

Track competes at Div. II Challenge

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff Reporter

Last weekend the Bulldogs got a look into the future.

The Bulldog men's and women's track and field teams competed in the Div. II Challenge last Sunday. The women finished third out of 12 teams, and the men placed eighth out of 13 teams.

This was the first big test for the Bulldogs. They took on seven conference teams, all of which the University will meet again at the conference tournament the first weekend in May.

Head coach John Cochrane said that although all the competition was tougher than the teams have seen so far in the outdoor season, one of the toughest competitors was the weather.

"The wind made the world very difficult to deal with, especially for any [event] that went all the way around the track," he said. "... But it was definitely tougher than any event we've had before that."

Leading the way for the men was senior hurdler Sean Bergstedt, who took first place for the

fourth straight week in the 400-meter hurdles. Last week, at the Northwest Missouri Invite, Bergstedt earned an automatic spot at the NCAA Div. II Outdoor Championships with a time of 51.45 seconds, 0.2 seconds faster than this year's automatic qualifying time of 51.65 seconds.

This week, however, Bergstedt missed earning an automatic mark by just .02 seconds.

Bergstedt, who currently is seeded second in the 400-meter hurdles in Div. II, said poor weather conditions might have had something to do with his drop in performance between last week and this week but that he wouldn't lay all the blame there.

"I don't want to make excuses," he said. "I could have run faster, but you never know. I couldn't get into my 13-step the first three of four hurdles. So in that respect, I guess I could have run faster."

The senior national qualifier was not the only Bulldog for the men's team to take first place in a hurdles event. Senior Joe Ackermann took first place in the 110-meter hurdles with a provisional time of 14.52 seconds,

with his twin Jake hot on his heels for second.

As for the women's team, juniors Ashley Bernard and Christen Lauer were the only Bulldogs to pull out first-place wins, each with a pair. Bernard bested the rest of the field in both the shot put and the hammer throw. Lauer took first place in the triple jump with a mark of 11.95. She also won the 200-meter, timing at 25.23.

However, it was Truman's numerous second places that pushed the women into third place in overall team score. Along with her two first-place finishes, Bernard took second in the discus. Other Bulldog women taking second included the 4 x 100 relay team, senior Danna Kelly in the 3,000-meter steeple chase and freshman Kylie Raithel in the 5,000-meter run.

This was the first time Raithel competed against that many conference foes in the outdoor arena at the same time. She said her second-place finish could have just as easily been a first.

"I did everything my coach wanted me to do," she said. "[Drury University's Kimberly Shigeno] just had an amazing



Mark Hardy/Index
Freshman Kylie Raithel leads the pack in the 1,500-meter run during the March 29 Truman Open. The women's track team finished third in Saturday's Div. II Challenge in Emporia, Kan.

kick at the end of the race. ... but it doesn't bother me too much. I mean, I've done the same thing before, too."

Now every meet means one less for both teams to get provisional times. Next week, the "Dogs head south to Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla for a

meet Cochrane said is not on par with the last week's meet in terms of competition. He said, though, that this does not mean his teams should approach the meet with any less intensity than they would for any other meet. He said one of the big goals for everyone should be to hit provisional times, which is not depen-

dant on the performance of those around them.

"We have three weeks left," Cochrane said. "We have got to step up, and we have got to compete hard. If you're not going to compete hard and you are not willing to be nasty, you're not going to be able to do much in our conference."

Roller hockey falls short of national title goal

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

After losing in the second round of last week's national tournament, members of the Truman inline hockey club might wish they would have followed an old sports cliché: Take it one game at a time.

With a potential semi-final game against powerhouse Nuemann College (Penn.) looming, the Bulldogs' attention might have been diverted, and they fell 7-3 in the quarterfinals to California State University-San Bernardino on Saturday.

"To be totally honest, I feel like a lot [of] what happened was we did a little bit of looking ahead — looking past San Bernardino," senior captain Dane Moody said. "We had played

them before and we had beaten them before, and it wasn't necessarily that close of a game. So I think a lot of mentality, whether we would admit to it or not, was we saw the game and we thought, 'Well, we beat these guys, and they're just going to roll over and die,' and that was obviously not the way it worked."

Despite dressing just eight players as opposed to the Bulldogs' 10, the Coyotes were able to pull off the upset victory and advance to the national semifinal. In the semis, San Bernardino fell to eventual national champion Nuemann.

The loss ended the Bulldogs' season.

The Bulldogs scored the first goal of the game when junior forward Drew Vandas lit the lamp in the first period. San Bernar-

dino responded with three goals in two minutes and headed into the first intermission up 3-1.

Just 26 seconds into the second period, senior defenseman Neil Bales scored to cut the lead to just one. The goal was Bales' first of the playoffs. He only scored two during the regular season.

"[Junior forward] Truman Patterson was down in the left corner by the net," Bales said. "It seemed like all the San Bernardino guys were going to the puck, so I just went ahead and cut in from the point. Truman [Patterson] hit me with a cross-ice pass, and I just took a shot and beat the goalie glove side."

San Bernardino answered back with two goals in the second period. Truman struck first again in the third period on a

power play goal by Moody, but after that, the Bulldogs couldn't muster any more offense and lost the game 7-3.

"Not for 30 seconds were we playing our game," head coach Joe Nedelec said. "The guys just couldn't come together. ... If there was something that could go wrong to lose a hockey game, we did it."

Just two days before, the Coyotes and Bulldogs squared off in the preliminaries. Moody, Vandas and Patterson each scored two goals to help the Bulldogs earn a 7-4 win.

Bales said it was tough losing to the Coyotes after beating them earlier.

"It was really disappointing, especially losing to a team we know that we can beat," he said.

The win was the Bulldogs'

second of the preliminary round used for seeding purposes. On April 9, the team opened nationals with a 7-2 win against Western Carolina University.

In the last game of the prelims, the Bulldogs took on the University of Maine. Despite six goals by Moody, the Bulldogs tied the Bears 7-7. Still, the team was feeling confident heading into the single-elimination games with a 2-0-1 record.

"We were really excited — really happy with how we played in the first round," Moody said.

Western Carolina awaited the Bulldogs in the opening of the elimination round. The Bulldogs scored two in the first, four in the second and two more in the third to beat the Catamounts 8-0.

"The 8-0 win really showed

the dominance the guys had in that game — they were really on," Nedelec said. "It was one of their better games all season."

After the loss at nationals, the Bulldogs began focusing on next season. The team has the potential to not lose anyone from this year's team. The two seniors, Bales and Moody, have expressed interest in playing again next season.

Bales is a double major who will be back for a fifth year and plans on using his last year of eligibility to play. Moody, on the other hand, said he might come back just to keep playing.

"It's very, very tempting to me to maybe continue dragging my feet and stick around and maybe make one last run at a national title that eluded us this year," Moody said.

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