

NEW FACES

Julie Young's blueprint for success

BY LESLEE SCHENK

Julie Young's unique good looks could put her on the pages of *Elle* magazine. Her articulateness and confidence are what one would expect from a UCLA graduate with a degree in political science and international relations. And her pleasant and friendly personality could win her a congeniality award. Yet the 25-year-old Sacramento, California, native has chosen the sport of cycling to display her many assets and skills — including her well-rounded athleticism.

Young has been touted by some as the most talented all-around rider to hit the cycling scene in recent years. During the 1991 season, she has been one of the most consistent riders in the U.S., posting notable results in climbing events as well as in sprint finishes.

At the Ore-Ida Women's Challenge, Young impressed her American counterparts when she was outclimbed only by former world champion Jeanne Longo-Ciprelli and Finland's Tea Vikstedt-Nyman. And the Californian reached the summit of many of the grueling climbs ahead of her more experienced countrywomen.

Young climbed like a seasoned competitor in Idaho, always poised at the front of the field, relaxed and steady, showing exemplary form on the bike. But her climbing prowess and athletic capabilities are not things that "just happened," or that she has taken for granted. In fact, Young's approach to her growth in cycling is a well-planned blueprint for success.

"I did well in criteriums at first — that seemed more natural to me — and I had to work on my climbing," she recalled. "But I realized that if you want to do anything in cycling, you have to be a good climber." So the determined Young left nothing to chance. "When I got into cycling, I didn't

stressed in her self-analysis was the fact that she simply loves to ride her bike. "I love to go out and ride and train, and I like cycling so much that I'm just not intimidated," she said.

Young comes to the sport of cycling from a varied athletic background. When she was

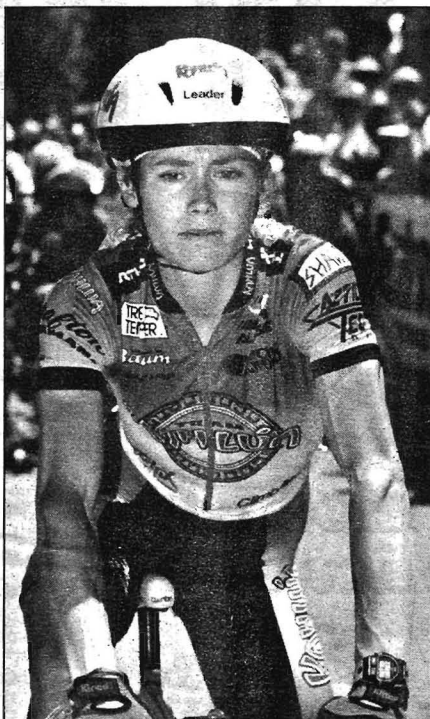
in junior high and high school, she played soccer and alpine ski-raced. During those years, she would ride a bike in the summer months as training for her ski racing. Then, her first two years of college were spent on a scholarship for golf at UCLA.

"Golf was something of an interlude for me," Young explained. And it was that interlude which may have provided one key ingredient for her future success in cycling. "I had a lot of pressure when I was on my golf scholarship, and I'm not going to buy into the pressure now ...

You've got to deal with the pressure as it comes. I really learned a lot from my experiences in golf. I won't get obsessed with cycling — because I got obsessed in golf," Young emphasized.

Combining even-temperament and self-actualization with her physical talent and iron will, Young has produced stellar results in her two years of competing. She finished the Ore-Ida in ninth place overall, with three third-place finishes — all behind Longo-Ciprelli and Vikstedt-Nyman — in the special categories of Queen of the Mountain, points, and sprints competitions. At the prestigious Nevada City Classic, Young placed second to the talented Sally Zack, and she was second overall at the Mammoth Stage Race. She was also third overall at La Vuelta de Bisbee, after winning a tough road stage, and taking the top spot in a brutal criterium that wasn't scored toward the overall standings.

But Young has a different perspective that many athletes have on their competition.



Mitch Clinton/Good Exposure photo

Young has moved confidently to the top of women's cycling.