

Flo Meiler Named USATF – New England's Athlete of the Month for August 2015



Photo by Rob Jerome

BOSTON – **Flo Meiler**, age 81 of Shelburne, VT, a member of the Mass Velocity Track Club, has been named USA Track & Field - New England's Athlete of the Month for August 2015. Representing Team USA at the 2015 World Masters Athletics (WMA) Championships in Lyon, France, August 4-16, Flo won ten medals - more than any other competitor among the more than 8,000 athletes from 98 countries at the WMAs. Meiler won gold medals in five events; the heptathlon, triple jump, pole vault, 2000 meter steeplechase and the 4 x 100 meter relay. She added silver medals in four events; the high jump, 200 meter hurdles, long jump and 80 meter hurdles. She also won a bronze medal in the discus.

In three of Meiler's wins, she set W80 age group world records, scoring 5730 points in the heptathlon, running 15:43.23 in the 2000 meter steeplechase, and running the second leg on the W80 4 x 100 relay which finished in 1:21.08. She also set a W80 American record in the triple jump with a mark of 5.91m (19-04.75). After her record-setting heptathlon in the opening days of the meet, Flo was one of the featured athletes in a New York Times article, "Racing a Clock While Scoffing at Time."

Flo began track & field competition at age 60, when long time friend and training partner, Barbara Jordan, lured her away after a mixed doubles tennis match at the Vermont Senior Games, to compete in the long jump. Flo was hooked immediately and began to train and compete in multiple track & field events. It should be noted that Flo was not a neophyte at sports. In addition to years of singles and doubles tennis, Flo states that she did water ski competitions for 30 years in the slalom event.

In any case, Flo has consistently won medals up to the national and international championship level in track & field, and has set numerous American and world records. Although her best results have been usually been in the hurdles and in all four jumping events, the extraordinary range of her ability is demonstrated by the world records she achieved in the heptathlon and in the 2000 meter steeplechase in Lyon. Although coaches and fellow athletes have sometimes suggested that she would perform at even a higher level if she focused her training on a smaller number of events, Flo says she enjoys training and competing in as many events as she can.

In the months leading up to the 2015 WMAs, Meiler trained six days a week, which typically included three track training sessions and two weight training sessions each week. Asked about her motivation, Flo said that she obviously enjoys the results she gets, but beyond that she values the fun, fitness and fellowship she finds in masters track & field. She said her continued commitment to training keeps her mind and body healthy and allows her to compete and do the things she enjoys in life. She adds that she expects to continue competing "as long as I have my health."

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

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