

Alex Niemiec Named USATF – New England's Athlete of the Month for June 2013



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BOSTON – **Alex Niemiec**, a senior at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, is USA Track & Field - New England's Athlete of the Month for June 2013. On June 8 at the New England High School Track & Field Championships in New Britain, Connecticut, Niemiec won the long jump with a distance of 24'11", breaking a 21 year old meet record and bettering second place by 19". Just 5'7" tall, Alex also placed third in the high jump at the New Englands at 6'6" and has a season best of 6'8".

Niemiec also won those two events (the high jump and long jump) at the Massachusetts State Meet on June 1. On

June 20, the Gatorade Company in collaboration with USA Today High School Sports named Alex as its 2012-13 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year.

As a high school freshman, Alex had a best long jump of 16-8. During his sophomore year, he long jumped over 20 feet, and began to raise his goals and expectations. He enjoys the high jump almost as much as the long jump and also shows high ability as a hurdler and short sprinter with bests of 6.60 at 55 meters indoors and 10.9 in the 100 meters.

During indoor season as a senior, Niemiec made further breakthroughs with four long jumps over 23 feet and a best of 23-9 $\frac{3}{4}$ when he won the New England Indoor Championships. However, he found himself frustrated during the outdoor season when he could not break his PR. He knew the New England Championships would be his last high school meet, but didn't feel that confident going in because his right ankle was sore and needed to be taped. On his first two jumps, he felt some pain, but says that eventually his adrenaline kicked in and he felt more comfortable. Going into his 6th and final jump, although he had already won the competition, he was determined to jump 24 feet. He sprinted down the runway, lifted as well as he could, but didn't think he had done anything special. The officials and spectators knew otherwise, and as the tape stretched out to 24-11, Alex was overjoyed - and amazed that he had almost reached 25 feet.

Niemiec is now a freshman at Springfield College. He reports that track & field coach, Ken Klatka, had planned to retire, but was so excited by his prized recruit, that he has decided to stay four more years. Alex's goals as a freshman are to make All-American, to long jump over 25 feet, and to win the Division III nationals in the long jump.