



Designed by Chris Waller/Index

Spain quickens Faust's pace

Joseph Barker
Staff Reporter

Attention all University athletes – schedule a trip to Spain as soon as possible.

It helped junior cross-country runner Jacquie Faust.

After spending the spring 2005 semester abroad in Spain, Faust returned to the States with a renewed commitment to running. Faust is having her best season as a collegiate runner. She was named MIAA Women's Cross Country Runner of the Week three weeks running, she won her first tournament ever Sept. 30 at the Emporia State University Jock's Nitch Invitational and was named Index Athlete of the Week. And Faust believes it is all because of Spain.

"Going to Spain was probably one of the best things I have done for my running," Faust said. "It just reminded me how much I love to run and really made me appreciate my teammates."

While in Spain, Faust took a break from the rigorous world of college running and just ran to stay in shape and learn about her new surroundings.

"I just went to study abroad, and I kept up with my training," she said. "It was one of the coolest ways to explore the city to get up early and run."

Coming back from Spain, Faust said she didn't know what to expect once she returned to the college track. By not competing in a college event, she didn't know how she

would measure up and was unsure how successful she would be this year.

"I had no idea coming back from Spain what kind of shape I would be in," Faust said. "The distances for the races over there are kind of weird. I didn't realize how fast I was running while I was running abroad. I surprised myself."

Faust wasn't the only one surprised. Head coach John Cochrane said he didn't know what to expect from her after she was abroad last spring.

"I hadn't worked with her last fall so I didn't have any idea what she would do this year," Cochrane said. "Jacquie has improved a great deal this year from where she has been in the past. She has been a very happy, happy surprise at how well she has run this year."

The season is far from over for Faust. She still has the Border States Invitational on Oct. 8, the MIAA Conference Championships on Oct. 22 and the South Central Regional Championship on Nov. 5. Faust is looking forward to showing her stuff at the conference race.

"I really want to bring my best race to conference because that's where we see our best competition," Faust said. "I really want to run my best race that day."

Cochrane said he agrees that the next few weeks really can make or break Faust's season.

"The plaques she's gotten for runner of the week don't mean as much as what happens in those meets," Cochrane said.

Athlete of the Week

Jacquie Faust

Sport: Cross Country

Year: Junior

Hometown: St. Louis

Faust finished first in the Jock's Nitch Invitational at Emporia State. Her time of 18:30 was 24 seconds quicker than her next closest opponent. She was also named MIAA Runner of the Week for the third straight week.

Kilted athletes compete at games

Sara L. DeGonia

Assistant Features Editor

The kilt-clad men and women who gathered on the first Saturday of this October are generally of a highly competitive nature.

But not with one another. "This sport is different," Kirksville resident Brian Kerby said. "None of these people want to beat each other unless the other one is having a good day. They're not wanting to win. They're more competing against their own personal records, so if they happen to win, great."

Kerby, 38, was one of the organizers for the athletic portion of the Thousand Hills Highland Games and Festival on Saturday at the NEMO Fairgrounds. He said he is a member of the Jackson Weightlifting Club, the organization that sponsored the athletic events.

Kerby said the highland games differ from other sports because there is an ever-present sense of brotherhood and sisterhood among opposing athletes, which originated in Scotland.

"The Scottish people feel that the honor is in the competing, not the winning, and competing with good sportsmanship is a Scottish tradition," he said.

The Scottish had several reasons for conceiving the highland

games, including laws banning the ownership of arms, a desire to maintain war skills and the necessity to stay in shape for frequent skirmishes with the English, Kerby said.

"Manhood was very big for them, and so the games kind of came about as a way to prove their prowess without killing each other," he said.

Melanie Gordon, 31, of Overland Park, Kan., competed Saturday in the women's division. She said highland games can consist of nine events, but the Thousand Hills Highland Games included the minimum seven: weight over bar, braemar stone, caber toss, sheaf toss, heavy hammer toss, light weight for distance and heavy weight for distance.

Gordon set a personal record of 22 feet in the sheaf toss, which consists of the athlete throwing a hay bale-type object over a bar using a pitchfork. She also set a personal record in her favorite event, the 16-pound hammer throw, at 69 feet 8 inches.

Part of Gordon's technique is emitting a sound upon her execution.

"I firmly believe when you grunt it goes further," she said. "It's just timing your body's explosion with your breathing pattern. I don't always know what I'm going to yell either. Lately it's been 'bye.'"

