

Brown faces two hard months in race to Montreal



Julie Brown, right, celebrates a little early against Jan Merrill

By DENNIS GAUB
Of The Gazette Staff

Three years of anticipation are nearly over, but the final two months may be the longest as former Billings Senior track standout Julie Brown awaits and works towards trials to determine the United States Olympic team.

Brown, a senior on the Montana high school track scene, added a host of American and international running records after graduating from Senior in 1973.

She then enrolled at UCLA where she's a junior in kinesiology—the study of muscles and movement—aiming towards a career in sports medicine.

But Brown's not attending school this quarter. Instead, she said in a telephone interview Saturday, she's working in a Los Angeles department store and preparing for the Olympic track and field trials. They're scheduled June 19-27 in Eugene, Ore.

"Right now I'm just training hard," Brown said. "I'm not racing much. I'm just waiting for the trials."

Her father, Billings lawyer Rockwood Brown, described the countdown towards Montreal a bit differently. "I think this is kind of the calm before

the storm," he said.

His 20-year-old daughter exuded confidence about her chances of representing the U.S. "I think as far as time goes, I'm ranked third or fourth (nationally). And my times should improve. This is what my coach (Chuck DeBusi) is peaking me for."

Brown's main event, she said, is 1,500 meters. To help her at that distance, she runs the 800 for speed and the 3,000 and two-mile for endurance. "And I run cross-country," she added.

But mixed with her confidence about an Olympic appearance is a note of caution. "You can't really predict," she said. "I could pull a muscle. Anybody could. Or you could fall in the race."

"It comes down to three races—the trials, the semifinals and the finals" at Eugene, she added.

Brown's competition includes Jan Merrill. The 18-year-old was voted outstanding women athlete at the National Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Indoor Track Field Championships in New York City in February.

Both women were clocked in four minutes, 38.3 seconds for the mile in that meet, breaking the AAU record. But Merrill slipped Brown in a photo-finish.

However, Merrill's not her nemesis, Brown maintained. "Jan has just really come up fast. I

think Jan had a semi-peak in the indoor season."

That's important, Brown explained, because she wasn't striving for the same goal but instead was "training hard." A kidney infection she was fighting throughout the indoor season hampered her performances also, Brown said.

"This is a good runner," she agreed. But "I raced her all last summer and beat her several times. She's a factor, but not the only factor."

Next on Brown's agenda is the Mount San Antonio College Relays this month, where Merrill and other top women runners are expected. "That's known as one of the big races," Brown said.

She'll enter other Southern California meets this spring and will start running the 1,500 next month.

But her friends in Billings may have to wait for the fireworks from Montreal in July to see her next. "I won't be back until after the Games," Brown said. "I can't afford to lose any training."

Her family's planning to travel to Eugene. And they've bought tickets to the Olympics and made reservations, Brown said.

There's one hitch, however. "They didn't buy me a ticket," Brown said, laughing. "So I've either got to make the team or not go."

Trojans use discus record for track win

STANFORD, Calif. (AP) — Southern California's Trojans overpowered California with the help of Darrell Eider's meet record discus throw and UCLA defeated Stanford despite the first setback of the season for Trojan jumper Willie Banks in the double dual track meet here Saturday.

The Trojans outpointed Cal 100-41, while UCLA won 89-56 before a crowd of 17,000 track and field fans in Stanford Stadium.

Eider's toss of 136 feet broke the meet record of 130-9 set by Southern Cal's Joe Anfi-

novich five years ago. His teammate James Gillies won both dual events, the 100 meters in a time of 1:13 seconds and the 200 in 21.5.

Cal's most impressive winner was Olympic hopeful James Robinson who was timed in 1:46.9 in the 800-meter run, beating the Trojans' Rayford Beaton by two-tenths of a second.

Stanford's James Lofton remained unbeaten this season in the long jump with his effort of 24 feet, 8 1/2 inches into the wind. Banks was second with 24 1/2.

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