

# Indoor track takes 14 first-place marks

BY JOCELYN NEBEL  
Staff Reporter

Domination was the theme for the men's and women's indoor track teams last weekend.

The Bulldogs returned from Saturday's Illinois College Blue Classic with 14 event wins, four provisional marks, a new school record and several personal bests.

Although the competition was not as tough as it had been in past meets, head coach John Cochrane said there still were some athletes who challenged the Bulldogs.

"The meet wasn't where the other ones were, but there were still good people in the meet," Cochrane said.

The women had many top-10 finishes. Cochrane said junior jumper Katrina Biermann had a great day. Biermann took first place for both the triple jump and pole vault and had provisional marks in both events. Her 3.76-meter vault in the pole vault was a new school record, smashing her old mark by 0.11 meters. This mark also earned Biermann conference honors. The MIAA named her Women's Track & Field Athlete of the Week.

Freshman jumper Jenny Zweifel placed second behind Biermann in the triple jump. Her mark of 11.06 meters also was a qualifying provisional mark.

Senior thrower Ashley Bernard led the Bulldog throwers by placing first in

both the weight throw with a throw of 15.69 meters and the shot put with a throw of 12.97 meters.

Bernard said a lot of her motivation for last weekend's performance came from her teammate, junior thrower Tessa Letuli, who finished second in both the weight throw and shot put. Bernard said they use each other's marks to push each other to do better.

"She's probably my biggest competitor anyway," Bernard said. "It's always friendly competition, it's always motivational competition. It's never 'setting out to beat each other' because we're on the same team."

Other first-place finishers for the women included junior hurdler Shaina Dochterman in the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 8.68 seconds, junior sprinter Amber Clayton in the 400-meter run with a time of 1:00.52 and freshman Anne Ratermann in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:25.97.

Cochrane said senior distance runner Danna Kelly also ran well. Kelly placed second in the mile with a time of 5:10.29, her second-fastest mile this season.

All three women's relay teams placed first in the meet, and the men had a first-place finish in the 4,000-meter distance medley relay.

Bernard said she also was proud of the men's throwers. Sophomore thrower Derek Atwood and sopho-

more thrower Alex Van Delft placed first and second in the shot put. Senior thrower Dan Jones also placed second in the weight throw with a personal best of 15.24 meters.

"The boys did awesome this weekend," Bernard said. "We had a [personal record] and some consistent [performances] that are going to be good for the conference."

Freshman jumper Coedy Walker also delivered a strong field performance. Walker placed first in the triple jump with a jump of 14.01 meters. He also placed second in the long jump with a jump of 7.08 meters. His long jump mark was a personal best and provisional mark.

Walker said he was a little disappointed about his second-place finish but grateful for the competition that pushed him to get the provisional.

Walker said he worked on his form and keeping his hands up when landing during practice to prepare for meets. Walker also said the close competition helped motivate him to jump further.

Sophomore distance runners Josh Mantooth and John Venner also placed well at the meet. Mantooth placed first in the mile with a time of 4:24.60, and Venner placed second in the 5,000-meter run with a time of 16:20.32.

Next weekend the Bulldogs will compete at the Knox Invitational in Galesburg, Ill. They will compete against a



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Sophomore Mike Reams practices the shot put in practice last week. Reams had a throw of 12.51 meters in the shot put at Saturday's Illinois College Blue Classic.

variety of teams, including Div. I Western Illinois University. Cochrane said the meet will be "a cut below the last one." He said some ath-

letes will be participating in different events to work on speed and endurance. "We have some really tough meets and we have

some meets like the one this last week, which was really good for us," Cochrane said. "It won't be as tough as last week, but it won't be easy."

## SHOWGIRLS | Reporter experiences halftime routine with dancers

Continued from Page 15

of mankind. He makes Shaq look like a ballroom dancer. I give myself an A for outperforming the "Mad Dog."

So in the end I learned a few things from this experience. I learned I'm not quite ready for

"Dancing With The Stars" or "So You Think You Can Dance," or even that dance show that A.C. Slater from "Saved by the Bell" hosts. I learned that it is no longer safe to listen to any music by Michael Jackson because I will bust into a dance move. But I also learned that the

Showgirls work really hard every day to put on a good performance at basketball games and deserve to be recognized for their hard work and dedication. They are there week in and week out with no break. So if I get the call again next year, at least I will have had 11 months to rest up.

## BASEBALL | Team will try to rebound from record-setting season

Continued from Page 15

"Obviously it's fun being able to get a chance to turn a program around that's struggled a little bit over the years," Davis said. "It's a place I really believe deep in my heart we can do some great things."

