

2023 CMA OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 48th Canadian Masters Athletics Championships was held under sunny skies in the Township of Langley, British Columbia, from August 11-13. The Greyhounds Masters Club hosted the meet at the first-class facility at McLeod Athletic Park. The weather was ideal on Friday and Saturday, but Sunday was uncomfortably hot.

A record number of athletes registered for the national championships, representing almost every province in Canada, plus the Yukon Territory. Athletes from Hong Kong, India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria (did not show up) and the United States also registered to compete. Although registrations were opened in March, athletes were very slow to register and it seemed that perhaps a maximum of 250 athletes would register. But during the last few days athletes registered in large numbers with 412 athletes entered in 1100 events when registrations closed.

The many last-minute entries caused a nightmare scheduling problem in the throwing events. With 87 athletes entered in the discus and 54 athletes entered in the hammer, it seemed physically impossible to complete these two events as scheduled on Saturday. A difficult decision was made to reduce the number of throws in the discus and hammer events from six to five. Even after reducing the number of throws by one, our officials worked continuously from 7:30 am to 7:30 pm in order to complete these two events.

Our BC Athletics officials have done an excellent job all season and they continued their hard work at our championships. Many athletes said, "Your volunteers and officials were great." Our organizing committee, officials and volunteers received many compliments. Comments such as, "...once again a Greyhound(s) event is by far the best meet of the year" and "It was the best track meet I have been to in a long time." Thank you to John and Carol Cull for recruiting and coordinating 34 officials, a few from out-of-town, whose dedication made our CMA championships a great success.

There were many excellent results, including six World Records. Ninety-year-old Myrtle Acton stole the show, breaking four world records in the W90 shot put (6.58m), discus (15.28m) and hammer (20.47m). She also broke her own world record in the Throws Pentathlon (3975 points), a record she had established earlier in the year. Christa Bortignon broke her own world record in the W85 long jump (3.08m). She missed another world record in the 100m by only 0.10 seconds (18.24). The sixth world record was broken by the M60 4x800m relay team of Mark Pinckard, Chris Deighan, David Guss and Greg Athayde (9:16.90).

In addition to the records above, there were seventeen more Canadian records (and other tied). Muriel Giene, who had just entered a new age group, broke the W65 record in the Pentathlon (3990 points) and tied the triple jump record (8.87m). Boris Zaitchouk who holds all of the Canadian hammer records from M45 to M70 now is the record holder in the M75 age group (43.46m). Graham Morfitt who holds all but one of the Canadian javelin records from M35 to M55, broke his own M55 record (57.93m). Johanna Flipsen who holds multiple Canadian race walking records in the W55 to W65 age groups, broke her own Canadian record in the W65 1500m race walk (8:22.49). Nancy Craig who currently holds Canadian records in the W45 to W55 pole vault, broke her own W55 record (2.50m). Tom Dickson, holder of the Canadian 100m records in the M55 and M60 age groups, now is the M70 record holder (13.14). Renate Cheetham who holds three Canadian race walk records added the W85 1500m race walk to her name (12:56.15). Yuko Nakano, Canadian record holder in the W70 and W75 discus, added the W80 record to her list (23.20m). Michael Deady who competed in the M65 age category because he was still 69 on Friday, the first day of competition, turned 70 on Saturday and broke the M70 discus record on his 70th birthday. He now holds the Canadian discus record in the M65 and M70 age groups. And CMA president Vern Christensen who currently holds the M70 and M75 Canadian steeplechase records, broke the M80 record (13:19.71).

Others who broke Canadian records were: Reidar Zapf-Gilje, the all-time points leader among Canadian decathlon record holders, who broke the M70 steeplechase record (8:54.20). Nicole Carlos who holds the W45 Canadian weight throw record now holds the W45 hammer record as well (41.42m). Breaking Canadian records for the first time (I think) are: Elizabeth Waywell in the W65 10,000m (43.33.15), Larry Fiege in the M85 pole vault (1.70m), Dan Parsons in the M55 weight throw (18.46m) and Andrea Diener in the W45 weight throw (12.64m). Hylke Van Der Wal set a new standard in the M85 steeplechase (26:14.67).

There were also 59 Meet Records, a very large number considering that these championships have been taking place for almost fifty years.

The CMA awards dinner was held on Saturday night at the Coast Langley City Hotel and Convention Centre. The dinner was delicious and the atmosphere in the Mackie room was excellent. All eighty seats were sold. Awards were presented to the 2022 CMA Athletes-of-the-Year. Winning the awards were: Carol LaFayette-Boyd (Track), Christa Bortignon (Field), Muriel Gieni (Combined-Events) and Natasha Wodak (Non-Stadia). Inducted into the 2023 CMA Hall of Fame were: Rose Hare (Athlete), Liz McBlain (Athlete) and Urith Hayley (Executive). Inducted post humously was Rhona Trott (2020).

The new medals designed for the championships were a crowd-pleaser. An athlete described the medals as “ a highlight . . . a work of art.” Unfortunately with the large number of entries, we ran out of medals but the local athletes agreed not to pick up their medals at the meet. We have reordered more medals which we expect to be delivered in about a month (mid-September).

Besides our outstanding officials and volunteers, there are many others to thank. Thank you to BC Athletics and BC Fairs, Festivals and Events for their generous Grants. Thank you to Westcoast Naturals for providing free supplements, bags and two paddleboards. And thank you Rob Smith (Tut Fitness) for donating your fitness equipment, which was won by Lori Graham who donated a beautiful handmade Canada-themed quilt. Thank you to Ray Alley who designed the souvenir T-shirts. Thank you also to the Township of Langley for allowing us to rent their superb track and field facility. Thank you to the Coast Hotel for giving the athletes a special reduced price for their rooms. And special thanks to Andrew Lenton who worked very hard bringing out, setting up, taking down, and restoring the Langley Mustangs' equipment.

Harold Morioka

Meet Director (on behalf of our 14-member Host Organizing Committee)

In addition to the 13 BC Masters records mentioned in the World and Canadian records (above), there were another 15 new BC Masters records. In addition to her Canadian hammer record, Nicole Carlos broke two more BC records in the javelin and weight throw. Along with his Canadian javelin record, Graham Morfitt broke the BC Throws pentathlon record. Reidar Zapf-Gilje added another BC record in the long jump and Renate Cheetham added another race walk record in the 5000m race walk.

Bakhshish Dhillon and Heath Semeniuk broke two BC records, Bakhshish in the M85 hammer and throws pentathlon and Heath in the M35 1500m and 5000m race walks. Breaking one BC record were: Janette Wood (W60 1500m), Alita Bommann (W55 5000m), Emily Lynch (W35 triple jump) and Mihail Larin (M50 1500m race walk). Joan Harris tied the BC record in the W60 weight throw.

Two relay teams broke BC records in the 4x100m relays. The team of Nancy Craig, Judith Cook, Melina Thibodeau and Jeannette Van Den Bulk broke the W45 record while the team of Brian Carnate, Marvin Johnson, Jay Guzman and Eric Rouwenhoven broke the M45 record.