

Rain ends men's golf tourney early

'Dogs finish 9th at invite, Kurth ranks as team's top scorer at first spring meet

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

Monday's weather was great for flying kites but not for playing golf.

The men's golf team finished ninth out of 11 teams Monday at the Pasta House Invitational in Springfield, Mo., hosted by Drury University. The University of Central Missouri won after shooting a 648 the first day.

What was supposed to be a two-day event turned into one, when rain washed out Tuesday's play after 14 holes. Both days featured wind gusts of up to 45 mph. Co-coach Kevin White said the weather was a huge factor for all the players.

"[Monday] was tough for us," White said. "The course was tough. The wind was going, and the greens were in their summer condition as far as how they were rolling, which was fast. They were twice as fast as the ones we play on here in Kirksville. It was not a good day."

Sophomore Vincent Kurth led the way for the Bulldogs. He finished in a tie for 31st place after shooting a 168 (86, 82) through 36 holes.

Seniors Scott Daniels and Mike Spaulding, sophomore Chris Kovach and freshman Nik Bentzinger were the other four competitors for the Bulldogs. Daniels finished in a tie for 35th place, with a score of 170. He was followed by Kovach and Bentzinger, who both finished in a tie for 52nd place.

The Bulldogs didn't just battle the weather — they also struggled with their short game, missing several putts and

close-range shots.

"Our short game was our weakest part," White said. "The wind is going to take the ball, but it's like that for everyone. But when you're missing four-footers and tap-ins, that's on us."

The tournament was expected to be 54 holes, with the golfers playing 36 holes Monday and 18 holes Tuesday. Truman shot a 340 on the first 18 holes and a 342 on the second 18, finishing with a total score of 682. They only completed 14 holes Tuesday before the meet was called off. White said the rain was expected, but the mediocre play wasn't.

"The only surprise was how poorly we played," White said. "We can play a lot better than what we did. Some of the teams made significant improvements and showed it. [The team] knows that they can do better."

This tournament was a sharp contrast

from last semester's Pasta Invitational. The Bulldogs finished second in that tournament, shooting a 36-hole team 589. Kovach finished in second place individually with a four-under-par score in that tournament.

The weather wasn't the only factor different for this meet. Last fall's invitational took place at the Rivercut Golf Course in Springfield, but Monday it took place on Highland Springs Golf Course, a course used for the Nationwide tour, which is just one step below the PGA tour. But Kurth said the course wasn't the biggest problem for the Bulldogs.

"The wind made all of the difference," Kurth said. "The course is a tough course, but you could definitely score on it without the wind. [The course] is a lot longer than Kirksville's. The wind moved the ball so much — putting was tough because the wind would move the

ball right off the greens."

The Bulldogs were also at a disadvantage because this was their first tournament of the spring semester, and every other team had already played in at least one tournament.

Truman's next tournament is the Missouri Western University Spring Invitational, which will take place in St. Joseph, Mo., March 29 and 30. Daniels said this tournament should be better for everyone.

"I had a lot of rust on my swing going into Monday, and I was fighting it all day," Daniels said. "On Tuesday, we got to play 14 holes and then we got rained out. The conditions were worse, but somehow, I got my game together. I was playing great, and I was only three-over [par]. I left on a high note, so I've got some confidence going into the next tournament."



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Freshman jumper Coedy Walker jumps into the sandpit during practice. Walker put up marks of 6.62 and 13.74 meters in the long jump and triple jump last weekend.

Walker leaps into first in two events at Open

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

Freshman jumper Coedy Walker started the outdoor track season with a bang.

Walker took first place in both the long jump and triple jump at the Central Methodist Open Saturday with marks of 6.62 and 13.74 meters, respectively.

His long jump fell several inches short of the marks he posted in the indoor season and his triple jump was on par with his average distance. But both were good enough to best the competition in Fayette, Mo.

"My long jump was definitely not as far as I usually jump," Walker said. "It definitely wasn't as far, but I'm improving on my landing."

Walker said there was a solid level of competition at the meet. His competitiveness was triggered when he recognized an opponent as someone who had beaten him at a meet from the indoor season, he said.

"I was kind of worried that he was going to beat me," Walker said. "We ended up kind of battling it out again at the beginning, and he had some scratches. We both didn't perform as well as we

had in the past."

Walker said the meet provided a pressure-free atmosphere as the athletes geared up for the outdoor season.

"This meet was kind of relaxed," Walker said. "... [It was] the first meet of the outdoor season, so [I] just kind of did whatever to see how everything turned out."

Walker has had a strong start to the season after placing fourth in both events at the MIAA Indoor Championships — the only freshman to do so. He also posted a provisional mark in the long jump during the indoor season but didn't qualify for the NCAA Div. II Indoor Championships in the event.

"[Walker has] technically improved a lot from when we started in the fall," head coach John Cochrane said. "He has potential to be very decent in the future. It's going to take a while to do it, but he's gotten quite a bit better than he was in high school."

Cochrane said Walker was technically sound on multiple counts when he posted his provisional mark in the indoor long jump in February. If Walker can make improvements and return to that form, he has the potential to qualify

for the National Championships in the outdoor season.

Both jumps at the Central Methodist Open fell more than a foot short of his marks from the MIAA Indoor Championships just three weeks ago.

Walker said he wasn't concentrating as much on his take offs this weekend because he wanted to work on building up speed and extending his marks with a solid landing. The change of emphasis in his approach could account for the drop in distance, he said.

"I'm trying to be a little quicker when I get out for long jump and triple jump," Walker said. "I'm just trying to get more speed, and I'm focusing a lot more on my landing instead of my approach and getting off."

Walker said he has been making adjustments in the long jump for most of the season, but his triple jump consistently has improved. However, Cochrane said some improvements still need to be made in the second phase of the triple jump.

"We've got to cycle our legs faster," Walker said. "That way we can get up higher and that'll set us up for our last phase, so we can get high in that phase too."

Athlete of the Week

Coedy Walker
Sport: Track and Field
Year: Freshman
Events: Long jump, triple jump
Hometown: Lee's Summit, Mo.

Walker took first place in the long jump and triple jump at the Central Methodist Open last Saturday despite not jumping his best. He put up a provisional mark in the long jump during the indoor season and placed in both events at the MIAA indoor championships.

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