

Triple jumpers place at nationals

Lauer finishes 10th, Biermann 11th at meet in Mankato, Minn.

BY JOE BELL
Sports Reporter

Two members of the Bulldogs track team spent their Midterm Break in Mankato, Minn., but they were not on vacation.

Senior Christen Lauer and sophomore Katrina Biermann competed in the Div. II National Indoor Track and Field meet in Mankato on March 15. Lauer came in 10th place with a jump of 11.48 meters. Biermann came in right behind her in 11th place, with a jump of 11.45 meters.

This was the first time either Lauer

or Biermann had made it to nationals.

"It was the first time I've been [to nationals] in my career here so far, so it was exciting to get to go," Lauer said. "It was a really great experience to have, especially senior year. It was a really good learning experience, because it was a lot different than the rest of the meets of the year. Obviously, there's tougher competition. Everyone there is really good."

Head coach John Cochrane said the difference between nationals and other meets could have been a factor in Lauer and Biermann's performances.

"Going to that level of meet is a different situation," Cochrane said. "There's a little more pressure. Usually, if you can go to the meet and jump, or throw, whatever you did to get there,

you can usually end up in the top eight, because people don't do as well, and things like that. That was the first experience either of them had going to a national meet. Neither of them had gone before, so it was a different situation. And then you have to endure the things that you endure [normally]. It was a two-day meet. Their field event was the last of the two days. So you sit around for a long time."

Because of the winter weather, the women were unable to practice outdoors much. Cochrane said they only have been able to jump into the sand pits about once a month since returning from winter break. They arrived early at Mankato and used that time to practice jumping into an indoor sand pit, which Truman does not have.

"Once we got to Minnesota, we went to the track there and we did a couple short workouts, just to keep ourselves in shape so we were ready for [the meet]," Biermann said.

For the last two weeks, ever since the indoor conference meet, Lauer and Biermann trained together in preparation for the national meet.

"We got along really well, I felt like, for not having spent that much time together before," Lauer said. "I think it was a really good confidence booster for [Biermann], getting to go [to nationals] and compete at that level. I think it will help push her into her next couple of years that [Biermann] has here. We had a fun time together, and we're hoping to do it again in the outdoor season, but we'll see."

Biermann said having the presence

of someone more experienced might have helped her during the meet.

"This was both of our first time going to nationals, so we were both kind of in the same boat," Biermann said. "We didn't know what was coming. ... We didn't really know what to expect. It's nice because [Lauer] is older and she has more experience than I do. I look up to [Lauer] as a teammate. She kind of helped me stay focused at the meet when I got really, really nervous."

Both of these two have been competing in the triple jump for a long time, with Lauer starting in fifth grade and Biermann in eighth grade.

The women begin the outdoor season with the rest of the teams next Friday, March 21st at the Central Methodist Easter Open.

SLOOP | Women's basketball team will need a new head coach for next season after John Sloop's contract was not renewed March 10

Continued from Page 17

director of athletics at Truman since September of 1999, and this was the first time in his tenure he has released a head coach by not offering them a new contract. Wollmering said the team has already begun searching for a new head coach.

Wollmering cited Sloops' .238 winning percentage in MIAA games as a major factor in the decision. He also said the funding given to the women's team played a roll in his decision.

"Our mission and our vision statement supports the idea that a sport like basketball, offering full tuition room and board scholarships, bears the responsibility of being competitive and having athletic success," Wollmering said. "We invest significantly more resources per student athlete in the sport of basketball than any other collegiate

sport at Truman. Our average scholarship in basketball is almost twice as much as in any other sport on campus."

Wollmering said the achievements of other women's programs, notably the volleyball team and the seven-time national champion swim team prove that women's sports can be achieve at Truman.

"Our women's athletic programs are one of the most successful Div. II athletic programs in the country," Wollmering said.

Sloop said it was unfair to compare his team to other women's sports.

"It's very difficult to compare men's and women's anything, but it's extremely difficult to compare different sports here," Sloop said. "... In women's basketball we probably have eight, nine, 10 times as many schools at the Div. II level as they do in swimming. Your com-

peting in a pool of the high 200s, maybe 300 as opposed to, I don't know, somewhere to 30 to 40 in terms of women's swimming. I think what women's swimming has done is absolutely astounding, and it's great. But you're looking at two completely different sports."

Sloop took over as the head coach of the women's team prior to the start of the 2000 season. Before taking the helm of the women, Sloop served as an assistant coach for the men's basketball team under head coach Jack Schrader. Sloop was on the staff of the 1998-99 team that went to the Final Four.

"He basically said that when they hired me eight years ago they were excited about the direction of where the program was going," Sloop said. "After eight years they weren't as excited or whatever in terms of where the program was, and so they weren't

going to renew my contract."