Gordon said the tournament is certainly an interesting event, but since her introduction to the games in April, she has become very attached to the atmosphere.

"It's almost comical to see people out here in skirts throwing heavy, weird objects," she said. "But I think for the most part we just come out, not just to do better ourselves, because that's really why we're here. It's not about winning or losing, but it's the sense of camaraderie, I would say."

The scoring system is roundtable, with the first-place athlete in each event receiving one point and the fifth-place receiving five points. The athlete with the least points in all seven events wins the overall competition.

Gordon won first place in the women's division and received a battle-ax as her prize.

"It was a good day," she said. "It was a good battle."

Dean Ross, 62, of Tulsa, Okla., said the Highland Games were one of 12 competitions in which he will participate in a nine-week span.

"I've probably competed in more Scottish masters' games than any master in the world," he said.

Ross said he became involved with highland games in 1999 when a highland games athlete approached him at his gym.

"I worked out with him for four

or five weeks, entered the Tulsa games in '99, took home a bronze medal in my favorite event, which is the ... 42-pound weight over bar, and I've been doing it ever since," he said.

Ross maintains the world records of two events, the 56-pound weight over bar and the 56-pound weight for distance, in his age group: men 60 to 64 years old.

He said he has increased his involvement every year since he began and will compete in a total of 29 games this year. In 2003, he competed 18 times and was the oldest athlete at 17 of the 18.

The attitude of the athletes is what has kept Ross involved in the sport, he said.

"I really enjoy the sport, the camaraderie," Ross said. "That's the one word you'll hear the most. ... The support from your athletes that you're competing against, no matter what class you're in, the person you're trying to beat will be the first one to walk over and give you some encouragement or to show you a point on how you can throw better or throw higher."

The competition, he said, is more about enjoyment and personal improvement than winning.

"My main competition, most of the time I just go out and throw against myself," Ross said. "I don't even keep track of my numbers. ... I can't tell you what my best throw in each event is."



Nick Corich/Index

A highland games athlete participates in the caber toss, an event that involves tossing a 18 to 22 foot wooden pole.

Northern Iowa varsity rugby provides tough test for Bullets

Billy Drazen

Staff Reporter

It had all the makings of a David and Goliath matchup, except David did not have a rock in his sling.

The Bullets Rugby Club hosted Div. I University of Northern Iowa. The difference between a club team and a school-sponsored team was evident.

"They were a varsity Div. I team," said Krista Kastler, senior player and coach. "When they got on the field with us, they played like one."

The Bullets played the A-side varsity

team in the first game Saturday and were shut out. Neither Kastler nor head coach and junior player Natalie Gerhart could remember how many points they let up.

Before the game even started, Kastler said UNI was adamant about their game having 40-minute halves, even though the Bullets were scheduled to play UNI's B-side immediately afterward.

The first game felt like a track meet, Gerhart said. The Bullets found themselves chasing down Panther players, but the Bullets never gave up.

"We didn't get down on ourselves," Kastler said. "We chased down the girl that got away, and we hung in there 'til

the end."

Gerhart knew their team was out-matched before they even began to play, but for them it's about learning the game and having fun.

"We were using this game as an opportunity to have a good team play against us," Gerhart said. "They contacted us and wanted to play against us at our place, and we don't turn down a home game."

The game against the B-side started 15 minutes after the first match finished. Gerhart and Kastler both said their conditioning was a problem. They said they could have given the B-side a better game if they not played an 80-

minute game immediately before.

Gerhart said that in the second game, they actually got to play the sport instead of chasing girls from behind for the entire match.

"In the second game, we got to do a lot more tackling, scrumming and rucking," Gerhart said. "We actually got a chance to play rugby and show off our skills."

The Bullets didn't walk away from this weekend empty-handed. Gerhart and Kastler said they learn from every game they play. After the team's performance this weekend, they need to work on making better tackles and to have better spacing on defense, Kastler said. She also said

the offense needs to slow down and actually run a play.

Kastler said they will use everything they learned from this game and work on it in practice, and hopefully they can incorporate all they learned into their next game Saturday against Kansas State University.

A bright spot on the day was that it was family weekend for the Bullets. Parents and family members came up for a barbecue and watched the girls play.

"It was good," Gerhart said. "We tried to get all our parents to come out and watch the game. It's not a sport that all of them have gotten to see."

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