



Senior Brett Taylor hits a backhand during practice Wednesday. Taylor is one of several returning Bulldogs, including the No. 1 doubles tandem of senior Tyler Wood and junior Ryan Cope.

Chris Waller/Index

## Upcoming 2005 Fall Tennis Matches

Sept. 3	MIAA Doubles Tournament (St. Joseph's, Mo.)
Sept. 11	Town and Gown (Home)
Sept. 13	Quincy (Home)
Sept. 16-17	Truman Invitational (Home)

# Tennis teams start year with talented recruits

Becky Dinsick returns from injury to anchor women's team this fall

John Scognamiglio  
Staff Reporter

The degree of success for the two tennis teams might rest on the arms and rackets of four freshmen and a senior looking for redemption.

The women's team opens up the fall season full of expectations.

The squad lost Abigail Souders and Melissa Dudak to graduation, but feature the return of Becky Dinsick, who received a medical red-shirt last season. Dinsick suffered through elbow problems since high school, but last year, she underwent Tommy John surgery.

Before the injury, Dinsick was a top performer on the women's squad, attaining a 63-51 record in her two full seasons.

Also on this year's women's squad are two outstanding freshmen: Courtney Walther and Linsy Blair. Before joining the Bulldogs, Walther ended her high school career ranked 23rd in the Missouri Valley section of the United States Tennis Association rankings.

Blair comes to Kirksville from Pella, Iowa, where she finished her high school career with a No. 2 ranking in the Iowa section of the USTA rankings. Head coach Pete Kendall said he is optimistic about the women's chances for success this year.

"We are returning a majority of players from last year's squad, plus the return of Becky," he said. "She played near the top of the lineup for the previous two years. We have a couple of very solid freshmen. I think everybody is optimistic."

Senior Kristine Grajo said the pair is adapting well to the team.

"Coach [Kendall] brought in two very good girls," she said. "We've really bonded well with them."

The Bulldog men's tennis team lost only one senior from last year's squad: Steve Jones.

Despite having no money avail-

able for scholarships, Kendall has filled that absence with freshmen Devin Williams and Mark Marifian.

Williams was one of the top 20 senior players in the five-state area while in high school. Marifian joins the 'Dogs after winning four rounds in the ultra-competitive Illinois State High School tennis tournament.

Kendall said these two individuals would be top-caliber players for the men's team.

"Devin [Williams] is of the type that can be one of the top three or four guys on our team," he said. "Mark is a little bit more of a doubles player than singles, but he did very well in the state tournament. We are pleased with those two guys."

Both squads open up the 2005 fall season at the MIAA Doubles Tournament this Saturday in St. Joseph, Mo.

The women's pairings have yet to be seeded, however, Kendall said he is almost positive he knows a majority of the pairings, highlighted by the teams of Dinsick/Grajo and Blair/Walther.

The men's pairings include the doubles combination of senior Tyler Wood and junior Ryan Cope playing as the No. 1 doubles team. Seniors Brad Martin and Sean Cooper will play as the No. 2 doubles team. Kendall said he thinks both squads will do fine this Saturday.

"It's the first time out," he said. "We'll have our No. 1 and No. 2 men's teams returning. They've played together for a couple of years, so that's always good."

"The women are a little bit different. We do have two returning teams, but at least one of them will probably not stay together because of our new players and the return of Becky."

Marifian said he has high hopes for himself and the team as he begins his collegiate career.

"I hope to play as well as the team," he said. "I've never played any tournaments before."

Play will begin at 10 a.m. today at Missouri Western State University.

## SPORTS|In Brief

### Alumna wins award

Former All-American soccer player Sara Murray won Missouri's NCAA Woman of the Year Award.

The award recognizes outstanding female student-athletes who have excelled in academics, athletics and community leadership.

Ten finalists for the national award will be revealed in the Sept. 26 issue of the NCAA News, and the national winner will be announced during the annual awards dinner Oct. 29.