The Bulldogs finished the regular season as the No. 7 team in the 10-team conference. It was the highest finish the women had during the Sloop Era.

The dismissal comes on the heels of Sloop's most successful campaign as the Bulldogs head coach. The team won six MIAA games and 16 games overall, both top marks for John Sloop coached teams.

Three days prior to Sloop's dismissal, the women upset second-seeded Emporia State University 77-70 in the MIAA tournament. It was the first time in Sloop's eight-year tenure that the women had won a conference tournament game.

With no head coach, the women's team enters the off-season having to prepare on its own. Junior forward and first team All-MIAA member Georgia

Mueller said she and the other veterans have attempted to organize training activities.

"I kind of initiated that because I am one of the returning seniors," Mueller said. "The seniors and the upper classmen, everybody pretty much knows the ropes, and we're just going to continue and weight lift and play everyday."

Mueller said she had a good relationship with Sloop and is sorry to see him go. However, she said she won't be bothered by the change in coaches next year.

"It's always nice to shake things up," Mueller said. "I look at it as a new challenge. Coming in, I'm going to have to learn a new defensive style, a new offense. ... It's a challenge and that's what I like."

For a full transcript of the interview with John Sloop, please see page 22.

WRESTLING | Peterson places third at nationals, earns All-American as Nahlik drops both matches in first national appearance

Continued from Page 17

the sport of wrestling with one year of eligibility still remaining, especially when I will be the obvious favorite at my weight class going into next season. However, for me, my future in medicine is more important than one last year of wrestling."

Peterson said he hopes his career at Truman will benefit him in all his future endeavors.

"I truly believe that after juggling academics and wrestling the way that I have had to do at Truman, everything will be put in a perspective that only a former wrestler could understand," he said. "The mental, physical and emotional strains of the sport are strong enough to strengthen an individual's psyche in a way that very few other experiences could ever do."

Head coach Dave Schutter said he was happy with the way Peterson rebounded from a loss on the first day.

"I was pleased with how Blake came back on day two and got third," Schutter said. "He wrestled really good on day two. If he could have it to do over again, he'd just wrestle day one on day two. He'd probably be national champ. He looked like he was really peaking on day two, like he was at his best."

Schutter said he would love to have Peterson back for his senior season.

"He could be the greatest wrestler ever in the history of Truman wrestling," Schutter said. "He'd have a chance at being a four-time national qualifier, a two-time All-American, possibly a national champ."

Schutter said Nahlik's two losses might have been caused by nervousness because it was his first national tournament appearance.

"I thought Rob was paired well and had his best shots," Schutter said.

Nahlik said he didn't attack soon enough to win in either of his matches.

"I fell behind early in both my matches because I wasn't aggressive enough in the neutral position," Nahlik said. "I rode both guys tough but could not quite capitalize on the opportunities that I was presented with."

Nahlik said he had a chance to win both of his matches but wasn't able to take advantage of those situations.

"Both matches were within reach," he said. "I just didn't make it happen while Blake did, and that's what separates All-Americans like him from the rest. He made it happen, got the turns when he needed them and controlled his matches."

Nahlik said he was happy with the improvements he made this season but wishes he could have made it to the next level.

"Waiting until later in my career to start really training cost me becoming an All-American," he said. "I didn't work hard enough for long enough."

Nahlik completed his final season with a 24-8 record and placed second at the Midwest Regional Tournament.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet that I'm done competing in wrestling, but I have some other talents, so I just have to pick something else to compete in because I'm not done winning yet," he said.

CHAMPS | For the seventh time in eight years, the women's swim team wins the Div. II National Swimming and Diving Championship, defeating rival Drury University 461.5-449

Continued from Page 17

Drury's fifth in the 800-yard freestyle relay consisting of Aherne, senior Emily Puffall, sophomore Kendra Brunkow and senior Molly Polette.

The finish erased Truman's 12-point deficit going into the last day.

"Drury went from being all excited to it just took the wind out of their sails, and you [could] even physically see that," head coach Mark Gole said. "When you look across at them, you could tell that was going on."

It wasn't until there were three events to go that the 'Dogs knew they had it won, when they scored three swimmers in the 200-yard

backstroke to Drury's one. Drury then swam below expectation in the 200-yard breaststroke by not finishing anyone in the top eight. All Truman had to do was avoid a false start in the final event for the victory.

Even racing safe to avoid a miscue, Truman swam their fastest 400-yard freestyle relay this season and finished second to Drury's third in the event.

"When we got through the 200 back, we were feeling like we were pretty secure for first place, but we still knew that we needed to do well in the breaststroke and then that final relay," Aherne said.

