

Raeferd Native's Long Jump — Over Growing Age Hurdle

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DURHAM — Sometimes, Kathy McMillan Ray feels old at 24.

That was the case Saturday afternoon, when Ray watched 18-year-old Carol Lewis win the women's long jump at the USA-Pan Africa-West Germany track meet at Duke's Wallace Wade Stadium.

Other event winners Saturday included Calvin Smith, whose 10.03-second 100-meter dash made Carol Lewis's brother Carl a loser in that event for the first time in almost a year. The meet continues today, with events scheduled to begin at 3 p.m.

Carol Lewis jumped 21-11½ Saturday. Ray, a native of Raeferd in Hoke County, lost by a half-inch. Lewis wasn't close to her 22-4½ at last weekend's U.S. National meet in Knoxville, Tenn., but Ray's leap was her best of 1982, 5 inches further than in Knoxville.

But her best still didn't win, and Ray paced around talking to herself afterward, picking at small flaws in her form that she felt robbed her of that extra half-inch.

"I landed with one foot in front of the other," she said. "If I could have brought that foot around . . ."

But form is not Ray's biggest enemy. When she isn't bothered by the nagging injuries she says have hampered her in recent years, Ray's form is fine.

The real problem is Carol Lewis is 18, all bulging thighs and enthusiasm, looking forward to fulfilling her potential. Kathy McMillan Ray is 24, with hamstrings that pull and knees that ache, looking back at a career that includes a silver medal at the 1976 Olympics. She struggles to hold onto her accomplishments by attempting to recreate them. She talks about the 1984 Olympics, when she will be a few months shy of 27.

"They say a jumper can go until she's 26," Ray says. "I still have the ability. I still feel it."

But the fact is McMillan's jump of 22-4 in the 1976 N.C. girls' high school state meet is her best in sanctioned competition. It still is a national high school record — "The only (national) one I've got left," she says.

there's no good competition, it's boring."

Long jumping for long jumping's sake doesn't seem as interesting as it did in high school. Then, her high school coach rigged up a ramp and pit so she could start her approach in the gym on cold mornings, running right out the door just before jumping. As an international competitor, she has other pleasures to hold her to the sport. She likes the travel — London is her favorite city — and she always has savored competition.

Still, competition seemed easier in 1976, when she jumped from Raeferd to Montreal, winning a medal 53 days after her high school graduation.

"It doesn't seem like a long time ago at all," she says. "A year, maybe."

Dave Volz and Coleen Sommer stole some of the thunder from Smith's sprint victory over Lewis by setting U.S. records. Volz pole-vaulted 18-9½, bettering the mark of 18-9¼ set last week by Dan Ripley and Billy Olsen in

Knoxville.

Sommer high-jumped 6-6, breaking the year-old women's record of 6-5½ set by Pam Spencer.

Smith, a junior at Alabama, beat Lewis by .02 seconds. In their last meeting, a week ago in Knoxville, Lewis beat Smith by .05 seconds. In that race, Lewis waved to the crowd 10 meters from the finish, allowing Smith to narrow the gap.

After Saturday's events, the U.S. men led West Germany 54-40 and led Africa 61-28. West Germany and Africa aren't officially competing against each other. The U.S. women led West Germany 61-34. The Africans didn't bring a women's team.

Saturday attendance was estimated at 8,000, less than half what officials had anticipated.

The record was set when she was still Kathy McMillan, sixth of eight children, someone who looked forward to getting out of Raeferd so she would no longer have to pick tobacco.

After the record came the Olympics, a track scholarship to Tennessee State, trips all over the world, a marriage, and injuries. Now she lives and trains in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. She seldom returns to Raeferd.

"Once a year or so, when they have meets nearby," she says. "Everybody I knew and went to school with, they've moved and gone away."

But she hasn't lost touch.

In 1976, after the Olympics, Raeferd held Kathy McMillan Day. The town erected a city-limits sign identifying it as her hometown. The sign is still there, and she says, "It's like a trophy."

Ray left Tennessee State in March 1981, her athletic eligibility expired, her degree in physical education a few credits away. She hasn't returned. In December 1980, she had married Terrel Ray, a former Southern California football player whom she met at a track meet. Ray teaches high school physical education and coaches in Los Angeles.

She would like to be a teacher and coach someday, but her attention is focused on 1984. Lewis is the biggest obstacle between her and another Olympics.

"Healthy, I can still beat her," Ray says.

"But my body's not like it was in high school . . . After the excitement of the (1976) Olympics, I kind of came down. I only get that excitement now at national meets. If it's not an exciting meet, and if



Ray