

Dan Vassallo Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for November 2014



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BOSTON – Dan Vassallo of Peabody, MA, who competes for the Central Mass Striders, is USATF-New England's Athlete of the Month for November 2014. On November 23, Dan won the Philadelphia Marathon in 2:17:28. This was Vassallo's second victory at Philadelphia, and was exactly 4 minutes faster than his winning time in 2010. He smashed his previous PR of 2:21:13 at the 2012 Maine Marathon and secured a "B" qualifying time for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Marathon Team Trials to be held in LA in February 2016.

On November 2, in New Hampshire, Dan won the City of Manchester Marathon in 2:31:06. This was the seventh and final event of the 2014 USATF - New England 2014 Grand Prix Road Racing series. With his victory, Dan clinched second place in the men's individual standings for the series.

Vassallo is a 2007 graduate of Colby College in Maine. This is his second Athlete of the Month award. His first selection was in November 2010 when he won the Philadelphia Marathon for the first time in a PR of 2:21:28. He attributes his improvement in the past year to being able to train consistently while avoiding injury.

Despite his achievements, Dan speaks of himself in modest terms, stating that he has “a limited amount of talent” and that his challenge lies in getting the most out of his ability. For the first half of 2014, he concentrated on shorter runs and speed development. Only then did he start adding mileage, building to over 120 miles a week by early fall. He states that he had one focus for the Philadelphia Marathon – qualifying for the Olympic Marathon Trials by running under 2:18:00. He underscores the importance of this goal by explaining that he would have preferred finishing 6th with an Olympic trials qualifying time to winning the race, but failing to qualify.

His race plan at Philadelphia was to break the course into three mile segments, and run each segment in 15:45 (5:15 per mile pace). His consistent pace worked well. With a mile left Dan was in a tight race with Birhanu Dare Kemal of Ethiopia, then pulled away with a strong finish to win by 24 seconds.

Despite other races on his calendar, such as a half marathon in Chicago in October 2015, Dan is highly focused on the Olympic Trials marathon in Los Angeles on February 13, 2016. Although he does not expect to make the Olympic team, he wants to get the most out of himself on that day, hoping to run in the 2:15 to 2:16 range and beat as many other runners as possible. “I look at the trials race as a personal Olympics,” says Dan.