

Athletes make grade

Director of Athletics says admission standards will not be compromised

BY BLAKE TOPPMAYER
Assistant Sports Editor

Senior Nick Certa sat in the back row of his senior seminar business course Monday morning, discussing the business strategy of McDonald's.

Like the other students in the strategic management course, Certa participated in group discussions about global business strategies of major corporations. On the surface, Certa appeared to

be a typical student.

But for four years, Certa was just as successful on the basketball court as he was in the classroom. Nearly every Wednesday and Saturday between mid-November and early March, Certa starred for the Bulldog basketball team and earned two all-MIAA honors. He also was named twice to the MIAA Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll.

Certa is one of more than 400 student athletes at Truman, and he takes the student half of that two-word term just as seriously as the athlete portion. Certa, who scored a 26 on his ACT, carries a 3.26 GPA — slightly above the average

for a male non-athlete at Truman.

"I did not want to sacrifice [academics], and that's why Truman was such a good fit for me," Certa said.

Certa is not alone. The University's highly selective admission standards are applied to athletes basically as if they were regular students. Therefore, the average ACT score for a Truman athlete on the roster in fall 2007 was 26.6, according to data supplied by the athletic department. This compares to an average ACT score of 27.3 for Truman's 2006 freshman class, according to the Oct. 4 issue of the Index.

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Junior Kristen Klesh soars over the bar in the pole vault Saturday during the Truman Open. Klesh won the event with a vault of 3.04 meters. Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Wild chain of events for athletics

Things sure haven't been quiet with the athletic department in the last month. Coaches have been writing letters to the Index requesting more support, a head coach was not offered a job for next season and some knucklehead football players got busted for burglary in Dobson Hall. It kind of reminds me of one of my favorite scenes from the movie "Ghostbusters."

When one of the Ghostbusters is trying to describe to the mayor how bad things are, he offers a line I quote frequently. "Dogs and cats living together — mass hysteria."

Volleyball head coach Jason Skoch's March 14 letter to the editor certainly got my attention. To refresh your memory, Skoch basically was decrying the lack of University support for all things athletic — not just the volleyball team.

As I read the letter, I found myself nodding along and agreeing with a lot of the points. The University community really treats athletic programs as an afterthought.

Now, I won't pretend to know all the goings-on of the budget and all of the money issues, but I know this: If the school is going to keep saying athletic programs are important, it needs to back the statement up.

If it is going to brag constantly about having 21 varsity-level sports — the most in the state, if you haven't heard — then it should put some more effort into making the teams competitive. What's the point of having 21 sports if you are going to have 21 under-funded sports?

I know that problems can't be solved just by throwing money at them. Some of the problems Skoch was talking about can be fixed without increased funding.

One of the problems he mentioned, and one I have witnessed, is the general overuse of Pershing Arena. I was in the arena one day in February and almost was trampled by Sean Bergstedt.

It was a chaotic scene, with the men's basketball team practicing on the game floor, the women's basketball team off to the side ready to begin its practice and indoor track athletes doing all kinds of physical activity. The place was packed.

Not to mention that the baseball, softball and tennis teams also used the gym that day.

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COMMENTARY



Joe Barker

Track competes at home

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff Reporter

It might have been overcast most of Saturday in Kirksville, but that just meant the Truman track teams could shine all the brighter.

Last weekend, the Bulldog men and women competed at Stokes Stadium in the Truman Open.

For the women's team, senior Christen Lauer led the way. Lauer captured two first-place spots in both the 200-meter dash and the long jump and a second place in the triple jump.

Of these three placings, Lauer ended up hitting a NCAA Div. II

provisional mark with her second-place triple jump of 11.77 meters, after being edged out by Brittanie Roland of the University of Central Missouri by only 0.06 meters.

Head coach John Cochrane said this is very telling of the competition in the triple jump

"Oh, it's very competitive within the conference," Cochrane said. "You've got to remember that [Roland] was second in the conference [indoor meet], [Lauer] was third, and [sophomore] Katrina Biermann was first."

If Lauer led the way in the rankings, the rest of the team followed

her example. Of the 20 individual events at the Open, Bulldog women took first place in 10.

Among that count was junior Danna Kelly, who took first in the steeple chase with a time of 11:47.1. Although her field of competition included only one other runner, she also had to compete against the elements. The steeple chase involves a water element for runners. When Kelly competed at about 11 a.m., the wind chill was 27 degrees, with winds at about 13 mph.

Another shining moment for the women's team came in the pole vault when Biermann, junior Kris-

ten Klesh and freshman Lindsey Bramon took first, second and third, respectively.

Klesh said the trio is very pleased with these results and that she thinks the home-field advantage played in their favor.

"It's so much fun to know the area and know the mat and your runway," Klesh said. "Everything is so familiar. Not to mention the fact that you have your friends who came out from the dorms and family members who came up to watch. There's just so much more excitement to it than any other meet."

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Limsiaco, women take second

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

It was a weekend of second-place finishes for the women's golf team.

After winning the last two Bulldog Classics, Truman's team couldn't match Minnesota State-Mankato's winning score of 690. On the individual side, sophomore Krystal Limsiaco finished runner-up to Mankato's Kayla Wheeler in the first tournament of the spring season for the Bulldogs.

