

Jan Holmquist Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for April 2015



Photo by Liz Cardoso

BOSTON – Jan Holmquist, age 70 of Burlington, MA, who competes for the Whirlaway Racing Team, has been named USA Track & Field - New England's Athlete of the Month for April 2015. On April 26, at the James Joyce Ramble in Dedham, MA, Jan set an American W70-74 age-group record as she blazed the 10K course in 45:19, the top age-graded performance for open or masters runners in the race (99.02). The James Joyce Ramble served as the USA Masters 10K Road Championship, so Jan's victory brought her another national championship title.

Jan's 10K road record lowered her own previous U.S. W70-74 mark of 45:45, set at the Lone Gull 10K in Gloucester in September 2014. Since turning 70 in May

2014, Holmquist has also recorded road bests of 22:16 for 5K (U.S. W70-74 record), 1:21:40 for 10 Miles, and 1:44:33 for the Half Marathon (a pending U.S. W70-74 record).

Holmquist's age-group record setting has continued into the summer months as she ran a pending world record of 6:37.21 for the mile at the Adrian Martinez Classic in Concord, MA on June 4, and added pending American records of 36:41 at the Bobby Doyle Five-Mile Summer Classic on August 9 in Narragansett, RI, and 7.52 miles (12,110 meters) for the one hour run in Lynn, MA on August 14.

Surprisingly, Jan didn't begin running at all until age 38 when another parent in her son's Cub Scout troop challenged her to run a mile in under 10 minutes. Jan was able to do this, yet didn't begin competitive running until age 50 when her daughter Kara has her to join her in road races. In the 20 years since, Jan has excelled at distances ranging from the mile to the marathon, has set numerous age group records and has won more than a dozen national age-group titles. This is Jan's second Athlete of the Month award. Her first selection was in May, 2011.

Personally and professionally, Jan has long been devoted to animal welfare. She is an executive with the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA), having worked for the organization for 15 years. Notably, this is a family endeavor as her daughter Kara is an attorney for MSPCA and Kara's husband, Bracker is an emergency and critical care veterinarian for the organization's Angell Animal Medical Center in Boston. Currently, Jan also serves as the masters long distance running chair for USATF – New England.

In addition to her affiliation with the Whirlaway Racing Team, Holmquist is president of the New England 65+ Runners Club, which has more than 700 members. She notes that "age-grading", which gives a percentage score to race times relative to a runner's age, provides added motivation to older runners because although they can no longer match the times they ran when younger, they can demonstrate their fitness and level of achievement for their age. Jan typically runs times that are scored at 98 or 99% in the age-graded tables, and at times exceed the 100% mark, particularly when she sets new age group records. Jan declares that 70 is not old (actual quote: "Oh my God, 70 is not old!") and wants to inspire and challenge people to refute the negative cultural impressions too often associated with growing older.