

Nate Jenkins Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for November



Photo by Patti Stirk
New England Runner

BOSTON – Nate Jenkins, age 27 of Lowell, MA has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for November 2007. Jenkins, a member of the Greater Lowell Road Runners, who is sponsored by Saucony, finished 7th in the U.S. Men’s Olympic Marathon Trials in New York City on November 3, running a personal best 2:14:56 in only his second marathon. In a highly competitive field, Jenkins finished between U.S. 2004 Olympian Dan Browne who was 6th and Meb Keflezighi, the Olympic silver medalist in the 2004 Athens Olympic marathon who finished 8th.

Jenkins a 2004 graduate of UMass – Lowell, is currently an assistant cross country and track coach at his alma mater. At 6’2” and 162 pounds, Jenkins is bigger than most elite marathoners. Last winter he suffered from mononucleosis, which left him unable to train effectively for a number of weeks. Still he believes he rebounded well from illness, and had a mostly injury-free year of training, consistently topping 140 miles a week for much of the year. He tapered well for the Olympic trials, dropping to 80% and then 50% of his usual weekly training mileage and “felt freshness in my legs” as the trials neared.

With the 20th fastest seed time (2:15:28 in his 2006 marathon debut in Austin, TX), Nate felt that he had to balance “going for it” with intelligent self-management, by not going out too fast. His goal was to finish in the top ten. As it turned out, the pace was conservative through the first three miles, and it was easy for Nate to stay in the large lead pack of 60+ runners. By the 10th mile, as eventual winner Ryan Hall and others began to push, Jenkins felt that he was “already on the red line”, so he drifted into the “B pack”.

He fought through a stitch from mile 12-14, but soon after started picking off lead pack members who were dropping off the pace. Although the final miles were grueling, Jenkins was excited to pass some highly ranked runners, including Keflezighi. He felt thrilled to finish 7th and said afterwards; “I really knew I had achieved everything I could on the day”. Yet afterwards in his hotel room, he felt more ambivalence, recognizing that the opportunity to make an Olympic team only happens every four years.

For the future, Jenkins hopes to continue to improve and believes that he has the ability to eventually run under 2:10 for the marathon. He would like the opportunity to represent the U.S. on national teams and wants to place well at major marathons such as Boston and New York. His mental makeup appears suited for continued improvement in training and racing. Specifically he shows considerable aptitude for self-management while racing as reflected in his statement that, “I tend to be able to inhabit my own brain... to be a passenger within myself”, that is, rather than getting pulled out of his plan by the events unfolding around him.

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outstanding performers
at all levels of the sport.
USATF-NE will name a
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month and feature the
athlete on the USATF-
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