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Sophomore Whitney Hamilton lunges for a ball Saturday at the Bulldog Invitational. Hamilton went 2-4 in Flights 3 and 4 for the tourney. Both the men and women have a dual against Westminster College at 4 p.m. on Sept. 20 in Fulton, Mo.



Blair blasts competition

Freshman goes 6-0 in flights five and six; senior Dinsick returns

John Scognamiglio
Staff Reporter

A trio of tennis titans held sway over the Truman State University tennis courts last weekend.

Friday and Saturday, the women's tennis team hosted the annual Truman Invitational. Because the MIAA Doubles tournament was canceled, it was the first opportunity to see the women's team in action.

Freshman Lindsay Blair went a perfect 6-0 and won first place in flights five and six. Senior Jessica

Bennett captured second place in the final flight, going 1-1. Freshman Courtney Walther nearly matched her teammates' performance, winning four of six matches in flights three and four to achieve a third-place finish.

The invitational also featured the return of senior Becky Dinsick to the courts, following a season long injury last year. Dinsick regained her No. 2 singles post, but failed to win a match, going 0-6. No. 1 singles player sopho-

more Jennifer Salmon fared a little better, going 1-5.

Head Coach Pete Kendall said there is nothing to worry about with the way Dinsick performed.

"I don't think about those records," he said. "Some of the upper-classmen may have gone 0-6, but across the board, we did as well as we had hoped."

Freshman Lindsay Blair said she was excited about getting her first collegiate win and cannot wait to partner up with Walther as the season progresses.

"We work really well together

as a doubles team," she said. "We worked all week in preparing for the doubles tournament that was canceled."

Kendall said he was pleased with the output of both Walther and Blair.

"It doesn't make much difference what grade they are in, it is always good to see young players come right in and do something," he said. "Hopefully that will continue."

On Sunday, the 'Dogs welcomed the community and alumni to the annual Town and Gown Event. The Town and Gown event is a chance for people in the community to see a preview of both tennis teams while giving the opportunity for some to lace up their shoes and scrimmage the men's and women's teams.

Kendall said the event is a chance for local players to come out and test their mettle.

"It is a public relations event designed to get some of those local players involved in our program," he said.

The women's team will be back in action Tuesday as they travel to Fulton, Mo., to face Westminster College in a dual meet. The men's team hosts its Truman Invitational this weekend before traveling to Fulton.

Freshman Devin Williams said the men's team's depth will be an advantage this weekend.

"The guys who are playing Nos. 5 through 8 can fight for the same spot," he said. "We are ridiculously deep."

SPORTS In Brief

Volleyball ranked No. 1 team in the country

The volleyball team was ranked the No. 1 team in the country in the Sept. 5 CSTV/AVCA Div. II Coaches Top 25 poll. It is the first time in school history that a Bulldog volleyball squad sits atop the national poll and the first time since 1996 that a MIAA school is ranked No. 1 in the country.

Truman, which was ranked second in the preseason poll, received 34 of the 35 first-place votes in the poll and had 874 out of a possible 875 points.

They remained at the top of the poll for the Monday Sept. 12 poll, even though they lost to the University of Northern Alabama this past weekend.

Faust wins MIAA Runner of the Week Award

Jacquie Faust becomes the first MIAA woman cross country runner of the week. It was the first time Faust won the award in her career. She led the Bulldogs to the College Division championship at the Bradley (Ill.) Open.

She was second in the division and ninth overall – behind seven runners from Marquette (Wis.) and the College Division winner Marisa Mele of Elmhurst (Ill.) – with a time of 18 minutes, 11 seconds for 5 kilometers. Truman had six runners in the top 10 and scored 30 points, 15 ahead of Olivet Nazarene (Ill.).

Walter wins weekly MIAA volleyball award

Senior volleyball middle hitter Micaela Walter was named the Wilson/MIAA Hitter of the Week on Sept. 5 after her performance at the Southern Illinois-Edwardsville Cougar Classic. It is the first time in the senior's career that she has received this honor.

