

Alumni Prepare to Challenge Varsity on Decemeber 2

2006 Track Team Wins Fourth Straight New England Outdoor Track Title

For the fourth consecutive year, the **University of Rhode Island** men's track team has captured the New England Intercollegiate Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The 119th annual championship was held at MIT in Cambridge, MA under overcast skies and torrential rains. Only six teams have ever managed to win four or more straight New England titles. Rhode Island amassed 126.5 points to defeat the pre-meet favorite, Dartmouth (96.5). The University of New Hampshire (71.5), Williams (69) and Southern Connecticut (57.5) rounded out the top five in a field of 36 scoring teams. This is Rhode Island's 12th New England Outdoor Championship victory in 119 years.

The Championships began with a Games Committee decision to completely alter the format of the meet. The decision was made just 15 minutes before the start of the meet. The change meant that all sprints and hurdle races would be run as timed finals on Friday rather than the customary two-round, two-day format of trials and finals. Further, all field event flights were adjusted to place the best field athletes in the final flight. While this decision could spell disaster for some teams, the URI coaches and athletes quickly made adjustments which turned out to be critical to the team's ultimate victory.

With the timed-final format for the sprints and hurdles, it was critical that Rhody score early and often. Rhody opened the scoring by winning the 4x100m relay. The team of Mike Bland, Brendan Lamboy, Eric Groce and Ashhad Agyapong ran 41.45, more than 0.40 seconds faster than the second place team and well ahead of the top-seeded Dartmouth team. Next on the track, Yudehweh "Peter" Gbaa and Chris Adams had a 2nd and 4th finish in the 110m High Hurdles with times of 14.57 and 15.00 respectively. Adams came into the meet

Cross Country Team Revival of Sorts in 2006

Lead by junior captain, Matt Gallagher (Keene,NH), the 2006 cross country team enjoyed its most successful season in recent memory. Coach John Copeland recently commented that "I couldn't be more happy with the season. We could have scored better, but that part of the equation will come".

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the season is the fact that only one senior leaves the team. The returning runners are: Junior, Soph, Soph, Junior, Frosh, Soph, Frosh, Frosh.

A very competitive schedule brought the team up against some nationally-ranked teams at the Paul Short Invit, Boston College Invit, the New Englands, the Atlantic 10 and NCAA Regionals. With much improved workouts, the team's confidence was at peak at the New England Championships. Seven men ran below 27:00 and the team's five man split was only 0:48. The team finished in 27th place in a field of 45, a 4 place improvement from last year. The top six included Matt Gallagher, 112, 26:06, John Cuoco, 140, 26:25, Alex Sico, 155, 26:34, Nat Ruchames, 161, 26:37, Tom Stepan, 26:54, Ryan Karwiel, 189, 26:55. Adam Karwiel who had run 26:14 at Paul Short, missed the New Englands with a stress fractured hip.

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Blue/White Teams and Alumni Square-Off

The Blue/White meet is held annually at the end of fall training to act as a barometer of where the team stands. The athletes and coaches alike are all excited to "to let it out" for the first time all season.

Spearheaded by the "Older Generation" from the '80's, the Alumni have begun to get "actively involved" in the Blue/White meet. Last year, there were 37 alumni from 1940's to 2005. Many competed and represented themselves well. Many just told lies and enjoyed seeing familiar faces. A great time was had by all.

This year, thanks to the efforts of many alumni, there will be a social gathering at the Alumni Center on Upper College Rd. after the meet. All alumni, friends and families are invited to join us. Also thanks to Alumni, contributions have been made to support the coaches' efforts to get top athletes to top flight competitions. Last year, two frosh qualified for and competed at the USATF Junior Nationals in Indianapolis. Alumni funds paid for their trips. Thanks.



Pictured above: Ed Winslow, Coach Yush, Scott Steeves, Tom Anderson, John Copeland, Eric Steeves, Mike Murphy in back, Wayne Grover, Dom Murgio

NEW ENGLANDS CONTINUED

ranked 9th and finished 4th in a seasonal best time. In the next event, the 400m, a hamstring-injured Ashhad Agyapong was able to salvage a 3rd place finish in 48.53. Relay team members Mike Bland and Eric Groce next had a 1st and 2nd finish in the 100m. The same combo finished 4th and 5th in the 200m a short while later. Their times were 10.65, 10.75, 21.66, and 21.80. Senior Co-Captain Eric Groce (Rutland, VT) had previously won the 100m in 2003 and 2004. Rounding out Rhody's track effort was a 4th place finish in the 400mIH by Peter Gbaa in a personal best time of 54.00, a full 1.0 second faster than his previous best effort. In the 5000m, Andrew Poland ran a huge personal best of 15:17.45 for 12th place.



