

Track and Field



Candy Young



Track and Field



Candy Young

Candy is Dandy

During the harsh winter of 1979, when snow was ever present in western Pennsylvania, America's newest young track sensation found herself without a dry piece of ground on which to practice. So it was, that in a most unusual solution to a common problem, hurdles were set up in the hallway of Beaver Falls High School, and Candy Young was able to go happily about her business.

This is the kind of fortitude and ingenuity that has characterized Young's swift ascension among the world's top women hurdlers. "She wants it bad enough that she works at it," said her coach, Karlin Ryan. "She has the maturity of a girl who's been running in national competition for years. She doesn't shake up, you can't rattle her, you just have to beat her."

Unknown outside her own community prior to the 1979 season, the 16-year-old Candy set a world indoor record of 7.5 seconds in a heat of the women's 60-yard high hurdles during the AAU national indoor championships. To show it wasn't a fluke, she repeated that time in the finals.

Young, who has seven sisters and one brother, was involved in gymnastics until

she was encouraged to try hurdling by Ryan, a former backup quarterback to Joe Namath at the same Beaver Falls High School. Oddly, Ryan knew little himself about hurdling, but he contacted other coaches to ask about training methods, and Young attended a five-day development clinic at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Col. "Her desire to work was there," Ryan said. "She made my job easy."

Only a few months before her record-setting performance, Young still was competing in the junior division, and her success is even more remarkable considering it has been several years since the U.S. has produced a new world-class woman hurdler.

Candy has a lot of faith in her ability and already has a trademark, a blue yarn wrapped around her pigtails. She also is a good student, maintaining a B average, and she has a definite idea in which direction she's moving. As she put it, "My feet are pointing toward the 1980 Olympics."

CANDY YOUNG

Born May 21, 1962, Beaver Falls, Pa.