In addition to the expected increase in production from the returning sophomores, the Bulldogs could get a big offensive boost this season from sophomore transfer third baseman Drew Garwood. He has three years of eligibility left after transferring from Johnson County Community College last season. Garwood hit .310 in 41 games for JCCC and helped lead his team to a junior college regional championship.

Garwood played third base for the first time last season, moving from his natural position of shortstop and committed 30 errors.

"It was actually pretty hard for me because it was the first time I'd ever played third base," Garwood said. "It's just a whole different ball game. The reaction time has to be better because the ball gets on you a lot faster. You also need to have a stronger arm. ... I feel like this year I will be a lot more successful defensively."

Even with all the freshmen seeing time last year, the team is relatively young. There are 22 freshmen and sophomores on the roster and only three seniors. The sophomores who saw playing time last season should help the incoming freshmen adjust.

"It's nice they've got some experience, and coming in as sophomores a lot of them have 30 or 40 games under their belt," said junior outfielder Keaton Jones, who hit .291 last season.

A determining factor in Truman's success this season will rest on the shoulders of the pitching staff. Truman was last in the conference in ERA, strikeouts and home runs allowed last season. The team's 8.61 ERA was nearly half a run more than the next closest team in the conference.

Davis said that early on in practice, sophomore Logan Frame has shown some separation from the rest of the pitching staff. Frame started nine games as a freshman last season and had an ERA above 8. He missed most of the second half of last season with a sore arm but was first among Bulldog starting pitchers with a strikeout to walk ratio of 2.6-to-1.

In addition to Frame, Davis said he expects sophomore Matt Herrick, redshirt freshman Christian Witt and freshmen Seth Hunninghake and Ryan Trimble to fill out a young Bulldog rotation.

"I definitely think we can be pretty good on the mound, but again you have to go out and compete and prove that on a regular basis," Davis said. "We're still

## Opening Day Lineup

The Bulldogs began their season Tuesday with a 7-4 loss to Quincy University (see story, Page 18). Truman's opening day lineup is listed below (2008 stats in parenthesis):

1. Keaton Jones, LF (.291, 1 HR, 11 RBI)
  2. Luke Crader, 2B (.352, 0 HR, 8 RBI)
  3. Matt Herrick, 1B (.239, 3 HR, 16 RBI)
  4. Kevin Zukaitis, DH (.287, 3 HR, 20 RBI)
  5. Drew Garwood, 3B (.310, 5 HR, 28 RBI)
  6. Jeff Davison, RF (.255, 1 HR, 12 RBI)
  7. Kenny Swanson, CF (.273, 2 HR, 12 RBI)
  8. Bryce Bond, C (.278, 0 HR, 16 RBI)
  9. Corey Eagen, SS (.169, 0 HR, 8 RBI)
- Starting Pitcher: Logan Frame (2-6, 8.08 ERA)

Design by Blake Toppmeyer/Index

going to be pretty young on the mound. The first weekend of the year we are starting two freshmen."

Although the pitching staff has continued to have its ups and downs, the Bulldog offense steadily has improved under Davis' guidance. The 'Dogs raised the team batting average by 19 points to .270 last season and slugging percentage by 45 points to .370.

Sophomore second baseman Luke Crader should provide a steady bat. As a freshman he played in 25 games, led the team with a .352 batting average and hit .448 against left-handed pitchers. He also led the team with a .465 on-base percentage and was named Honorable Mention All-MIAA.

"My expectations are No. 1 to have fun, No. 2 to play hard," Davis said. "If we aren't playing hard we don't have a chance. ... The biggest thing is, if you play hard every single pitch, you look up at the scoreboard win or lose, you know that you played your best. If you don't do that there is always going to be a question mark."

## PITCHING | More depth could help the team improve the Bulldogs' strikeout-to-walk ratio

Continued from Page 15  
strikeout-to-free pass ratio was 0.83 to 1.

I don't need Bill James' sabermetrics to tell me that this ratio is not good.

Truman enters the 2009 season coming off a year in which it set a school record for losses in a season. So it's safe to say the Bulldogs are in need of improvement in all facets of the game. But the best starting point for that improvement is better production on the mound. And, as Davis said, that all begins with throwing strikes.

Really, the answer to Truman's poor strikeout-to-walk ratio does not solely lay in limiting walks. Last season, Bulldog pitchers gave up about 3.8 walks per nine innings, a mark that ranked seventh in the conference.

But Truman's conference-worst strikeout mark in 2008 of 4.7 per nine innings just won't suffice. It's no coincidence the MIAA's top three teams in pitching strikeouts per game last season claimed the top three spots in the conference standings.

Davis said the strikeout problem stems from a condition that he calls pitching backward. He said that many times last season, Bulldog pitchers wasted their strikeout pitch when a hitter only had one strike on him, instead of saving the strikeout pitches for strikeout counts. It's a problem Davis is working to correct this season.

