# MARGARET DOMKA



SPASH Class of 1997

Although Margaret harbored gymnastics dreams, those were cut short when she grew from 5' to 5'10" during the summer after 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Turning her focus to soccer during high school, she started every game under coach Sue Radmer from freshman to senior year. She excelled as a left defender and was selected All-State defender.

Continuing her career at UWSP under Coach Sheila Meich, she played stopper with fellow SPASH alumni Sarah Menzel and Marie Muhvic. In 2000, the team advanced to the NCAA DIII Final Four, the first time in school history.

While Margaret was a talented soccer player, it was her referee skills that took her to the highest levels of her sport. She refereed her first soccer game at age 13 to earn some extra money and at age 19, she was selected to referee the Midwest Region Youth Championships. By age 25, she became the first female to officiate a Milwaukee Wave professional indoor soccer game, and in 2015 she was the only American selected to referee in the FIFA Women's World Cup Canada.

According to former UWSP assistant soccer coach Larry Leton, "You could tell her personal qualities, strengths and attributes she possessed as a talented and skilled college soccer player would carry her forward to becoming a FIFA official at the highest levels." Margaret was the 5<sup>th</sup> female referee in the history of the United States to be reach a FIFA World Cup.

Making it to the World Cup as an athlete or official is a long road with year-round work. In addition to understanding the rules inside and out, it requires intense physical conditioning. And Margaret did all this while she was a Spanish teacher at Union Grove High School.

She retired from refereeing at the FIFA level in 2016 to pursue a PhD in Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management at Clemson University with a focus on the mental health aspect of sports. She formed the non-profit, U.S. Center for Mental Health & Sport, which offers mental health awareness training for coaches, athletes, parents and family members, officials, and sport administrators.

In 2022, she refereed the men's and women's World Cups for the International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) in Spain. Margaret also referees blind soccer and has supported the development of the sport around the country in preparation for the 2028 Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. She referees for Special Olympics and in 2022 refereed at the USA Games in Florida.

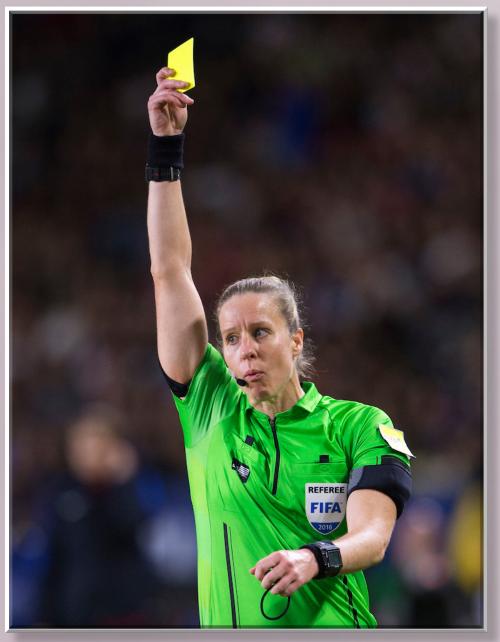
#### SOCCER HONORS

- All-State Defender, SPASH
- Led the WIAC in scoring in 2000 with 12 goals & 3 assists
- 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-American and member of the All-Tournament Final Four Team, 2000
- Team MVP of the NCAA Division III Final Four Team, 2000
- 1<sup>st</sup> Team Academic All-American, 2000
- WIAC 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-Conference, 2000
- WIAC Women's Soccer Centennial team selection
- UWSP Hall of Fame, 2008

#### REFEREEING HONORS

- Wisconsin Soccer Hall of Fame US Referee selection, 2017
- National Referee for US Soccer, 2005-2006
- Referee, Men's and Women's Professional Soccer Leagues, NCAA and NAIA Championship tournaments
- FIFA referee, 2007-2016
- FIFA Women's World Cup Canada, 2015 (only American selected)
- FIFA U20 Women's World Cup, Japan, 2012 (selected to referee the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> place match)
- FIFA U20 Women's World Cup Canada, 2014







YMCA gymnasts own 6-0 record

Stevens Point YMCA Team IV gym- beam (7.9), second in all-around (29.7) and third on bars (6.4). nasts remained undefeated by posting a 130.3-126.9 win over Appleton on Saturday, boosting their record to 6-0. Jackie Viertel led the age nine-andunder girls with first place in all-around (32.1), first on the floor excer-

cise (8.4), first on the uneven parallel bars (8.0), second in beam (7.4) and second in vault (8.3).

Other winners for Team IV were Julianna Osborne in beam (7.5) and Margaret Mary Domka in vault (8.4). Other placers included Kelly Wright, second in all-around (29.7), second on floor (8.3), second on bars (6.7) and third on beam (7.4); Osborne, third in all-around (23.5), fourth on floor (6.8),

Wolensky, fourth in all-around and Rachel Schoessow led the 10-11-yeararound (30.6), second in floor exercise (8.2). Heidi Miller was first on the floor (7.9).

For the 12-and-older girls, Kelly Blaha led the way by placing in all four events while finishing second all-around (30.6). Jessica Jakusz was the only winner, posting a score of 9.0 in

Other placers were Kriste Eble, third in all-around (31.4), third on floor (8.2), third on bars (7.5) and third on beam (7.9); Katie Trachte, second on bars (7.7) and third on vault (8.7).

Team III gymnasts (3-2) lost to Appleton 135.1-126.1. Katie Sipiorski led the 11-and-under girls with a first on the floor (7.8), second in vault (8.8) and third in allthird on bars (6.0) and third on vault Other placers were Natasha Wick,

(8.2); Bridget Konopacky, third on second on bars (7.9) and second on floor (6.9), and sixth in all-around; beam (8.1); Kristin Wright, fourth in Domka, fifth in all-around; and Nikki all-around (30.1), second on floor (7.6), third on bars (7.8); and Meredith Wolensky, third on beam (8.1). Placers for the 12-and-older girls old girls by earning first place in all- were Jeanne Ordens, third on bars (7.9); Jenny Viertel, fourth on vault (8.2), second on the bars (6.5), second (8.1); Jo Picconatto, fourth on bars in beam (7.7) and fourth in vault (7.6); and Jenny Konop, fourth in

#### Panthers don't wait for trip to state

Most high school sports pro-grams suffer through some grow-ing pains after earning varsity The Stevens Point Area Senior High girls soccer team, however, has been an exception to that year of varsity competition, have enjoyed a tremendous amount of

success since Day 1, losing only a pair of games over the past two And there is no indication they plan on stopping their winning ways anytime soon. In fact, while most prep soccer teams are currently enjoying their summer vacations, SPASH will be taking aim at a WIAA The road to the title begins tonight when the Panthers face Verona in a quarterfinal matchup at Breese Stevens Field in Madison starting at 7. Earning a trip to the state tour-

nament in just the second year of a program may have opened some eyes in the girls prep soc-"Judging by the way they reacted after losing in the sec-tional final last year, they were counting on going to state our first year," said SPASH coach Sue Radmer. "We don't think about this only being our second year of varsity soccer. Most of these kids have been playing this sport most of their lives. But the kids are very excited about going to state.'

As has been the case most of



**SOME WORDS OF ADVICE:** Coach Sue Radmer (with hat) goes over final details with members of the Stevens Point Area Senior High girls soccer team as they prepare for their WIAA quarterfinal game with Verona tonight at 7 p.m. at Breese Stevens Field in Madison. (Journal photo by Tom Charlesworth)

threats is junior Erin Morgan, who leads the team in goals. Sup-plying additional firepower are the likes of senior Katie Sipioron its own game and doing the things it does best, which is just trio of senior Camille Johnson and sophomores Kyra Johnson and Margaret Domka, has been about everything. If someone had to pick a strong suit for the Panthers, it would probably be an offense that fea-tures plenty of scoring depth, and several outstanding talents.

Among the more dangerous

sophomore Shannon Geiger. However, the Panthers are

A strong defense, led by the

instrumental in posting 14 shutout Junior keeper Rachel Lavin hardly a one-dimensional team.

get over the nerves of going to state. We don't have any goals while we're there. We're going down with the attitude of having a lot of fun and representing this area really well," Radmer said. has also played a major role in the Panthers' success, sporting a 0.61 goals against average on the

### SPASH dominates all-Valley soccer

The success of the Stevens Point Area Senior High girls soccer team this season is reflected on the all-Wisconsin Valley Conference team

recently announced. The Panthers, who captured their third straight Valley title with a 9-0-1 mark, had six players named to the first team.

