

Francis Hernandez Named USATF-New England Athlete of the Month for January



photo: nh.milesplit.org

BOSTON – **Francis Hernandez**, age 17 of Nashua, NH, a senior at Bishop Guertin High School in Nashua, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for January 2010. Hernandez ran three fast mile races in January that vaulted him to the top tier of U.S. high school milers.

On January 10, at the Dartmouth Relays in Hanover, NH, Hernandez won the high school mile with in 4:17.28, winning by more than 15 meters. The following week at the Yale Interscholastic Track & Field Classic in New Haven on January 16, Francis moved from third place to first with a ferocious kick over the final lap. His winning time of 4:14.98, was more than a second ahead of the second place finisher.

Two weeks later, on January 29, Hernandez entered the 103rd Millrose Games ranked 5th nationally in the mile. The pace was relatively slow through the first half and Hernandez was surprised to find himself in the lead. Four runners then sprinted past him as the pace sped up.

Francis was able to respond, passing two of the runners late in the race, winning a bronze medal, with a 4:17.58 finish, a fast time for the 11 lap to the mile board track at Madison Square Garden.

Hernandez started getting noticed as an 8th grader at Nashua Catholic Middle School. He has excelled in cross country as well as on the track and appears well-positioned to become one of the best high school distance runners in New Hampshire history.

In 1994, **Matt Downin** and **John Mortimer** put New Hampshire on the national stage as they finished 1-2 that fall at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in San Diego. Hernandez, whose coach, **Steve Hunt**, who praises him as a very coachable athlete with a strong work ethic, appears poised to join their ranks.