

Women Track and Field Olympians from Montana

In women's track and field qualifying for the Olympic Summer Games of 1976, 1980, and 1984, four Montana high school graduates earned first, second or third place finishes.

Julie Brown, a graduate of Billings Senior High School 1973 qualified for the 1980 and 1984 team. She was an alternate in the 800 meters for the 1976 Games. [6, 22]

Lorna Griffin, a graduate of Corvallis High School 1974, qualified for the 1980, and 1984 team. [22]

Pam Spencer, a graduate of Great Falls High School 1975, qualified for the 1976, 1980, and 1984 team. [6, 22]

Mary Osborne, a graduate of Billings West High School 1979, qualified for the 1980 team. [6, 9]

The 1976 Olympic Summer Track and Field Trials had six field events and seven track events for women.

Pam Spencer captured 3rd place in the high jump with a jump of 5' 11 1/4". In the Olympic Games she finished with a jump of 5' 7". [11]

On Jan 4, 1980, President Carter announced economic sanctions against the USSR in retaliation for the Soviet Union's assault of Afghanistan. The U.S. Olympic committee voted in April of 1980 not to participate in the Summer Olympics to be held in Moscow at the request of Mr. Carter. Yet the winter Olympics were held at Lake Placid New York in late 1980.[2]

The 1980 Olympic Summer Track and Field Trials had six field events and nine track events for women. Montana women seized four qualifying places of the 18 possible in the field events. This is a 22 plus percent of the total available. Considering that Montana had a population of 786,690 and the United States had a population of 266, 545,805 in 1980, Montana by population was 1/339 of the total United States population.[2]

Montana women who qualified in the 1980 field events:

Lorna Griffin, discus and shot put [15]

1st place discus:197 feet six inches (Olympic Trials record) [3,5]

3rd place shot put:15.89 meters (52' 1 1/2") [3]

Pam Spencer, high jump [15]

3rd place with a jump of 6'0" [5]

Mary Osborne, javelin [11, 15]

3rd place javelin: 181' 3" yes [5, 7, 9, 10]

Montana had one qualifier in track events.

Julie Brown, 800 meters [3, 10, 11, 15] and 1500 meters [3,]

2nd place 800 meters, 2:00.96

2nd place 1500 meters 4:07.13

The 1984 Olympic Summer Trials for Track and Field in women's field events had six events for a total of 18 qualifying places. Montana women seized three places for 16 plus percent of the total.

Montana women who qualified in field events:

Lorna Griffin in the discus and shot put:

1st place shot put [3] In the Olympic Games she placed 9th. [21]

3rd place discus: at 188' 2" [3] In the Olympic Games she placed 12th. [21]

Pam Spencer in the high jump

2nd place 6' 2 1/4" [3] In the Olympic Games she placed 11th. [21]

In track events, Montana had one qualifier:

Julie Brown, marathon

2nd place marathon 2:31:41 [1] In the Olympic Games she placed 36th. [21]

These Montana women held these American and World Track and Field records:

Lorna Griffin

1980 American record: discus 207' 3" [16]

Lorna was the first American woman to throw the discus 200 feet or more

Pamela Spencer

1981 American women's record May 30, 6'5", then raised the record to 6' 5 ½" at the Van Damme Memorial in Brussels, Belgium Aug. 28, [17]

Julie Brown:

1975 World Champion: March 16 IAAF World Cross Country at Rabat, Morocco, 3.9- mile course, 13:42. [19,20]

1975 World Record: March 29th 10,000 meters 35:00.4 [19]

1978 American women's marathon record 2:36:23 September 10 Eugene, OR. [7,13,19]

1983 World record for all-women's marathon, sixth annual Avon Circuit Marathon June 6, 1983 2:26:26 Los Angeles CA [8,11,21]

Montana's 1980 Olympians



Lorna
Griffin

Mary
Osborne

Julie
Brown

Pam
Spencer

At the White House receiving Congressional Gold Medals. July 1980

- [1] www.Olympics.com
- [2] 2022 The World Almanac copyright 2021 Skyhorse Publishing
- [3] The Missoulian, Missoula, MT, June 30, 1980 p 13
- [4] Great Falls Tribune, Great Falls, Montana Fri, Jul. 27,1984 p 9
- [5] Statesman Journal. Salem OR., Mon, Jun 30, 1980 p 5
- [6] Montana High School Association, Hall of Fame
- [8] The Billings Gazette, Billings Montana Wed, Jun 25, 1980 p 33
- [9] The Billings Gazette, Billings, Montana Tue, Jun 24, 1980 p 19
- [10] Newsday, New York, New York Wed Jun 25, 1980 p 114
- [11] more.arrs.run Association of Road Racing Statsticians
- [12] Mon Jun 30, 1980, The Missoulian
- [13] more.arrs.run, Association of Road Racing Statisticians.
- [14] The Billings Gazette (Billings, Montana) Thur. Jul 26, 1984
- [15] Congressional Gold Medal, Jul 1980
- [16] The Missoulian, Missola, Montana Tue, Jul 24. 1984 p 14
- [17] Women's Track and Field, California State Northridge Matador Hall of Fame Jul 7 2020
- [18] The Billings Gazette, Thu, Jul 26, 1984 p 47
- [19] Run with the Champions, Marc Bloom, p 171, ©Marc Bloom, Published by Rodale
- [20] World Athletics
- [21] www.Olympedia.org