Earning first team honors for SPASH were seniors Erin Morgan, Sabine Schabel and Rachel Lavin, along with juniors Kelly Wright, Marie Muhvic and Kyra Johnson.

Morgan led the Valley in scoring with 10 goals and six assists for 26 the scoring race with 18 points on and Wausau West junior defender ognition from SPASH was sopho-

Schabel, who finished with three goals and a pair of assists for eight points in conference play, and Johnson were named on defense. Wright and Morgan were picked in the midfield, while Muhvic was a

Lavin was slected the first-team goalkeeper after allowing just three goals in 10 games for a sparkling 0.33 goals against average and .917 save percentage.

Rounding out the first team were D.C. Everest seniors Katie Jenkins, Carrie Erickson and Brwynn Maas, a defender, and midfielder Angie and Kate Thompson of Wausau Thompson, senior forward Jenny Hilger and sophomore midfielder Beth North of Wisconsin Rapids,

Morgan and Thompson were unanimous selections.

Landing on the all-Valley second team for the Panthers were juniors Margaret Domka, a defender, and midfielder Shannon Geiger.

Joining Domka and Geiger on the second team were Wausau East's Amanda Tanner, Angie Marson, Carin Larson and Beth Connaughty, Karyn Jones and Emily Duerr of Wisconsin Rapids, D.C. Everest's

COLLEGE SOCCER

Receiving honorable mention rec-

Radmer noted that this year's team, while returning a solid nucleus, was a different group from the one that reached the WIAA state semifinals a year ago.

Balance

still key

for SPASH

By SCOTT WILLIAMS

of the Journal

girls soccer coach Sue Radmer in-

sisted prior to the season that last

year's success meant nothing this

Stevens Point Area Senior High

And perhaps the biggest difference has been the scoring depth and balance the Panthers have demonstrated on a regular basis this season.

SPASH put that scoring balance on display again Wednesday as the Panthers brushed aside Green Bay West, 4-0, in a WIAA sectional semifinal match at the Madison School fields.

Four different players contributed goals, including a couple of tallies provided by players coming off the bench.

Standing in the way of a second straight trip to the state tournament is Hudson, a 5-1 winner over Eau Claire Memorial on Wednes-

The Panthers (19-3-1 overall) will host Hudson in the sectional championship game on Friday at Madison School at 5 p.m. The teams met in a tournament earlier this season, with the Raiders prevailing 3-2.

"Everybody on the team has at least one goal this season and that is conducive to a good team," noted Radmer. "A lot of teams can say anyone can score, but here everyone has.

"I think the kids realize we have enough talent that everyone plays aggressive when they get in the game. They know they have to get their nose in there in order to score."

Someone who has done plenty of scoring in her three-year varsity

> ick and

ack hot

pert





### Homegrown Talent

Former SPASH trio play vital role in Pointers' success By SCOTT WILLIAMS

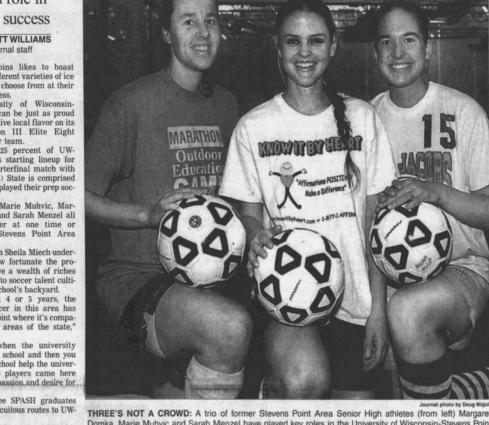
about the 31 different varieties of ice cream you can choose from at their The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point can be just as proud about a distinctive local flavor on its NCAA Division III Elite Eight women's soccer team.

More than 25 percent of UW-Stevens Point's starting lineup for Saturday's quarterfinal match with Salisbury (Md.) State is comprised of players who played their prep soccer in town.

The trio of Marie Muhvic, Margaret Domka and Sarah Menzel all Senior High. Pointer coach Sheila Miech understands just how fortunate the pro-gram is to have a wealth of riches vating in the school's backyard.

"In the last 4 or 5 years, the growth of soccer in this area has gotten to the point where it's comparable to other areas of the state," "It's nice when the university helps the high school and then you see the high school help the university. All three players came here with a strong passion and desire for the sport." And all three SPASH graduate Muhvic, a senior striker who holds

See SOCCER, B3



Domka, Marie Muhvic and Sarah Menzel have played key roles in the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Poin men's soccer team's march through the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and NCAA Division Ill tournaments. Muhvic and Domka started their college careers at Division I programs before transferring

## Cinderella's The UW-SP women's soccer team is poised for its trip to the NCAA 'Elite Eight' Cleats

By SCOTT WILLIAMS

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point women's soccer team is living a fairy tale during the NCAA Division III Tournament. Stevens Point hopes to avoid the same fate as Cinderella and make sure the clock doesn't strike mid-With a spot in the Final Four awaiting the winner, the Pointers will try to put Father Time on hold in its quarterfinal matchup with Salisbury (Md.) State at 1 p.m.

"It's like a storybook where you open up the motivational book and say things like 'Winner's do this' and 'Good teams show that,' " UW-Stevens Point coach Sheila Miech "That's us right now."

Stevens Point (21-4-0 overall) has every reason to be confident, having won a school-record 15 straight During that stretch, the Pointers avenged regular season losses to both Macalester (Minn.) and Wheaton College by identical 1-0

"We really haven't done anything different. Our group of players just decided how much they wanted to get out of this season," said Miech. During its winning streak. Stevens Point has outscored its opponents by a combined 72-3, including 9-0 in tournament play. The tournament results are in sharp contrast to past seasons, as the Pointers feel they are peaking at the right time. "I think it took until after the

Trinity (Texas) trip for us to see how really special a team we had this year," said Jennifer Schmit, one of four seniors on the roster. "We had such a young team. The mores and juniors on the team have really stepped up and theirs."

Salisbury State qualified for the In Salisbury State (20-0-2), the Athletic Conference tournament. Pointers are facing the country's Among the Sea Gulls' most

Lynchburg (Va.) 2-1 in overtime and 2-0 against Villa Julie (Md.).

Among the mystery surrounding Salisbury State is the quality of competition it's faced. Miech admits ity tough compete teams the Deighters with a fear high. from different regions.



MEMBERS OF THE University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point women's soccer team (above and right) practice Wednesday in preparation for its NCAA "Elite Eight" game against Salisbury State. The game will be played Saturday at 1 p.m. in Salisbury.

"You don't get to the Elite Eight being a lucky team," Miech said. \*People are talking about our defender Margaret Domka are seriregion being a little tougher than ous scoring threats. Molly Cady, a had the potential to beat those NCAA Tournament by defeating the ball. Mary Washington in the Capital

you don't play your style," said only remaining undefeated team. impressive wins is a 3-1 verdict In addition, the Sea Gulls own the over North Carolina Wesleyan, longest unbeaten streak in the ranked fifth in the country at the After earning a first-round bye, Amber Bradford leads a balthe Sea Gulls have advanced to the anced Sea Gulls' scoring attack it is. Elite Eight with victories over with 14 goals and seven assists.



