

Matt Pelletier Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for October



Photo: www.runningheritage.org

BOSTON – **Matt Pelletier**, age 29 of Warwick, RI, who runs for the Running Heritage club, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for October 2008. On October 19, at the Bay State Marathon in Lowell, MA, Pelletier won the race by a mile, literally as well as figuratively, as his time of 2:21:41 was 5:32 ahead of runner-up **Scott Carrara** of Hudson, MA.

In fact, Pelletier’s focus race for this fall was the Chicago Marathon held on October 12. His personal best is 2:17:17, which he achieved in the U.S. Men’s Olympic Marathon Trials held in New York City the day before the 2007 New York City Marathon. Matt was seeded around 50th going into the trials, but ran even splits and passed enough competitors in the closing miles to finish in 19th place. In Chicago, Pelletier was aiming for a 2:16, but events conspired to make that unattainable. The temperature, already 70 degrees at the start, shot up to 85 degrees within a couple of hours. In addition, he was placed in a non-elite starting chute, and found himself in the lead and having to set his own pace until the chutes converged. Clearly behind his goal pace, Matt decided to stop

at 16 miles and save it for another day.

That day came one week later at Bay State. Despite the hard miles in his legs from Chicago, Matt wanted to break 2:20 in the Lowell race. Accordingly, he persuaded **Casey Moulton** of Pelham, NH, whose marathon PB is 2:15:26, to pace him through the opening miles. Ultimately, Casey agreed to run the first half-marathon, which they went through just under 1:10. Casey then dropped out. Matt continued to run at pace, though the winds picked up in the second half and after mile 20, his ankle started hurting. The pain continued to increase: he described it as “excruciating” by the time he entered LeLacheur Park (home of the Lowell Spinners minor league baseball team) and ran along the warning track to the finish. Despite problems, his winning time was the second fastest in race history.

Pelletier is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island. He teaches physical education at Toll Gate High School in Warwick. Describing himself as a “high-mileage guy,” Matt averages over 120 miles a week, and tops out at 140 for a couple of weeks heading into a big race. He plans his year around two major races: a spring marathon and a fall marathon. He says that all other workouts and races are just part of his preparation for these goal races. The 2009 BAA Boston Marathon is his next target, and he notes that it will be an early opportunity to get a qualifier (under 2:19:00) for the men’s 2012 USA Olympic Marathon Trials.