

Interviews with the 2012 Loucks Games Honorees

Mike Stahr – 1982 Winner of the Loucks 800 Meters



Invited Returnees Anthony Smith (l) and Mike Stahr(r)

Below is an online interview that the Loucks Games (LKS) had with Mike Stahr (Mike) a 1983 graduate of Carmel High School.

LKS: Mike, this May we, at Loucks, will be very happy to welcome you back to White Plains and the Games. What are you doing now?

MIKE: I'm much honored to be asked back this year and anticipating a wonderful reunion. Currently, I am a Computer Science professor at Miami University. I also coach various levels of athletes. A few years back I created a website for the running community called running2win.com that is dedicated to helping athletes and their coaches by having an online running log and community.

LKS: Tell us what you've been doing for the last 30 years?

MIKE: Running, coaching, having children. I have 4 wonderful kids – hoping one will be a runner!

LKS: Sounds like you've had a busy and successful career. Congratulations on the family life. Would you mind giving us a list of your track career highlights?

MIKE: Needless to say, I have many fond memories from my high school racing days. As I look back, the highlights by my graduation consisted of the two wins at Millrose, winning States Jr. and Sr. years, winning nationals my Jr. year, the Loucks 800 win (and still my favorite trophy.) After high school I attended Arizona State for two years. During my tenure there I was fortunate to anchor the 2 mile relay that set the World (and current collegiate) Record my freshman year running a PR for the 800m in 1:45. During my sophomore year I was an All-American in XC. Due to coaching changes I decided to transfer to Georgetown University the summer before my junior year. While attending GU I broke 4 minutes in the mile, anchored the DMR at the Penn Relays running a 3:54 split and setting a World Record, won the NCAA D1 indoor Mile, and was All-American in XC, Indoor, and Outdoor Track. While still at Georgetown I qualified for the Olympic Trials in both the 800m and 1500m. After graduating I went on to race internationally in the 800m and 1500m/mile. I was ranked 42nd in the World in the 1500 and qualified for the '92 Trials.

LKS: That was very impressive. What memories do you have of Coach Paul Collins, the former head coach at Carmel High School?

MIKE: An absolute amazing person. Coach Collins truly changed my life as he did for so many others, as he was a kind-hearted individual willing to do anything for you as an athlete or as a person. Two stories that come to mind: Coach was a phenomenal golfer. Both his brother and father were professionals and Paul was even better than them. While running (jogging time only) laps around the track he would often tell us to stop at various points. He would have his club and a few golf balls and land them feet from us. We would have to bring the balls back to him. The second story (of course I have many, many more) was the second time I false started in a race my senior year... Yes, not only did I false start, I false started in the 2 mile run... The first time Coach was upset but quickly gave me a funny smile. The second time I was so mad that I started running the perimeter of the large field in back of the stadium. Unknown to me Paul was trying to chase me down to tell me everything would be fine.

LKS: on another note, what does the name "Loucks Games" mean to you?

MIKE: The Loucks Games was the first time I ever ran an 800m in open competition. Prior to that I really only ran the mile in open races. In smaller meets I did anything from the 200 to 2 mile.

LKS: What was your reaction to being asked to return to White Plains?

MIKE: It was an honor getting the invitation. T&F in NY was one of the greatest times in my life. Although I went on to accomplish many goals in the sport after high school I still think of NY and running as home. The White Plains track has many memories for me. Besides the Loucks Games win the most memorable experience I had was during my sophomore year at the State Qualifiers. The entire outdoor season I was consistently running 4:24'ish miles. My goal for the year was to run a 4:15. Unknown to me, while I was stepping onto the starting line for the mile run the assistant coach, who was sitting with my mom, looked to her and said "Mike has done a great job this year. It's too bad he didn't get his goal but dropping 10 seconds in one year was probably too much." My mom said "What are you talking about? He still has this race." The coach's response was "Well, he won't be able to drop 10 seconds in one race." I crossed the line on the White Plains track with a time of 4:15. I also ran my PR in the 400 there. I ran the anchor in the 4x400 at a meet against White Plains. It was evening and dark when I got the baton 20 or so meters back. The coach's said they couldn't see the runners – just the socks. I

ran a 47 split that night. So, yes, White Plains was one of my favorite places to race. I'm looking forward to returning.

LKS: Mike, What do you remember about the 1982 race?

MIKE: I remember thinking "how am I supposed to run an 800 when I'm used to a mile pace?" The thing I remember the most was probably the trophy. It is, to this day, the most unique award I have.

LKS: Finally, with all of the success that you have had during your excellent career, would you mind providing a few words of advice for the young runners who might aspire to reach the same levels that you reached 30 years ago?

MIKE: Take it slow – take your time. Don't expect the world all at once. The more you put into building a strong base and work ethic, the better the sport will be for you. Don't short-cut your training but don't make it the only thing in your life because everyone gets injured or has "bad" races and if you don't put these setbacks in perspective and "go with the flow" all you will end up doing is getting frustrated. Enjoy the sport and when you're racing race like it's your event to win that day – no matter where you are in the pack.

LKS: Thank you, Mike. On behalf of all the fans of track and field who will be at Loucks this May and for those who can't, but are reading this article, we at Loucks can't wait to acknowledge you for what you are, not only a former Champion of Loucks, but a Champion of Life. Thanks for the interview.

