

Sheri Piers Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for April 2012



photo by *KevinRMorris*

BOSTON – **Sheri Piers**, age 40 of Falmouth, Maine, who competes for the Dringo Running Club, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for April 2012. On April 16, at the 116th Boston Marathon, Piers finished as the top American woman, and was 10th overall and 2nd master. Her time of 2:41:55 was particularly impressive as the temperature soared into the 80s, resulting in finishing times that averaged 7-10 minutes slower for elite runners.

Sheri was concerned about the weather reports before the race, but understood that it was important to focus away from time goals; “It was not going to be a day to focus on a PR,” she said, “instead, I went into a survival mode.” The heat felt oppressive right away, but Piers determined to keep an even pace, and didn’t bother checking most of her split times. As the race went on, she credits crowd support with helping her stay strong. She says people were chanting “USA” and telling her she was the first American. To her surprise, she maintained well, even in the final miles.

Interestingly, much of Sheri’s training this past winter was on her home treadmill. This may have helped with heat acclimation, because the room would get very warm as she ran and there is no cooling wind when running on a treadmill.

Sheri grew up in the Portland area and was a Maine state high school champion in cross country for Westbrook H.S. Despite

her success, she found running so grueling, that she chose to play basketball in college. She continued to run for fitness, but did not compete.

Not until 2005 when she met Kristin Barry at a “turkey trot”, did Piers start to train seriously and set high goals. Sheri and Kristin were both mothers of young children and they became close friends and training partners. At Kristin’s urging, they set out to qualify for the 2008 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials. They accomplished this at the Philadelphia Marathon in 2007, pacing each other the whole distance and finishing hand in hand in 2:45:37. Sheri attributes her continuing success to the mutual support and pushing she enjoys with Kristin. This January in Houston, Piers ran the 2012 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in 2:37:09 – just five seconds off her personal best.

Piers works as a nurse practitioner. She has her own family practice in Portland, and also works for St. Joseph’s College of Maine. She also finds time to coach – with Kristin Barry - the boys cross country team at Cheverus High School.

Asked about her goals and motivation for the future, Sheri included Kristin, saying, “Nothing is ever good enough for us, so we are always pushing.” She notes that she sets “reach goals” as well as more realistic goals, but the determination in her voice is apparent as she says, “I still want to break that 2:37 mark in the marathon.”