

the Olympians

Track stars in running for Olympic dream

By PAUL CONROY

One of the best kept secrets on the York University campus has been the varsity track and field team. Under the watchful eye of head of coach Sue Summers the team has compiled an impressive record this past season.

The Yeowomen's 1987-88 success involved first time wins in both the Ontario and Canadian championships. On the other hand, the Yeomen, were not quite as successful, but did manage a very respectable third place finish at the CIAU finals this year in Winnipeg.

York hopes to continue this winning trend, as a select group of York's best will be setting their sights on the Olympics. Several of the athletes have been invited to try and crack the lineup which will represent Canada in September at Seoul. Coach Summers was selected to attend the games as an official observer coach, but decided to decline the invitation.

"It's at a bad time, with the start of school I'd miss a lot of teaching time," she explains. Summers also feels that the start of the school year is an important time for the recruitment of new athletes, who may one day be groomed as York's future Olympic candidates.

One of York's brightest stars among the candidates is France Gareau. The native of Verner, Ontario, a small town just west of North Bay, has already had a taste of Olympic pressure. In 1984, as part of the Canadian track team in Los Angeles, she came home with a silver medal which she earned in the 4 x 100 metre relay event. "It was my dream to win a medal and my

dream came true. I was really happy to win it," said Gareau.

Gareau also competed in the 100 metre event and did well enough to make it as far as the quarter finals. This time around she wants to compete in the 100 and 200 metre finals as well as the 4 x 100 relay event. "I plan to run a few races in the 400 metre event this summer at the Nationals to see if I can meet the standard for the Olympics," Gareau said, hoping to add this running distance to her repertoire.

Gareau's athletic life started in grade nine. In her first year of running she went to the senior nationals and finished fifth in the 100 and 200 metre races. It was at one of these meets that she met her present coach Charlie Francis, whom she credits for much of her success. In fact she declined a scholarship offer from a university in Texas and specifically chose York for track so that she could train with Francis.

Training three to four hours a day, six days a week, hasn't interfered with her education, however. A second year York student, Gareau is majoring in French and says that she hopes to get a linguistically related job, such as a translator after graduation.

But, the Olympic dream and a gold medal could put those plans on hold.

"France is one of my closest friends," states another of York's Olympic hopefuls, Sean Foudy. Foudy is another athlete training under the tutelage of Francis, specializing in the 110 metre high-hurdles.

A Toronto native, Foudy has been running the hurdles since grade seven. "They would let us out of school half an hour early if we were practicing



BABAK AMIRFEIZ

Warming Up for Seoul: France Gareau, one of York's brightest track stars, had a taste of Olympic pressure in 1984, as part of the Canadian team in Los Angeles. She earned a silver medal in the 4 x 100 metre relay. "It was my dream to win a medal and my dream came true," she said.

hurdles. That's why I became a hurdler," he says with a laugh.

A third place finish at the National championships in 1983 proved that those extra half-hours were well spent. The then grade twelve student was probably destined for an Olympic appearance in L.A., but a football injury upset his dream.

After a year and a half at the University of Florida on a track scholarship, Foudy returned to Canada, enrolled at York, and played for the Yeoman football squad.

The second-year Physical Education major has no long term plans and his immediate goal is to spend September in Seoul.

Richard Hislop is a fourth year student at York and has been a member of the varsity track team for three of those years. He specializes in the indoor 300 metre run and most recently took first place in that event at the CIAU championships in Winnipeg. For his Olympic tryout Hislop also hopes to compete in the 400 metre event.

Hislop started his running career in grade twelve at Neil McNeil High School, and attended the Olympic training camp in 1984. Unfortunately, a leg injury forced him to miss out on the main event.

Hislop came to York strictly for academic reasons, but joined the track team his first year here. Now in the final year of a combined honours in Sociology and Mass Communications degree, he has applied to graduate school and says that a Ph.D may be a long range possibility. "I would like to study more about the quality of work in life," he says.

A native of Trinidad, he feels his future may lie in returning to that country after his education. Barring that, he would like to get into human resources management with a corporation here in Canada. In the meantime, Hislop's main occupation will be training for the upcoming team tryouts and a shot at the Olympics.

Another of the brighter stars on the championship Yeowomen track squad is Lesa Mayes. Mayes could perhaps best be described as an all-purpose athlete. Specializing in the heptathlon she will be making her first attempt at an Olympic appearance this year.

The heptathlon is a grueling event requiring competition in seven different events over a two-day period.

Consisting of the 100 metre hurdle, the high jump, shot putt, 200 metre run, long jump, javelin, and capped with an 800 metre run, the event is one of the most physically demanding in sports.

"It can be very tiring. Especially when running the 800 metre, I sometimes ask myself 'What am I doing here?'" she says.

Mayes officially started training specifically for the heptathlon only one and one half years ago. Competing in track events since the age of twelve, she always took part in and excelled at all events. Her decision to try the heptathlon was a natural one.

One of the more difficult events, the heptathlon is also one of the hardest to train for. Most of her competitors are several years her senior as it usually takes much longer to master and become consistent in 7 different events.

