



Chris Barnicle named Athlete of the Month



Photo courtesy of Mike Boucher of DyeStat

BOSTON, MA—Chris Barnicle, a junior at Newton (MA) North High School has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for May 2004. Barnicle set a New England high school record of 8:50.82 in the two mile at the Hartford Public Scholastic Meet on May 8. The old mark of 8:53.7, set in 1978 by the legendary Alberto Salazar of Wayland, MA, was also bettered by Victor Gras of Belmont High School (MA) who ran 8:52.05 for second place.

Gras, a three time Massachusetts high school mile champion, quickened the pace after a 4:30 opening mile. Barnicle stayed with him and outkicked Gras with a sensational 61 second bell lap. Barnicle and Gras’s times are the 2nd and 3rd fastest high school marks in the U.S. this year. After the race, Barnicle showed sportsmanship equal to his talent on the track, telling Gras – in a reference to their previous matchups, “That’s one for Barnicle and six for Gras.”

In other outstanding performances, Amy Rudolph and Shalane Flanagan achieved the rigorous Olympic Games qualifying “A” standard in the women’s 5000m at the Boston High Performance Meet at Bentley College in Waltham, MA on May 29. Rudolph, a Providence College graduate who lives in RI, ran 15:00.03 to finish a close second to 2003 U.S. National Champion at 5000m, Marla Runyan, who clocked 14:59.20. Flanagan of Marblehead, MA, who attends the University of North Carolina, but is running unattached this season as she trains for the Olympics, finished third in 15:05.08. All three runners set personal bests for the distance.

In Gainesville, FL on May 30, competing in the NCAA East Regional Championships, Laura Gerraughty won the shot put with a throw of 60-10 (18.54m). Gerraughty, of Nashua, NH, a junior at the University of North Carolina, is favored to win the upcoming NCAA Championships and has already achieved the Olympic Games “A” standard. John Mortimer, an assistant track coach at Boston College, has already qualified for the 3000m Steeplechase at the U.S. Olympic Trials in July. On May 22, he showed his versatility, winning the Bedford Rotary / USATF-NE Championship 12K with a course record of 36:36. This event was the second of seven in the 2004 USATF-NE Road Racing Grand Prix Series.

Three New England collegians placed first at the NCAA Division III National Championships at Decatur, IL May 27-29. Amber James of Wheaton College (MA) won national titles with a 24.25 in the 200m and a personal best 53.58 in the 400m. Dan Olson, also of Wheaton, won the men’s high jump at 7-1 (2.16m). Olson has won several national titles in the high jump and has a “B” qualifier (conditional) for the U.S. Olympic Trials. Jessica Trombly, a senior at Tufts won the 400m Hurdles in 59.98. The Wheaton College women’s team finished third in the Division III Nationals. By ordinary standards, this is a fine accomplishment but in recent years, under head coach, Paul Souza, also a U.S. national teams coach, the Wheaton women’s teams have won eight indoor and outdoor Division III National Championships.

Events coming up in June include the New England Junior Olympics on June 19 at the University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH), the New England Track & Field Championships on June 20 at MIT, and two races in the USATF-NE Road Racing Grand Prix Series; the Rhody 5K on June 13 in Lincoln RI and the Whirlaway 10 K on June 27 in Methuen, MA.

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.