

# Nedelec searches for title in final season

**Coach has brought stability, Canadian influence to hockey team**

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

During the first week of the Fall 2006 semester, three members of the Truman roller hockey team entered the Student Recreation Center to practice. As they crossed the lobby carrying hockey sticks and gym bags, a man stopped his workout to ask them a question: "Do you guys have a hockey team?"

That man was Joe Nedelec, who was in his first semester as a Justice Systems professor at Truman. Upon finding out the roller hockey team needed a coach, Nedelec was quick to take the position.

That was three seasons ago. Sadly for the Bulldogs, this season most likely will be his last on the Truman bench. Nedelec intends to leave Truman after this year to pursue his Ph.D. at another institution.

Nedelec is a proud Canadian, and as is expected of the Canadian stereotype, he is a hockey nut. Hailing from the small town of Creston, British Columbia, Nedelec began his hockey career at about age nine.

"I actually started [playing] kind of late," Nedelec said. "Because I started so late, I wasn't as good of a skater. I distinctly remember that I went to every public skate session during the weekend to work on my skating and try and improve. I really wish that I would've started earlier, and I wish I would have got

into figure skating. A lot of hockey players do figure skating first to get that fundamental aspect of skating."

Nedelec's father even constructed a small ice rink in the family's backyard so that Nedelec could practice his skating any time he wanted. Nedelec played minor hockey — the equivalent of high school hockey in the United States.

At age 16, Nedelec was selected to play in the Best Ever Tournament, which featured Canada's best up-and-coming hockey players from different regions and pitted them against one another. Nedelec was selected for the first team originally but did not make it past the first round of cuts.

He went on to play tier-two Junior A hockey for a month but soon was demoted to Junior B hockey.

"In hockey vernacular, Junior B is bush league," Nedelec said. "If you're there, you don't want to admit it, but you're not going anywhere. You're not going anywhere, and you better know how to fight. I got beat up a few times. But my mouth got me into a lot of trouble over the days."

With his hockey career going nowhere, Nedelec returned to school and then went on to college. After teaching English in Japan for a year, Nedelec went back to Canada to get his master's degree in criminology.

Nedelec's journey from the Great White North to Truman was an unexpected one. He applied to Truman for practice while in graduate school. He said he was going to use the application process as an opportunity to get his portfolio ready for when he would apply for jobs after attaining a doctorate.

After coming to visit Truman, things changed. Nedelec said he fell in love with the campus and found it reminiscent of Harvard University. What had started as a free trip to Missouri had become a job opportunity.

Now, Nedelec's office is a small piece of Canada in the middle of Kirksville. Affixed to the door is a sticker reading, "Now entering Canadian soil. Present hockey stick for authorization, please," and many "aboots"

can be heard coming from the office. But possibly the most important thing he brought with him from Canada was his love for hockey.

Nedelec said hockey almost is a religion to people in Canada — an aspect of their national identity. He said there are many Canadians who, if facing starvation, would spend their money on hockey before bread. And now he passes on that passion to the members of the roller hockey team.

Nedelec came in and filled a coaching position that had been vacant for a long time. The team immediately responded. The Bulldogs finished 17-1 in Nedelec's first year, 2006-07, improving from their 13-4 mark the season before. Truman made it into the national championships that year as well.

The only regular season game the roller hockey team lost was the only game at which Nedelec was absent.

"[Nedelec] wasn't there for the first weekend of games, where we went 2-1," senior goalie John Pecher said. "Then we won 17 in a row. Just him being there provided a central authority. We became much more disciplined as a team."

Nedelec brought his experience from his days as a hockey player to help his players prepare for the one thing they all want to accomplish before he leaves: winning a national title.

"[Nedelec] has the same goals for us as we do, and that's to go win nationals," sophomore forward Cody Dependahl said. "He just reminds us sometimes, 'This is what we're going to need to do,' in order to achieve that. Whether he's skating us more in practice than we would like [or] he kind of reminds us that this is the stuff we need to work on if we're going to accomplish the goal of winning nationals."