Andrea Oswald, along with senior the team's primary distributor of "We can't worry too much about

have to do. If you want to call that chemistry, then I guess that's what



earn All-American honors It was eight years before transferred back to UW-Stevens women's soccer even became a Point after one year. varsity sport at the University of Both players are also outstand-Wisconsin-Stevens Point, but ing off the field as they both carry

August 13, 1979 will long be remem- grade point averages over 1.8. bered as one of the greatest days in Mulvic was the Wisconsin Intercolthe history of the program. It was that day that two of the ar athlete in soccer and Domia legiate Athletic Conference's scholprogram's most outstanding play-ors, Margaret Domks and Marie 2001 studying in Spain. Muhvic, were both born at St. "It's not only deserving for these Michael's Hospital in Stevens two for what they've done on the field, but what they've done away And in the year 2000, both have from the field as well," Misch said. been bonored as National Soccer "It's hard to find two players with

Coaches Association of America such work ethic as Marge and Division III All-Americans as Marie. Domka was named to the first "They were as good of an offenher two seniors. "This is tremen-

The similarities don't end with accepted Division I scholarships out of high school as Demka attended Marquette and Muhvic

went to Eastern Michigan, but both

leam and Muhvic was a second- sive and defensive combination there was in the country and they "The awards really put great clo- are going to be dearly missed for sure on two outstanding careers," everything they've contributed to Pointers coach Sheils Misch said of this program over the past three dous not only for our seccer pro-gram at the university, but for the Stevens Point to a 22-5 record and to have two players from SPASH in the school's first-ever appearance in the NCAA Division III semifinals. Domks was one of the top-scorthe players having the same birth- ing defenders in the country with 12 date and alma maters. They both goals and three assists. She tradinally marked the opponents'

See SOCCER, 83





UW-STEVENS POINT seniors Margaret Domka and Marie Multivic were named to the NGAA Division III All-American women's sooper team on Monday. Above, Domka, who was chosen to the first team, shows some of the skills that made her one of the most dangerous offensive defenders in the country. A second team selection, Muhvic (at left) capped her three-year Pointers' career by becoming the school's all-time leading scorer during her senior season. Both players are former Stevens Point Area Senior High

Journal photos by Doug Wolcik

### Domka blows the whistle on refereeing

"According to one of the

area, Margaret is already the best female referee in

Wisconsin," said Randy Davis,

Davis, who has been a refer-

Former Pointer, SPASH star excels as an official By SCOTT WILLIAMS Journal staff Margaret Domka is used to coming under scrutiny on a soccer field. Stevens Point Area Senior High, Domka had Division I college recruiters checking her out. She settled on Marquette

easier for me to difference Things didn't work out with the Golden Eagles and she eventually transferred to UW-Stevens Point, where she was defender for the Pointers. While her college playing days are over, Domka still finds herself under a micro-

the lone representative of the U.S. to referee at the 2015 Women's World Cup in

who was the recipient of the Wisconsin Assessor of the Year Award in 2000. between good. ee since 1994 and serves as an hard physical

the attention of state socces are being evaluated as a refer- Davis immediately thought of Early reviews suggest she



RANDY DAVIS, left, a local soccer referee who also evaluates officials, and Margaret Domka, right, were selected to work

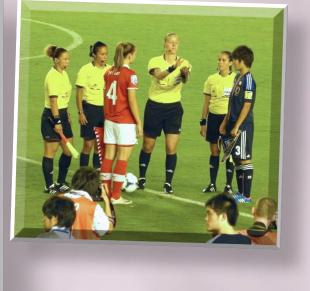
making split-second decisions.

ee DOMKA, Page 5A









Non-Profit started by Margaret At the U.S. Center for Mental Health & Sport, we are focused on making sport environments a place where all involved can experience support for their mental health. We all have mental health and we should never be ashamed to talk about it or get the support we need. Mental health falls along a continuum and the mental health we experience can change throughout our lives. Whether individuals' mental health is thriving or languishing, the USC-MHS has the resources, training and support to help make the sport environment one that is inclusive and provides a positive



TOGETHER

We can break the STIGMA

Join us today at mentalhealthandsport.org

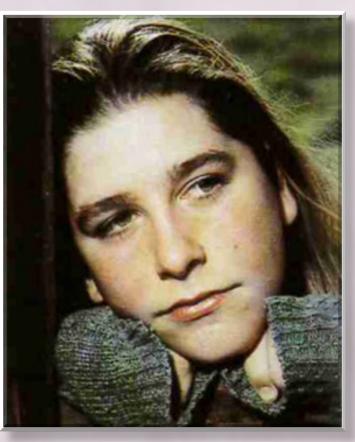
Mission Statement THE U.S. CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH & SPORT, A NONPROFIT 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION, DEVELOPS SPORT ESOURCES, OPENING PATHWAYS TO ACCESS ADDITIONA IENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES, AND COMMITTING TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SPORT

experience! www.mentalhealthandsport.org





# JANEL MCCARVILLE



SPASH Class of 2001

Learning to play basketball on the side of her family's barn at in Custer, Janel McCarville says, "I was basically self-taught. I never thought it would really take me anywhere, playing in a few summer leagues." But basketball has taken Janel on quite a journey, taking her from SPASH to a professional basketball career.

During her years at SPASH, Janel compiled an impressive set of statistics, on offense and defense. In 70 games spanning three seasons, she led the Panthers to a 60-10 record and to the WIAA State Basketball Tournament in 2001. Coming into the tournament with a perfect 26-0 season, they lost in the final game 51-44 to Janesville Parker led by another Wisconsin basketball superstar, Mistie Bass. 22

years after her state tournament performance, her statistics still stand near the top of the WIAA state tournament records.

In her freshman year at the University of Minnesota, she helped the Gophers reach the NCAA tournament. During her junior year, she led the team to the Final Four for the first time in Gopher basketball history. She became the first player in Gopher history to play in the NCAA Tournament during each of her four years and is in the all-time top 5 in every major statistical category for the Golden Gophers. Janel's number 4 jersey was retired on December 15, 2019 at the Williams Arena at the University of Minnesota in recognition of her achievements.

Janel was drafted in the first round of the 2005 WNBA draft, first pick overall, by the Charlotte Sting. After playing for other league teams, she returned to Minnesota in 2013 to lead the Lynx to the WNBA Championship, scoring 10 points in the decisive third game of the WNBA tournament.

During the WNBA off-season, like many of her fellow WNBA players, she played with teams in the Euro League to supplement their WNBA earnings, playing on teams from Slovakia, Russia, Poland, Turkey, China, Italy and Sweden. While living in Sweden, she began her coaching career, first as player and assistant coach and in 2021, head coach for the Alviks BK women's team. In addition, she was assistant coach for the men's Alviks BK team. In the fall of 2022, Janel moved back to Custer, coming full circle to return to her alma mater SPASH as the new girls basketball coach, taking over from her high school coach, Kraig Terpstra.

#### **SPASH CAREER**

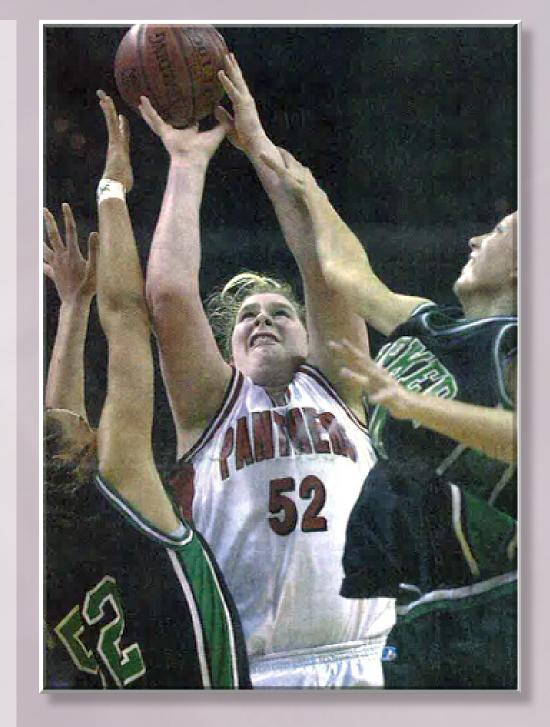
- Panther Hall of Fame, Class of 2023
- Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame 2021
- WIAA Division 1 State Runner-up 2001
- Wisconsin Associated Press Co-Player of the Year 2001

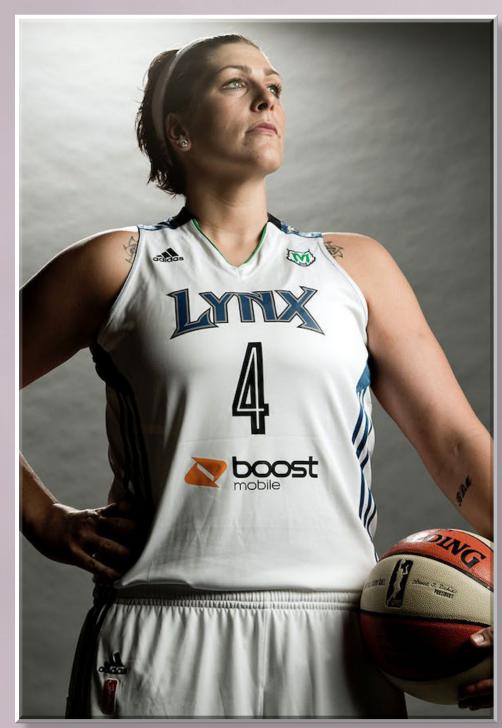
#### UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CAREER