Co-Captain, Eric Groce shows his start at the 2005 New England Championships. Groce won the 2003 and 2004 New England 100m

In the field events, sophomore Mike Bernardo captured his first New England title in the hammer with a personal best throw of 186'8". This throw qualified Bernardo for the NCAA East Regional Championships in Greensboro, NC. On the second day, Bernardo would post another personal best of 144'3" for a 4th place finish in the discus. Sophomore Ryan McCarthy posted an outdoor personal best of 54'2.75" in the shot put to finish 2nd. The javelin throw featured a 3rd place finish by Rob Scales with a throw of 191'3". Scales is a senior who because of injury had decided to retire last November. Scales came out of "retirement" in April after two of Rhody's three javelin throwers were sidelined due to injuries. His efforts were very fruitful in the A10 and New Englands. In 6th and 8th places were Ryan McCarthy and Jamaal Blackson at 183'1" and 179'3" respectively. Blackson had also just returned to the team after a year off. Rhody rounded out its Day One scoring with an 8th by Peter Gbaa in the long jump (22'7.75").

At the end of Day One, Rhode Island held a commanding 42.5 point lead over Dartmouth College. As the coaching staff

met to discuss strategies for Day Two, they were acutely aware that Day Two was really "Dartmouth's day" with most of their strong events still to be contested. On paper, Dartmouth was capable of scoring 52 more points than Rhody on Saturday. Such an effort would give Dartmouth a 9.5 victory over the Rams.

Mike Bernardo opened the Rhody attack with a personal best throw of 144'3" in the discus. He had come into the competition ranked 20th at 142'8" and he finished 4th. Yudehweh Gbaa jumped a personal best of 50'2.5" to capture 1st in the triple jump. While his jump far surpasses the NCAA qualifying mark, since the event was contested indoors, the mark was not recognized as a qualifying mark for the NCAA Regional Championships. Still clinging to the lead, Rhody needed huge performances by the pole vaulters. Senior Co Captain, Adam Zucconi and sophomore Sean Strizzi did not disappoint their cheering teammates. Zucconi and Strizzi finished 1st and 2nd at 15'5" and 14'11". Strizzi had suffered an injury earlier in the competition, but continued to jump and earn the points necessary to ensure a Rhody victory. Rhode Island's superior performances in pressure-packed situations maintained the Rhody lead and guaranteed another New England victory for the team from Kingston

Proof You're Getting Older

Believe it or not, this is the start of Coach John Copeland's 25th year at URI! It's been a fun time.

By the numbers:

Win-Loss Pct:	.800	478-120-1
New England Titles:	7	
New England Placing:	4.5 average	
NEng Individual Champs:	106	
Atlantic 10 Titles:	9	
Atlantic 10 Placing:	2.1 average	
A10 Individual Champs:	123	
NCAA Qualifiers:	25	
All Americans:	6	
School Records Broken:	188	

Coach Copeland says "Thanks to all the athletes who have worked so hard to help the team achieve these results. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work with you all. Thanks"



John Copeland with Tim Connell, his high school basketball coach at Copeland's Induction into the North Haven High Sports Hall of Fame.

Track Schedule 2006-2007

INDOOR TRACK

12/2	Blue-White-Alumni Meet	1:00 PM
1/12/	Rhody Collegiate Open	3:00 PM
1/13	Rhody Indoor High School Classic	10:00 AM
1/19	Heptathlon Qualifier	5:00 PM
1/20	Heptathlon Qualifier	10:00 AM
1/20	Sorlien Memorial Invitational	12:00 PM
1/27	at BU Terrier Classic	10:00 AM
2/2	Rhody MEGA Meet	5:00 PM
2/9	at NY Armory Winter Games	6:00 PM
2/17	Atlantic 10 Championships	9:15 AM
2/23	at New England Championships	10:00 AM
2/24	at New England Championships	10:00AM
3/3	ICAAAA Championships	11:00 AM
3/4	ICAAAA Championships	10:00 AM
3/9	NCAA Championships	10:00 AM
3/10	NCAA Championships	10:00 AM

OUTDOOR TRACK

All Meets AWAY

3/24	Northeastern Invitational	10:00 AM
3/31	LSU Tiger Classic, Baton Rouge	11:00 AM
3/31	SCSU Invitational	10:00 AM
4/6	Princeton Invitational	5:00 PM
4/7	Princeton Invitational	10:00 AM
4/13	University of Virginia	4:30 PM
4/14	University of Virginia	8:00 AM
4/18	Holy Cross Decathlon	1:00 PM
4/19	Holy Cross Decathlon	10:00 AM
4/21	UConnecticut Invitational	12:30 PM
4/24	New Hampshire, Quinnipiac, H C	2:30 PM
4/27	Penn Relays	9:00 AM
4/28	Penn Relays	10:00 AM
5/5	Atlantic 10 Championships	9:00 AM
5/6	Atlantic 10 Championships	9:00 AM
5/10	New England Championships	10:00 AM
5/11	New England Championships	12:00PM
5/12	New England Championships	10:00 AM
5/12	ICAAAA Championships	10:00 AM
5/13	ICAAAA Championships	10:00 AM
5/25	NCAA Regional Championships	10:00 AM
5/26	NCAA Regional Championships	10:00 AM
6/6-9	NCAA Championships	10:00 AM
6/21-23	USATF Junior/Senior Champion's	10:00 AM

The Finish Line....

It is with a heavy heart that we report the following members of the Rhody Track family have passed away:

Thomas Russell
Frank Blount
Don Szrom
"Sparks" Sorlien

May they rest in peace.