

## 2022 Athletics Report

The 2022 New Hampshire Highland Games Heavy Athletics has closed another chapter of the NH Highland Games & Festival. Professional Men, Professional Women, Professional Masters and Amateur Men gave great performances to the delight of the large number of spectators who came to the games. The Adaptive Athletes gave great performances with the 12th year of that competition.

The **Professional Men's** competition was held on Saturday and Sunday. Vlad Tulacek from the Czech Republic, fresh off of coming in second at the Highland Games World Championships 2 weeks prior, came focused on being the champion at the NHHG&F. Vlad won 5 of 7 scored events and as well as the Challenge Caber and the Loon Stone Carry. His achievements gave him the edge and allowed him to claim the win over a very strong field for the D'Amante Cup. 2018 World Champion Chuck Kasson from Nebraska came in second and was pushing Vlad the entire competition. Nick McPhee from Maine mixed strength and incredible athleticism to claim 3rd place overall in a field of men who were physically much larger. The field was rounded out by Wes Kiser of North Carolina, Garrett Blatnik of Tennessee, Jeff Kaste of New Hampshire, Nate Burchette of Iowa and Justin Gagne of Maine, all giving fantastic performances all weekend.

The **Professional Women** saw Adrienne Wilson of South Carolina come out on top of Nakita Marzano of Delaware in 7 events on Saturday. Adrienne is considered by many to be the greatest of all women Highland games athletes and she did not disappoint the spectators this year!

The **Professional Masters** competition had three experienced athletes vying for the Mike Walsh Memorial Trophy. Mike Zolkiewisz won the competition and set another of his many world records in the weight over bar clearing the height of 21'6" with the 42 lb weight. Will Barron of Maine came in second with Kevin Robinson of New Brunswick coming in 3rd.

The **New England Amateur Invitational Championships** was a hotly contested competition held on Sunday, with the Kenneth Cup going to Thor Gylfason of North Carolina. Second place was garnered by Tony Trapenese just one point ahead in the overall standings over Ronnie Reimika who claimed third. The field was rounded out by Bryan Staggs, Bill Waddell, Troy Johnson, Billy Crawford and Chris Sickler who gave their all and great performances.

The **Adaptive Athletes** were welcomed and supported by loud cheers of approval from the crowd of spectators. Makala Briar represented the woman in 2 days of throwing on both Saturday and Sunday. The men competing were Owen Anketell, Dennis Parker, Butch Freeman, Royal Page, Stephen Burchette, Peter Keller and fan favorite Dave "Gun Show" Bonfiglio. Putting stones, tossing weights and cabers allowed these athletes to show case athletic intensity and courage. Most of the other divisions of athletes came on to the field to help with marking, retrieving weights and offering coaching for the Adaptive Athletes.

Chuck Kasson was awarded a special plaque in recognition of his years of competing in the New Hampshire Highland Games and showing professionalism and sportsmanship at the highest level. This was Chuck's last year competing at the NH Highland Games & Festival and we will all miss him.

The New Hampshire Highland Games Heavy Athletics thank all our fantastic sponsors and devoted fans, without whom, we could not provide the very best in World Class competition. We hope to see everyone again next year who came to cheer on the athletes!