

CONNIE FRANKLIN

Rapid change in opportunities for girls in sports occurred in the early 1970s, and if ever there was an individual ready to take those challenges and “run with them”, it was Connie Franklin. Growing up in a large and extended family in Madison Heights, she faced numerous opportunities to enjoy the benefits of her competitive nature that was fueled by speed, agility, guile, and adaptability.

Her earliest memories include running and jumping, faster and higher than anybody in the neighborhood. The running was honed by regular track meets for about 100 yards against the train that ran nearby. She always lost these competitions, but had a horn-blowing/waving relationship with the engineer and remained undeterred in giving her best effort. Her leaping ability was a vital component of basketball games in the yard – played with a goal tacked onto a pine tree, considerably exceeding regulation height. Her quarter-mile track consisted of roads that passed on both sides of the house. Little could she have imagined the outcome of this childhood training regimen.



The high school years provided an introduction to organized sports, where she went from a raw athlete to a well-honed one, with participation in basketball, volleyball, and track and field. Always coachable, she then parlayed that characteristic into a lifetime of sports success covering two continents. With a scholarship to East Tennessee State University, she was a three-sport athlete, with All-Conference designation in basketball, and All-American status in track.

After graduation from ETSU in 1978, she joined women's professional basketball in its infancy in the United States. The professional league could not sustain itself, leaving players and coaches to seek opportunities elsewhere, and, in Connie's case, Europe beckoned. She played professional basketball in Austria for 10 years.

During those years, she also learned a new language, adapted to a new culture, introduced cheerleading and mascot teams to Austria, worked as a teacher and coach, and developed and marketed a line of sports attire and equipment. In addition to all the opportunities afforded by life in Europe, Connie's love for the beauty and challenge of the Austrian terrain led her to the development of an interest in mountain climbing.

She has been described by her current colleagues in Austria as an ambitious goal-oriented and superlatively professional trainer. For twenty years, she has led a diverse series of aerobics lessons and remains engaged in reaching personal training goals. Taking long strides and climbing mountains – those are two qualities in which Connie Franklin continues to excel, both literally and figuratively.

Connie Victoria Franklin – August 10, 1955

Career Highlights

- ACHS: basketball, volleyball, track and field
- ETSU track and field: outstanding athlete in long jump and 400 meters
- ETSU track and field: 3-year participant in Nationals in long jump, 200 meters, and 400 meters; All American
- ETSU basketball: All-Conference player
- Women's Basketball League (professional): San Francisco
- Austria: women's professional basketball, championship team 8 years