

MTF Chair's 2022 Annual Report by Jerry Bookin-Weiner

Each year it is good to take a look back at the major events of the previous 12 months. In 2022 Masters Track & Field (MTF) continued its emergence from the COVID-19 pandemic and returned to a full slate of competition both domestically and internationally. As the year progressed, COVID protocols became less and less stringent, and by mid-year, for all practical purposes, things were back to business as normal.

Our Indoor and Outdoor National Championships each had excellent turnouts at the Armory in New York City and University of Kentucky in Lexington respectively. In fact, the Outdoor meet had its largest registration since the 2010 meet in Sacramento. We also had a good turnout for the WMA Championships in Finland mid-summer and that team placed third on the medal table behind host Finland and nearby Germany. The "minor" championships (Indoor Heptathlon, Outdoor Combined Events, and Throws) all took place as scheduled, though fields were somewhat down, largely because of timing, continuing COVID concerns of athletes, and rising travel costs.

At the local and regional levels, meets returned in 2022, with outdoor regional meets in all seven regions and indoor meets in six of the seven regions – including the West region for the first time in many years. Plans are falling into place for regional championships in 2023, and more and more associations are adding association masters events as well.

To maximize the number of medals at the WMA Championships in Finland, USATF Masters created a partnership with the USATF Foundation to repeat the travel grant program that was previously known as the World #1 Program, thanks to the assistance of our Board of Directors member Chris Pasko. Funds were solicited from generous donors, giving us slightly more than \$50,000 in the fund. Approximately \$24,000 was disbursed to athletes likely to win medals in Tampere prior to the meet, and, with additional budget support from USATF and our sponsor HTWO Hydrogen Water, an additional \$55,000 was disbursed to medal winners. Plans are in place to repeat the program for the indoor WMA Championships in Poland in 2023.

The Masters Exhibition Events calendar was quite full, with events at the Indoor Championships in Spokane (200m for both men and women), Outdoor Championships in Eugene (800m for both men and women), and the Drake Relays (the Rex Harvey Memorial Masters Exhibition shot put). Plans are already underway to expand the program for 2023.

A major emphasis in 2022 was placed on communicating with our athletes. This included upgrading the information on the USATF Masters website, usatfmasters.org; creating webpages for all regional meets on usatfmasters.org for the first time, and creating an email distribution list for an MTF Committee created monthly newsletter and

other messages through our new account with Constant Contact. Newsletters now go out around the middle of each month with information about upcoming events and other major issues for masters athletes. Part of the emphasis on communications is the Grow to Impact Grant we received from USATF (\$5000) for activities to grow our local, regional, and national championships.

All of our regional coordinators sub-committee chairs and the members of their committees put in countless hours doing the important work that makes MTF tick. Without their commitment and active involvement, putting many hours into meetings and other activities on behalf of MTF, none of what we have accomplished this year would have been possible.

Finally, MTF benefits tremendously from the work of our representative on the USATF Board of Directors, Chris Pasko as well as my fellow officers, Vice Chair Robert Thomas, Secretary Amanda Scotti, and Treasurer Mike Travers. Chris is in regular touch with those of us in leadership positions and plays a key role in representing MTF and what we are accomplishing to other members of the USATF Board. He also played the key role in setting up our relationship with the USATF Foundation. Robert, Amanda, and Mike do their individual jobs exceedingly well, but they also put hours and hours in every week attending other MTF meetings and making sure everything runs smoothly.