

## T&FN INTERVIEW

# SUZY FAVOR

by Sieg Lindstrom

*Few athletes have dominated an NCAA event the way Suzy Favor has the 1500/mile. The Wisconsin senior has won NCAA titles each of the last three years, plus the NCAA Indoor mile in '87 and '89; the latter in a stirring duel with Olympian Vicki Huber.*

*The night before she left for this year's Indoor, Favor accepted the marriage proposal by her boyfriend of three years, Mark Hamilton (a pitcher on Wisconsin's baseball team). She then traveled to Indy, collected the mile title with a last-lap kick, and further aided the Badgers' 2nd-place team finish by winning her first national championship 3000 in a PR 9:02.30.*

*The Wisconsin native has been competing at an elite level since winning the first of three TAC Junior 1500 titles, as a prep soph in '84. She won the Pan-Am Juniors that year and again in '86, when she was 9th at the World Juniors.*

*In the last year, working closely with coach Peter Tegen, Favor has reached a new level, as evidenced by a 2:00.56 PR last summer and her big-kick 2nd-place finish behind Paula Ivan in the World University Games 1500.*

**T&FN:** You're a hard person to get hold of. How are you?

**Favor:** Pretty good. I just finished an exam so I'm feeling really good right now.

**T&FN:** What sort of exam?

**Favor:** Art history; I had to memorize all these dates, and I'm glad it's over with.

**T&FN:** You're an art major.

**Favor:** Yes, I'm really interested in photography. I'm working right now also in graphic design; I hope to do something with that after I get out of college.

**T&FN:** Do you plan to work or be a full-time runner when you graduate after next fall's cross country season?

**Favor:** I definitely want to work as well as run. I can't see just running. You need something more in your life; that's my opinion at least. I just need that balance.

**T&FN:** What do you do with yourself now besides run and study?

**Favor:** Me and my fiancé, we spend a lot of time together in our free time, which isn't much, believe me. We like to play pool and go golfing; he bought me golf clubs for my birthday.

**T&FN:** What's your best golf score?

**Favor:** It's not that good. We don't want to talk about that, but I'm starting, I had lessons, and I'm working at it. It's a fun game but it takes a lot of concentration.

**T&FN:** Is it a different kind of concentration than you use in running?

**Favor:** It is. It's relaxing and it's frustrating. Running isn't frustrating. Running, you just go and run the pace you want. In golf, you don't know where the ball's going to go.

**T&FN:** In the last year you've dropped your 800 PR from 2:04.03 to 2:00.56; you kicked well enough to take 2nd in a tactical race with Paula Ivan at the World University Games; now you've dropped your 3000 PR to 9:02.30 at the NCAA Indoor. What gives?

**Favor:** The thing is it's very important to keep running in the summer, and I've been doing that all the time since I was in high school. That's something that's just helped me down the road. Also, Peter is a great coach, and I really believe in his coaching abilities. He's just helped me so much that I really believe I can keep improving.

**T&FN:** After being a dominant force for so long on the NCAA level, have you found international competition to be vastly different or more difficult?

**Favor:** Well, from the Juniors I was used to international competition. And it's fun over there. There isn't so much pressure, I don't think, because you don't expect people to know you as well as they do here. But actually when you get over there, you're surprised at the people who know you.

They're such track fans over there, they know everything about everybody, practically. They come up to you and they may have your picture from some



Claus Andersen/ALLSPORT

article or a book with pictures in it. It's exciting to go over there, and I hope to go over there this summer again.

**T&FN:** Does all that attention make you nervous?

**Favor:** No, it's fun. It really is. The whole experience of going over there is fun, and I don't put a lot of pressure on myself in the summer when I go over there. You just have to have fun with it, and that's basically what happened with me ever since I started running.

**T&FN:** Is your training now different from in the past?

**Favor:** It's been the same since I've been in college. We only work out three days a week with our coach. So Tuesdays and Thursdays we're to do all our runs with fartleks and pickups and things like that.

**T&FN:** And on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays?

**Favor:** We do intervals and we're usually on the track. In the summer I do a lot of intervals; shorter ones. Last

summer I did 200s and 100s to try and prepare for the 800, and that really helped my speed a lot.

Actually last summer was the first time that I've really concentrated on basically sprinting a lot. Peter just had me do that because he wanted it to be a relaxed summer. And actually it was, because I was doing 100s and 200s and these were fun. I couldn't believe when he'd say the workout was over sometimes, because I wasn't as tired as I was expecting.

