

Tribute to our fallen immortal – William Hill

I am saddened and in disbelief upon hearing the shocking news of William Hill's passing. It happened too fast and too early. The name W Hill has been so closely linked to DBS that the 2 are almost inseparable. The entire DBS community will forever remember this legendary son and the legacy he has left behind.

William was among the first generation of "senior soldiers" who came back to school to coach and train with the current boys. After training, he would share some of his amorous adventures, suggestive experiences and some hanky-panky stories. As a young boy, I was mesmerized and fascinated by the delightful details, culminating in some kind of a dramatic climax. Strangely enough, the same tales were repeated 50 years later during the AC poolside parties. What amazed me more was the characters of the story remain unchanged. William, you certainly managed to find your favorite events then, didn't you? What's more interesting was a new group of old boys are equally captivated and elated with the same semi-fictitious stories. Some confessed they had some kind of weird dreams afterward. I am still uncertain whether the initials DBS, also nicknamed "Dirty Boys School", has anything to do with your memoirs. Anyway, we truly will miss those tales.

For decades, William's presence in the stadium represented athletic prowess and mastery, the pinnacle of power and speed. It is such a joy to watch William run. He almost redefined the law of gravity. It would be indisputable to say that DBS' dominance in athletics took off in the early 1960s when William prevailed in the athletics arena and was widely acclaimed as the "creme de la creme" in HK. At his prime, he excelled in all sprinting events, be they 100m, 200m & 400m ones. He triumphantly led the School to 4 consecutive grand-slams between 1962 & 1965, a remarkable achievement that still stands tall in the history of the HK inter-schools athletics competition.

William was a lanky athlete with an above-average height of 6'2". His talent in running was first discovered when he was in the C grade. It was not certain if he ever participated in the middle-grade division because of the age/height system which was implemented in both the C & B grades at the time. William seemed to run with so little effort, yet he was effective. He simply darted forward with no resistance. By 1965, he had already established himself as a giant in the athletics circle, literally transcending and eventually breaking all HK sprinting records and garnering the top honors twice of "The Athletes of the year" by HKAAA.

Many of you may not be aware of the rudimentary conditions which came with running in the late 50s/early 60s. Recapturing this time in history would lead one to realize that sports grounds were scarce and training was sporadic. Even basic equipment such as spikes shoes was primitive at best. A pair of "Torch/Made in China" spikes shoes cost around HK\$6-7 a pair. 4-5 iron nails were inserted. Adidas in those days was a foreign name and a rare commodity. Athletes in the sprinting events had to unearth 2 man-made holes to start a race-hopefully to provide the anticipated friction to propel an athlete from a crouching position.

A pistol or handgun was used for kickstarting a race. The application was filed to the Regional Police Station in order to obtain a permit. On the day, a plainclothes sergeant would deliver the revolver with boxes of empty shells to the stadium. An explicit record was made as to how many rounds of bullets were fired during the whole event. A significant of 20 cents per shell was charged. Some starters were quite prudent and concerned with the cost. Certain athletes understood this phenomenon and took advantage to make a "Jump" start or what they called "beating the gun." In those days, athletes were pardoned with one false start.

Mixed sandy tracks were ubiquitous. There were no financial rewards nor any subsidies or grants from the government for athletes. The commercial

endorsement was forbidden. This came at a time when financial assistance and reward in sport was frowned upon and seen as ungentlemanly. If you were found to have received a sum of money in any shape or form, you could have been disqualified from participating in all amateur sporting events or even the Olympics. Sporting life spans were relatively short and in general involvement in athletics came to an end right after secondary education in Hong Kong.

William was denied the right to run the inter-school 100m event at the time when he had already reigned as the prince of sprinting. As part of the event entry strategy, he was assigned to run the 200m and 400m whereupon he broke both records right off the track. In the following year, he was commissioned to participate in 2 new events not of his own choice; namely the 110 high hurdles and 800m. According to Mr. Lowcock's ratiocination and intelligence, he believed an outstanding athlete should be excluded from participating in his/her most formidable or favorable events in order to gain new experiences and confidence. Naturally and confidently, he was totally convinced of William's capability and competence in becoming an "All round" athlete. William subsequently succeeded brilliantly.

William, it's hard to compare you with others. Comparison is the thief of joy. You are what you're.

You made running a simple and enjoyable experience. You have inspired so many of us to carry the torch of disciples, dedication and the notion of "DBS, we will never settle for less".

Boys, records are made and meant to be broken again and again. I shall leave you to fill up the rest.

William, you're fondly missed.

Alex Ko

Chairman of DBSAC