

Track competes at Iowa

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff Reporter

For the Bulldogs, the first test of the year didn't come in a classroom.

Last Saturday, the men's and women's indoor track teams competed in Iowa City, Iowa, at the Hawkeye Invitational, the first meet of the new semester.

The Bulldogs knew this meet would not be easy. Three of the six teams that competed — the University of Iowa, Western Illinois University and Marquette University — were Div. I.

"It's not the toughest meet of the year, but there were some pretty competitive people at the meet," head track coach John Cochrane said. "But everybody's still early in the season. If you run against them in February, they are a lot nastier."

Before the meet, the team said one of the key goals was to register results consistent with those from the Cyclone Holiday Classic in Ames, Iowa, back in December. Cochrane, however, said he thought that did not happen for the most part.

"We kind of got our bell rung," he said. "I would hope that they would do a little bit better. ... The competitive fire wasn't there, which bothered me a little bit."

Cochrane said it is important for the athletes to get motivated for every meet but that he has yet to see that so far this season.

Senior hurdler Jake Ackermann said he thinks the lack of performance can be attributed to one major thing: practice.

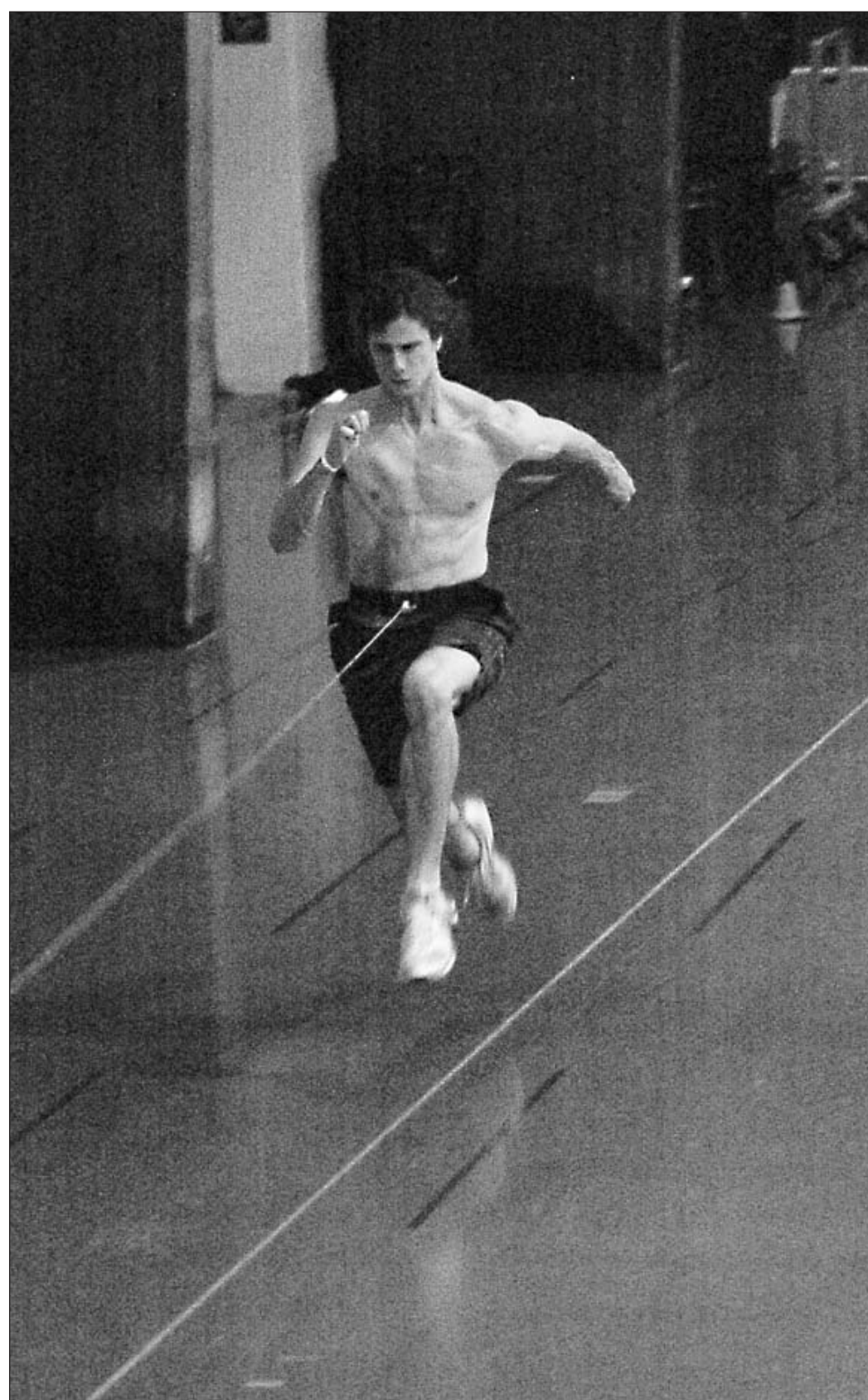
"A lot of people, I think, didn't do the workouts over break, which is something Coach really stresses," he said. "It's really almost like you just lost all that work you put into it during the fall, and it is going to take a little to get back up there where we left off."

