

## Kim Turner – Detroit Mumford 1979



“I learned that you have to take some beatings because I’ve lost a lot of races. And I’m still losing but I keep doing what I have to do,” said hurdler Kim Turner. That ability to keep getting back up and fighting is what made the Detroit Mumford/Motor City TC great an Olympic medalist.

Even as a senior at Mumford High, she knew big things were in her future. “The Olympics is my goal,” she told a reporter. “I think 1984 will be my year. I’m not quite ready yet.”

The Detroiter finished her high school career in 1979 with two state titles in the 100 hurdles and another on the 4x2 with her Mumford teammates. At the time, Michigan preps were running the low (30”) hurdles. At the AAU Junior Champs she got a chance to run the 33-inch college height and flew to a 13.83.

Turner signed with UTEP, where she flourished. In 1982, the first NCAA Championships for women, she placed 3rd. The next year, runner-up in a PR 12.95. And in 1984, she won the NCAA title. A few weeks later, she won the Olympic Trials in 13.12 in one of the tightest finishes ever. Places 2-3-4 all clocked 13.13.

At the Los Angeles Olympics, Turner tied for the bronze medal in 13.06. “I can’t believe it,” she said. “I guess somebody up there likes me after all.”

As a pro—competing under the last name McKenzie—she stayed in the sport through 1992, when she did the fastest running of her life, clocking 12.77 at the Mt. SAC Relays that year. Her best time indoors came at the World Indoor Championships in Budapest in 1989, a 7.92.

“Track & field is the thing that I was born to do,” she told a reporter in 1991. Yet she was unable to get back to the Olympic stage. In 1988, she just missed, placing 5th in the Trials. In 1992, before the Trials she said, “Is this my last hurrah? I don’t know. I’m certainly going to put everything I have into this effort, and then we’ll just have to see.” She finished 6th in her semifinal and did not advance.

Turner won a total of four USA titles in addition to her Olympic Trials victory. She was ranked among the top 10 American hurdlers of the year by *Track & Field News* a remarkable 10 times from 1981-1992. She later coached at Alabama A&M for 19 years.