Walter hit .484 (34 kills, 3 errors, 64 attempts) and averaged 4.36 points per game as the Bulldogs won four straight matches.

A Winning Tradition

Truman Cross Country MIAA Athletes of the Week

2005 - Jacquie Faust, Sept. 12

2004 - Lauren White, Sept. 21
Lauren White, Sept. 28

2003 - Dani Rawlings, Sept. 9
Alan Heincker, Sept. 16
Alan Heincker, Sept. 23

2002 - Leah Zidon, Sept. 23
Alan Heincker, Sept. 23
Leah Zidon, Sept. 30
Alan Heincker, Oct. 7

Women runners take first at Bradley

Men's team struggles as only three runners place in top 30 finishers

Billy Drazen
Staff Reporter

The journey that is both a cross country race and a cross country season took off Sept. 9.

The women's cross country team had an impressive showing at Bradley Open in Peoria, Ill., while the men struggled at the Iowa State Open. Both teams still see a need for improvement, and will use the upcoming meets before conference to prepare themselves for a big push at the end of the year.

The Bradley Open featured a variety of teams, including strong Div. I competitor Marquette University (Wis.) The first seven runners to cross the finish line were all from Marquette.

The meet was split into a university division and a college division.

While Marquette ran away with the university division, the Bulldogs took first place in the college division, boasting six of its seven runners finishing in the top 10.

Although it had a good performance inside its division, the team sees room for improvement.

"Getting out and racing shows us we need to start running as a pack," junior Jacquie Faust said. "If we want to stay competitive and succeed, we need to learn to run together."

At the start of the season, women's Head Coach John Cochrane said he thought his team would have a front runner followed by a pack.

Right now, it is hard to see that pack. The time between what should have been the "pack leader," freshman Danna Kelly, and "pack rear," freshman Mandy Puhak was 1 minute, 6 seconds.

Cochrane said the lack of experience on his team might be one reason it has trouble running together.

"If you have an older team, a lot of times you are going to have a better pack running team at this time [in the season] than us," Cochrane said. "We have a couple of young runners. Hopefully we do things better as far as staying closer together this next week."

The next meet is Sept. 17 at the Southern Stampede in Joplin, Mo. The team expects to see conference foes Pittsburgh State

University, Missouri Southern University, and Southwest Baptist University.

Faust said the team is getting pumped about the Stampede because there is supposed to be solid competition there, and the team is excited about getting its first look at other teams in its conference.

The men's team ran at the Iowa State Open, where team scores were not recorded. Two runners sat out because of injury or sickness and lack of training.

Had this been a team meet, the Bulldogs' performance would have been less than stellar.

Men's Head Coach Ed Schneider said it was the slowest time Truman has posted as a team since it started attending the Iowa State Open.

Only three runners finished in the top 30. Senior Eli Klimek had the best showing on the team with a 16th place finish while senior Dan Wilhite finished 24th and senior Aaron Wells finished 27th.

The runners know they need to pick up their game.

"We need a lot more competition and drive," Klimek said. "We

will do that this week when we will have a team get-together to set our goals and try to create more competition within the team, because we all know that every meet from here on out is important."

The next meet on the agenda for the Bulldogs is the Woody/Greeno Invitational in Lincoln, Neb. on Sept. 17.

Schneider said he expects to see conference rivals Central Missouri State and Northwest Missouri State at the competition.

Schneider said he knows his team is capable of more. Klimek, Wells, and Wilhite already have proven they can be top contenders at the conference and regional level. When the runners who did not run at the Iowa State Open return, the team expects to receive a boost from them.

If the team is able to learn from this first meet how to run, they might be able to make a run late into the season.

For the time being, Schneider views this part of the season as a time to prepare for more important meets down the road.

"I kind of break the season up into training season and racing season," Schneider said. "The training season is now in August, September, and the first part of October. The real running season is when you get to your conference, regional and national meet."

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