



Photo by Steven E. Frischling/WpN, 2004

Victor Gras named Athlete of the Month

BOSTON – Victor Gras, a graduating senior at Belmont High School has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for June 2004. On June 5, Gras won the mile at the Massachusetts State High School Championships in a record 4:05.14, the fastest time in the U.S. this year in scholastic competition. On June 19, in Raleigh, NC, Gras ran 4:06.69 to finish second in the mile at the Adidas Outdoor Championships, the nation’s most prestigious post-season high school event. Gras was leading by almost twenty yards with 100 yards left, but faded and was overtaken in the final yards. Afterwards, Belmont H.S. coach, Bill Brotchie, explained that Gras, who was on pace to finish in 4:03, was suffering from a bout of anemia, which has been a periodic problem for him.

A week later, on June 26, Gras showed excellent recovery at the Boston High Performance Meet at Bentley College, running 3:45.19 for 1500m—an equivalent 4:03 mile – the fastest high school time in the U.S. this year. Based on this performance, Gras, a French citizen whose family moved to the U.S. five years ago, was selected by France to compete for its national team at the World Junior Championships in Grosseto, Italy, July 13-18.

Gras follows **Chris Barnicle** of Newton (MA) North H.S. who was USATF-NE’s honoree for May. Gras and Barnicle’s accomplishments have set a very high standard for future high school athletes to be named Athlete of the Month.

In other outstanding performances, two New England throwers won their events at the NCAA championships in Austin, TX, June 9-12. **Jacob Freeman** of East Greenwich, RI, a senior at Manhattan College, won the men’s hammer throw at 232-2 (70.77m), and **Laura Gerraughty** of Nashua, NH, competing for the University of North Carolina, won the woman’s shot put with a throw of 59-11 (18.26m). On June 26, at the Chapel Hill meet in NC, Gerraughty won the shot at 60-7 ¼ (18.47m).

Josh Ferenc, age 22 of Keene, NH, a “rookie” mountain runner, won the La Sportiva USATF-NE Mountain Running Championships at Northfield Mountain (MA) on June 5, edging 2002 and 2003 USATF Mountain Runner of the Year, **Paul Low**, of Amherst, MA, in a time of 49:18 for the 13.2K circuit. **Nikki Kimball**, of Elizabethtown, NY, who runs for the Central Mass. Striders, won the women’s division and was 10th overall at the grueling Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run in California on June 26, running a fast 18:43:25. Impressively, just one week earlier on June 19, Kimball had placed 6th among women in the 7.6 mile Mt. Washington Road Race.

Colin McArdle, age 60 of Newton, MA broke five minutes for the mile with a 4:59.56 at the Boston High Performance Meet at Bentley College on June 5. McArdle mark missed the M60 American record by just one second and “age-graded” to an equivalent 4:01.6 mile.

Events coming up in July include the Stowe (VT) 8 Miler on July 18, the fifth of seven events in the USATF-NE Road Racing Grand Prix Series, and the USATF Eastern Regional Masters Championships at Springfield College (MA) on July 24.

Also, the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Track & Field will be held July 9-18 in Sacramento, CA. Highly ranked New England qualifiers include **Jennifer Toomey** of Salem, MA in the 800m and 1500m, Boston College coach **John Mortimer** of Goffstown, NH in the 3000m steeplechase, **Laura Gerraughty** of Nashua, NH in the shot put, and **Amy Rudolph** of Providence, RI and **Shalane Flanagan** of Marblehead, MA in the 5000m.

USATF – New England’s mission is to continue its leadership role as one of the outstanding associations of the national governing body in Athletics. USATF – New England provides opportunities for athletes of all ages to pursue excellence in long distance running, race walking, and track and field, from grassroots to the elite level.

Athlete of the Month
is a new program for
USATF- New England and is
designed to recognize
outstanding performers at all
levels of the sport.
USATF-NE will name a new
honoree each month and
feature the athlete on the
USATF-NE website.