- Big Ten Freshman of the Year 2002
- First Team All-Big Ten 2003
- Silver Medal Pan Am Games 2003, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- First Team All-American 2004
- Unanimous First Team All-Big Ten, First Team All-American 2005
- Finalist Wooden Award, Naismith Award and Wade Trophy 2005
- **Jersey Retired 2013** (1 of 7 women in the U of MN Women's Basketball program to be honored)

#### PROFESSIONAL CAREER

- 1st Round Draft Pick, Charlotte Sting 2005
- WNBA Player of the Week 2008
- WNBA Most Improved Player 2007
- USA Select Team Member 2007
   2nd place in FIBA World League Tournament
- Euro League Championship 2010
   Spartak Moscow Women's Basketball Team
- WNBA Championship with Minnesota Lynx 2013
- MVP Swedish League & Swedish Cup





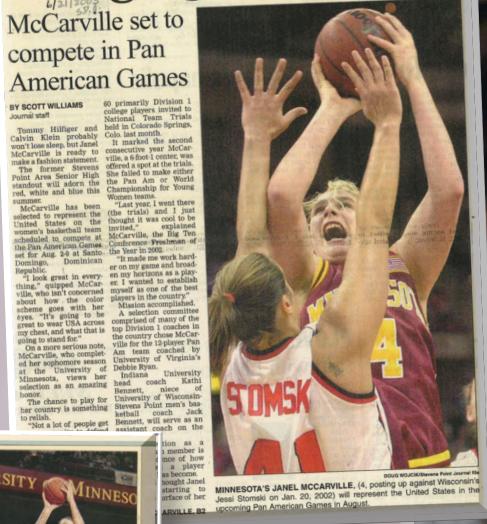














McCarville has banner raised at Minnesota

Janel McCarville had a banner raised in her honor during a ceremony at Williams Arena in Minneapolis Sunday, Dec. 15. Craig Lassig/University of Minnesota Athletics photo

Big Ten as a sophomore in found a good team, a good



McCarville grabs 18 boards in 80-61 win

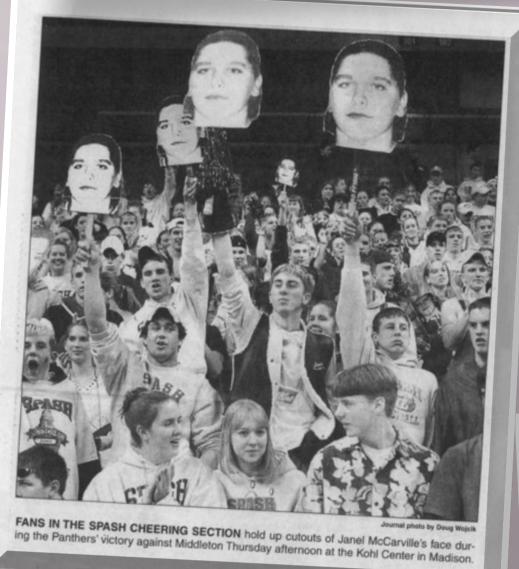














McCarville returns

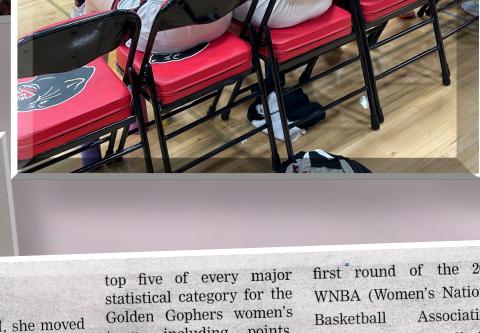




er Stevens Point Area Senior High athlete Janel

WNBA tips off in June.

On March 1, the former No. 1 overall pick by the Charlotte Sting in the 2005 WNBA Draft was included in part of a three-way trade that sent her from NewYork Liberty to the Minnesota Lynx. letes going through



from page 16 After SPASH, she moved on to the University of Minnesota to continue her basketball career for the Gophers.

COACH

As a member of the Gopher women's basketball team, she became the first player in Gopher's history to play in the NCAA

Tournament during each of her four years. McCarville was in the Janel was drafted in the

team, including points, rebounds, assists, steals, and blocks. McCarville holds the NCAA record for most rebounds in the tournament, with 75 rebounds in five games. She also has the NCAA record

for tournament rebound average, with 15 per game. Following her playing career at Minnesota,

first round of the 2005 WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) draft, the first overall pick, by the Charlotte Sting and started her professional playing career.

In the fall of 2022, Janel moved back to Custer and joined the SPASH basketball coaching staff as the JV girls' basketball

#### **SPASH** names McCarville as new girls' basketball coach



SPASH announces McCarville as varsity girls basketball coach Stevens Point Area Public School District photo

FOR THE GAZETTE The SPASH Athletics Department announced today the hiring of Janel McCarville as the new girls' basketball

Coach McCarville is a 2001 graduate of SPASH. Janel was a multi-sport athlete at SPASH, playing

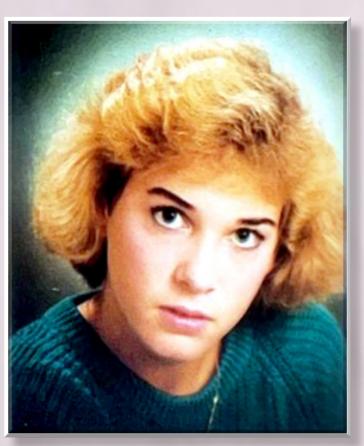
basketball and soccer. She led the girls' basketball team to the WIAA Division 1 State Basketball Tournament in 2001.

During her basketball career at SPASH, Janel compiled an impressive set of statistics, and she is still the career leader in a variety of categories to this day.

"I am extremely honored and excited to be the next head girls basketball coach at SPASH. To be part of this rich tradition and culture as a coach now is truly humbling. I look forward to working with all the student-athletes, SPASH coaches, teachers, administration and community members that are all involved in making Stevens Point an incredible place to play girls basketball," McCarville stated.

See COACH page 11

# SUZY FAVOR



SPASH Class of 1986

From her days with the Stevens Point Area Running Club (SPARC) known by the nickname "Bug" for the glasses she wore to her days on the Olympic stage, Suzy has exceeded expectations on the track and on cross country courses. SPARC coach Kent Hall used the word "unforgettable" to describe seeing Suzy run. Shortly after joining SPARC, she qualified for the National Track & Field Meet as an 11-year-old in the 400 M run.

During her high school career, she dominated the Wisconsin state cross country and track scene, winning 4 state cross country championships and 6 individual state track championships. In 1985, the Wausau Daily Herald noted that Suzy

Favor was the area's top sports story, eclipsing even UWSP's Terry Porter who had just been selected by the Portland Trailblazers in the 1st round of the NBA draft. According to her SPASH coach, Mike Olson, "She was just another teenage girl when she was off the track, but when she stepped on the track she became a different person, totally focused on the job at hand. As soon as she crossed the finish line, she would be all smiles again."

At UW-Madison, Suzy continued to compete as a cross country and track athlete. Over her collegiate career, she won 9 NCAA championships and 23 Big10 Championships. In recognition of her exceptional performance, she was named by the Big10 Conference as the Top Female Athlete in Conference History.

After college, she continued her running career, competing in 3 Olympic Games and winning 7 U.S. National Championships. When Suzy was inducted into the SPASH Hall of Fame in 2004, Marty Liquori, long-time NBC Olympic Commentator wrote, "What cannot be conveyed in her list of accomplishments is the impact that Suzy has had on the sport of track and field for her deportment off the track. No other athlete has been more humble in winning or more gracious in defeat".