For more on Coach Joe Nedelec, visit the Index Sports Blog at [indexsports.wordpress.com](http://indexsports.wordpress.com)

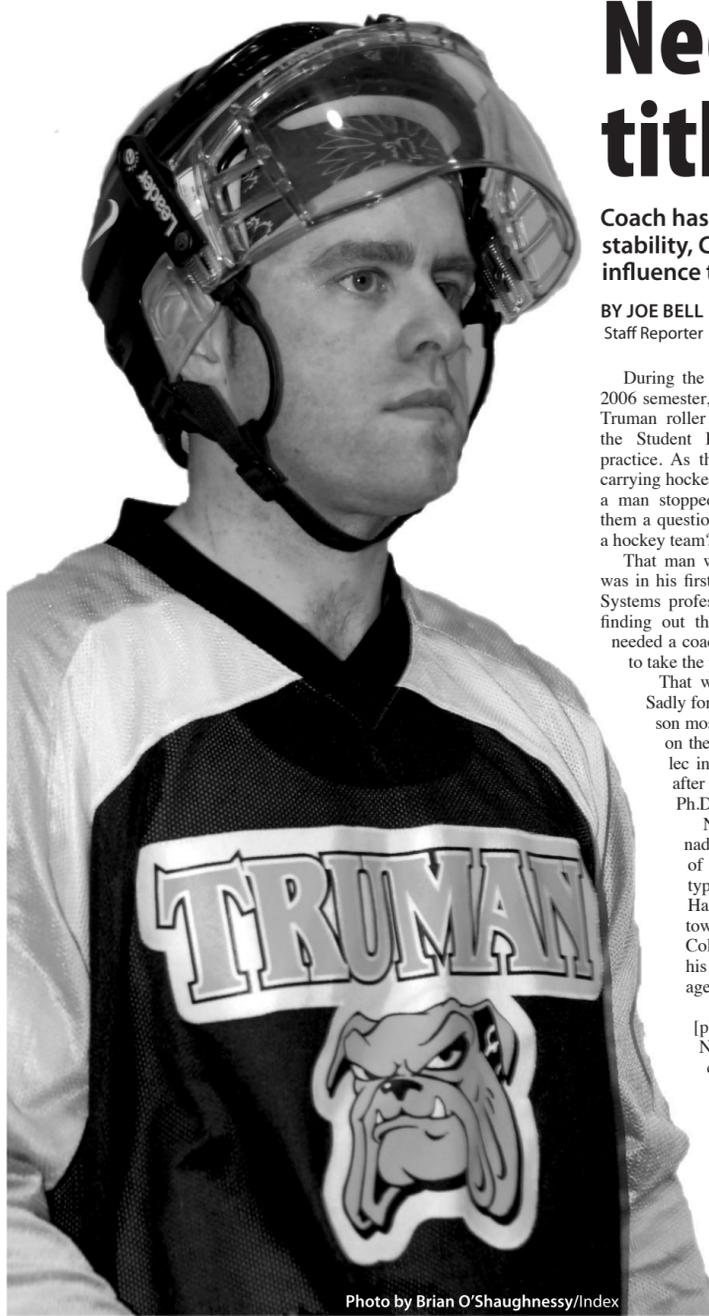


Photo by Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

## Track competes at UNI

**'Dogs combine to sweep 600-meter run, Biermann excels in two events**

BY JOCELYN NEBEL  
Staff Reporter

The men's and women's indoor track teams returned from Saturday's Jack Jennett Invitational at the University of Iowa with top places in running and jumping events.

The Bulldogs competed against NCAA Div. I teams such as Iowa State and conference rival University of Central Missouri.

Head coach John Cochrane said that even though only 12 teams attended the meet, the competition still was challenging.

"There was a lot of quality that was as good if not better than last week," Cochrane said. "It was a very testing meet. Hopefully that helped us."

Junior sprinter Amber Clayton placed fourth in the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:00.18, which Cochrane said was not where she needed to be in the race.

Clayton said she took the motivation from the 400 and ran the 4x400-meter relay a lot better, and the team placed sixth.

Junior jumper Katrina Biermann improved on her season-best provisional mark in the triple jump with a jump of 11.58 meters. This mark was 0.1 meters better than her provisional mark at the Jan. 23 to 24 Iowa State Open.

"Katrina did a pretty good job in the triple jump," Cochrane said. "She came through and competed well in that situation."

Biermann jumped 11.70 meters last year to qualify for nationals. Cochrane said Biermann needs to work harder than last year to qualify for nationals this year.

