

Abbey D'Agostino Named USATF-New England Athlete of the Month for June 2012



photo by PhotoRun.net

BOSTON – **Abbey D'Agostino**, age 20 of Topsfield, MA, who has completed her sophomore year at Dartmouth College, has been named USA Track & Field – New England's Athlete of the Month for June 2012. On June 28, at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials in Eugene, Oregon, Abbey came in 5th in the women's 5000 meter run. Her time of 15:19.98 was only .19 behind 3rd place and she ran just under the Olympic Games "A" qualifying standard of 15:20.

Abbey is a 2010 graduate of Masconomet Regional H.S., and has made phenomenal progress in her first two years of college. At the Olympic Trials, she had the fastest time in the preliminary round of the women's 5000. On June 9, Abbey won the NCAA Division I women's 5000 meters in 16:11.34, to become the first national champion in the 38 year history of women's track & field at Dartmouth.

In addition to crediting Dartmouth coach and former Olympian, **Mark Coogan**, Abbey notes that running has become a much higher priority. "In high school, I thought of it as an extracurricular activity," she says, "but now I am fully dedicated and committed. Running has become such an important part of my identity. There's no doubt that I'll do whatever I need to do to make it work and fit with the rest of my life."

The NCAA championships, at Drake University in Des Moines, were held in oppressive heat. During Abbey's race, the temperature on the track reached 104 degrees. This made for a slow first mile. As the pace quickened, Abbey stayed composed and moved with the pack. With 300 meters left, she surged into the lead. "It was up to me to be the one who wanted it the most," she says. Coach Coogan "had told me to run

the last lap as if my life depended on it." She focused strongly on these thoughts as she drove for home. On the homestretch, Megan Goethals of Washington came up on the inside and pulled slightly ahead. With just 20 meters left, D'Agostino answered with one last surge and leaned for the win, just .03 in front. Abbey had run the final lap in 67.00 seconds.

At the Olympic Trials in Eugene, Oregon, D'Agostino's strategy for the June 25th preliminary round was, "to do my best and make the finals." Winning was not essential because the top 6 in each heat qualified automatically. To her surprise, Abbey ran hard enough to win her heat in 15:41.14 and was the fastest qualifier from both heats. She says that the race did not feel that hard. Although she knew the finals pace would be faster, she felt relaxed and confident; "I wanted to make the best of the opportunity that was in front of me."

She did exactly that, three days later, staying with leaders until late in the race. Two runners pulled ahead of the field, but Abbey ran hard. In a wild sprint over the last 50 meters, she dipped under the Olympic Games "A" standard of 15:20, and though she finished 5th, she missed a place on the Olympic team by only .19 seconds. "I was not disappointed in the results," says Abbey. "I was happy to be there and to do so well. The week in Eugene, Oregon was like a dream, one of the best experiences of my life."

Looking to the future, Abbey says, "I want to keep challenging myself, physically and mentally. There is so much to achieve in college, in running and in academics, but I also think about being ready for the next Olympic Trials."