In a WIAA interview for the 1996 State Track and Field Championship program, Suzy says, "I know I was born with this gift to run. I've always used it, never taken it for granted. I always want to see what I can do. Ever since high school, I've always been thinking about being the best I can be."

#### **SPASH CAREER**

6 Individual Track Championships

- 800 M 1985
- 1600 M 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986
- 3200 M 1984

4 Individual Cross Country Championships 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985

#### **UW MADISON CAREER**

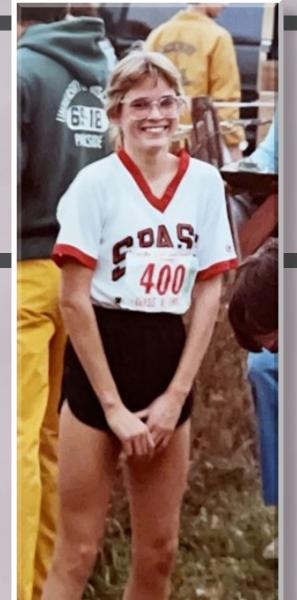
- 9 NCAA Championships
- 23 Big10 Championships
- 14 All-American Awards (Track & Cross Country)
- USA Track & Field Championships 1500 M 4 Outdoor, 3 Indoor

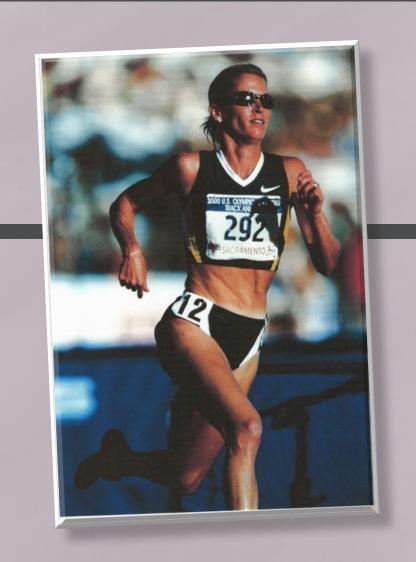
#### NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CAREER

- Pan Am Games, 1500 M Gold Medal, 1984, 1986
- 7 United States National Championships
- 3x Olympic Qualifier: 1992 Barcelona, 1996 Atlanta, 2000 Sydney

#### **HONORS**

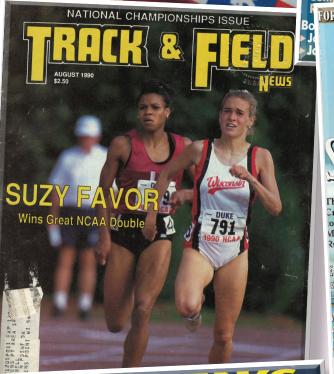
- Panther Hall of Fame 2004
- 1500 M United States Junior Record Holder
- Top 100 High School Athletes of the Century
- United States National High School Sports Hall of Fame 2010
- Honda Sports Award, Best Female Collegiate Track & Field Athlete 1990
- Honda Sports Award, Top Female Cross Country Runner 1991
- Honda Broderick Cup, Best Overall Female Athlete
- Babe Zaharias Award, Top Female Athlete in the Country
- Big10 Athlete of the Decade 1991
- Wisconsin's Female Athlete of the Year 1987-1990



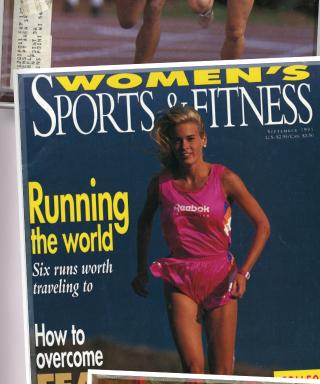


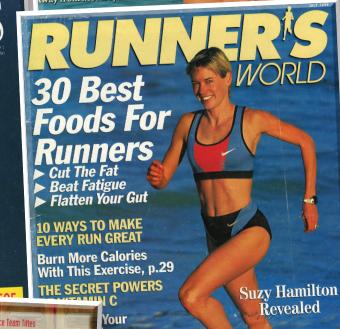
# Good luck, Suzy PEOPLE FROM THROUGHOUT the area sign a banner and a birthday card for Suzy Hamilton at the Center-Point Mall Saturday to wish her luck as she competes in the Olympics. Hamilton will run in the 1,500 meter preliminaries Wednesday. Her birthday is Saturday, the day of the final race of the 1,500 meter. (Journal photo by



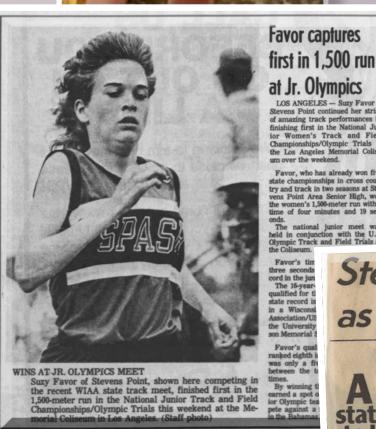












## Stevens Point girl wins Favor



games are just as big. There are plenty of places like that for those who play and those who cheer. If you care about sports, Wisconsin is a state to be in.

Boy, Suzy Favor was. the Green Bay Packers, or at out-of-the-way high school fields, where hundreds watch the homecoming showdown they've waited for all year long. Reporter Dale Hofmann traveled the state talking to athletes and coaches in places where the crowds may be smaller, but the

loesn't live in a big city or train at a fancy When little blonde-haired Suzy traveled to Los Angeles last summer, thanks in part to her friends at SPASH, she was hoping to meet the te in running and maybe learn a few things e was supposed to finish somewhere around passed in the street by Evelyn Ashford. She didn't get passed on the track by anybody.

She won the event in 4 minutes, 19.8 seconds, and no other 15-year-old in the country has ever run it faster. In fact, no 16- or 17- year-old runs it that fast now. year-old runs it that fast now.

"It was something I'll never forget, being out there with all the Olympians," Favor recalled Wednesday. "I was right up close to Carl Lewis and all those people, and I got to know the Wisconsin runners like Cindy Bremser pretty well. It was great.

Favor was surprised when she insined to was nobody ahead of her at the tape. That was in an elementary school meet when she beat all the mentary school meet when she beat all the mentary school meet with graders in town in the 400. "I had no idea," she said. "I just kind of got on the ser pretty well. It was great.

Favor was surprised when she will said the missied to the surprised when she will said the missied to the surprised when she was nobody ahead of her at the tape. That was in an elementary school meet when she beat all the one idea, "i just kind of got on the ser pretty well. It was great.

Favor was surprised when she was nobody ahead of her at the tape. That was in an elementary school meet when she beat all the one idea, "i just kind of got on the ser pretty well. It was great. "But I didn't go out there with the idea of Runner

Anyway, SPARC held a sock hop at SPASH to raise some of the money for Favor's trip west. Her parents raised the rest, something they've had to do quite a bit of since Suzy got

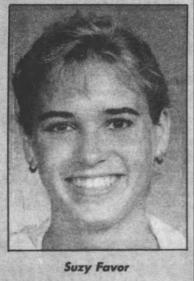
#### Favor is first Owens award triple winner

MADISON — For an unprecedented third time, Wisconsin running sensation Suzy Favor, a senior from Stevens Point, has been named the Big Ten-Jesse Owens Female Athlete of the Year. the award, is the first person to receive the honor three times, having won the honor as a junior and a sophomore as well. Her freshman year, Favor fin-

Northwestern's Jennifer Averill, a field hockey and lacrosse standout. In addition, Favor was named as the University of Wisconsin Fe-male Athlete of the Year four consecutive years. Minnesota gymnast Marie Roeth-lisberger was second in the voting behind Favor with three secondplace and two third-place votes.

