

'Dogs start NCAAs

Men finish fourth at MIAA championships, women fail to place

John Scognamiglio
Staff Reporter

After eight months of play, the tennis season is winding down to the final two weeks.

The men's and women's tennis teams participated in the MIAA championships last weekend in St. Joseph, Mo. The men opened up the tournament as the fourth seed, facing fifth-seeded Emporia State University in the first round.

Senior Tyler Wood said the men used the MIAA tournament as a warm-up for the upcoming NCAA tournament. Both the men and the women's teams made the NCAAs.

"We went in preparing for the NCAA tourney," Wood said. "We played our hardest we've played so far this season last weekend."

The Bulldogs came out strong early against the Hornets, sweeping the doubles matches. Wood and sophomore Cody Pusateri won their singles matches first to give the squad a 5-1 victory against Emporia State.

The second round pitted the 'Dogs against Northwest Missouri State University. The team didn't play the same way and dropped all doubles matches to the Bearcats. The squad was sent to the third-place match when Northwest won the first two singles matches to get the match victory 5-0.

The men would face Southwest Baptist University in the final match of the five-team MIAA tournament. The 'Dogs took an early 2-1 lead with wins by the teams of seniors Brad Martin and

Sean Cooper and freshmen Devin Williams and Mark Marifian in doubles play.

Williams and Pusateri won singles matches in straight sets, but those were the only Bulldog victories of the match as Southwest Baptist squeaked by 5-4.

Head coach Pete Kendall said the men finished as expected in the tournament.

"I thought the men played well," he said. "They almost pulled off the upset against Southwest Baptist. Tyler [Wood] had a three-setter in his singles match."

In the latest regional poll, the men were ranked fifth in the top-10. The 'Dogs were helped with wins against Minnesota State University-Mankato and Winona State University (Minn.) during spring break weekend to get their position to fifth in the North Central region.

Ironically, only three MIAA teams were in the top-five as Southwest Baptist was not ranked in the regional poll.

The women's tennis team is waiting with baited breath after its MIAA tournament outing. The Bulldogs lost both matches in the tournament to Emporia State and Washburn University.

Against Emporia State, the squad dropped all three doubles matches and lost two singles matches to end play against the Hornets, losing 5-0. The team also dropped the doubles matches against Washburn. However, sophomore Whitney Hamilton got the 'Dogs on the board with a 6-1, 7-5 victory against Amber Raindl. Senior Kristine Grajo and sophomore Jennifer Salmon lost their singles matches, however, and Washburn won 5-1.

Grajo said it was just a tough

weekend for the Bulldogs.

"Washburn was really on a mission to beat us," she said. "They lost a close match in the first round and lost to us in the regular season. Emporia came out hard against us because they knew they should have beaten us worse than they did earlier."

Kendall said the women were disappointed with their performance in the tournament.

"Our doubles just didn't play well at all," he said. "We played well in the singles matches that we got to play."

The women's team finished the regular season with a record of 14-7 and was ranked eighth in the latest regional poll. Kendall said there will be a shakeup when teams are announced this week because Southwest Baptist, ranked fourth in the latest poll, went 1-2 this weekend, dropping its record below the .500 level.

Kendall said one of the requisites for a national tournament berth is a .500 record against Div. II opponents.

Both teams are now gearing up for the NCAA Div. II tournament.

Wood said the men's team can't wait for the NCAA tournament, and he has high hopes for the squad.

"We have a good group of seniors and some great young players," he said. "I think we can win two rounds and get to Kansas City where the national championships are going to be played."

Grajo said the only question is where they will play.

"Our main goal in the tournament is to play as well as we can," she said. "This is my first regional tournament after four years of playing."



Chris Tharp/Index

Sophomore Jennifer Salmon returns a serve April 8 during a home match against Emporia State University. The women's team lost both matches in the conference tournament.

Sean Bergstedt matches NCAA Div. II automatic mark

Emily Black
for the Index

Despite rain and delays at the Dewey Allgood Invitational in Rolla, Mo. on Saturday, the outcome was bright for the Bulldogs' track and field team.

"Going into my race, I felt wet and cold, ... and I really wasn't in the mood to run," sophomore Sean Bergstedt said.

But that did not stop him. The highlight of the meet for the men's team included Bergstedt dominat-

ing the 400-meter hurdles Saturday and earning an automatic bid to the NCAAs.

"I ran my hardest and it turned out for the best," he said.

Bergstedt just matched the NCAA Outdoor Championships' requirement at 51.70 seconds, beating out his competitors by nearly four seconds.

"I'm excited about going to nationals and breaking the school record," he said. "It is all really gratifying."

The other men's winner Sat-

urday at the non-scoring meet, against regional Div. II schools Lincoln University, University of Missouri-Rolla, Drury University and Missouri Southern State University, came from senior Trey Robinson, who had the fastest time in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

The highlight for the women's team was junior Ashley Colon, who set an NCAA provisional mark in the hammer throw.

She easily won the hammer throw event after a toss of 161 feet 10 inches. Her closest com-

petitor, from Missouri Southern, threw a toss of 151-07. Colon also finished third in the shot put. First place went to her teammate junior Bridgette Carpenter.

Sophomore Jacquie Faust took first place in the 3,000-meter run for the women, narrowly missing the NCAA provisional mark by little more than half of a second.

Faust said she was pleasantly surprised by her speed but not too concerned about missing the provisional mark.

"It would have been nice to be a

half second faster, but I'm not going to complain," Faust said.

She said she was running the 3,000-meter race as speed work for her usual 5,000- and 10,000-meter races.

In preparation for the race, Faust said she worked with junior Meg Robertson, who took second in the event.

Truman's other victories came from the 400-meter hurdles and 3,000-meter steeplechase. Freshman Nikki Moore won the 400-meter hurdles, and freshman Danna

Kelly was first in the steeplechase.

Track and field head coach John Cochrane said this invitational was just another competition that is preparation for the conference meet, which is in two weeks.

"At that meet, you have to dig way, way down, and hopefully you come up with the performance of the year," Cochrane said. "If you don't, somebody else in the conference will. We are progressing along, we have just got to continue to get better at competing. ... That is one of the main things right now."

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