

Joanne Dow Named USA Track & Field – New England Athlete of the Month for July



Photo: Victah Sailer

BOSTON – **Joanne Dow**, age 44 of Manchester, NH, has been named USA Track & Field – New England's Athlete of the Month for July 2008. On July 6, in Eugene, OR, at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Track & Field, Dow finished first in the 20 km race walk. Her time was 1:35:11 and her first place finish put her on the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Team for the 2008 Olympics being held in Beijing, China August 8 – 24. Dow's event will be contested on Thursday, August 21.

Despite a long, glorious career as an elite race walker, this is Dow's first Olympic Games. In 1996, hampered by injury, she finished 10th at the trials; at the 2000 trials she was 4th, and in 2004, although she placed 2nd at the trials, she had not made the Olympic "A" standard time and thus could not be added to the team.

Dow is the fourth repeat winner of USATF – New England's Athlete of the Month award. Her previous selection was in February 2006, when she won the 3000m race walk before an appreciative home crowd at the U.S. Indoor Championships in Boston. Altogether, she has won four USA Outdoor Championships and five USA Indoor national titles. She also won a bronze medal in the 2003 Pan American Games and has been ranked #1 in the U.S. by Track & Field News three times (1998, 2002 and 2006).

Amazingly, Dow did not take up competitive race walking until 1994 at age 30. She had competed as a sprinter in track & field as a high school freshman and sophomore, and then turned to swimming in both high school and in college at the University of New Hampshire, where she competed in the NCAA Division II nationals in a relay event.

Joanne is married to Tim Dow and has two teen-aged children, Hannah and Timmy. She is clear that, however much she loves race walking, that being a wife and a mother are her highest priorities. Although she is very much a long shot in her event at Beijing, Dow intends to perform as well as possible. She believes that the expected heat and smog may take a toll on the top-ranked walkers if they attempt too fast a pace, and that this may open the door for her to place higher than expected. Above all, Joanne is intent on enjoying her Olympic experience.

USATF – New England's mission is to continue its leadership role as one of the outstanding associations of the national governing body in Athletics.