



RACE WALKING NEWS

March 2024

Success and More Work to Do at National Masters Indoors Track & Field

The **USATF Masters Indoors Championships** was held in Chicago. The walks were contested on March 21 and 22 for the 1 Mile and 3000m respectively. High Altitude Racewalk Team (HART) athletes Marianne Martino and Carol Wilkinson represented the Colorado association. The competition was intense with tough judging from officials with both USATF and Silver Level World Athletics. The tougher judging



Above: David Swartz (Pegasus Track Club), Carol Wilkinson (HART) and Marianne Martino (HART). Swartz and Martino were both named Masters Racewalk Athletes of 2023 (again!)

prepared our athletes for what they will expect when World Masters Track and Field Indoor competition comes to Florida in 2025.

The beauty of Track Family and the Racewalk Community in particular, we celebrate the amazing accomplishments of our colleagues from other associations. Chicago saw two massive records fall – three American and one long standing World record!

1 Mile

The first event for the Ladies of HART was the 1 Mile, contested at 3:30p CDT. Both Martino and Wilkinson compete in the 70-74

age group. Both athletes were able to finish the event with respectable times. Scores were posted before the red card paperwork was completely tallied.

Martino brought home a silver behind speedy Karen Swisher (Unattached). She posted a respectable 10:16.02. Her performance came after some travel snafus that would have put off a weaker athlete, but Martino proved her mettle. She also bettered her time of 10:32.53 set at the Air Force Academy.

The hard part of the rules of Racewalk is that sometimes athletes are disqualified (DQ) after splits are shown and unofficial standings are posted. Wilkinson remembered seeing a couple yellow paddles and thought she had corrected the infraction, however with such a short race, that is difficult. Sadly, about half an hour after the unofficial results were posted, it appeared Wilkinson had DQ'd. Noting a knee softness was noted at That Dam Run 5k earlier in March, she was determined to focus on the 3000m.



Above: Martino – Hip 7 – hot on the heels of Swisher during the 3000m race.

The age groups on the track were 60-79. Maryanne Daniel (Connecticut Racewalkers) broke the 1 Mile indoor record she had set only three weeks before! She replaced her 9:20 time she broke the record 65 age group record three weeks ago with 9:14.46!

Michael Blanchard races for Pegasus and is part of the Michigan Association, but lives in Castle Rock. Blanchard held on the bronze in the Men's 60-64 with 10:50.03. He did well but stated that he was feeling dizzy prior to the event. A teammate gave him a protein bar to try to settle his system down.

3000 Meter

The Ladies of HART returned to the track for the 3000 Meter contested at 12:30p CDT. Martino and Wilkinson were ready to finish off the Indoor Season with good showings before transitioning to training for the Outdoor season.

Martino brought home another silver behind Swisher who put fire in her shoes for an American record. Martino posted 19:21.25. This time was a great deal faster than her 20:07.23 she clocked at the Air Force Academy at Mid Americas. She clicked off stable laps, averaging 1:17.74 per lap. Martino left Chicago clear of calls and a pair of silvers tucked in her luggage. She closes out her season with some good times and is ready to get training for the outdoor season, as long as we don't have a huge snow!

Wilkinson showed up at the track ready to correct her technique from her first race and end the season strong. Sadly, she was pulled from the track about half way through the race. Although being DQ'd is never fun, Wilkinson was realistic about her training and focus. She's highly motivated to focus and return to proper form for the longer Outdoor season.

Records fell in this race. Swisher, who Martino came in silver to, reset the American 70-74 Age Group record from 19:02.02 to 18:53.83! In the Women's 55-59 event, long time Racewalker, Michelle Rohl (Greater Philadelphia TC) quite literally obliterated both the American and World Masters Athletics (WMA) Age group records. Once ratified, the American record of 16:14.01 and WMA one of 14:41.24 will be reset to 14:19.74!

In the 60-69 heat, Blanchard eked through his 3000 Meter event collecting two Red Cards along the way. He got his dizzy situation sorted out, focused and picked up speed. His 20:06.76 bested his 20:38.05 set at Air Force, thus earned him a second bronze to hang on his wall in Castle Rock!

With this, we end the 2024 Indoor Master's season. The 2025 event was announced and shall be held in Gainesville, Florida; the same venue as next year's World Masters Indoor Championships.