**T&FN:** How do you deal with those frozen Wisconsin winters?

**Favor:** I run a lot outside but I also run a lot on treadmills inside. My father works for an insurance company that's big on corporate fitness. They have a big fitness place with treadmills, and I train there a lot when I go home.

**T&FN:** Can you run fast on those?

**Favor** (laughs): I think I might have broken a couple of machines. A couple of times I've come back and the machine won't be working the next day. I don't know if it's me or what's going on.

**T&FN:** What's the most exciting race you've ever run?

**Favor:** I think I would have to say the race with Vicki. That was exciting. During the race I kept saying to myself, "2nd-place wouldn't be too bad." Then, "No, I don't want 2nd. What are you doing?" Arguing with myself during the race.

**T&FN:** Did that race mark a turning point for you?

**Favor:** Yeah, I think so. I think it just gave me more confidence. Vicki's such a nice person and a great runner.

**T&FN:** What about the University Games race against Ivan? That was quite a tactical affair.

**Favor:** Nobody wanted to lead the race. That's why I was in 2nd-place. I didn't want to lead either. But it made it really fun. The last 800 went down to a 2:06. It was just whoever could hang on in that last half, just like running an 800.

**T&FN:** Did the time matter to you?

**Favor:** I was running against Paula Ivan; that was the thing. That was so neat just to run with her. The time didn't matter.

**T&FN:** What were your thoughts going in?

**Favor:** I didn't think I could win, and that's probably bad, but I knew who I was up against. There's a point at

which you have to be realistic too.

After the race I traded a pin with her. That was kind of neat. We couldn't talk with each other, because we didn't understand each other. But I still have this pin she gave me.



**T&FN:** Have you made any friends in Europe?

**Favor:** I met a Russian girl, Lyubov Kremlyova [World Ranked No. 10 in '88]. We're pen pals. We met at the international quad in Birmingham last summer.

**T&FN:** You exchange letters?

**Favor:** After the meet, we kind of talked. We couldn't really talk; just hand gestures. We wrote our addresses for each other and exchanged them. I have a Russian professor in Stevens Point, and he interprets the letters for me. It's really neat to hear what they do everyday. She tells me about her training and stuff.

**T&FN:** How have all these experiences changed you?

**Favor:** I'm just more experienced in race situations. I think I can handle myself in a race. If it comes down to being boxed in or something, there's always a way out. I have to say that's from racing in Europe.

**T&FN:** Just the higher level of competition?

**Favor:** I think it makes you a tougher runner. I've learned that sometimes it's gotten me in trouble, because I come back here and I forget that you can't be that rough over here. Some coaches really get upset with that, so I have to watch myself sometimes.

**T&FN:** Do you get very nervous before races?

**Favor:** I'm nervous, but sometimes I look around and I see people and I see how nervous they are, and I ask, "Why are these people doing this to themselves?"

The reason you're out here is for fun, or else why would you be here? Sometimes I laugh when I'm out there before a race and I see these people stressed out.

I think it all started in high school. The people I was around were just so lively and had so much fun with track. That's just the attitude I grew up with.

**T&FN:** Were you surprised by how quickly your success came?

**Favor:** I didn't think about it that much. I guess towards my junior and senior years of high school was when it really started to happen. I thought, "Wow, I can go to a college and run."

It was so exciting for me at that time, and it still is. The future that's ahead is so exciting. □

Suzanne Marie Favor was born August 8, 1968, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and is 5-3 1/4/105. Graduated from Stevens Point High in '86 and attends Wisconsin. Holds the American Junior 1500 record with her 4:09.10 from '87.

Major 1500/Mile finishes: '84—1)TAC Jr, 1)Pan-Am Jr; '85—1)TAC Jr; '86—1)TAC Jr, 1)Pan-Am Jr, 9)WJr; '87—1)NCI, 1)NC, 6)TAC; '88—2h)NCI, 1)NC, 7h)OT; '89—1)NCI, 1)NC, 2)TAC, 2)WUG; '90—1)NCI. 3000: '90—1)NCI.

Progression (U.S. Ranking in parentheses):

Year	Age	Affil	800	1500	3000
'83	14	WIHS	—	4:55.23y	—
'84	15	*	—	4:19.46	10:42.95y
'85	16	*	2:09.88	4:19.43	10:26.2y
'86	17	*	2:11.5+	4:18.62	—
'87	18	Wi	2:04.03	4:09.10 (5)	9:12.33
'88	19	*	2:05.52	4:13.91	—
'89	20	*	2:00.56 (4)	4:09.7 (1)	9:13.53i
'90	21	*	2:05.14i	4:21.7i	9:02.30i