

# 'Dogs prepare for national tourney

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

Truman roller hockey no longer is just a team. It has become a machine.

This machine might be the juggernaut that head coach Joe Nedelec has been looking for to carry him to a national title.

"This is the best collection of cogs of a roller hockey team machine that I've managed to be with," Nedelec said. "To be able to have had a part in creating this little machine we have going here at Truman has been fantastic."

Truman heads to the roller hockey national tournament this week. The tournament, which includes 16 teams, begins today and runs through Sunday. The beginning of the tournament will consist of three round-robin preliminary games to determine seeds as teams go into the playoff portion of the tournament.

The Bulldogs (15-3-1) offer a deep lineup that has talent throughout. The offense boasts the most goals scored by any team in the Great Plains region (157), as well as four of the top five leaders in total points in the region. The defense is second best in the region in goals allowed (55), and senior goalie John Pecher is in the top five in wins, saves, goals against average and save

percentage.

Truman finished first in the regional standings at the end of the regular season and had four more wins than its nearest opponent. Truman also captured second place in the regional tournament a month ago.

The team has plenty of experience to boost its resumé. All but two of the team's members have been to the national tournament at least once, and all but four of them have been twice.

"I think that other guys being there, and having played before will help [us]," freshman forward Cody Dependahl said. "I'm sure I'll get a talk in the next couple days about what to expect, but I think I'm as ready as I can be to play."

The team has been anything but complacent in the month since they last played in the Great Plains regional tournament. During that time, the team has drifted away from the intense skating workouts that they had done for the majority of the season. Instead, the team has been scrimmaging to keep its edge and increase endurance.

The results were apparent Sunday during the team's intersquad tournament. Nedelec said he was happy with the movement of the puck that he saw and the "hockey sense" that the team displayed. He also said that the players

were executing their fundamental skills very well. A few members of the team have come out of the past month looking exceptionally strong, namely Dependahl and sophomore Zach Rohne.

Also, Nedelec said senior Jon Watson has been playing the best hockey Nedelec has ever seen him play.

"I'm in the best shape I've ever been in," Watson said. "That allows me to skate harder for longer during games. ... Also contributing to playing better hockey right now is the confidence I have in my linemates. ... Confidence, that's huge. Confidence in who you're playing with — knowing that when they have the puck, you can trust them with the puck."

Time also appears to be on Truman's side. The Bulldogs will play only one round-robin game a day, from today to Saturday. The games are all in either the early afternoon or late in the morning. This will allow the Bulldogs plenty of time to rest.

The team also managed to acquire practice time for themselves once they arrived. The Bulldogs had an hour and a half to practice on a full-size rink once the team arrived Wednesday afternoon. This should allow them to circumvent one of their biggest problems during the regular season: adjusting to



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The first round of the roller hockey national tournament begins today.

a full-size rink.

The rink in the Student Recreation Center where the Bulldogs practice is significantly smaller than the full-size rinks where they play their games. Normally, the Bulldogs have to use the first period of their first game of the week-

end to adjust.

The odds look to be in the Bulldogs' favor, but their success will largely be determined by their success in the preliminary games. But if Nedelec is right, success should just be a matter of time for this machine.

## Track team notches four provisional marks

BY JOCELYN NEBEL  
Staff Reporter

Sunny days swept the clouds away as the track and field teams ventured to Washington University (Mo.) for surprisingly tough competition and satisfactory results.

The men's and women's teams competed in the Washington University Mini-Meet on Saturday against Div. III and NAIA teams. The Bulldogs had 14 first-place finishes and four provisional marks.

Head coach John Cochrane said that although the competition consisted of smaller schools, there still was a decent amount of competition in certain events, especially in the distance races.

Freshman jumper Coedy Walker made a provisional in the long jump with 7.22 meters and placed first. Junior hurdler Shaina Dochterman had a provisional mark in the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 1:02.84. Senior Ashley Bernard also made a provisional

mark in the shot put with a throw of 13.38 meters.

"It was a really exciting weekend, and I think the competition just helped us step up the intensity level and compete more to our potential," senior distance runner Danna Kelly said.

Kelly made a provisional mark in the 3,000-meter steeplechase with a first-place time of 10:59.27, four seconds away from the NCAA Div. II automatic qualifying time. Her time broke her own Truman outdoor record of 11:00.43. It also was a new stadium record at Francis Field.

Kelly said one of the biggest motivations during her race came from staying consistent with her lap split times. She said one of the biggest factors in separating runners in the steeplechase was the attitude they had toward each hurdle or water hazard.

"Once you start hitting the barriers it's almost like whoever is the most confident and has the best technique going

over the barriers and the water jump really plays a role in spreading out the competition," Kelly said.

She said she will work on her hurdling technique to take more time off of her provisional mark during the next few weeks in practice and that will affect her more than focusing on endurance training.

The women's distance team also performed well at the meet. Many of the women set a personal record or placed high in their event. Junior Fiona Williams placed second in

the 1,500-meter run with a time of 4:46.43, which beat her personal record by 14 seconds. This was the first time Williams broke the five-minute mark since her sopho-

more year. Freshman Michelle Gronemeyer placed first in the 5,000-meter run with a time of 18:13.87. This is the first time this season Gronemeyer has run this race.

On the men's side, freshman distance runner Joey Walls won the 1,500-meter run with a time of 4:00.11. Sophomore distance runner Adam Kell ran a personal-best in the 5,000-meter run with a time of 15:18.05.

Throwers had a long day Saturday with a three-hour delay in the hammer throw because of an error in the set-up. This was a problem because there only was one throwing cage for the hammer throw and discus. The Bulldogs didn't finish the discus until 11 p.m.

Top performers for the men's throwers included sophomore Alex Van Delft, sophomore Derek Atwood and senior Bob Massop. The trio swept the top three places in the shot put. Freshman Matt Kiblinger placed third in the men's discus with a throw of 41.85 meters.

Junior thrower Eric Ruzicka said the temperature and time of day were comfortable for the discus, but the dark and cold environment during the discus made it harder to perform well. Ruzicka won the men's hammer throw with a throw of 49.74 meters.

"I had a really bad release and [assistant coach Leslie Hardestey] worked with me a lot, and I worked on getting faster and faster," Ruzicka said. "You work with a lighter weight — instead of working with a 16-pound weight you work with a 12-pound, and it will force you to get faster. ... It helps because once you're used to going fast you can just focus on little things like arms and

your rotation and your release."

Ruzicka also is an offensive lineman for the Bulldogs' football team. He said balancing track events and spring football practices is a challenge but his training in football has helped him get used to competition in field events.

"From my experience, I've seen a lot of throwers that are 'head cases' where people can get in their head really bad, and football teaches you to keep going," Ruzicka said. "It makes you more competitive."

The Bulldogs will compete at the Northwest Missouri State Open next weekend in Maryville, where they will face conference competition. Cochrane said the coaches will be focusing on "the artistry part of coaching" before this meet, which includes resting and attending to sore athletes.

"We're not going to over-run people, we're going to try to get some specific things done," Cochrane said. "We're trying to put people in the things they ought to be in."

"I think the competition just helped us step up the intensity level and compete more to our potential."

Danna Kelly  
Senior runner

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