

# Girls gather new track records

By **JUNE CROSSON**  
News Special Writer

A group of Detroit-area teen-agers broke three Canadian track records this month during the Ontario Junior Championships in Brantford, Ont.

"They didn't even get excited — they're breaking records all the time," said coach Richard Ford of Detroit.

The girls, all members of the Motor City Track Club (MCTC), hold all kinds of records, according to their coach. "But I don't think anybody knows anything about them, except me and their competitors," he said.

Carmen Rivers and Athlen Bowles, both 18, and Lisa Walton, 16, all of Detroit, and Molly Brennan, 16, of Pontiac took first place in the 800-meter race, and set a new Canadian record.

Another of their teams broke the Canadian junior girls' record for the 1,600-meter. The team consisted of Detroiters Allison Ware, Rochelle Collins and Lisa Walton, all 16, and Ruth Hubbard, 16, of Walled Lake.

"Carmen ran the fastest time in the world in her category last year in London, Ont.," said Ford, "and she placed first in the 50-yard dash this year at a meet in Cleveland."

Carmen, a McKenzie High School senior, joined MCTC five years ago when she met the group while running independently in a meet at Cobo Hall. She has been a consistent winner ever since. Her team placed first in the mile relay at the 1977 Girls Nationals at Central State University in Xenia, Ohio.

Rochelle Collins' name is also all over the Amateur Athletic Union record sheets. She was on Carmen's first place team in the Girls' Nationals, ran second in the 800 meter event there and helped break the Canadian 1,600-meter record in Ontario.

Kim Turner won the 100-meter hurdle in her division at the Ohio meet.

"They all have comparable records," said their coach proudly.

Ford, who was with the U.S. Army Track Team in 1943 and continued in track as a member of the Detroit Varsity Club, is a housing aid with the Detroit Housing Commission. He and Bettye Robinson, Detroit Board of Education member, organized MCTC primarily in the inner city in 1965.

What started as a project to keep neighborhood youth busy expanded into a successful athletic program. Young athletes from other Michigan cities competed

for places on the team, and now there are members from seven other communities.

Among them are Joan Mihaiu of River Rouge, Cindy Malice of Garden City, Kim Willis of Inkster, Jill Day of Ypsilanti and Kathy Miller of East Lansing. Other Detroiters include Angela Johnson, Donna Smitherman, Kim Watts, Leslie Sims, Delisa Walton, Sheryl Gilliam, Pat Morris and Sherrie King.

Girls who stay in the program have a good chance of receiving college scholarships, according to Ford. "I go and talk to the coaches — they all know me," he said.

This year Sherrie King graduated from Cooley, Athlen Bowles from Henry Ford and Sheryl Gilliam from Cass Tech. They all have scholarships — Sherrie to the University of Michigan, Athlen to Eastern and Sheryl to Michigan State.

The young athletes traveled to Chicago, Miami, St. Louis and Los Angeles in the past year. And it's keeping the coach busy and digging in his pocket to keep the team on the road.

"He won't come right out and admit it," said Joan

Mihaiu, "but he pays for a lot of the expenses himself. He borrowed \$600 to finance the team's trip to California last year. The group doesn't have any financial assistance."

"I have worn out four cars," he admitted, "but we all split expenses."

Ford doesn't have the group's next competition on his schedule yet.

"It will depend a lot on the financial situation," he said with a smile.

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