

Roger Busch Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for July 2016



Photo: Betty Wisse

BOSTON – Roger Busch, age 75 of Greenwich, CT, who competes for Thor's Stone, is USA Track & Field - New England's Athlete of the Month for July 2016. At the USATF Masters Outdoor Championships, held July 14-17 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Roger won the gold medal in the M75 discus. On his first throw, he broke the existing M75 American record of 42.18m, a mark set in 2002, with a throw of 42.30m. On his fourth throw, he improved his new American record, stretching to 42.85m (140-07). On July 30, Busch competed in the New England Association Championships at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, and won the M75 Discus with still another throw (42.35m / 138-11) that topped the former American record. After his record at the USATF Championships, Roger expressed both satisfaction and a strong

sense of perspective: "It's nice to set the record, especially at a national meet, but the biggest joy was getting to compete with the other throwers."

Roger grew up in suburban New Jersey. He says that, as a high school senior, a medical issue "wiped out my career as a pitcher," so he decided to try the discus. Astonishingly, in his single outdoor season he won every meet, set the school record and became the state champion. At Colgate University he continued his dominance. As a senior he was captain of the undefeated team and he set a school discus record of 165 feet, a record that still stands more than 50 years later.

Busch majored in mathematics and economics in college and afterwards forged a highly successful career that culminated in the position of CFO for an import company. Not until 2003, at age 62, did he take up discus again. He practiced with his old 2 kg college discus and only at his first meet, the Connecticut Senior Games, did he learn that after age 60, throwers use a 1 kg discus. He won his first meet with a throw of 117 feet and has trained and competed continuously since then. Within 2-3 years, he reached national class level and won his first national championship medal when he came in 2nd at the 2006 USATF Masters Championships in Charlotte, NC.

Asked about his continued high performance level, Roger says, "My rate of decline has been slow." He states that he's become good at "balancing the intensity of training," working very hard but not overdoing it to the point of injury. Since 2011, Carl Wallin, founder of Thor's Stone, has served as his strength coach and he cites Carl's guidance as a major factor in his growing dominance of his event. At the 2015 World Masters Athletics (WMA) Championships, Roger placed 4th despite being one of the oldest M70-74 throwers. In 2016, moving into the M75-79 division, Busch has topped the standing record of 42.18m in all six of his meets. He is ranked number one in the world this year and has the 4th best all time throw in the world.

Roger is planning to compete in the 2016 Perth WMA Championships in October. Asked about motivation, he says, "I love to train, I love going to the gym and I love learning technique." He further states that he values, "the training the competition and the camaraderie," as he continues to look for ways to improve.

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