There were some exceptions, though, such as senior jumper Christen Lauer. She took first in the triple jump with a distance of 11.47 meters, 0.17 better than her Cyclone Classic distance and only 0.09 meters away from her personal best.

"I was happy coming back off of the four or five weeks of being off again and start about the same spot and hopefully move up there now," she said.

Lauer attributed much of her consistency to the one-on-one training she has put in since returning to Truman, focusing on specific points of technique.

The men also showed some signs of life at the Invitational, especially in the 60-meter hurdles. Sean Bergstedt took second in the finals, and Jake and his



File Photo
Senior Joe Ackermann practices in Pershing Arena last spring. Ackermann finished seventh in the 60-meter hurdles at the Hawkeye Invitational.

brother, senior hurdler Joe Ackermann, took sixth and seventh, respectively.

However, Jake said the race probably would have come out more in Truman's favor if it weren't for some physicality during the meet.

"Joe was seeded first," Jake said. "He legitimately should have won the race. But, [Ray Varner] from Iowa ran into him. ... Joe got knocked off balance. And, actually, the same thing happened to me. A guy from

Western slapped me in the chest as I was coming over the hurdle. It's like hitting a brick wall of wind. But sometimes that's just how it works out. You just got to move on to next week and hope it goes better."

Now, however, the Bulldogs move into a much higher level of competition with the Iowa State Open, returning to Ames. Lauer said the Bulldogs can expect to see a rise in all aspects of the meet.

"In terms of sheer num-

bers, this weekend is going to be a much bigger meet," Lauer said. "For me, I didn't see any of the big D-I schools jumping with me. But this weekend, there is usually 30 or 40 girls jumping. It is going to be a much tougher competition that helps us really get started and get ready for the rest of the season."

Events will start off at 3 p.m. Friday, with the Bulldogs in it for the long haul until late Saturday afternoon.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Swimming: Team moves on without Ferrell

Senior Ryan Ferrell no longer is on the Bulldog swimming team.

Ferrell, a three-time letterman and national qualifier, swam sprint freestyle and butterfly events. His last meet was the Nov. 16 dual meet versus the University of Iowa.

Ferrell was one of the team's top butterflyers, and he competed in numerous relay events while on the team. He had not qualified for nationals this year. In the University of Indianapolis meet on Nov. 3, Ferrell swam in the 200-yard freestyle relay, the same relay which qualified for nationals without Ferrell in the Nov. 29 Miami (Ohio) taper meet.

Head coach Mark Gole said the squad is adjusting to not having Ferrell on the squad.

"We have to do what we can with what we have," Gole said. "Some guys are going to definitely step up."

Gole and Ferrell both declined comment on why Ferrell is no longer on the squad.

Men's Basketball: 'Dogs struggling at line

The men's basketball team continues to exhibit mediocre free-throw shooting.

The 'Dogs are hitting 66 percent of their foul shots, which ranks seventh in the MIAA. In addition, Truman gets to the foul line the least out of all 10 teams in the conference.

Free-throw shooting is a close reflection on the conference standings. Missouri Southern State University, Northwest Missouri State University and Southwest Baptist University are the MIAA's top free-throw shooting teams. These schools also are the top three in the conference standings.

Truman has made at least 70 percent of its free throws in only three games this season. In those games, the Bulldogs are 2-1.

Wrestling: Dual matches ahead for Bulldogs

The wrestling team is beginning to wind down its open and invitational portion of its season and will finish up the season with more dual matches. The Bulldogs have one more invitational Feb. 1-2 at Wheaton College (Ill.).