"We probably played just about how I expected we would have shot," head coach Sam Lesseig said. "It's never what you want it to be, but for the first one out in the spring, it's pretty much about what I thought we would do."

Cold weather and slick greens at the Kirksville Country Club caused scores to jump throughout the two-day tournament. Mankato's winning score was 27 shots higher than the winning score the Bulldogs put up in 2007.

Playing on their home course could have been an advantage for the Bulldogs, but the greens made it anything but.

"Where the pins were, we never

practiced it from where they were," Limsiaco said. "It was new for us, too. They put them in places that we were not used to putting around. We were just as surprised as the other teams."

Limsiaco was able to withstand the fast greens and new pin placement to rack up her second second-place finish at the team's home tournament.

"I wouldn't really call it a success because I wasn't really happy with how I played," Limsiaco said. "... I just tried not to let little things bother me."

Limsiaco opened the tournament Friday with an 85. Saturday she cut one stroke off her score to finish at 19 over par, two shots behind the tournament champion.

"On the greens she tried to keep the putts, not worrying about trying to make a lot of putts of any length, but just trying to not run them by too far and keep the ball in play," Lesseig said.

Freshman Jen Lawson was the next highest finisher for the Bulldogs. After an opening round 92, Lawson dropped eight strokes off her score Saturday to finish the tournament 28 over par and in a tie for sixth place in the field of 31.

"Overall I feel like I played really well," Lawson said. "There were definitely times when my short game was not up to par, and so it caused my score to be higher. But I hit the ball really well and pretty much picked up where I ended in the fall."

Lawson said the key to her improved play Saturday was simply better putting.

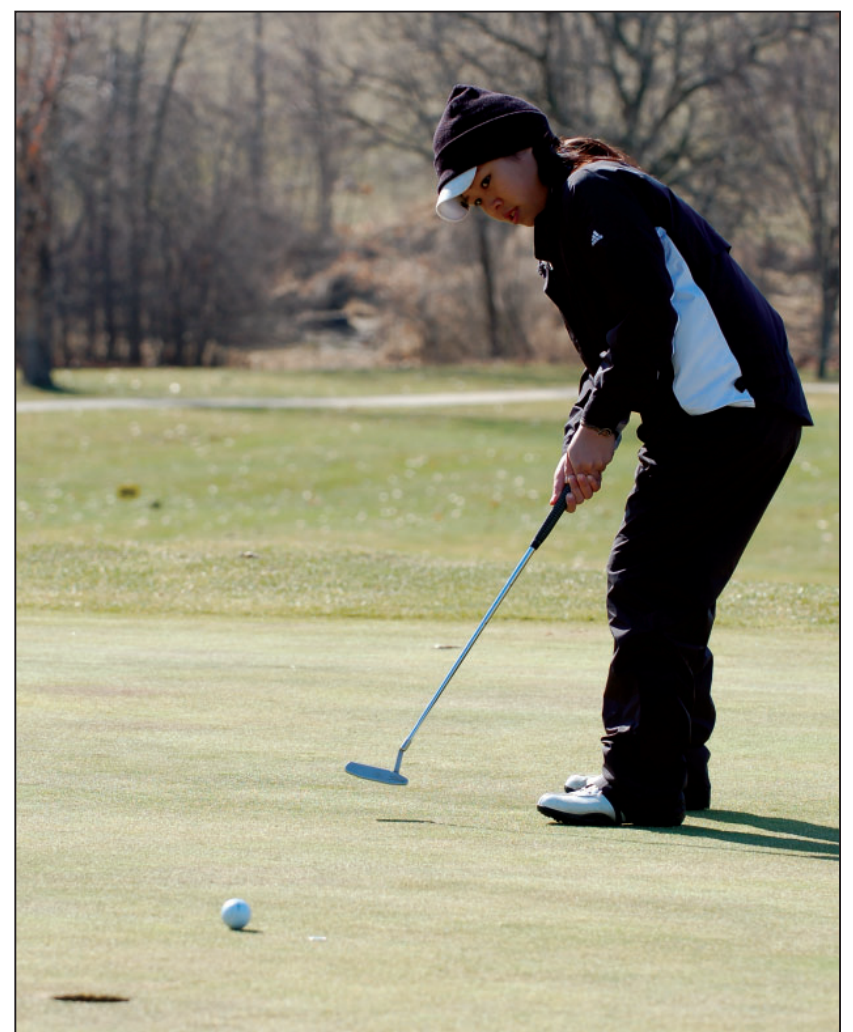
"I didn't three-putt as much," Lawson said. "I didn't count it for sure, but on the first day I know I three-putted over six times. On the second day I only three-putted once."

Two-time defending Bulldog Classic champion Julie Williams couldn't come up with a third consecutive victory at the tournament. After an opening round 88, Williams shot a 93 Saturday to finish in 10th place.

"She didn't hit the ball solid," Lesseig said. "This time of year, one of the things you're trying to do the first couple of tournaments out — well, you try it all the time — but what you really need to concentrate on at the start of the season in the spring is not worrying a great deal about length. You're just trying to hit the ball in the center of the club, which sounds so easy but is so hard."

Lesseig said if Williams can find her swing, she can challenge Limsiaco for the top spot on the team.

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Sophomore Krystal Limsiaco watches her putt roll toward the cup last weekend in the Bulldog Classic. She carded a two-day 169. Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index