"She's about seventh on the total list but there are a lot of big meets coming up, so a lot of things could change in that time," Cochrane said.

Provisional marks were met earlier this season by senior distance runner Danna Kelly in the 5,000-meter run, senior thrower Ashley Bernard in the weight throw and junior thrower Tessa Letuli in the weight throw. The provisional list does not automatically qualify the athletes for nationals. If there are positions that are not filled by automatic qualifiers, those positions are given to top performers in the provisional markings.

Kelly finished second in the women's 3,000-meter run Saturday with a time of 10:17.42.

Junior hurdler Shaina Dochterman placed first in the 600-meter run with a time of 1:38.29, missing Leigh Earle's 1987 school record mark by 1.15 seconds.

The men and women placed first in both 600-meter runs Saturday. Junior middle distance runner Damon Morris won the event with a time of 1:22.91.

"I actually felt pretty relaxed while I was running," Morris said. "I didn't run it quite as coach wanted me to run

it. He wanted me to try to lead the whole thing and hold on and try to win it that way."

Morris is one of the only middle-distance sprinters for the men, so he often practices alone.

"I get more one-on-one time with coach so I feel like that kind of helps me a bit," Morris said. "It motivates me because he's constantly watching so I'm motivated to try harder because I know he's never looking away."

Other top finishers on the men's side included sophomore thrower Derek Atwood. Atwood finished fourth in the shotput with a throw of 15.32 meters, which was a personal record for Atwood this year.

Sophomore distance runner Josh Mantooth placed third in the 3,000-meter run with a time of 8:43.38. Freshman jumper Coedy Walker qualified for the finals in the triple jump. Walker finished fourth with a jump of 13.78 meters.

The Bulldogs will compete in the Illinois College Blue Classic on Saturday in Jacksonville, Ill. Cochrane said he will be giving some of his experienced athletes different events to do more training in distance or speed. He said he also will be taking some newer athletes to the meet to see how they compete.

"It gives us an opportunity in these two weeks to put some of these people that have been running their good events in some other things that will help them develop," Cochrane said.

## TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

### Men's Basketball: Estridge pursues 1,000 points

Senior point guard Banks Estridge is nearing a scoring milestone but might run out of time before he gets there.

Estridge has 902 career points, and with seven games remaining, he needs to average about 15 points per game for the rest of the season to reach the 1,000 point milestone. Estridge is averaging 10.6 points per game this season.

The men's basketball team has had at least one player attain 1,000 career points in each of the last three seasons. Nick Certa scored his 1,000th point last season, the trio of Andy Calmes, Grant Agbo and Austin Kirby reached the milestone in 2006-07 and Chip Sodemann scored his 1,000th in 2005-06.

Estridge also is moving up the ladder in career assists. He ranks seventh all-time for the Bulldogs with 289 career assists and needs to average about two assists per game for the rest of the season to reach 300. Only one Bulldog, Sodemann, has reached 300 career assists in the last 10 years.

### Women's Basketball: Mueller climbing the charts

Senior forward Georgia Mueller continues to climb several all-time MIAA and Bulldog charts. With seven rebounds last night against Washburn University she is now in the top-10 in career MIAA rebounds. Mueller has an outside shot of breaking into the top-ten of the MIAA's all-time scoring list. She needs to average 21.6 points per game the rest of the season. So far this season she is averaging 16 points per game.

Mueller now is ninth in Bulldog history in assists with 226. She needs 22 to pass Katie Fowler for eighth place. Mueller is unlikely to catch Carol Jarrard to become the school's all-time leading scorer. Mueller is second behind Jarrard with 1,779 points. Jarrard had 2,006 points during her Bulldog career.

### Track and Field: Cochrane adds new runners to mix

Head coach John Cochrane intends to bring some newcomers onto the competitive track and field scene at the Illinois College Blue Classic on Saturday.

Sophomore distance runner Kylie Raitel and freshmen distance runners Anne Ratermann and Michelle Gronemeyer are among these new competitors. Gronemeyer ran on the cross country team last fall and placed 13th at conference, less than a minute behind senior teammate Danna Kelly.

Kelly also will run Saturday. She has a provisional mark in the 5,000-meter run from the Jan. 23 Iowa State Open. Kelly qualified for nationals in cross country twice and placed as an All-American last fall.

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