The team will finish the season with five consecutive dual matches, including its first dual at Pershing Arena this season against the defending national champion University of Central Oklahoma on Feb. 9.

The Bulldogs currently are 1-3 in duals on the season.

Football: Recruiting season continues

With the National Signing Day coming up Feb. 6, the football team is in full recruiting mode.

"Recruiting is going really good," head coach Shannon Currier said. "We've already got some commitments."

Names could not be released because of NCAA rules. Currier said the team has already upped the roster by four with transfers enrolling at Truman for the spring semester.

Although the Bulldogs lost only four seniors to graduation, Currier hope to have a class of 20 to 35 join the team.

"We're looking probably to sign about 20 on Signing Day," Currier said. "We want to bring 35 players total, so there will be 15 guys without scholarship money. ... Hopefully they will work their way up to scholarship money."

Currier said the team is not looking at specific positions. "We're trying to get talent and we are trying to get guys at every position," Currier said. "An area that we are trying to find is safety, we are a little thing at safety."

Another position that is getting a long look during recruiting is inside linebacker. Multiple linebackers on the current roster will be in their last year of eligibility come the fall.

Roller hockey: Watson returns to team

Junior forward Jon Watson made his return to the floor for the Truman roller hockey club.

Watson spent last fall studying in Australia and missed the team's first six games. He rejoined the team this weekend and notched two goals and five assists in five games.

Watson said he was happy to show to the team he can still be a goal scorer.

"There are some major goal scorers on the team, so it was nice to get the puck in the net and feel like I can still do it," he said.

Trio of seniors lead men's indoor track team

Ackermann brothers and Sean Bergstedt place high in hurdles

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff Reporter

For a trio of Bulldog hurdlers, there is no obstacle they don't overcome together.

Seniors Jake and Joe Ackermann and Sean Bergstedt have been leading the way for the indoor track team this season, making Truman a force to be reckoned with in the hurdlers' lanes.

The trio was a duo before Joe

Ackermann joined the squad.

"I transferred here at the end of my freshman year," Joe said. "... The program I was with was really poor, and the coaching wasn't very good."

However, once Joe made the move to work under the direction of head track coach John Cochrane, things started looking up.

"Coach Cochrane is way better than the coaches [at the old school]," Joe said. "He's definitely helped me so much. I didn't know what the heck I was doing. ... Basically, everything I knew was from high school."

One of the things Joe brought from his days at St. John Vianney

High School in Kirkwood, Mo., that has helped his performance at the University was the chemistry he built with twin brother and former teammate, Jake.

The Ackermann brothers joined with Bergstedt to become a powerful trio, something Jake didn't think would happen. At least, he didn't think the trio would be as good as it has become.

"It's funny because I would have never imagined running track in college," Jake said. "When I got here, Sean was really good from the get-go. I, actually, was not very good. ... I personally didn't expect it, and Sean is really humble, so he

never would have said it."

Now that the flow is well-established between the three, the ability to work hard comes naturally to the triad of athletes.

"Having Jake and Joe to practice with every day and to critique my hurdle form and racing is so crucial to my running success," Bergstedt said. "They've been around me for a long time. They know how I run, and I know how they run."

Bergstedt also said one of the keys to personal achievement is the sense of competition that comes with a group like that.

"There is that desire to want to beat your teammates," he

said. "Of course, you want them to succeed as much as you want to. But, also, you are there to run and to race and compete."

And compete this triumvirate does, as was the case last weekend at the University of Iowa's Hawkeye Open in Iowa City, Iowa. Both Ackermanns and Bergstedt won their individual preliminary heats for the 60-meter hurdles, making Truman the most represented team in finals. When all was said and done, Bergstedt came away with second place, and Jake and Joe finished sixth and seventh, respectively.

This kind of solid representa-

tion in final competitions is not uncommon. Since the start of last season, at least two of the three men have placed 10th or higher in seven of the last nine regular-season indoor track meets.

This legacy of continued performance is something Joe said he hopes to see carried on in the younger hurdlers, such as freshman Andy Cochran.

"I think he really benefits," Joe said. "Having one senior is worth a lot of knowledge and experience. But you multiply that by three. He has three guys there that have experiences that vary. ... Everyone brings a little different piece."

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