A second-year student at York,



Bruce Wainman is the fifth York athlete trying for a berth on the national track team and a ticket to Korea. Wainman is a marathon man which means he competes in the twenty-six mile run. Before Christmas he placed tenth at the cross country championships and more recently has



JAMES HOGGETT

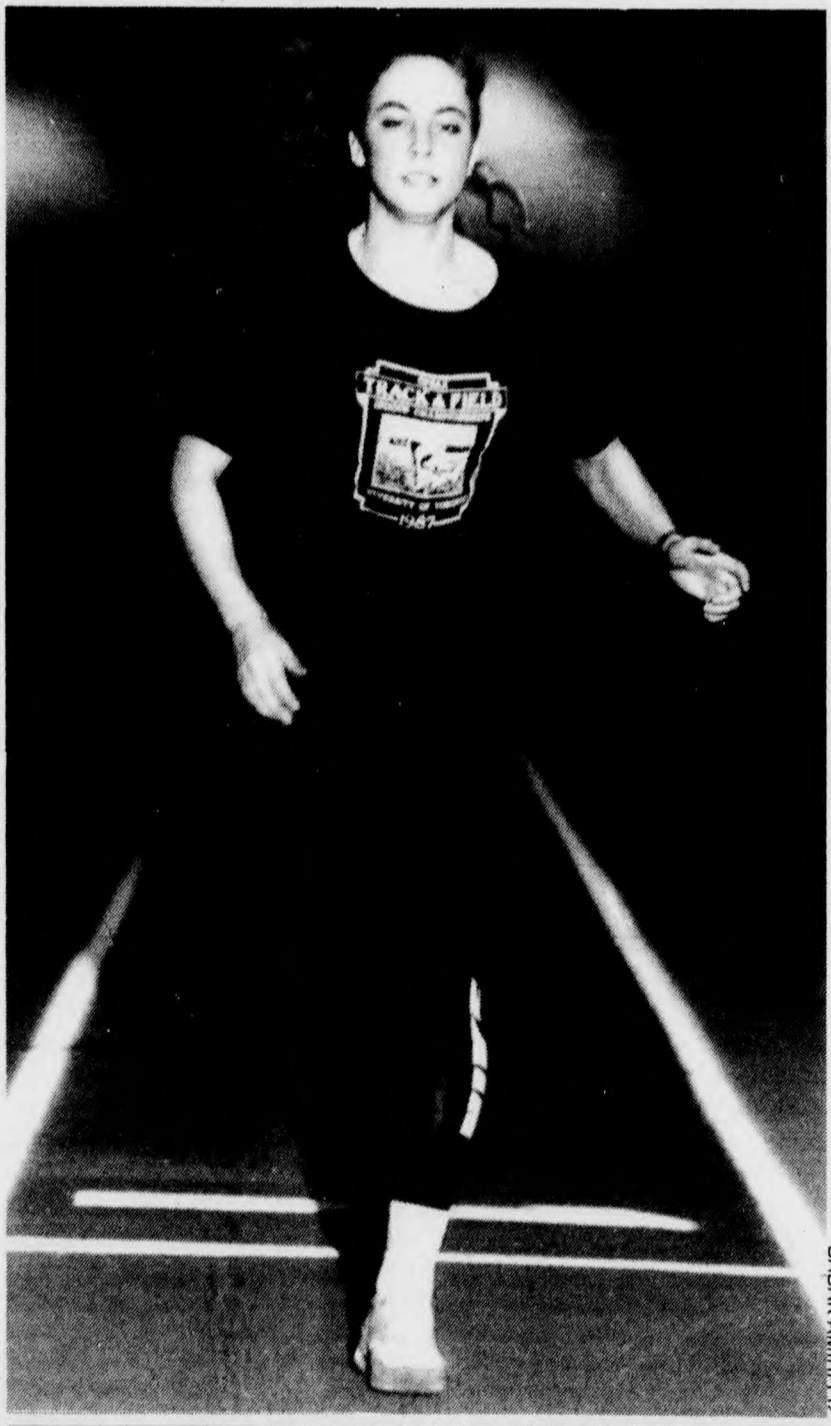
Taking a Break: Track and field coach Sue Summers (right) and Lesa Mayes are both critical assets to the York squad. Mayes could perhaps be best described as an all-purpose athlete, because of her specialization in the demanding heptathlon event.

Mayes is striving for a double major in History and Physical Education. Later she hopes to attend law school, but her ultimate goal is to be a missionary. She happily belongs to the very "controversial," as she laughingly puts it, Toronto Church of Christ.

"It's a great church, it's really awesome!" This summer Mayes hopes to join her brother, NFL star Reuben Mayes, as another of North Battleford, Saskatchewan's famous athletes.

been ranked sixth among his peers. Lately he has been hampered by a hamstring injury which kept him off the York indoor team but it is hoped this will be cleared up by summer.

A marathon man, a hurdler, a missionary, a sociologist, and a translator with a silver medal. Quite a variety of personalities with one very important thing in common—they are all on the right track to make a shot at the gold in this summer's Olympics.



BABAK AMIRFEIZ

Practice Makes Perfect: Gareau trains three to four hours a day, six days a week, but she hasn't let her track interfere with her studies. Presently, Gareau is majoring in French and hopes to get a linguistically related job such as a translator, after her graduation.