

## Emma Fitzgerald Named USATF-New England Athlete of the Month for July



*Emma Fitzgerald (photo by Kikki)*

BOSTON – **Emma Fitzgerald**, age 14 of Wayland, MA, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for July 2011. Competing in the Youth Division (age 13-14) at the USATF Junior Olympic National Championships in Wichita, Kansas, July 26-31, Emma won a gold medal in the javelin and a bronze medal in the pentathlon and placed in the top eight in three other events. Emma was the only New England gold medalist at the meet.

The Junior Olympic National Championships are highly competitive, as young athletes advance by qualifying at local, association and regional championship meets. The USATF - New England JO Championships took place at Fitchburg (MA) State University on June 18, and Emma was sensational, as she won all four of her events. She won the javelin (600 grams) with a superb throw of 145’ 8” (44.39m), and took first place in the pole vault, with a height of 9’ 0”, the long jump, with a leap of 16’ 6”, and the triple jump, with a mark of 32’ 6 ½”.

Emma’s next challenge was the USATF Region I Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships held at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, NY 7/8 to 7/10. Fitzgerald continued to dominate at this level of competition, winning all five of her events – the pentathlon, javelin, long jump, triple jump and pole vault. She was particularly impressive in the pentathlon, where she scored 2922 points and in the triple jump where she leaped a personal best of 34’ 9 ¾” (10.61m).

Few competitors are able to qualify for five events at the Junior Olympic nationals, but Emma made the most of her opportunity in large national fields, placing eighth in the pole vault, seventh in the long jump and fifth in the triple jump. In the pentathlon, she scored 2890 points in winning the bronze medal, and won her gold medal in the javelin by throwing 138’ 8” into what she described as a “bad wind.”

Not surprisingly, the javelin is Emma’s favorite event, and she gives abundant credit to her coach, Tom Petranoff, who she describes as “very supportive.” She is looking forward to high school, and eventually college competition in track & field. Asked to name her favorite track & field athlete, Emma replied, “Shalane Flanagan.” Flanagan, who starred at Marblehead (MA) High School, and won a bronze medal in the 10,000 meters at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, seems like an excellent model for a young athlete of Emma Fitzgerald’s talent and aspiration.