

Email from Dave Pavitt, February 23rd 2010

Unfortunately I can't be with you all here tonight to pay homage to my very good buddy JL but trust it'll be a night to remember and I've certainly shared more than a few of those with the man himself who I've known since both of us met regularly in the days when my son Lee raced against Chris on the junior grasstrack scene.

Now I could see from his junior grasstrack exploits that Chris, like JL himself, was a very talented rider indeed and so invited him to come along to our winter practice sessions in the winter of 1987/8 that we were holding at Waterden Road, London E15, the home of the club I was promoting then, the Hackney HL1 Kestrels.

Hard to believe that was 23 years ago now and thus the memory is somewhat dimmed with the passage of time but I believe I'm right in saying that Chris initially snuck out of the Louis residence on a few Saturdays to attend those sessions without JL's knowledge but of course John did eventually find out and came along too.

I was delighted when he agreed to my suggestion that he become team manager of the Kestrels for the forthcoming 1988 season but immediately had a row, albeit a good natured one, with JL when it came to putting together the team for I insisted that Chris was going to start the season at reserve in the team and his dad was equally insistent that he wasn't ready!

As promoter I got my way and the rest is history for in that year the Kestrels, with John at the helm, romped to success after success in the National League with Chris one of the main reasons behind us winning trophies galore and I'll never forget him scoring 14 points in our first away match in the league at Glasgow and immediately phoning his mum from a callbox within Shawfield stadium to tell her how he'd done!

Obviously come the end of the season, irrespective of the points limit set at the promoters AGM for 1989, the Hackney side would have to be broken up but, by chance, the promotional rights for Ipswich became available, I purchased them and John and I became co-promoters and so he, Chris and Mark Loram made the move to Foxhall for 1989.

We had some great times together here at Ipswich, producing three worlds champions - Chris and Mark at Under 21 level and Tony Rickardsson for the ultimate accolade and whilst I'm no longer involved with the Witches, John and I remain very good friends, we frequently talk to each other and I've got to say he's taught me a lot over the years especially when it comes to money matters!

I stayed at JL's house many times during my time here with Ipswich Speedway and can now exclusively reveal to you a little known secret about him and that is that he has a single shot of whiskey each and every evening EXCEPT that it becomes a DOUBLE if he's managed to go through the day without spending a single penny! I kid you not that is absolutely true I can assure you and I hope my revealing that to you here tonight won't end our very firm friendship!

Enjoy the evening John!

Dave