Favor completed her collegiate track and field career undefeated in NCAA Championship competi-tion, winning the 800-meter and 1500-meter events at the 1990 NCAA Outdoor Championship. A 13-time All-American, Favor is the winningest woman in NCAA track and field history with nine ndividual titles. With her victory in the 1500, Favor became the first woman to claim four NCAA titles

At the 1990 Big Ten Outdoor Championship, Favor won the tri-ple crown for the third time in her career, claiming the 800-, 1500- and 3000-meter titles. She completes a similar triple at the 1990 indoor championship, winning the 800 mile and 3000 runs. Favor completed her collegiate track and field career undefeated in Big Ten Championship events with 23 titles. Favor recently won the 1500 me-



ters at the TAC Outdoor Cham-pionship and qualified for the 1990 Goodwill Games. She is currently traveling in Europe with Coach Peter Tegen and other members of the UW women's track and field

Thompson received the Big Ten Jesse Owens Male Athlete of the year honors. Thompson, who fin-ished second in the Heisman Trophy voting last year, established three NCAA records in 1989 with 65 career touchdowns, 394 career points and a single game rushing mark of 377 yards. Ohio State gymnast Mike Racanelli was the runner-up in the men's voting. Favor and Thompson, pending their availability, will have their awards presented to them July 27, at the 19th annual Big Ten Football Kickoff Luncheon at the Chicago Mariott Downtown.

#### Nation's top female athlete

Friends ready for Olympic win from 'Bug' By BRIAN EARNEST of the Journal Sury Favor underwent a name change a little more than a year

runner married college sweetheart Mark Hamilton, people weren't sure exactly what to call her.

Sometimes she's Suzy Favor Ha-milton. Sometimes she's Suzy Ha-milton. Most of the time, just

Some of Hamilton's oldest and

And the same one that always seemed to be able to put the pressures of running aside and get silly at the drop of a hat.

at the drop of a hat.

"Suny has always been one of
the widest, craziest people I ever
knew," says Mike Olson, Hamilten's high school track and cross
country coach at Stevens Point
Area Senior High. "Success never
went to her head. She's never put
anybody else down or made anybody feel inferior.

If their their one of the reasons.

"I think that's one of the reasons

And shortly, the 11-cme state high school champion and nine-time NCAA champion will draw friends and fans from all over to their TV sets for the biggest mo-ment of her athletic career — the 1993 Summer Olympics.

Bamilton achieved a Efelong dream for herself, and her sup-perters, when she qualified for the women's 1,500 meters in Barcelona with a third-place finish in last month's U.S. Olympic Trials.

The track stadium in Barcelona is about as far away from Goerke

is about as far away from Goorne
Field and the cross country trails
surrounding SPASH as you can
get, but one of Hamilton's greatest
appeals, according to the people
who know her best, is that she has
never forgotten where she came
from or the people she has met
along the way.

"One of the things you notice

"One of the things you notice about Sury is that she hasn't really changed over all this time," says See Hall, a friend of the Favor family who became friends with Sury some 15 years ago through the Stevens Point Area Running

people are so drawn to her." And shortly, the 11-time state

They just call her "Bug." Somehow, the insect moniker doesn't seem to fit the all-grown-

It's Suzy Favor, of course BEAUMONT, Texas — The winningest woman in NCAA track and field history capped her collegiate career with a singular achievement Wednesday night.

Stevens Point native Sury Favor became the first recipient of the Babe Zaharias Female Athlete of the Year Award. Sury is the daughter of Conrad and Rachel Favor, Park Ridge.

Favor, a senier standout at the University of Wisconstin-Madison in both indoor and outdoor track, earned the nationwide honor that pays tribute to the late Mildred (Babe) Boffrikson Zaharias, generally regarded at the greatest female athlete who ever lived.

Applauded by a sellout crowd of 750 gathered in the Beaumont Cricic Center, Pavor accepted the bronze Zaharias Award trophy created by sculptor Doug Clark.

Designed as an art object as well created by sculptor Doug Clark.

Designed as an art object as well as an award, the trophy incorporates female athletic figures into the flames of the Olympic torch.

Favor was selected over three other finalists by vote of a 173-member national selection committee made up of prominent sports educators, athletic administrators and media representatives.

The other finalists — all record-secters in their sports — were Leigh Ann Fetter of Louisville, Ky., University of Texas at Austin, swimming; Carlette Guidry of Houston, University of Texas at Austin, track and field; and Vicki Huber of Bryn Mawr, Pa., Villanova University, track and field.

Each received a gold medallion

va University, track; and field.

Each received a gold medallion
bearing a portrail of Zaharias on
one side and a depiction of the Zaharias Award with an inscription
on the other.

"This is such a wonderful honor," Paver said. "I am so happy
to able to share it with these other
three. It's not just one who is the
champion. It's all four of us. How
could they make such a difficult
decision? decision?
"I wish there could be four awards presented tonight, because each of the others deserves it just as much as I do. This is such a wonderful way to end my college career. It is really marvelous. Thank you all." From roots in Beaumont, in southeast Texas, Zaharias became the darling of the sports world, an Olympic gold medalist who excelled in every sport. Golf, track and basketball brought her



Zaharias died on Sept. 27, 1966 at age 45 after a courageous three-year battle against cancer, much of it waged as she continued to WW L



Freshman leads UW

ADISON, WIS. — Peter Tegen watched, in admiration, from a hill as Suzy Favor and a group of University of Wisconsin runners practiced earlier this week at the Dan McClimon Memorial Track.

"It really is remarkable," said Tegen, the UW women's track and field coach. He was talking about Favor, the freshman sensation from Stevens Point who has exceeded

The 5-foot 3-inch, 105-pound Favor came to Wisconsin with enormous potential after a celebrated, All-American high school career. She has quietly emerged from the pack and into a lead role for the Badgers by living up to Track and Field News' billing, which acclaimed her the nation's best high school runner at 1,500 meters from 1983-'86.

At the Big Ten indoor meet in February, she won the 1,000-yard and 1,500-meter runs and helped the

By PERRY A. FARRELL

Suzy Favor stretched out before a recent practice at the Dan McClimon Memorial Track in Madison

Favor outruns expectations

medal.

In 1992, the former Wisconsin star, who won a record nine NCAA titles and 23 Big Ten Conference titles had a miserable experience at Barcelona. Competing in the 1,500 meters, she failed to get out of the first round, running 4 minutes, 19 seconds, and finishing 11th in her heat.

"It was a bad "It was a bad dream," she said. "I was scared to death. I was terrified of the whole Olympic experience. I felt e v e r y b o d y expected the world of me.
"I felt like I was running in

"I shed a lot of tears at those games because I was so unhappy with my performance," she said.

Hamilton got another shot in 1996 at Hamilton got snother shot in 1996 at Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor Hamilton has rebounded from a series of injuries to run some of Suzy Favor H

because I was so unhappy with my performance, "she said.

Hamilton got another shot in 1996 at Atlanta. Again, she came up short in the first-round heats, failing to advance in the 800 by 01 of a second.

That setback was not as devastating as four years earlier.

"I didn't feel the 800 was my strongest event," she said. "Realistically, I couldn't see myself on the medal stand. You have to see yourself there in order to get there.

"I was undertrained. I was surprised to even make the team."

She also felt she wasn't being pushed enough by Dick Brown, here coach at the time.

"I wasn't in the shape I needed to be," she said. "People ask me, "Why didn't you train harder?" I guess I just had faith that what my coach was doing was the right thing. I've learned now that isn't always the case. I've learned to go with my instincts."

Shortly after the games, Hamilton left Brown and Eugene, Ore, and returned to her old college coach, Peter Tegen, and Madison, Wis.

Those Olympic frustrations behind her, the more mature experienced, nealthy Hamilton envisions herself on

By JIM KRUEGER
Journal Sports Writer
MADISON — The longest road Suzy
Favor has had to run in her career
came the last month — the road to recovery from lilness.
About a month ago, Favor contracted mononucleosis and tonsillits complications arose from that. But a little
rest and relaxation put the Stevens
Foint Area Senior High distance
standout back on track in quest of her
standout back on track in quest of her
fourth consecutive 1,600-meter run
state title.

Favor ran the race Saturday at the
WIAA State Track Meet and ran like
the Suzy Favor of old. She won the
race with a time of four minutes, 51.34
seconds, showing little signs of the illness which almost put a kibsoh on her
attempt for four in a row.

"I was very nervous at the start of
the race," Pavor said afterwards, "I
was shaking. Every state meet is
ulways like that. But it's good to be
like that. It takes the pressure of a
little. I was definitely nervous.

"Physically I felt really good." I'm
seling stronger each day now."

"It's now on to the University of Wis
"It's now on to the University of Wis
"It's now on to the University of Wis
"I'm and that track come for favor, who won four WIAA
and dividual cross country titles and sevend sittles in WIAA track competition.