"They try to get guys to strike out before they have two strikes, and you can't do that," Davis said. "It's not possible to strike out without two strikes. ... Then we get to two strikes and we're laying it over the middle, we're not throwing our strikeout pitch."

Allowing home runs was Truman's other major dilemma last season. The Bulldogs allowed 66 long balls last season — most in the MIAA. The home runs stemmed from the Bulldogs' same basic problem — throwing strikes. Davis said that because he dislikes watching his pitchers walking hitters so much, he encourages them to challenge hitters, even when behind in the count. Sometimes this led to pitches being grooved over the plate and smacked out of the park.

"Home runs are going to happen in college baseball, but we give them up at a high rate," Davis said.

"But part of that's falling behind in the count.

Fortunately, Truman might have the personnel to correct its pitching woes this season. When Davis inherited the Bulldog program before the 2007 season, he encountered two key pitching problems: lack of depth and lack of talent.

The problem of depth, at least, appears to be solved. Truman has 18 pitchers on its roster this season, compared to 14 a year ago. In Davis' first season, the Bulldogs had just 20 players on its entire team, 10 of whom could pitch.

Now, the question remains whether the Bulldogs have talented arms. At the very least, the 'Dogs will have more experience this season. The rotation primarily consisted of freshmen last year, and those players are more seasoned now.

There might even be a couple potential aces lurking on the staff. Sophomore Logan Frame and redshirt freshman Christian Witt showed flashes of brilliance in 2008 before each encountered injury problems.

Witt totaled seven innings and allowed two runs in appearances against nationally ranked Ouachita Baptist University and Emporia State University. Frame had a two-start stretch against conference opponents in March during which he tossed 14 innings and surrendered two earned runs.

Then, there's senior AJ Barton, the staff wild card. Barton, who has distributed brilliant command during his career, missed all of last season because of an injury. He was the staff ace in 2006. Davis said he's not sure Barton is at 100 percent, but any contribution the senior can make this season would be an added bonus.

Like the seven sophomores on the roster, this will be Barton's second year pitching for Davis.

"Since we have so many guys that are sophomores now that have been under me for going on two years now, I'm starting to think that they need to start showing up," Davis said. "At the same time, you really have to understand that we're still really young so we're going to maybe have some ups and downs. But I think for the most part, we're definitely a much better team on the mound."

## TENNIS | Bracha returns to No. 1 singles flight while No. 1 doubles pair Schlotz and Rothfusz team up for fifth straight semester

Continued from Page 15

save on travel costs. Even with the switch, the goals for the team haven't changed.

"The goals I set remain the same, and always have been: have a winning season, win the conference, qualify for the national tournament," Kendall said.

Truman opens the spring season today against Div. I Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville in Elsau, Ill., before competing in the Principia Tournament during the weekend. After that, the team will have a month-long break before their next match.

Kendall said he expects the Bulldogs to dominate at Principia, but SIUE should be a close match. SIUE

defeated Truman 5-4 last season.

Although the season technically started in the fall, the men were limited in the number of matches they could play because juniors Peter Bracha and Ben Rusk were studying abroad. The 'Dogs were 2-0 in dual matches, but they quickly were ousted in the ITA Regional Tournament, where they saw many of the teams in the new region.

"I guess the ITAs was an eye-opener, showing how hard the teams are actually going to be," junior John Rothfusz said.

The men played at least five matches during the fall season for the last eight years, until last fall.

"It got us used to playing those teams from Texas and Oklahoma in

the regional tournament, but other than that, this fall season just wasn't really preparing us that well

because coach didn't schedule that many fall matches this fall season," Schlotz said.

Bracha will take over the No. 1 singles flight with his return, which will move everyone one spot back in singles from where they competed in the fall. Bracha said he was able to hit three to four times a week while in Mexico, but that it's nice to return to a structured system where he knows when he will be able to play.

Schlotz and Rothfusz will play No.

1 doubles and fill the No. 3 and No. 4 singles flights, respectively.

"I guess the ITAs was an eye-opener, showing how hard the teams are actually going to be."

John Rothfusz  
Junior

Kendall also said Rothfusz is battling a shoulder injury that might limit how much he plays.

"[There will] be matches where he'll only play doubles — he won't play singles, because it'll just be too much," Kendall said.

The 'Dogs have been able to practice outside a number of times during the past week, which allowed them to prepare for hard courts instead of the faster, slicker courts in Pershing. Every match during the season is played on hard courts.

The 'Dogs' home opener is against Missouri Baptist University on March 24, and their conference opener is at Southwest Baptist University on March 20.

Kendall said SBU, Washburn University and Northwest Missouri State University will be three of the more difficult teams in the MIAA.