27th MSB NCO overcomes hurdles

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Try driving from Texas to Oregon in two days, over 44 hours, and then compete in a national track meet. Sounds ridiculous, right? After driving a measly six straight hours most people's rear ends feel like jello, not to mention that their legs feel like two heavy pieces of meat, not really a part of their bodies anymore; just simply hanging there to put weight on the gas pedal.

Now, try driving 44 hours in two days and then competing against some of the top track athletes in the world. Crazy, right?

Ask Sgt 1st Class Kerry Sloan, of Company A, 27th Main Support Battalion, how crazy this is.

Last week, Sloan participated in the 2000 National Masters Outdoor Track and Field Championships, in the 35-39 year old age bracket, in Eugene, Ore., and accomplished something he had only dreamed of to this point: bringing home a gold medal in a race against the world's finest.

"It hasn't sunken in yet," he said. "I finally got the national championship; I've been trying to get (the gold) in a national competition since 1977," said Sloan, who has competed on many levels: from high school to college.

Sloan is a veteran of the master's national competitions, having competed in the nationals for the past seven years.

Twenty-three years of hard work have finally paid dividends for Sloan, who nearly brought home the gold last year in the 400-meter hurdles. Through his hard work, he earned the silver.

"This year I was more mentally prepared than ever before; I knew what to expect," he said about what took him over the top in this year's event.

The events he competed in were the 400-meter hurdles, 110-meter high hurdles, triple jump, long jump, and the 4 x 100 meter relay. He was also slated to run in two other events but due to his extensive road trip, he wasn't able to make it to those events in time.

Missing the first two running events was really disappointing, Sloan said. But his resolve proved much too great to allow those things to bring him down.

Sloan, after the minor setback, proceeded to leap his way into the history books by smoking the competition in the 400-meter hurdles, gaining the much-coveted gold medal. The closest competitors, which were more than three seconds behind, were a Tennessee native and a runner all the way from Hong Kong.

His other victories were a silver medal in the 110-meter high hurdles and a bronze medal in the triple jump.

Upon returning, Sloan said he has no plans of slowing down. He'll continue his rigorous training regimen and continue to coach and mentor his track team, A Running Start Track Club.

"Now I can show (the track team) what it takes to be a national champion," Sloan said. "I can finally show them by example."

Sloan stayed true to his goal of attaining greatness in running, while still fulfilling his duties as a soldier.

"You can do anything you set your mind to," he said. "You may not get it done today or tomorrow, but in time if you have persistence and perseverance, then you can achieve anything.

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