"T'm excited that it's over because
for little in WIAA track competition.

"The race went pretty good, mostly
as I spected it to go. I was surprised
that people kept up with me, I like
competition like that. On the third lap
wanted to pull away. I head coach
(Mike Olson) yell 'Gol' and that made
should a self-group and the discuss Friday
because of the best races
should a self-group and the tradition of our program. She will
it'm edication of our program. She will
and dividual cross country titles and seventitles in WIAA track competition.

"The accited that it's kind of sad to see in
low that I wa

evens Point Jou makes, however, "Bog" might look a little different, but she is the same old gregarious free spirit they have always known. The same one that occasionally strayed from race courses during cross country meets because she couldn't quite see where the finish line was.

Signs of support

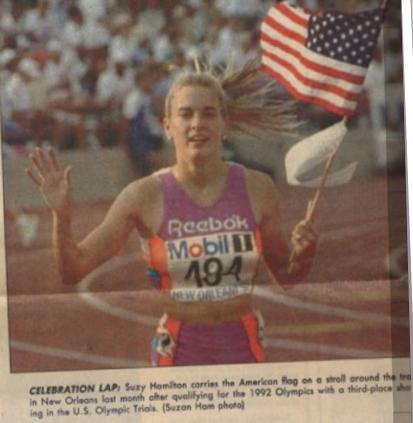






STEVENS POINT **FAVORS** 

FORGET



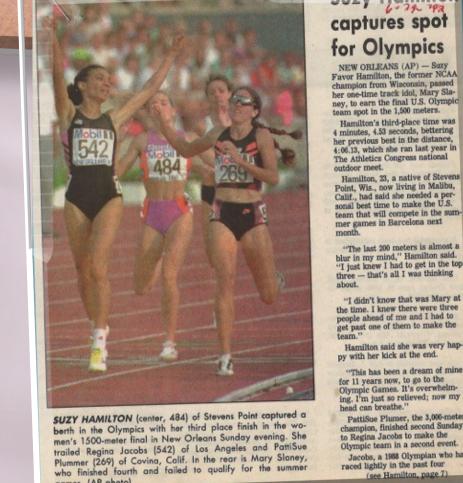




By BERT ROSENT NARBONNE, France— Suzy Hamilton graduated Wisconsin in 1900 with fou of virtual invincibility in ? and Big Ten competition, hailed as the next great U men's distance runner. So far, that hasn't happ It hasn't discouraged th She is improving her til steadily, and is confident ternational stardom will o "It's important to be es losing, because you have to deal with it. You can't ery time. Even the super don't win all the time. "I knew this would be a knew it would take time." Hamilton was encourage running a personal best of utes, 4.53 seconds in finis

Hamilton is steadily improving





"The last 200 meters is almost a blur in my mind," Hamilton said. "I just knew I had to get in the top three — that's all I was thinking the time. I knew there were three people ahead of me and I had to get past one of them to make the "This has been a dream of mine for 11 years now, to go to the Olympic Games. It's overwhelm-ing. I'm just so relieved; now my head can breathe." Pattisue Plumer, the 3,000-meter champion, finished second Sunday to Regina Jacobs to make the Olympic team in a second event. Jacobs, a 1988 Olympian who has raced lightly in the past four (see Hamilton, page 7)



# ROISIN WILLIS



SPASH Class of 2022

Continuing the great tradition of 800 M runners from Portage County, Roisin Willis is at the start of her running career. In 2013 when Roisin was 9, her parents, Lee and Breeda Willis, along with SPASH coaches Mike and Nate Olson, restarted the Stevens Point Area Running Club. From a young age, her mother Breeda, a former Olympian, "knew she was exceptional. She's relentless and when she wants something she has the ability to push her body beyond what it is capable of."

As an 8th grader in 2018, she won the 800 M event at the Wisco Mile at the Wisconsin Lutheran Track in Milwaukee, running the fastest 800 M in Wisconsin high school history. As a freshman, she won the 800 M event in

state record time and anchored the championship 4x400 M relay. Covid cancelled her sophomore year track season. During her junior year, she was 1 of 3 prep girls to qualify for the 2020 Olympic trials in Eugene, Oregon where she made it to the semi-finals and finished in the top half of all of the qualifiers. During her senior year, Roisin won the 800 M, setting not only a Wisconsin state record but a National Federation of High Schools record. She also ran the anchor leg on the 4x400 M relay which placed 2nd.

To illustrate Roisin's dominance of the 800 M event, she lowered the state 800 M record by an incredible 9.19 seconds and the National High School Federation 800 M record by 2.01 seconds. Over her high school career, she beat the previous Wisconsin high school 800 M record set in 2015 an astonishing 28 times.

After a stellar high school career, she committed to running at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California where she is completing her freshman year of competition. Rosin has established herself as an elite 800 M athlete on the world stage and we are excited to follow her achievements.

#### **SPASH CAREER**

- 800 M Champion: 2019 & 2022 (2 State Records)
- 1600 M Wisconsin State Record 2021
- 400 M Wisconsin State Record 2021
- 4x400 M Relay Champion 2019 (anchor leg)
- National Federation of High Schools 800 M Outdoor Record 2022
- National High School 800 M Indoor Record 2022

#### STANFORD CAREER (AS OF MAY 20, 2023)

- NCAA Indoor Champion 800 M, 2023 (Meet Record)
   2nd all-time NCAA indoor record
- NCAA Indoor Distance Medley Relay Champion 2023
- Stanford School Record 800 M
- Stanford Distance Medley Relay School Record

#### NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CAREER

- New Balance Outdoor Nationals, Junior High Mile Champion 2018
- USATF U20 Championships, 800 M, Silver Medal, 2019
- NSAF Meet of Champions, 400 M Champion, 2021
- Olympic Trials, 800 M, Advanced to semifinals, 13th, 2021
- Nike Outdoor Nationals, 400 M Champion, 2022
- U20 World Champion 800 M (Championship Record) 4x400 M Relay Champion, Cali Colombia, 2022 Roisin's anchor split of 51.34 was the fastest of the entire field
- World Record Distance Medley Relay 2022
   Heather MacLean, Kendall Ellis, Elle Purrier St. Pierre, Roisin Willis

#### **HONORS**

- Wisconsin Gatorade Player of the Year Track & Field 2019, 2020, 2022
- National Gatorade Player of the Year, Track & Field 2021
- Wisconsin Track Coaches Association Athlete of the Year 2021, 2022
- USA Track & Field Youth Athlete of the Year 2022

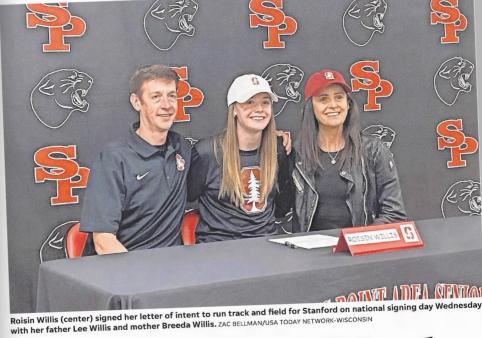












#### Willis to Stanford highlights signing day

Tac Bellman

Stevens Point Journal

USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

STEVENS POINT – Two Division I

withletic commitments for SPASH trustable tie commitments for SPASH trustable trustable tie commitments for SPASH trustable tie commitments for SPA USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN athletic commitments for SPASH students were among the highlights of central Wisconsin commitments on Wednesday's national signing day.

SPASH track and field athlete Roisin Willis signed with Stanford, while classmate Maddy Miklesh signed with DePaul University to play softball.

definitely helped me decide what kind of team I wanted to go into, because I come from such a great team," Willis said. "Bight here is an example of that. There were rough times and she just stuck with it because she loved it." "My mom and my dad are definitely my biggest supporters. They've helped me through everything, the bad days and the good days," Roisin her daughter from a young age, imagnetic form a young age, imagnetic form and the said. "Bight here is an example of that." There were rough times and she just stuck with it because she loved it." sin Willis signed with Stanford, while classmate Maddy Miklesh signed with DePaul University to play softball.

Willis said she is grateful to sign with a school she has dreamed of attending since she was a child. She was also considering offers from the University of Southern California, University of Washington.

