



## Mari Littleton named USA Track & Field– New England’s Athlete of the Month for November



BOSTON – **Mari Littleton**, age 12, who competes for the Nashua (NH) Police Athletic League Cruisers, has been named USA Track & Field New England’s Athlete of the Month for November. At the Region 1 Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships at Augusta, ME on November 21, Littleton won the Midget Girls race by 24 seconds with a sparkling 11:18 for the 3k course. On November 14, in Amherst, NH, Littleton, a 2002 USATF national cross country champion in the Bantam Girls division, also won the Midget Girls division at the USATF-NE Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships.. Mark Fraser, program director for the Nashua PAL described Mari as quiet and reserved; "you barely know she is there sometimes", but added that, once she's racing, she demonstrates "a high level of determination and commitment to success". The first weekend in December, Littleton followed her Region 1 victory up with an All-American 22nd place in a 304 runner field - and first New Englander - at the

National JO Championships in Illinois despite having a heavy cold, and led her team to a 5th place finish out of 28 teams.

In other outstanding performances, on November 22, **Kim Smith** of Providence College won the NCAA Division I Cross Country title at Terre Haute, IN. Smith, a senior from Auckland, New Zealand, won the race by 17 seconds, posting a time of 20:09 for the 6k course. On November 4, at Franklin Park in Boston, **Orla O’Mahoney**, who hails from Ireland, led the Boston Athletic Association women’s team to victory in the USATF-NE Cross Country Championships, clocking 21:12 on a course that measured just over 6k. On the men’s side, USATF-NE office manager, **Paul Ryan**, who competes for Reebok Boston, won the New England title and finished 5th overall in a race that included several international runners.

On scholastic scene, **Chris Barnicle**, a senior at Newton North High School, continued his dominance of high school competition by winning the Foot Locker Northeast Regional Cross Country Championships in 15:27 for the 5k course. This past May, Barnicle was selected as the first honoree for USATF-NE’s Athlete of the Month after breaking Alberto Salazar’s New England record for 2 miles, a mark that had held for 26 years. Other New England winners at the Region 1 Junior Olympic Cross-Country Championships included **Erin LeGasse** of Cranston, RI who won the Intermediate Girls 5k race by 28 seconds, **David Sinclair** of Waitsfield, VT in the Midget Boys division, **Bridgette Black** in the Youth Girls division and **Jared Garfield** in the Youth Boys race, both of the Nashua PAL.

**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.

*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.*