

PHOTOS BY ROBERTA DIMAIO

Grid Yeomen and track star venture forth together in business

By MANOJ PRAJAPAT

Have you ever wondered what becomes of Yeomen football players once their playing days are over?

Well, some move on to the professional ranks in the Canadian Football League, but those who don't, what happens to them?

Are they exiled to Buffalo?

Do they become physical education teachers?

The latter perhaps.

We do know that some, well, four to be exact, have opened a shoe store in Toronto.

Running For Less, on the corner of Steeles Avenue and Gaudar Road, just west of Weston Road, is jointly owned and operated by Domenic Cugliari, Tino Iacono, George Ganas and Desai Williams, all former Yeomen. Each owns one quarter of the store.

Williams, who is better known for his track and field achievements, had been flirting with the idea of an athletic footwear store for some time. He first met the others a couple of years back while training at the Track and Field Centre.

Then late last winter, word spread that Williams was looking for some partners for a business venture. Cugliari, Iacono and Dave Cynamon (who has since left to be with family out west) showed interest.

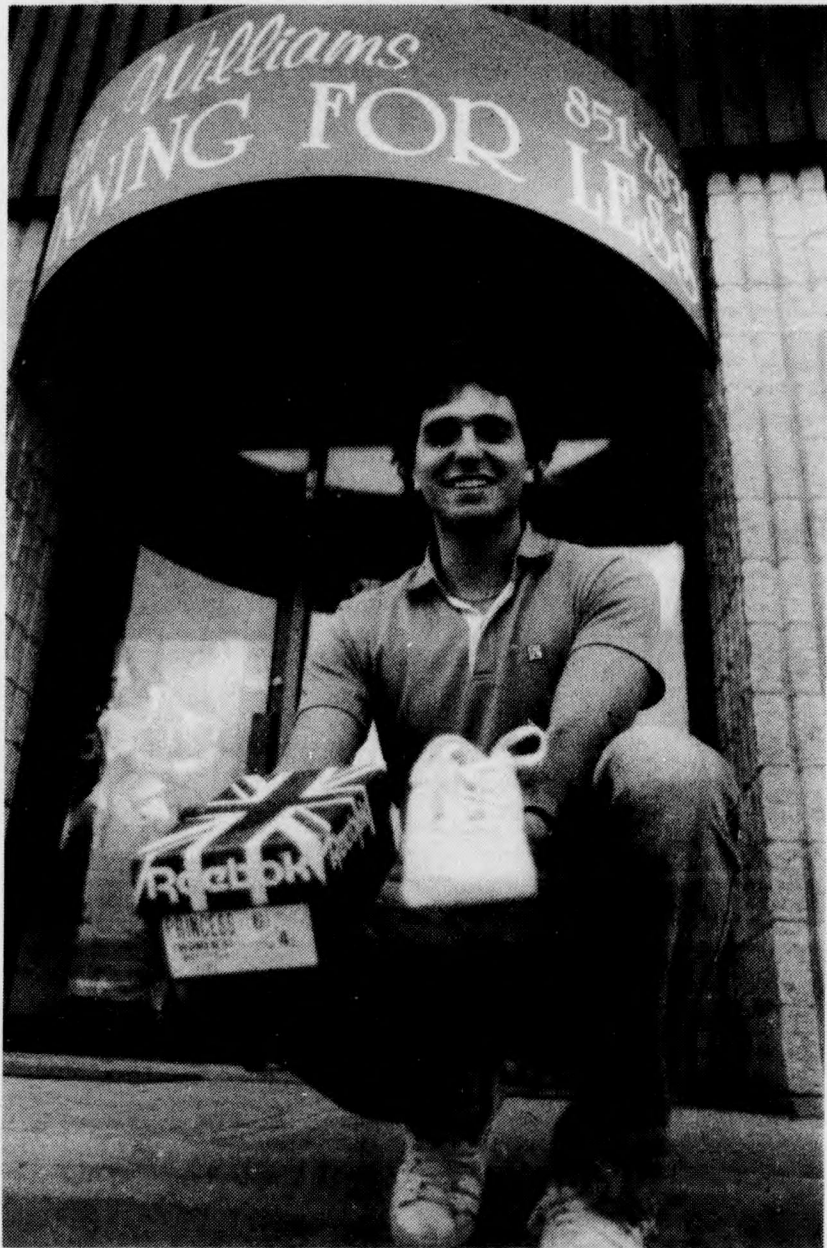
Things progressed quickly from there.

"It all happened pretty fast," Iacono said, who was the 1981 OUA A rookie of the year. "We were incorporated in less than two weeks and opened two months later (last June)."

They applied for and received a small business loan from the government.

"That (small business loan) really helped to get us started," Iacono added. "We put up the rest and put in a lot of hours fixing up the inside. All the work in here was done by us."

After Cynamon left last summer, the three remaining partners found it difficult to com-



HAVE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU: Yeomen quarterback Tino Iacono offers his wares outside the store of which he is co-owner.

bine school with a business. A fourth partner was needed. Ganas joined in late October of last year.

"It was too much for three people to handle, we really needed that fourth guy," Cugliari said, who shares the Yeomen record for most career interceptions. "George is a friend and it's worked out great."

With their location not being the best for retail sales, the bulk of the store's business right now is done through club and team orders. Eventually, they would like to increase their retail sales but the club and team orders side of the business is something they hope to build upon.

"That's something we'll always have," Iacono said. "The team sales right now are our bread and butter, anything retail is a bonus."

Having a world-class sprinter in Desai Williams as a joint owner has added instant credibility to the store. Williams has won virtually every sprint title in both the OUA A and CIAU championships.

"People know of him and his achievements—they respect what he has to say," Iacono said. "His name has definitely helped our sales."

The athletic backgrounds of the others has also helped. "We all have our connections," Cugliari said. "Everyone has equal input into the operation, I think that's had a lot to do with our success."

The four are becoming more involved with the technical side of the shoe business. They are working with a doctor who is helping them to better understand the bio-mechanics of the foot. Their product knowledge is quite impressive.

Ganas, who is a member of Canada's national handball team, is especially active in this area.

"There's a lot more to finding the right type of running shoe for someone than just finding the right size," Ganas said, who was the OUA A leading rusher in 1984. "People walk and run differently—they use their feet differently—we now know what to look for when recommending a type of shoe for someone."



PROUD OF HIS SOCKS: Running for Less, in addition to dealing in shoes, also sells accessories.

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