All 14 swimmers scored for

Truman, which before the meet Gole said the team would have to do to win. Aherne led the team with seven All-Americans, followed by six for both Polette and junior Erika Anderson.

The team set numerous personal records, including Anderson's seventh-place finish in the 200-yard breaststroke. Anderson rebounded this year after no All-Americans last year.

Truman nabbed two first-place finishes: Aherne's 200-yard individual medley and the 800-yard freestyle relay. It marked the eighth time in the last nine years Truman has finished first in the relay.

Gole said the swimmers' mindset coming into the meet changed from last year, when Drury finished first.

"Last year was all about how they didn't handle the pressure," Gole said. "This year they went into that meet knowing they were underdogs, and Drury was the one who couldn't handle the pressure

this year. ... Those girls deserved it after how well they swam."

Polette had a phenomenal meet for the 'Dogs. She never finished lower than third in her five events. She finished second in the 1650-, 1000- and 500-yard freestyle events, each time losing to Kristen Frost from Southern Connecticut State University.

"I had the best meet of my life," Polette said. "I felt amazing with the swims that I had. I definitely felt that the training I put in this year and in the past year paid off in the way that I hoped it would. I just felt great every single time I got in the water."

Polette set school records in the 500- and 1650-yard freestyles, including beating Truman alumna Diana Betsworth's record in the 1650. She aided in the 800-yard freestyle relay win and also finished third in the 200-yard freestyle. It was her fastest meet in the 200-yard freestyle since her freshman year.

AHERNE | Sophomore claims seven All-Americans at nationals, will help bear load next season

Continued from Page 17

but she said her approach was the same as any other race.

"I did not expect to win, that's for sure," Aherne said. "I was hoping to get a best time, and I kind of thought I might be able to make top five, maybe even top three."

Head coach Mark Gole turned some heads when the other coaches saw he had put Aherne in the 200-yard individual medley. It helped Truman get out to a fast start at the meet, with Polette finishing second in the opening event, the 1,000-yard freestyle and Aherne taking down first in the second event.

In her individual events, Aherne added a fifth place in the

50-yard freestyle, ninth in the 100-yard backstroke and sixth in the 100-yard freestyle. She set season-best times in each of the events.

In the relays, Aherne contributed to the team's first-place finish in the 800-yard freestyle relay, also a season-best time in the event. She was part of the fourth-place 200-yard freestyle relay and she swam the final leg of the final event in the 400-yard freestyle relay. Truman finished one place ahead of Drury in the relay to clinch the title.

It was the eighth time in the last nine years the Bulldogs have won the 800-yard freestyle relay.

"That was an amazing race," Aherne said. "We have such a success because of the four girls who are on it. We were so ready to do it, and we had all been swimming well, and we just knew going on to the blocks that we had the talent and capability to win it. It was amazing."

Coming in, Truman was one of the favorites to win the race, and Gole said the 'Dogs had it won by the time Aherne finished the first leg, which set another season-best for her.

"I had no idea Kate was going to do what she did," Gole said. "When she led off with 1:50, I was like, 'It is over.'"

Junior Erika Anderson and sophomore Kendra Brunkow

also will step into leadership roles next year. Anderson is the only returning junior national qualifier. Anderson was tied for second on the team with six All-Americans, and Brunkow received five. Brunkow also was a member of the first-place relay.

Junior Jessie Lemaster, who narrowly missed an A cut this season, will play a role in Truman's run next year. All of the freshmen this year will have to step up next year, Gole said.

"For a lot of the returning athletes, as well as they did at that meet, I think it's going to light a fire under them to work even harder to make sure they do as well as they did again," Gole said.

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY
KOHLENBERG LYCEUM SERIES

Rock N Roll Music
THROUGH THE AGES
MISSOURI *****
CONTEMPORARY
BALLET STYLE

Rock

Friday, April 4, 2008
7:30 p.m.
Baldwin Auditorium

MISSOURI CONTEMPORARY BALLET presents

Free tickets for Truman students with a Truman ID are available in the Student Activities Board Office beginning March 28. Free tickets for faculty and staff

with a Truman ID are available beginning March 28 in the Center for Student Involvement. Both are located in the SUB.

General Admission tickets may be purchased at Edna Campbell's on the Kirksville Square and at the Truman Cashier Window in McClain Hall beginning March 28.

For more information, call 785-4016 or visit our Web site at <http://lyceum.truman.edu>

RE-ELECT
TODD WHEELER
Kirksville School Board

- MO SBA certified in school board governance
- Continue the teamwork within the district and community for the betterment of all children.
- Please vote YES on the Education Bond Issue to help all students meet tomorrow's challenges.

Paid for by candidate Todd Wheeler.