

Ferris Walker First Girl In National Track Finals

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (AP) — Lynn Olson is a fresh face in the crowd at the annual NAIA track and field championship.

Lynn, an attractive 5-foot-8 blonde, is the first woman to qualify for the national track meet.

"No, it's not women's lib," said Miss Olson, a freshman at Ferris State College in Grand Rapids, Mich. "In fact, I would rather compete against women, but they don't offer any women's events in the NAIA. I just enjoy the sport. I'm not out to prove anything."

Miss Olson, 19, was to compete Thursday night in the two-mile walk against 15 men.

"Lining up against men doesn't really bother me," she said. "They have always been nice to me or at least they've never said anything to me about it."

She earned her place in the national meet by competing

against men in the NAIA district in Michigan. She set the American women's indoor record in the one-mile walk earlier this year in the national AAU meet in New York with a time of 7:37.0. She has participated in track for eight years — four in the sprints and four in race-walking.

She began race-walking in a meet in Detroit, her hometown.

"My coach wanted me to run in four events," she said.

"There were only three running events I could enter so I got in a one-mile walk."

About that time, Jean Bocci began working with Miss Olson.

"She's one of the best," Lynn said. "She really got me started in it after that."

Miss Olson won the national women's AAU outdoor one-mile walk championship in 1971 and lost to Mrs. Bocci last year.

The transition from sprinting to race-walking wasn't easy, Lynn said.

"It took me about one and one-half years to get my form," she said. "It's a lot different from running. I think it's harder than running. In running, you tire in the upper portion of your body but in racewalking the stress is on the legs and that makes it more difficult."

She says she is switching from race-walking to rowing in hopes of making the 1976 Olympics.

"I want to go to the 1976 Olympics in Montreal—that's a lifetime dream of mine, but like last year they aren't going to have any women's walking events," she said.

She probably won't participate in the NAIA next year, because she plans to transfer to New York University next fall. Her boyfriend, Steve Hayden, a walker, finished 27th in the 1972 Olympics and he works on Long Island.

Lynn Olson 5-25-1973

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