

Ashante Little Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for March 2014



Photo: athletics.wheatoncollege.edu

BOSTON – **Ashante Little** of Seabrook, NH, a senior at Wheaton College, is USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for March 2014. On March 15 at the NCAA Division III Women’s Indoor Track & Field Championships in Lincoln, Nebraska, Little won the 400 meter national title in 55.10. Her seasonal best of 54.82 led the nation and is the 2nd fastest women’s 400 in Division III history. Following the meet, Ashante was named Division III National Track Athlete of the Year for the indoor season.

At indoor nationals, the 400 was decided not in head-to-head competition, but by the fastest times in two sections. Running in the first section, Ashante followed her plan of going out hard, getting into good position during the middle of the race, and sustaining speed as well as possible over the last 150 meters. After running 55.10, she then had to wait for the second section. She states she was not watching with anxiety, because she was rooting for teammate, Meredith Scannell. The result was doubly pleasing as Ashante won the national title and her teammate did well in placing third.

Ashante finished her star-studded career at Wheaton with two national championships, 16 NCAA All-American honors in 6 different indoor and outdoor sprint and hurdle events, and selection as Co-NEWMAC NCAA Woman of the Year honoree for 2014. She radiates positivity and a belief in her ability to continue to improve, stating that her mantra is that “there is no ceiling.”

Ironically, Ashante did not have high expectations when she came to Wheaton from Winnecunnett H.S. in Hampton, NH., and considered quitting after freshman year. Most of her development began in sophomore year with the arrival of new track & field coach, Dave Cusano. Under his tutelage, Ashante began a strength training program that emphasized power lifts and Olympic lifts. She also became more of a student of track and field. Of highest importance, Little cites Coach Cusano’s creative and individualized approach to training, noting that two athletes training for the 400 meters or for the high jump don’t use the same approach for training, but rather follow a plan based on a careful appraisal of their strengths, weaknesses and training needs.

In September, Ashante will be moving to Phoenix, AZ to train with World Athletics Center, the brainchild of John Godina, a three-time world champion and two-time Olympic medalist in the shot put. Ashante will focus on developing her talent in the 400 meter hurdles and pursuing a professional track & field career.