

TWO WINS

Softball team picks up doubleheader sweep

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SPORTS



Baseball: 3 p.m. Friday April 18, 1 p.m. Saturday April 19 and 1 p.m. Sunday April 20 vs. Missouri Southern

Tennis: 3 p.m. Friday April 18 vs. Washburn and 2 p.m. Saturday April 19 vs. Southwest Baptist



Softball: 1 p.m. Friday April 18 vs. Emporia State and 1 p.m. Saturday April 19 vs. Pittsburg State

Tennis: 3 p.m. Friday April 18 vs. Washburn, 10 a.m. Saturday April 19 vs. Missouri Southern and 2 p.m. Saturday April 19 vs. Southwest Baptist

Thursday, April 17, 2008

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Salmon leads team in final year

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Assistant Sports Editor

Senior Jennifer Salmon approached the net, gripping her tennis racket with two hands as her white adidas shoes squeaked on the court. She steadied behind the oncoming ball and delivered a low, two-handed backhand between Western Illinois University's No. 2 doubles duo, who could not keep their attempted return in bounds.

After picking up the point, Salmon turned and gave her doubles partner, freshman Amy

Ochs, a high-five.

On the very next point, Salmon returned WIU's Kate Kennedy's serve with a backhanded shot that landed just in front of the baseline and over the head of Ashley Clark, who was playing near the net. Once again, Salmon capped off the point with a high-five to Ochs.

The back-to-back points were vintage Salmon: backhand winners and high-fives aplenty.

"High-fives — it's a good way to interact with your partner and keep them pumped up," Salmon said with a smile after Tuesday's

dual against WIU. "... It's just a good way for us to keep each other enthused about the match and keep each other talking."

As for the backhand, Ochs said it's one of Salmon's skills that helps set her apart from other players.

"She has an incredible backhand," Ochs said. "That's really one of her best weapons in her game. ... She can place the ball pretty much anywhere she wants to. She also has a lot of power in her shots, so it's just really hard for the opponent to return it."

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Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Senior Jennifer Salmon performs her signature backhanded shot during a doubles match Tuesday against Western Illinois. Salmon, the No. 1 singles player, has a 23-9 singles record in 2007-08.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Freshman Anna Greenwald positions herself for a shot in a doubles match Tuesday against Western Illinois University. The Leathernecks beat the women 6-3, but the Bulldogs bounced back with a 9-0 win against Quincy to improve to 18-3 this season.

Women's tennis rolls to 18-3

Women sweep Quincy to continue success, men improve record to 13-4

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

The women's and men's tennis teams improved their prospects for NCAA tournament appearances with wins yesterday at Quincy University.

The women swept the Hawks 9-0 and the men won 8-1.

The women improved to 18-3 (3-1 in the MIAA) this season and the men are now 13-4 (in the MIAA).

Hard winds blew in a loss for the Bulldog women's tennis team the day before.

Winds of up to 35 mph were blowing sporadically during the Bulldogs' match against Div. I Western Illinois University. Western Illinois took the match 6-3.

Juniors Lindsay Blair and Courtney Walther were the only Bulldogs to win a doubles match when their opponents

forfeited the match with the score at 5-5. Blair and freshman Amy Ochs claimed Truman's two singles wins.

"It was a good competition," head coach Pete Kendall said. "They're a pretty good team. The wind was terrible. The wind was a major factor. Obviously, with [a score of] 6-3, we played pretty close. The matches we lost, we didn't play badly. I thought we played pretty smart with the wind."

The men's match was cancelled by the University because of the large

number of matches coming up.

During the weekend, inclement weather drove the Bulldogs tennis teams indoors for their matches at Winona, Minn.

The women won every match they played. They swept through Minnesota, defeating Winona State University, the University of Minnesota-Duluth and University of Minnesota-Mankato. The men won both of their matches this weekend, defeating Winona State and Manakato.

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Love of sports persists

I've heard countless stories from jaded sports writers who have lost the passion they once had for sports.

I am nowhere near a veteran sports writer, but I too sometimes forget why I do what I do.

This week I read stories about Denver Nuggets superstar Carmelo Anthony seemingly forgetting how to call a cab and getting pulled over for suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol.

That alone makes me mad, but when I heard that the police gave him special treatment — taking him home instead of to the drunk tank and not impounding his car like protocol dictated — I was not happy.

Then I logged on to ESPN.com and saw that Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Chad Johnson is whining about his contract — a contract he willingly signed. Again, he wants to be traded to a better team. He said he won't play and blah, blah, blah.

Reading all of this made me wonder once again if I really want to keep doing this. Do I want to keep plugging away and become a sports journalist?

Yes I do. Because I still love sports.

I love watching the games and rooting for the underdog. Last weekend I was watching The Masters, and I couldn't help but pull for Trevor Immelman. Here was a guy who had a cancer scare four months ago, and he was back on the links and having the best four days of his life.

Seemingly everyone in the media wanted the greatest golfer going right now, aka Tiger Woods, to win so they could keep going on and on about the potential for a Grand Slam. Me? I found myself pulling for Immelman. I was fist pumping when he was.

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COMMENTARY



Joe Barker

Secondary looks to fill openings

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

Losing only two starters on defense sounds pretty good. But having to replace two from the secondary does not.

The Bulldogs have the task of replacing all-MIAA starting cornerback James Thabuteau and safety Jesse Cooper after graduation.

Cooper and Thabuteau combined for six of the Bulldogs' 14 interceptions last season, which was good for fourth in the 10-team MIAA. Cooper's four picks were good for fourth best individually in the conference.

Defensive backs coach Thomas Kearney said that during practice he looks for the defensive backs who are going to play the most physically.

"Who's willing to hit," Kearney said. "The MIAA's got a lot of strong running backs. Sometimes defensive backs got good coverage skills but not the best tackling skills. So I'm looking for the boy who's got the good cover-

age skills but also looking to come up with the big hit and be physical."

One likely candidate to help replace Cooper and Thabuteau is junior Derek Rodriguez. Rodriguez started three games last season before getting injured.

"I think we'll be fine replacing Coop and Thabs," Rodriguez said. "Myself, I was starting before I got injured, so it gave a chance for [freshman] Luther [Eta] to get some experience out there. ... I feel [junior Matt] Burel provides leadership that Coop had last year."

Kearney said that despite the loss of Cooper and Thabuteau, there still is a lot of experience in the secondary.

"It's a loss from a depth perspective," Kearney said. "We've got some young talented players in, but they're unproven at this time, so until they get into a game, you really don't know. But the transition's been easier because Luther Eta, he started eight games for us as a freshman. Derek Rodriguez started before he got hurt." Please see FOOTBALL, Page 21



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The Bulldogs work on defensive drills in spring practice in an effort to improve marks that ranked near the bottom of the MIAA last season. One of the biggest position battles this spring will be in the secondary.