

## Bobby Colantonio Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for July 2014



*Photo: Ed Ionata*

BOSTON – **Bobby Colantonio**, age 16 of Barrington, RI, is USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for July 2014. On July 23, at the National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships in Humble, Texas, Bobby won the national title in the hammer throw for the 15-16 Boy’s Division, with a toss of 215’ 1” (65.56m). This set a new Junior Olympic championship meet record by more than 7 feet, as Bobby won the competition by more than 30 feet over the second place thrower.

On July 11, at the USATF Region I Junior Olympic Championships held at Fitchburg State University, Colantonio won the hammer with a mighty throw of 219’ 7” (66.93m), setting a national Junior Olympic

record in the event for the 15-16 Boy’s Division. In June, Bobby won the New England Junior Olympic meet, and also won the hammer throw at the Rhode Island State High School Championships, only the second sophomore to do so.

Bobby has been throwing the hammer for only two years. His father, Robert Colantonio, Sr. had competed in the event in high school, winning the Rhode Island state championship in 1978. In the summer before Bobby entered high school, his father got him interested in throwing. Bobby developed rapidly – an understatement really – given that by the end of freshman year, he threw the 12 pound hammer over 212 feet, just missing the national high school freshman record of 213’ 0” - set by Conor McCullough of California in 2006. Bobby says his near-record throw “lit a good spark under me” and changed how he viewed the sport and his own potential. He became more passionate about throwing, more determined to excel, and more dedicated to learning and improving.

Bobby credits two people in particular for his accomplishments; his father and his coach, Bob Gourley. He says “My dad is my strength coach and motivator and Mr. Gourley works with me on my technique.” With his father, he does Olympic and power lifting, but points to the importance of mastering technique in throwing, saying that strength is never enough. Although Bobby played football as a freshman and sophomore, he has given it up as a junior. He wants to focus his athletic energies on throwing, noting that as much as he enjoys football, he doesn’t want to risk an injury that would interfere with his development as a thrower.

This summer, at the Sons of Italy meet in Providence on August 18, Bobby set a new personal best of 233’ 3” in the hammer. For the future, he has set very high goals. He wants to win the indoor nationals in the weight throw and then break the high school junior record in the hammer – currently 243’ 11” by Conor McCullough. He is determined to win the hammer at the U.S. World Youth Track & Field Trials next June so that he can represent and compete for the U.S. at the IAAF World Youth Championships to be held in Cali, Colombia in July 2015.