

## Buzz Gagne Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for August 2012



*Photo: 2011WMAphotos*

BOSTON – **Buzz Gagne**, age 65 of Penacook, NH, who competes for Twilight Throwers, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for August 2012. At the 2012 U.S. Masters Track & Field Championships held in Lisle, Illinois, the first week of August, Gagne won the M65 javelin with a nation-leading throw of 161’ 7” (49.26m). Two weeks earlier at the New England Association Masters Championships in Providence, RI, just days before his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, Buzz had thrown 160’ 4” (48.86m) to win the M60 javelin.

Although Gagne enjoys the other throws and competes well, the javelin is clearly his signature event. He has won 7 national javelin titles in the U.S. Masters Championships and has added 4 gold medals and 3 silver medals in National Senior Games competition. He

ranks in the top 10 all-time world rankings for the javelin throw for both the M60-64 and M65-69 age divisions.

However, the road to athletic success has not been smooth or easy for Buzz. Growing up in Greenfield, MA, he was captain of his high school track team and competed in the javelin, long jump and low hurdles. He moved on to community college where basketball and soccer were the only sports. He then served in the U.S. Army and did three tours of duty in Vietnam in a helicopter company. After military service, Gagne went to North Adams State College, where once again basketball and soccer were the only sports offered.

As he neared age 50, Buzz saw an advertisement for a masters track meet. He decided to compete and learned more about the opportunities for masters both in USATF and in the Senior Games. Although he loved throwing the javelin, he had never learned good technique in high school. The turning point for Gagne was when he attended a javelin clinic at MIT put on by Jeff Gorski, a throws coach at University of North Carolina, who would become USATF Men’s Javelin Development Chair. Gorski and his team videotaped Gagne and pointed out serious flaws in four phases of his throwing. “I worked on one thing at a time to get rid of the bad habits,” he says, “and eventually the javelins really started to fly.”

In May 2011, Buzz was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent surgery in August. He said that following surgery he had no core strength left. Over the winter, he carefully resumed strength training, but only with light weights. Core training continued to be difficult and he repeatedly injured his back and abdomen. Though his practice has remained limited, he says that, “I rely on muscle memory and hope for the best.” Under the circumstances, his results are stunning.

Buzz has high praise for his teammates in Twilight Throwers, calling them “a fabulous group of guys,” and for the club’s founder and director, Jim Chamberas. Asked about his motivation, Gagne is direct, “I never feel like I’m competing against the other guys. I compete against myself. I love the throws and just try to do the best I can every time.”