

Bob Matteson Named USA Track & Field - New England Athlete of the Month for August



Photo: www.massvelocity.org

BOSTON – **Bob Matteson**, age 90 of Bennington, VT, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for August 2006. Competing at the USA Masters Track & Field Championships held in Charlotte, NC, August 3-6, Matteson ran to victory in the 100m, 200m, 400m, and 800m. Despite ferocious heat, which forced four hour delays on two days, Matteson set M90 American records in the 200m which he ran in 41.95 and the 400m in 1:39.39. He also set a meet record of 19.73 in the 100m. Matteson has been competing in track and field for about 20 years, beginning in his late sixties. Asked about his motivation to train and compete, he said, “I try to make the most of whatever talents I’ve been granted. I recognize that I have certain abilities and I believe it’s important to honor them by trying to do well.” Questioned about the physical and mental challenges of staying in competitive shape at age 90, he said “I don’t think it’s greatly different than in the past ... if anything, having experienced some success, I think that, in spirit, I’m more competitive now than 20 years ago.”

During the long Vermont winters, Matteson does not have access to an indoor track. Instead he relies on his “telephone pole workout” to hone his speed. This consists of a warm-up jog around a hospital and then a speed workout on the street that he measures by the distance between telephone poles. Running 1 ½ to 2 telephone poles for each segment, he begins his run at 10K race pace, then progressively speeds up to 5K pace, mile pace, 400 meter pace and then 200 meter pace as he sprints to the finish.

In a society in which many people retire as soon as they can, Matteson has never truly retired. A graduate of Middlebury College, who went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard, Matteson continues to run a consulting company, Matteson Associates, which provides professional services in policy planning, economic development, governmental management and other areas. In the past he has also served as town manager for Bennington and planning director for the state of Vermont. Currently he serves as director of Bennington Tomorrow, a non-profit association which aims to enhance the town’s quality of life through a strong economy, an attractive environment and a vibrant cultural and artistic scene.

Also excelling at the Masters Track & Field Championships was Barbara Jordan, co-winner of the Athlete of the Month award in August 2004. In Charlotte, Jordan, age 70 of South Burlington, VT, won the 100m and 200m “flat” races and also won and set W70 American records in the 80m hurdles clocking 17.80 and in the 300m hurdles with a time of 1:11.49.

Athlete of the Month is a program for USATF-New England and is designed to recognize outstanding performers at all levels of the sport. USATF-NE will name a new honoree each month and feature the athlete on the USATF-NE website.