### Football receives votes in national Div. II poll

As of Tuesday, the Truman State University football team received eight points in the latest American College Football Association poll following its 21-16 over then-13th-ranked Winona State University (Minn.).

### Football team to host Thursday radio show

Truman football players and coaches will be appearing at the Dukum Inn for a radio show every Thursday during the season.

The show, which is hosted by Brad Boyer of KRES 104.7 FM, will air from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Admission is free and fans will have the chance to ask questions to the players and coaches, including head coach Shannon Currier.

### Women's golf receives NCAA academic award

The National Golf Coaches Association ranked the Bulldog women's golf team as having the 12th-highest grade point average out of all collegiate programs.

With a collective average team GPA of 3.539, the Bulldogs finished percentage points behind such schools as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Washington State University.

The University of South Carolina won the first-ever team academic award with a 3.752 GPA.

### NEMO Triathlon will be run Sept. 11 in Kirksville

The 21st annual NEMO Triathlon will start Sept. 11 at 8 a.m. Registration is available at [www.nemotriathlon.org](http://www.nemotriathlon.org).

# Cross-country teams look for return trip to national meet

Head Coach Ed Schneider will coach his final cross-country season this fall

Billy Drazen  
Staff Reporter

Thirty-one years ago, Ed Schneider took over the Bulldog men's cross-country and track teams.

Since then, he's won four MIAA titles, three regional crowns and has finished in the top four in the nation on three occasions.

This fall, though, will mark the last season that Schneider will lead the purple and white.

"He's been a great coach," junior Steve Porath said. "One can just look at all of his accomplishments and longevity to see that. He will really be missed."

Current women's cross-country and track coach John Cochrane will take over both programs starting in 2006.

Schneider's farewell year, though, looks to be better than last fall's ver-

### Ed Schneider's Career Accomplishments

31 years as Truman head coach  
Four MIAA titles  
12 NCAA Championship Trips  
Best finish: Cross-Country (3rd)  
Indoor Track (11th)  
Outdoor Track (16th)

sion. The 2004 squad was the first team in five years that did not make the national meet.

Aaron Wells, senior co-captain, was the only member to compete at nationals.

Porath said he thinks last year's performance would have been better if two of their top five runners had not been injured.

He said he thought the team was good enough to go to nationals last year, and if they stay injury-free, good enough to make it this year.

"I don't think any of us feel like we are underdogs," Porath said. "We have

just about everyone back, and at the end of the year. I expect us to be back at nationals."

Leading the team are co-captains Wells and fellow senior Eli Klimek.

Porath said both are good leaders and says Klimek is always there to keep the team on task while Wells can be a comedian. The combination of the two keeps the team's morale high.

Head coach Ed Schneider said he knows every race until conference is a chance for the runners to keep building endurance.

"We're preparing for the 6,200-meter race at the end of the year," Schneider said. "You can be the fastest man in the world at 100 or 400 meters, but if you don't have that base of endurance you won't be able to run long distance."

Schneider has the Notre Dame Invitational on Sept. 30 circled on his calendar as a gauge of how his team stacks up against the competition.

The Invitational gets a wide range of talent, and some of the best runners in the country compete there.

The always-important MIAA conference meet, a race the 'Dogs finished third last year and second in 2003, will be Oct. 22 in Pittsburg, Kan.

The women's team enjoyed arguably its best year in school history last fall and it may be difficult to top last year's performance.

Four runners finished in the top 100 at the 2004 national meet, including alumna Dani Rawlings, senior Abbie Smith, junior Lauren White and senior Sarah Armstrong.

In 2005, the 'Dogs will be without Rawlings, and White, who is studying abroad.

Despite the absence of these two runners, Cochrane said the Bulldogs return a team just as strong, but needing to establish its own identity.

"We'll have to figure out what this team will be like," Cochrane said. "I think that we will be a different team than last year. This year I think we will have a front runner and then a group. Last year we just had a group."

Getting back to nationals won't be easy.



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