

What Makes Sunny Run?

PHOTO STORY BY ROB HILL

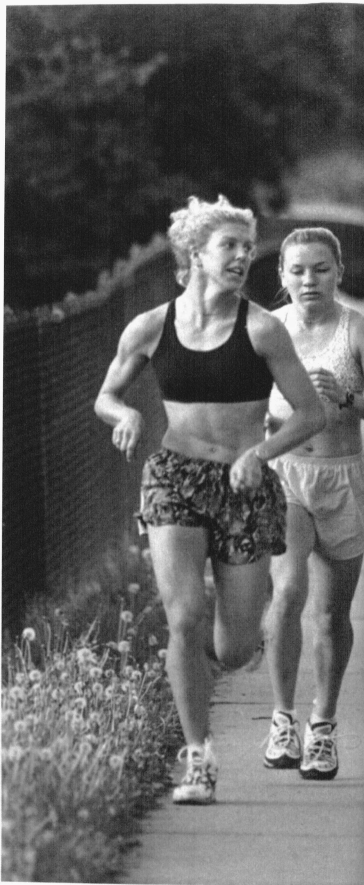
IN THE DAYS JUST BEFORE THE BIG 12 OUTDOOR TRACK AND Field Championships in May, 800-meter runner Sunny Gilbert was a little on edge. The freshman biochemistry major and middle-distance runner from Ellisville, Mo., was suffering from forced inactivity.

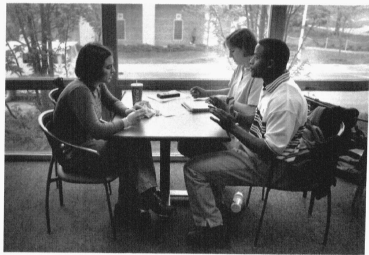
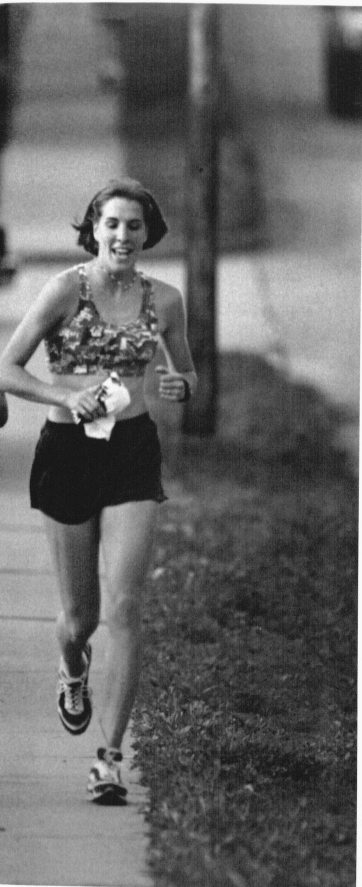
"I have to do something more tomorrow," she says. "Coach Pigg has told us not to do anything outside of practice, and I just can't stand it. I'm not used to sitting around." For a week before the May 15 to 17 championship, there was no bicycling, no in-line skating, just morning track practice, some light reading and a few video movies she had noted in her journal over the course of winter semester. "I wanted to see them, but with my schedule..."

The demands of being a 3.89 GPA student, member of the MU Alumni Association Student Board, and intercollegiate athlete make for one cluttered daybook. Here's a three-day photo journal of her life at Mizzou, a glimpse of what makes Sunny Gilbert run.

Wed. 5:45pm

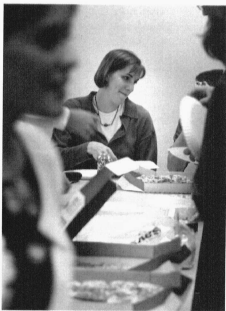
Sunny Gilbert, right, and her middle-distance cohorts muscle up a hill along Providence Road on the final leg of a 5-mile run from the Audrey J. Walton Track-Soccer Field-Softball Complex, down the MKT Parkway and back. Running with Gilbert are Courtney Bell, left, and Katie Meyer, Gilbert's roommate. Gilbert was inspired by her grandmother, Joy Gilbert, a ranked distance runner in her age group. "By the time I was 5 or 6, she was really into it." The family tradition is maintained by grandfather Gary, father Ken and sister Katie.





Wed. 10:45am

Senior Clayton Baker, right, stops by to talk with Gilbert and tutor Nicole Clark in Brady Commons. Clark tutored Baker through the Total Person Program, an academic enhancement program for intercollegiate athletes. "I didn't think I would need much help, but I wanted to make sure I knew what I was doing," says Gilbert of her weekly tutoring sessions.



Thurs. 9:05pm

Over pizza and soda, Gilbert speaks with a friend before the start of an MU Alumni Association Student Board meeting. The group details final preparations for the May 1 Senior Send-Off, which it organizes. "A friend told me about AASB, and it sounded like a group I could contribute to and that would also fit into my schedule," Gilbert says.

Wed. 7:45pm

It's the final week of classes, time for studying and a little fun while playing the game, Pass the Pig, with Ann Marie Brooks, right, a neighbor on second-floor Hudson Hall. "It's the only game I own," says Gilbert, a biochemistry major. Players roll pig-shaped pieces, like dice, to score points. This fall, Gilbert and Brooks plan to room together in an apartment. Running is also a shared interest for the two—Brooks ran in high school and plans on competing for Mizzou this season.



Tues. 10:57am

Before her Literature and Medicine class, Gilbert shares a laugh with partner Kristin Thomas. They presented a simulated newscast reporting the scenarios of medical thrillers. Combining the scientific exactness of medicine with the expressiveness of literature appeals to Gilbert.



Wed. 3:50pm

Gilbert clowns around with teammate Courtney Bell while assistant track Coach Jeff Pigg runs through daily drills before practice at Walton Stadium. "I would have still come to Mizzou without the new track, but having it sure makes it nicer," says Gilbert, who specializes in cross country during the fall and in the 800-meter run during track season.



Wed. 3:15pm

Gilbert runs through the tunnel under Stadium Boulevard on her way to track practice. Having no car on campus is not a serious disadvantage for someone as mobile as Gilbert. "I let my little sister have it my freshman year," Gilbert says of her Dodge Shadow. As a sophomore, she wants her wheels. On Wednesdays, Gilbert leaves Chemistry 32 at 3 p.m., with enough time to change, run to practice and arrive while her teammates are still warming up.