



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Freshman Jamin Roberts practices the high jump in a practice earlier this season. The men's and women's track teams competed at the Central Missouri Open on Saturday and will compete in the MIAA indoor championships this weekend.

Four finish first at Open

BY CHRIS BONING
Assistant News Editor

If the MIAA Championship is the wedding, then last Saturday's Central Missouri Open was the track team's rehearsal dinner.

Four Bulldogs had first-place finishes at the competition in Warrensburg, Mo., which was the last regular indoor meet and chance for the Bulldogs to hone their skills before this weekend's conference championships.

First-place finishes for the women included sophomore Amber Clayton in the 600-yard run, senior Christen Lauer in the triple jump and sophomore Katrina Biermann in the pole vault. The quartet of sophomore Shaina Dochterman, freshman Kristin Lowry, Lauer and Clayton took first in the 4x440-yard relay.

Head coach John Cochrane said Biermann broke the University's record for pole vault and now ranks 13th in the national standings. Biermann's mark of 11 feet and 11.75 inches Saturday was about four inches higher than her last personal best.

"[That] is a pretty significant improvement, and that was back from about three weeks ago," Cochrane said. "It was a very good pole vault competition. There were a lot of good vault-

ers, most of whom will be [at the competition] this weekend."

On the men's side, senior Sean Bergstedt took first in the 400-meter dash and fourth in the 60-meter hurdles. Freshman Damon Morris placed second in the 600-yard run, and fellow freshman Josh Mantooth placed second in the one-mile run.

On Friday and Saturday, the teams will compete in the MIAA Indoor Championships in Joplin, Mo.

Cochrane said he will prepare the teams by not working them and great deal of emotion and letting them rest a bit before the competition.

He said he hopes the focus of the men's team will improve this weekend. The men struggled last Saturday because they didn't concentrate enough, he said.

"It takes a great deal of focus and great deal of emotion to do well in this meet," Cochrane said. "We don't score very many meets, and [conference] is scored, so we have to have a sense of urgency with how you compete and how tough you are and how nasty you are. ... A lack of that means you're going to get walked all over."

Cochrane added that both teams must put out their best performances of the season if they want to do well.

"If you do what you've

done to this point, it won't be good enough," he said.

Cochrane said he doesn't think Truman has a legitimate chance of winning this weekend's meet. He said the women's team this year simply isn't as talented as last year's, which placed third. The men's team placed sixth at last year's championships.

"We have a few good people, and we have to hope they can dig back and give us our best effort," Cochrane said of the men's team.

Bergstedt said he was disappointed with the results from Saturday because his times were not what he expected or close to last year's.

"I wish I would have run faster," he said.

Bergstedt said he's not sure what went wrong Saturday because it's difficult to pinpoint exact details and technicalities. The overall performance of the men's team was not on par either, he added.

"Every week, you go in and you don't know what exactly to expect, but maybe we were a little unfocused and weren't trying to zone in on what we were trying to do [like] performing our best," Bergstedt said.

He had raced against his opponents in the 400-yard dash previously and said that made

it easier coming into the competition, which he described as pretty tough.

Bergstedt said that in preparation for Saturday's competition, he is going to try to catch up on his sleep, eat well and hone in on any problems he's experienced during previous meets.

Lauer said her performance Saturday put her back where she needed to be, but that she thought she could have done better despite the first-place finish.

"I wasn't quite as happy with the result," she said. "I felt I needed to go a bit farther at least in preparation of this weekend, but I still feel like I'm in a good place to place well in the conference meet."

Lauer added that technical issues slowed her down Saturday.

She said she was confident going into the meet because it wasn't that big and was a chance for her to improve her technique before the championships.

"That's why I was disappointed distance-wise," Lauer said.

She said she will prepare for this weekend by practicing hard and trying to keep herself motivated. Her goals are to win the triple jump and place well in the high jump and 4x440-yard relay, Lauer added.

"I have really high hopes for this weekend," she said.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Wrestling: Midwest Regional on Saturday

With the regular season now over for Truman wrestling, the team looks forward to the tough test of Saturday's NCAA Div. II Midwest Regional Tournament in Indianapolis, Ind.

Freshman Thomas Redmon will be competing in the regional tournament for the first time in his career. Because Redmon hasn't had the experience of competing in the regional tournament before, he said he doesn't know if he is fully prepared.

"It's hard to say," he said. "I guess you just have to get to regionals and find out. That's where you're going to find out if you're where you need to be."

Redmon said he isn't worried about his first regional tournament.

"I'm not as nervous as I thought I would be," he said. "It's going to be big, no doubt, but I've just got to look at it like any other tournament. I'm just going to go out there and wrestle and do what I can."

Softball: Team's home schedule begins Saturday

The softball team's two games this weekend will mark the first time the Bulldogs have been able to play on their own field this year.

Because of the weather, the team has been unable to practice outdoors. The Bulldogs have been restricted to having all of their practices in Pershing.

Head coach Erin Brown said it's not a guarantee the field will be ready, even if Kirksville does not get any new rain or snow. The field will have to dry out from the recent weather to be playable.

The two games this weekend will be the start of nine home games for the 'Dogs this season. In an 11-game home schedule last season, the team did not have a home game until March 21.