"I wanted to go where a coach had the same vision as far as my running goals, and a team that would help me support that," Willis said. "Stanford overall is just a really great school and getting in academically was a really big thing for me. Meeting the team just really clicked, they were just the people for me. Just a team that I really wanted to be a part of."

The 2000 Summer Olympics for Ireland and was a coaching resource for her daughter from a young age, imagined a day like Wednesday was a possibility.

"I think even from the very beginning when she was 7 or 8, I saw something in her that you see very rarely in thing in her that you see very rarely in thing in her that you see very rarely in thing in her that you see very rarely in thing in her that you see very rarely in thing in her that you see very rarely in thing process. They know me the best out of anyone, so they were able to decipher and help me figure out where would be the best place for me.

Her father added the recruiting process had been "almost like a full-time job" all summer, but he was proud of the way Roisin handled the decision.

"She took it very, very seriously, really zeroing in on where she wanted to go," Lee said. "It just feels like the perfect fit, the perfect match, and we're just really, really excited for her. We're going to miss her next year.

She credited her current team-

**HIGH SCHOOL TRACK** 

#### **SPASH's Willis sets** indoor record in 800

Stevens Point Journal USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

SPASH senior Roisin Willis is the U.S. high school girls 800-meter indoor rec- Championships qualifying mark of ord holder after narrowly missing be- 2:01.50, Willis told Letsrun.com that she coming the first girls high school athlete is focusing on high school competition to finish in under 2 minutes indoors. Willis' time of 2:00.06 at the David door Championships in less than two Hemery Valentine Invitational in Bos- weeks. ton on Friday eclipsed Sammy Watson's mark of 2:01.78 set in 2017. Sophia Gor- last fall to run in college for Stanford riaran, a junior at Moses Brown School University. in Providence, Rhode Island, also beat the old mark with a time of 2:00.58 to consin sports reporter Zac Bellman at finish fourth. Willis also beat out profes- zbellman@gannett.com.

sionals Madeleine Kelly and Cynthia

Anais to win the event.

Only Mary Cain's 2013 time outdoors of 1:59.51 has been faster than Willis for girls in the recorded history of U.S. high school track and field. While the mark falls under the World Athletics Indoor rather than competing in the USATF In-

Willis signed a letter of commitment Contact USA TODAY NETWORK-Wis-Follow him on Twitter at @ZacBell-







**WIAA TRACK AND FIELD** 







### Roisin Willis, who set a girls WIAA Division 1 state record in the 800 meters as a freshman, is back competing with the SPASH's goal: 'Run fast, turn left'

Panthers bolstered by return of record-holder Willis

Zac Bellman STEVENS POINT - The SPASH track by example and makes everybody see how that motivates her to keep USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN program will be looking to continue a dominant run in the Wisconsin Valley Conference in 2022, led by a number of returning stars.

Perhaps the biggest among them is:

Around her better as well.

The sentiment goes both ways. Willing as the outdoor season approaches. She plans to try a number of other races as well this year, ranging from shorter sprints to the 1,600. Perhaps the biggest among them is other challenges have often relegated the record-setting Roisin Willis, a Stan-her to training alone. high school team during her junior year another record-setting performance as she prepared for the U.S. Olympic Team Trials, where she finished 13th Invitational in Boston. While competting the program of the desired trials and the program of the and narrowly missed the cut in the 800.

SPASH girls track coach Nate Olson

SPASH girls track coach Nate Olson

SPASH girls track coach Nate Olson

is among many in the program excited Watson's U.S. high school indoor recto welcome back Willis.

"It's great to have an awesome leader"

ord, setting the mark to beat at 2:00.06.

Willis said it was a shock to post that like Roisin be there," Olson said. "Leads time in February, and she is anxious to

"These past couple weeks have just what I can do outdoors and have fun her senior year this spring. Willis has really been great, and going to practice with it and be with my team," Willis not run with the Panthers since her freshman year in 2019, a season in Willis said. "I'm able to do more and acwhich she set the WIAA state record for complish more in practice each day, just ing state competitor Brittany Beadles, the 800-meter run at 2 minutes, 5.68 having so many people around to push who finished eighth in the 400 at the the 800-meter run at 2 minutes, 5.68 seconds in a Division 1 state title win.

After COVID-19 canceled her sophomore year, she did not compete with the high school team during her junior year to be a considerable with the high school team during her junior year another record-setting performance and the p

from last year. I'm just excited to see

'I'm just incredibly excited'



Team Trials last month in Eugene, Oregon. KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

SPASH's Roisin Willis named Gatorade national track athlete of the year

Stevens Point Journal USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

a year ago, Roisin Willis was feeling a litchampionships had been canceled, no Track and Field Player of the Year. VID-19 pandemic and all of it got to be a running just to like reset," Willis said all these things that happ little too much for the Stevens Point during a Zoom call with media Tuesday.

dramatically for the better.

the semifinals, and Wednesday she was future would be like. I didn' The 2020 WIAA state track and field named the Gatorade National Girls of confidence in myself. It "Mentally, I was just not in a great months would bring because of the CO- place and I had to take some time off was able to come back from

Fast forward a year and Willis' out- training last year, if I'm being comlook on running and life has changed pletely honest. I got started really late training for track and so I didn't even The soon-to-be SPASH senior ran in know if there would be an Olympic STEVENS POINT - Around this time the 800 meters at the U.S. Olympic Trials. I had no goals and I had very lit-Team Trials last month, advancing to tle motivation. I didn't know what my

"I didn't really put in a great year of See WILLIS, Page 3A



# Taking the national stage

SPASH's Willis sets U.S. record in 800 meters on championship Saturday

Zac Bellman Stevens Point Journal

USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

setting fashion Saturday, nearly break2:02.04 set by Amy Weissenbach of cheered me on," Willis said. "They realing 2 minutes in the Division 1800-meHarvard-Westlake School in California ly helped me run that time today, so I'm ter run to set a national high school rec- in 2011.

took home gold Saturday at the WIAA losing 2020 to the coronavirus panstate track and field championships.

but none left quite the impression of Willis' runaway victory.

U.S. Olympic Trials, the stage provided every bit of motivation needed to strive Her time of 2:00.03 bested the field by 14 seconds, as well as her own 2019 LA CROSSE - Stevens Point's Roisin WIAA state record of 2:05.68 and the that's just so excited about track and Willis ended her prep career in recordnational high school girls record of field and have all these people that just

For Willis, who was participating in Five central Wisconsin competitors only her second WIAA state meet after circled around the track, but she said an

demic and 2021 while preparing for the See TRACK, Page 3B







### **Wisconsin Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**

recently announced that sports. Pierre on a distance med- ed athlete I have ever Roisin Willis of Stevens The state's three-time ley relay quartet that known." Point Area Senior High returning Gatorade Girls School is the 2021-22 Track & Field Player of Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Track at Willis has maintained a weighted 4.06 GPA in the Year and also the 2020-New Balance in Boston. Track & Field Player of 21 Gatorade National Willis has volunteered Player of the Year in the locally as part of a pen National Letter of Intent Willis is the second sport, the 5-foot-11 senior pal program with ele-to compete on an athletic Gatorade Wisconsin Girls won the 800-meter race at mentary school students Track & Field Player of the Division 1 state meet, and children with special the Year to be chosen leading the Panthers to needs. An accomplished The Gatorade Player from Stevens Point Area a 12th-place finish as a violin player, she has also donated her time with The award, which rec- At the time of her selec- the Uplift Foundation, ognizes not only out- tion, Willis' winning time an organization that standing athletic ex- of 2:00.03 ranked No. 2 na- raises money for womcellence, but also high tionally among prep comen and children in crisis the 50 states that sancstandards of academic achievement and exin U.S. history. She won

"Coaching an individ"Coaching an individgirls volleyball, boys and onstrated on and off the in the 400-meter run at been an incredible expe-Nike Outdoor Nationals, rience," said Nate Olson, and girls soccer, base-Now a finalist for the crossing the line in 52.64, head coach of Stevens ball, softball, and boys prestigious Gatorade which ranked No. 4 in the Point Area Senior High. and girls track & field, National Girls Track & country this spring.
Field Player of the Year,
Willis joins an elite alumVolumpians

To most, Roisin is the and awards one National greatest prep track athlete in Wisconsin histosport.