

Big Sky State Games, Montana Mile Billings, MT, 20 July 2001

Men:

Chuck Sloan	Billings	4:12.2
Scott McGowan	Poplar	4:15.0
Rowdy Sargeson	Helena	4:23.5
Joe Fisher	Browning	4:25.9
Kelly Fulton	Billings	4:28.9
Daniel Driscoll	Bozeman	4:31.0
Ryan Hess	Poplar	4:36.7

Women:

Nicole Hunt	Deer Lodge	4:59.8
Sabrino Monro	Clancy	5:02.4
Heidi Lane	Great Falls	5:09.7
Kathy Aragon	Billings	5:15.9
Bethany Long		5:33.6
Andrea Luebbe	Bozeman	5:40.3
Cailie Fura		5:41.3
Staci Anderson		5:22.5
Jena Jones-Haumpy	Brockton	7:54.6

Hunt, Sloan notch record-setting wins By FRITZ NEIGHBOR Of The Gazette Staff

A pair of distance runners turned themselves into sprinters for four laps Friday, and broke a pair of records while winning the Montana Mile titles at the 16th annual Big Sky State Games. In front of a cheering Daylis Stadium crowd, former Billings Senior and Oklahoma State standout Chuck Sloan sprinted past two-time defending champion Scott McGowan to win the men's race in a brisk four minutes, 12.15 seconds; Deer Lodge's Nicole Hunt got a lead on defending champ Sabrina Monro after three laps and held on to win in a personal best – and record-shattering – 4:59.8.

While the women's Montana Mile is just two years old, it's worth noting the top three finishers – Hunt, Monro (5:02.4) and Great Falls Russell grad and all class HS mile record holder, Heidi Lane (5:09.7) came in under Munro's 1-year-old record of 5:13. Hunt's win completed a husband-wife sweep of sorts: Ray Hunt won the 5K in 16:13 some two-plus hours before. "He coaches me: 'Surge the third lap!'" said Nicole Hunt, who added this was just her second competition at that distance. "If I was going to beat Sabrina, I had to surge the third lap, which I did. And it was very painful."

Her win also stopped a different sweep. Monro had won both the 5-kilometer race and Montana Mile last year, and won the 5K Friday in 17:25. "Right now, she's not at her peak," Hunt said of Monro, an All-America runner for the University of Montana who will run for the University of Washington next year. "She's not done any speed work. If she did, she would have probably beat me." Hunt skipped the 5K because she's running a 10K road race in Salt Lake City on Tuesday; as it stands, she figures she and Monro have split the 10 or so races they've run together. "She's usually better in the mile and the 3,000," said Hunt. "She beats me there." But Friday night was Hunt's night. "It was so exhilarating. The crowd is so loud when you come down the straight-away, you just get pumped. Runners don't get that kind of attention often."

Sloan hasn't gotten that kind of attention in over a year. A year ago last March, he won his second straight Big 12 3,000-meter steeplechase title; his trip to last summer's Olympic Trials, where he finished ninth, marked his last real competitive race. Since then, he's been nursing plantar's fasciitis and running the occasional road race. "After college you don't have that support group, so you just kind of run these road races, and make a little extra money. There's a pretty good training group in Oklahoma, and they run in those races. But it's sort of like practice."

So while Sloan figures he got about \$2,000 richer, the competitive juices weren't boiling. Friday, they were. McGowan, who finished just a half-second off Joe Beatty's mark of 4:14.4 at 4:15.0, helped. So did bronze medalist Rowdy Sargeson (4:23.5). "We talked before the race and we wanted to run in 64, 65 seconds," Sloan said of the start. "Then we go out and run that first lap in 61. We were flying. I was like, 'I don't know if I'm ready for this.'" "But he was, despite his assertion that he's "not a miler." The heel, which began hurting him a year ago, quieted down for him to begin training 10 weeks ago. "I knew I wasn't in horrible shape," he said. He was strong enough to hang with McGowan stride-for-stride. "He was leading, and I was, 'OK, I'll just stay on his shoulder and see what happens,'" said Sloan. "You get to that last 400, and you get all ready to rock and roll. The last 200, I sort of out sprinted him, I guess." Right into the record book. Not bad for a non-miler.