

Mark Amirault Named USATF – New England Athlete of the Month



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BOSTON – **Mark Amirault**, age 17 of Xaverian High School in Westwood, MA has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for January 2007. Amirault has shown tremendous ability over a surprising range of race distances during the 2007 indoor track season. On January 27 at the Reebok Boston Indoor Games held at the Reggie Lewis Track Center in Boston, Amirault ran 4:11.26 for 3rd place in the Junior Boys Mile, which remains the third best mark in the nation this year.

Two weeks earlier, at a Tri-County League meet at the Reggie Lewis track, Amirault won the 1000m race in 2:31.20, the fastest time in Massachusetts at that point in the season. He also ran a 600m race in January in 1:25, within two seconds of the state best and in early February, raced to the best time in the nation for the 2 mile, with a scintillating 9:17.90 at the Tri-County League’s championship meet. The Reggie Lewis track no longer allows the use of spikes, except at major championship events, so Amirault ran in flats while posting his fast times in the 600, 1000 and 2 mile. On January 28, at the Bob McIntyre Memorial Relays, Xaverian High School recorded a seasonal state-best time of 8:01.26 in the 4 x 800m relay. Amirault, joined by teammates **Dan Higgins, Taylor Fitzgerald, and Andrew MacIsaac**, anchored the relay in 1:56.

Amirault, who is vying for valedictorian at his school, has a strong interest in molecular biology, and will attend Princeton University next fall. Asked about his indoor track accomplishments, Amirault expressed satisfaction, but made it clear that he is pointing towards

the outdoor season where he hopes to take aim at the state and New England 2 mile record. He has been running 40-50 miles a

week during the winter, almost all of it outdoors, and has been doing fartlek-type speed workouts but no speed intervals on the track. He credits new distance coach, **Brian Dunn**, with bringing new ideas and new techniques that have helped him improve. Asked about goals for the future, Amirault believes he will eventually move up in distance to the 5000m and hopes that with continued improvement, he will be able to run internationally as a professional runner and on U.S. national teams.

New England had an abundance of fine track & field performances in January. One that cannot be overlooked was by Marblehead, MA native, **Shalane Flanagan** who graduated from the University of North Carolina in 2004 and now lives in Portland, Oregon. On January 27 at the Reebok Boston Indoor Games, she ran the 3000m race, her first track race in a year and a half after recovering from foot surgery that removed an extra bone from her foot. Nonetheless, after staying off an overly fast early pace, Flanagan moved up at 1200m and ran on the shoulder of 2004 Olympic 5000m gold medallist, Meseret Defar of Ethiopia. With two laps left, Flanagan challenged for the lead. Defar held her off to win in 8:30.31 but Flanagan finished 2nd in 8:33.25 a new American record, almost 6 seconds faster than the former record. This was a great breakthrough race for the Massachusetts native, and suggests the possibility of even greater achievements as she heads into the Olympic year of 2008.

Athlete of the Month
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 recognize outstanding
 performers at all levels of
 the sport. USATF-NE will
 name a new honoree each
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