

Olympic contender looks back

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Former Swede coach, teacher threw discuss during 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City

Carol Frost was watching the 2012 Summer Olympics in London when she received a call from The Times last week.

Forty-four years ago, Frost threw the discus during the 1968 Olympics event in Mexico City.

“Discus throwing has definitely improved, like everything,” she said about this year’s winning distance of 226.7 feet. “Kids are throwing in junior high, college and beyond.”

Frost’s best was 172.2 feet.

The Cedar Rapids native, along with her husband Larry, taught physical education and coached for Gothenburg Public Schools from 1970 to 1972.

Larry coached football and track and was mentored by coaching legend Dutch Zorn.

Former newspaperman and baseball coach Tot Holmes described Frost as the best female athlete he’s ever seen.

“She also played shortstop in a men’s league which is the premier position,” Holmes said. “And she hit just as well as anyone else.”

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Holmes said Frost's shot and discus technique was perfect.

So much so that Zorn lobbied for the addition of girls track and for Frost to take the position before he retired in 1971, Holmes said.



Frost remembered Sue Peterson as an outstanding Swede sprinter and Deb Wing, who threw the discus and shot put well.

Carol Moseke Frost grew up loving sports.

"I played softball forever and threw the ball off the garage and caught it," she said. "I developed good arm strength."

In the fifth grade, her prowess landed her the shortstop position on a high school team.

In addition to softball, a community supportive of girls sports also offered volleyball—long before Title IX-mandated sports equality in schools in 1972.

During her senior year, English teacher Randall Lambert took note of the athletic ability of Frost and several other high schoolers, and taught them the basics of track and field.

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Frost said they attended two meets in the state, one of which was the Midwest AAU meet in Cozad, since there were no state track and field meets for women.

She tried to be a half miler and then a hurdler but didn't know she was a thrower until after competing in AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) Junior Olympics.

"I ran against West Coast speed and placed second in the shot," Frost said. "I knew then I could throw with those people."

Frost started competing at more national meets as a senior and, in 1963, enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Because the university didn't have a women's track team, she would run to the state fairgrounds and practice her throwing technique on concrete pads designed for farm equipment.

"I wasn't allowed to practice at the men's track facility," she said.

Frost and a handful of other track and field women also began practicing at high school tracks, after the boys had finished training.

She coached herself with assistance from Lambert who provided books and taped Frost on old Super 8 home movie film.

Lambert helped the women raise money and get sponsors like Roberts Dairy that supported a team, she said.

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In 1965, Frost qualified for the USA national team in discus and shot and traveled to East Germany, Poland and Russia to compete in Soviet-bloc countries.



There she regularly placed third behind two Russians. Eastern European competitors were not tested for performance-enhancing drugs at the time, she said.

Frost qualified for the Pan American Games in 1967 where she received gold in discus while competing against athletes from North, South and Central America.

In 1968, she made the Olympic team which was “really exciting.”

However she knew she couldn’t compete against the Russians, East Germans and Romanians and was placed in the second flight.

Although she wanted to throw her personal best, a rain delay sent athletes indoors. During competition later, her muscles were cold and her throws were from wet concrete. She finished 14th.

Frost later coached UNL’s women’s track and field, beginning during the team’s second year of existence, and in high schools throughout Nebraska and Texas.

Although women have made great strides in athletics on all levels, she said money is not equal in professional sports.

“I’m not sure that will ever happen,” Frost said. “Tennis and golf come close but I don’t think

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there will ever be the demand.

“But opportunities to compete and get an education are certainly there.”

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