

Sarah Bard Named USATF – New England’s Athlete of the Month for September 2015



Photo: irunfar.com

BOSTON – **Sarah Bard**, of Somerville, MA, who runs for Craft Concept Racing, has been selected as USA Track & Field - New England's Athlete of the Month for September 2015. On September 12 at Winschoten, Netherlands, Sarah finished fourth in the International Association of Ultrarunners 100K World Championships. Bard finished the 62.1 mile race in 7:29:01 and, as the second fastest American, helped the three-woman U.S. team win the gold medal.

Sarah, a 2006 graduate of Wellesley College, just began running ultra distances in 2014. She grew up in Waterville, Maine where her high school team won several state championships. In high school, Sarah won state championship titles indoors in the mile and outdoors in the two mile.

At Wellesley College, which during Sarah's years had a cross country but not a track & field program, Sarah focused more on academics and life outside of running. She did run DIII cross country in college and as a senior qualified for the Boston Marathon, but broke down during the race and struggled to finish in 4:02. She took time off and thought her racing days might be over. However, at the 2008 Chicago Marathon she again qualified for Boston and, as a marathoner, "began taking off chunks of time," lowering her personal best to 3:15, then 3:06, and then under three hours. In 2011 she tried to get the "B" standard of 2:46 to qualify for the Olympic Trials marathon, but came up just short with a 2:46:37 effort.

After getting an M.A. at Catholic University in Washington D.C. and beginning to work as a librarian, Sarah moved to the Boston area and joined the B.A.A. In 2013 she again lowered her marathon best with a 2:43:14 at the Hartford Marathon. Bard then began training for ultra distances and found quick success. In 2014 she qualified for the IAU 100K World Championships by running the JFK 50 miler in Maryland in 6 hours 37 minutes. She also qualified for the IAU 50K championships in March 2015 by winning the U.S. 50K championships at the annual Caumsett State Park race in Long Island, N.Y.

Approaching her first international competition, Sarah chose to run the 100K distance at Winschoten, the oldest race in the Netherlands. Already a high mileage trainer - averaging 100-120 miles a week in full training mode - Sarah speaks of preparing for ultras by "training on tired legs." For example, she will do long runs of 20 and 30 miles on consecutive days. The Winschoten championship course consisted of 10 circuits of 10K. Veteran teammates cautioned her to not to even think about racing until after the 50K mark. Bard believes she went out conservatively because she was relatively stronger over the second half of the race and her final 10K was the fastest final 10K in the women's field. Her U.S. teammate, Camille Herron was the overall winner and with Bard closing strongly for 4th and Meghan Arbogast finishing 17th, the U.S. women's team won the world team title over Sweden and Russia. Sarah was delighted at the result, noting that it was unusual to be on a team for an ultra race.

In May 2016, Sarah ran the 87K Comrades Marathon in South Africa, where she was the first American. She continues to look forward to ultra competition with a focus on the 2016 100K World Championships in Spain this December.

USATF – New England's mission is to continue its leadership role as one of the outstanding associations of the national governing body in Athletics.