

## **Sherita Williams Named USA Track & Field - New England Athlete of the Month for January**



Photo: Stanley Hu

BOSTON – Sherita Williams, age 24 of Providence, RI, who competes for the Greater Boston Track Club (GBTC), has been named USA Track & Field New England's Athlete of the Month for January 2006. Competing at the GBTC Invitational at Harvard University on January 22, Williams broke the meet and facility record in the women's triple jump with a personal best of 44' 00.75" (13.43m). At the end of January, this mark ranked her third in the nation.

Williams is a 2004 graduate of Michigan State University where she earned both bachelors and masters degrees in kinesiology. At MSU she starred in the sprints and hurdles as well as the long and triple jump. Asked about the GBTC meet, Williams said that she was excited and happy with her performance and credited the enthusiastic support of her teammates for helping her jump so well.

Describing her pre-competition routine, she noted that about an hour before her event, after an initial warm-up, she likes to take a "catnap". Asked to elaborate, she talked about going into a state of deep relaxation for 15 minutes during which she usually falls asleep - as she did the day of the GBTC Invitational. Although this degree of relaxation before competition may sound unusual, New England Patriots fans may remember quarterback Tom Brady's well-publicized nap in the locker room an hour before the start of the 2002 Super Bowl.

Williams will compete in the triple jump at the USA Indoor Track & Field Championships to be held at the Reggie Lewis Center in Roxbury, MA, February 24-26. She expressed hopes of finishing in the top three in the national championships.

Looking towards the future, Williams first said that she wanted to triple jump 45 feet this year, then corrected herself and said that more important than any particular distance, she wants to stay competitive with the top group of American triple jumpers and eventually achieve standards that will allow her to compete internationally for the U.S.

In another outstanding performance at the GBTC Invitational on January 22, Joanne Dow, age 41 of Manchester, NH, clocked 12:57.42 in easily winning the 3000m race walk. Her time was 8 seconds faster than her silver medal winning performance for this event at the 2005 USA Indoor Track & Field Championships.

Sean O'Brien, a graduate of Winnisquam (NH) H.S., and then a middle distance track star at American University, became the first New Hampshire high school graduate to run under 4 minutes for the mile as he timed 3:59.05 on January 14 at the University of Washington Indoor Preview meet in Seattle.

*USATF-NE provides opportunities for athletes of all ages to pursue excellence in running, race walking, and track and field, from grassroots to the elite level.*

**Athlete of the Month** is a 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.