

October 2015 *Wingfoot* Spotlight: Athlete Chases Olympic Dreams with Atlanta Track Club Elite

By Amanda Kowaleski



Most runners enjoy getting outside and exploring new places as they log their miles. For Christy Cazzola, she moved her entire family halfway across the country to take the next step in her running career as a member of Atlanta Track Club.

Cazzola is one of the newest members of Atlanta Track Club Elite with personal bests of 2:02 at 800m and 4:14 at 1500m. “I felt good about coming to join Atlanta Track Club mainly because of the people,” says the 30-year old Wisconsin native. “My coaches had similar goals for the Club that I have as an athlete, but when I met everyone I felt so welcome!” One of her current goals: Making the 2016 Olympic Team.

It has been a long, unconventional journey for Cazzola to reach this point in her career. Early on in high school, she quickly showcased her talent by winning the state 800m title in Wisconsin as a freshman. It was the first of her many successes in track and cross country. But when Division I schools tried to recruit her, she wasn’t ready to head off to college.

Cazzola decided to postpone college and work at a restaurant. It was at that restaurant that she met her now-husband, Shuma Kuwamoto. They married and had two children, a boy and a girl.

After starting her family, Cazzola decided to pursue a degree in secondary education – and return to the world of competitive running. At the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Cazzola became a five-time NCAA Division III record holder and 17-time national champion.

“Christy took a different route than most runners, but she is a racer who is not afraid to work hard,” says Amy Begley, Atlanta Track Club’s head coach. “Her speed and her turnover are impressive. It will be fun to see what she can do when we add some strength to that speed.”

Now that Cazzola has settled in, she has fallen into her new training routine. “I enjoy getting to train with a team of women who are all smart, fun and dynamic,” she explains. “I also love getting to meet other Atlanta Track Club members. It’s crazy how often you bump into a member... That makes it really fun and gives me a sense that the Club is a bigger positive outreach than I have discovered at this point in time.”