Women's basketball: Mueller nears mark

Junior forward Georgia Mueller came close to making history Wednesday night but was not given the opportunity to do it at home.

Mueller was one point shy of tying Carroll Jarrod's single-season scoring mark of 573 points when she was taken out of the game with a little more than a minute left.

Head coach John Sloop said he did not know Mueller had a shot at the record.

"Wasn't aware, didn't care," Sloop said. "Individual records mean absolutely nothing to us."

Mueller likely will break the record Saturday when the Bulldogs play at Pittsburg State University.

Men's basketball: Flynn plays in last home game

Senior guard Josias Flynn played at Pershing Arena for the final time Wednesday night in the men's basketball team's 84-72 loss to Emporia State University.

Flynn was in the starting lineup for the first time since Dec. 1. He scored three points and added two assists against the Hornets on Wednesday. The points came on a layup which Flynn made despite being fouled. Flynn then made the free throw to finish the three-point play, which gave the Bulldogs a 38-37 with 16:44 to play. This marked the final time Truman led in the game.

Head coach Jack Schrader said earlier this season that Flynn is a strong defensive player. On Wednesday, Flynn had the task of guarding DeAndre Townsend, the MIAA's leading scorer.

Flynn transferred to Truman from Clark Community College (Wash.) prior to the 2006-07 season. He experienced a career-high with seven points Nov. 16 against Minnesota State University-Mankato.

Baseball deals with adverse weather conditions

Bad field conditions cause cancellation of weekend games with Missouri S & T

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

The Bulldog baseball team was ready.

The team did all the scouting of the Missouri University of Science and Technology. The Bulldogs made travel arrangements to head to Rolla, Mo. Players planned their weekends around the three games on the schedule last weekend.

Everyone was ready for baseball, but the field at Missouri S & T was not.

"Weather, ice and rain — no drying time to get the field ready," head coach Dan Davis said.

The conditions caused the teams to postpone the games, but Davis said the three games likely are off the schedule for good because the Bulldogs' remaining schedule doesn't have many open dates.

"It's always rough, in any sport, when you get excited about playing the game, and you then have to hold off," sophomore catcher Brandon Pearl said.

With the unexpected opening in the schedule, the team simply did not take a break from the game. Instead, the 'Dogs were in Pershing Arena on Saturday at 5:20 a.m. getting in extra practice time.

"The more practice the better," Pearl said. "It just gets us that much more prepared for the next game. ... It can't hurt to practice more."

The early start time to the practice was nothing new for the team. Davis and the Bulldogs have been at Pershing for early morning practice all season long.

"Saturday we should have had a game and played at a normal time," Davis said. "But we had to be up at 5:30 and be at Pershing early in the morning. ... We've been getting up at 5:30 — and when I say getting up I mean being at the building ready to practice at 5:20. The guys are actually getting up at any-

where from 4:30 to five o'clock. That's stressful and that's not fun for the guys. What college kid wants to be up at for in the morning? No college kid."

Saturday's practice was different for the team because Saturday was supposed to be a game day. Instead of the team just working on the fundamentals, Davis said he tried to replicate a game.

"We practiced just like it was game day as much as we could," Davis said. "Our starting pitchers, the guys who would have started our three games, threw their big bullpen session of 90-100 pitches."

Relievers also got into the act taking turns and throwing 30 to 50 pitches. The pitch counts never were reached on consecutive pitches. Davis had his pitchers take turns throwing to a catcher and stand-in hitter to simulate how a game actually works.

"You go through and throw a few pitches at a time, and then you rotate — just like if there were innings," senior relief pitcher Jesse Brady said.

"It's not actually a simulated game, but it's close."

In the confines of Pershing, the pitchers don't actually throw to batters who can swing. Instead, Davis has players stand at the plate - bat in hand to help his pitchers gauge where the strike zone is.

Brady said that although he knows the hitter isn't going to swing, knowing what is a strike and what isn't helps him prepare for an actual game.

"I know personally, I like to keep track of the count in my head," Brady said. "You know, start off with an 0-0 count and then if it's a strike then it's 0-1. ... You run through that a few times, and then you try to work on each pitch ... so you can get so you can throw whatever pitch in all situations."

The hitters also worked on their craft at practice. They can't hit off live pitchers in the gym, but Davis and assistant coach Sean Zaborowski throw to the hitters. Pearl said they make sure to not just give the hitters a steady diet of batting practice fastballs.

"Our coaches throw, so we see a lot of variety of pitches," Pearl said. "We see change-ups, we see fastballs, we see curveballs, and it's not thrown in the same spot or at the same speed every time."

When the hitters are taking batting practice, it's not just about seeing who can hit the most pitches. Pearl said the team goes up to bat with a purpose.

"We take a lot of hacks in practice," Pearl said. "And we are very swing-oriented goal-wise. When we take hacks it's not just we go in and hit the ball, hit the ball, hit the ball. When we go in, we take swings with a purpose. We have a mindset of, 'I'm looking for this pitch in this spot, and I'm going to do this with it.'"

The Bulldogs hoped to get out of the gym this weekend to take on Bemidji State (Minn.) for a three-game set. Because the Truman field is nowhere near ready, the games have been canceled. The next scheduled game is also at home, March 8 against Upper Iowa University.

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