

**Grace Watson Named USATF – New England Athlete of the Month**



*Photo by Jim Fesler*

BOSTON – **Grace Watson**, age 17, a senior at Belmont (MA) High School, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for February. Watson dominated the girls high jump during the indoor season and, on four successive weekends in February and early March, won the Massachusetts Division 2 state meet with a jump of 5-5, the Massachusetts All-State meet at 5-7, the New England Interscholastic Championships at 5-7, then finally triumphed as first American in a field of nearly 50 jumpers at the National Scholastic Indoor Championships at the Armory in New York City, where she leaped 1.74m (5-8 ½). Her personal best is 5-9, achieved at the Bob McIntyre Relays in January.

Her coach, **Brian Dunn**, described Watson as a natural talent who was clearing five feet within weeks of beginning to high jump as a freshman. Dunn characterized Watson as cool and composed in competition, saying she never gets jittery and that “outside forces don’t affect her, when they call her name [to jump].” He further described Watson as having great potential because she is at an early stage of her speed and strength conditioning..

Asked about her ability to win consistently and perform well under pressure, Watson credited her experience at the regional and national Junior Olympic meets last summer (for the Waltham Track Club), with helping her feel more comfortable in a big meet atmosphere. A highly recruited student-athlete who plans to major in biology in college, Watson indicated that she is deciding between attending Brown University or Boston University. She agreed with Coach Dunn’s

Also, in February, several athletes with New England ties placed well at the AT&T US Indoor T & F Championships held at the Reggie Lewis Track in Boston for the 5<sup>th</sup> straight year. On the women’s side, **Kristal Yush** of CT, an assistant coach at URI was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the weight throw, **Sherita Williams** of the Greater Boston T.C. (USATF-NE Athlete of the Month for January 2006) was 4<sup>th</sup> in the triple jump, and **Rebecca Donoghue** of New Balance Boston was 5<sup>th</sup> in the 3000m. On the men’s side **Michael Kazmierczak**, a URI graduate, and **Zachary Pollinger** of Harvard, placed 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively in the 5000m race walk.

**Athlete of the Month**  
is a USATF- New England  
program 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.