

# Track and Field



*Francie Larrieu Lutz*



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### *Long Distance Darling*

For someone who claims to be clumsy and who has trouble concentrating on what she is supposed to be doing, Francie Larrieu has achieved a large helping of success. She was always a competitive girl, and her interest was sparked by an older brother who was on the U.S. Olympic team in 1964 when Francie was just 11. She was running for the fun of it but discovered something very important about herself. "I found out early that I couldn't stand to be anything but first, even if it was just to run down the block," she says. When she was 16, and just barely over 5' and 100 lb, she was in her first organized meet. Everything was so new to her that she missed the call for her first race, a 220-yard dash. Fortunately she was alert for the 660 call and won easily. She switched to longer distances.

After she outgrew her first club, the Cindergals, she joined the Pacific Coast Club, where she was one of the few women athletes. Her coach worked hard at keeping Francie's mind on her work, and the effort paid

off as she qualified for the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972. But after finishing eighth in the 1,500 m semifinal, Francie increased her rigorous training schedule, running as much as 100 miles a week. It took a while for her to reach top form, but she did, and in 1974 she began to run world record times indoors. First she ran a 4:36.4 mile at Seattle, then went to San Diego, where she lowered the 2-mile standard by 32.6 seconds to 9:39.4. During the course of the race she also established a record for the 3,000 m with a time of 9:02.4. Later that season she set still another mark with a 4:12.2 in the 1,500 m in Toronto. Her record-breaking continued the next year as she set an indoor world record for the mile three times within two weeks, lowering the standard to 4:28.5 in Richmond, Va. In 1977, running under her married name of Francie Larrieu Lutz, she reeled off 14 straight victories in indoor distance races, keeping her hopes up for an olympic medal at Moscow in 1980.

*First across the Line in another indoor race*