

Marathons don't rule Brown's life

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Julie Brown, 23, of Billings broke the American women's marathon record and in the next breath softly admitted that she really wasn't interested in the marathon. She also claimed she hadn't trained for it.

What would happen if she ever got serious?

The Billings native, now attending California State University at Northridge ran 2:36:23 at the Nike-Oregon Track Club Marathon Sept. 10. Kim Merritt who until that day had held the record

The human race

with 2:37:57 was also in the race, but she finished sixth.

In a telephone interview after her great race, Brown said, "The marathon isn't really my kind of race. I enjoy the shorter distances."

She had been doing serious cross country training, so decided to give the long race a whirl. In only her second marathon, she shattered the American record. She had run 2:45 her first time out.

In March, Brown entered the Avon International Women's Marathon in Atlanta. She was leading when she passed out and woke up in the ambulance. She blames the heat for that breakdown.

Although Brown doesn't seem very excited about the marathon, she isn't ready to leave it quite yet. She has one

more planned before turning her training to the shorter distances.

She plans to run the National AAU Championship Marathon Oct. 22 in conjunction with the New York City Marathon. There she wants to break the world marathon record 2:34:59, held by Christa Vahlensleek.

Who could doubt her ability to do it?

Still, she is modest. "There are lots of women who could run that time if they only trained for the marathon," she claims. "I'm sure the women's record will be under 2:30 before too long."

Her favorite race is the 1500 meters. And she has her sights set as high as they can go—the 1980 Olympics. She wants to go to Moscow as a member of the American team.

Certainly, she is versatile enough to make it. She previously held the American records in the 5,000 and 10,000 meters.

Even if the marathon were her favorite, she couldn't make the Olympics because women aren't allowed to run anything longer than 1500 meters. Women runners have been moving heaven and earth in the past few years to bring equality to the Olympics. But the International Olympic Committee still refuses to allow the longer races for women.

Brown graduates from undergraduate school this next June and then goes to medical school for four years. "Then, I want to come back to live in Montana and maybe run some of the races you have there."

Julie's brother Scott, who manages the Base Camp, a sporting foods store in Helena, has urged his sister to come back



Julie Brown still prefers shorter runs

for some of Montana's races. But she always has world-class track meets lined up. "I'd like to come," she admits, "but I'm just to busy."

Julie's parents still live in Billings. Her father Rockwood Brown, an attorney there, makes his daughter's record sound even more spectacular when he tells of the troubles she has had.

Julie broke her leg last fall, and had to lay off completely for six weeks.

This spring, as she was just getting in shape again, she broke her other leg.

Finally this summer, she was able to stay together long enough to maintain a heavy running schedule. About three months later, she ran the fastest marathon ever run by an American woman.

And in about three weeks she might be the fastest woman marathoner ever.

(Photo) Julie Brown Breaks Women's Marathon Record

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