

'Dogs take 15 events at Dewey Invite

BY JOCELYN NEBEL
Staff Reporter

During the past four track meets, breaking school records has been as natural as breathing for two Truman athletes.

The Bulldogs won 15 events at the Dewey Allgood Invitational on Saturday. These top performances included another school record of 3.69 meters from junior pole vaulter Katrina Biermann. This was the third week in a row that Biermann broke her own record. Senior distance runner Danna Kelly set a new 3,000-meter steeplechase record the week prior at Drake University with a time of 10:49.66. The time automatically qualified her for the NCAA Div. II national meet and was the third straight weekend she broke her own record.

"We had things that were better," head coach John Cochrane said. "It's a small meet that we have, but it's a time

of the season where people can perform well because they should be getting pretty close to 100 percent."

Other top performances included a sweep in the 100- and 400-meter hurdles from freshman Stephanie Grauel. Junior sprinter Amber Clayton placed first in the 400-meter dash with a time of 58.78. The women distance runners took the top four places in the 1,500-meter run led by Kelly, who finished first.

Senior thrower Kortney Holeman placed third in the discus with a throw of 43.38 meters, an NCAA Div. II provisional mark. Junior thrower Tessa Letuli placed first in the shot put with a throw of 12.83 meters. Letuli said she worked on moving through the ring faster in practice to improve her performance.

"I had been working on a new technique [because] I've been in a slump all season long," Letuli said. "We were just trying something new after watching

some girls last week, and ... it worked for me, so I think I finally found my stride, which is nice because conference is coming up."

Other top performances for the women's throwers included senior Ashley Bernard in the hammer throw and senior Whitney Boehler, who finished first in the javelin with a throw of 30.90 meters. Bernard and five other throwers swept the top spots in the hammer throw.

"It was more or less competition between ourselves, which is pretty tough," Letuli said. "We all push each other. ... It's really fun because we're all just like a big family and we love to see each other excel even though we're [competing] against each other."

The men's throwers also placed well at the meet. Sophomores Alex Van Delft and Derek Atwood took the top two places in the shot put. Van Delft won with a throw of 15.76 me-

ters. He is 0.14 meters away from a provisional mark.

"Both [Van Delft and Atwood] can provisional," Cochrane said. "They're probably going to be three or four feet away from the national meet but they can do that, and they're at the point where if they throw, they'll score in the conference for us."

Freshman Matt Kiblinger and senior Bobby Massop took the two top positions in the discus, and senior Dan Jones placed second in the hammer throw with a toss of 42.91 meters. This was Jones' first time throwing in a meet in three weeks. He had been out with a back injury and said he wanted to get a good mark at the meet.

"The importance wasn't necessarily on winning," Jones said. "It was just going out and better your mark, and that was the main goal. ... I wasn't expecting to go out there and get a big throw. I was just trying to get

my technique back."

Despite these top finishes, Cochrane said the Bulldogs need to prepare hard for these next meets to be ready for the May 2 to 3 conference meet, specifically the women's team.

"Our women need to step up," Cochrane said. "They need to compete much harder. They need to be able to find it within themselves to make themselves do things. ... You don't just go to the conference meet and turn on the switch. You have to get yourself ready."

The Bulldogs will compete in two different meets Saturday. Cochrane said some of his athletes will compete in the Drake Relays in Des Moines, Iowa, to mentally prepare themselves for the competition at the conference and national meets. The rest of the team will compete at the Simpson Invitational in Indianola, Iowa. Both meets will include a variety of Div. I teams.



File Photo

Senior outfielder Dani Mayer provided the offense for the softball team last weekend, going 7-for-15 with five RBI.

Mayer's hot bat sparks offense during weekend

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Senior outfielder Dani Mayer had only one hit against Northwest Missouri State University in the first game of Truman's doubleheader last Friday, but it was a difference maker.

The pressure was already on the Bearcats. Freshman first baseman Mary Manley had homered earlier in the inning, and there were runners on second and third with only one out. Mayer stepped into the box. She was six for her last 25 as she went into the at-bat and had only one home run the whole season. Mayer swung at the first pitch she saw and sent the ball high into the sky.

"I didn't walk up there thinking I was going to hit a home run or anything like that," Mayer said. "[The ball] was so high that I really didn't think it was going to go over, actually. The girls always tease me a lot because a lot of the time I hit some really high fly balls. I guess one time it actually paid off because it wound up going over."

The home run was the loudest hit of the doubleheader for Mayer, but she continued to contribute at the plate. In the second game of the doubleheader, Mayer went 3-for-4 with a walk and two RBI.

She continued her hot hitting Sunday in a doubleheader against the University of Nebraska-Omaha when she went 3-for-7.

Friday's doubleheader was the most offense that Mayer has provided for the team since moving to the leadoff spot April 7. Head coach Erin Brown said she moved Mayer into

the leadoff spot as a way to get more production from that spot in the order.

"We kind of struggled with the leadoff spot, someone who can go up there and get on base," Brown said. "We moved [Mayer] into that position, and I think that she does a good job with it. As of late, too, the kids in the bottom of our line-up are starting to get on base and she's able to hit them in."

Mayer said that the change was not a huge one for her, because she batted leadoff throughout high school. What Mayer is more concerned with, however, is being more consistent with her hitting. She currently is second on the team in batting average (.277), fourth in on-base percentage (.290) and third in slugging percentage (.362). Mayer attributed her recent offensive success to just relaxing more at the plate along with getting more sleep.

"I would say I've been hitting OK the whole season," Mayer said. "I wouldn't say I've been hitting too well, but I've been doing OK. I think that maybe just because it's senior year, maybe it's kind of getting to me. Maybe I was just a little more tense and wanting to do really well, especially after the year that I had last year. So, I probably put a little extra pressure on myself."

If Mayer can continue to hit well at the top of the lineup, it will ease the pressure on the hitters behind her, and provide extra RBI opportunities. And if the bottom of the order can continue to get on base, Mayer will be able to drive in some extra runs herself. It will provide a boost to the team as the MIAA conference tournament approaches.

Athlete of the Week

Dani Mayer
Sport: Softball
Year: Senior
Hometown: Lee's Summit

Senior Dani Mayer went 3-for-4 with a home run and two RBI in a victory against Northwest Missouri State on Friday. Mayer was 7-for-15 during the weekend with five RBI. Mayer is batting .276 on the season.



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