

Athlete of the Week

Michelle Gronemeyer

Sport: Cross Country
Year: Freshman
Hometown: Creve Coeur, Mo.

In her first NCAA race, Gronemeyer placed second Saturday at the Miner Invitational. She ran with and finished only four seconds behind senior Danna Kelly, who qualified for nationals last year. Gronemeyer trimmed 30 seconds off her time at the Missouri Cross Country Championships last fall, in which she finished 12th.

Strong start for Gronemeyer

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

It wasn't an individual win, but it would be hard to picture a better way to start off an intercollegiate career.

Freshman Michelle Gronemeyer placed second at the Miner Invitational cross country meet Saturday in Rolla, Mo., with a time of 19:30.5. She finished just four seconds behind senior Danna Kelly, who competed at the Div. II National Championship race last fall. Their one-two finish led the team to a first-place finish out of six teams competing.

Kelly and Gronemeyer took the lead at the end of the first mile. "They were gone after the first mile," head coach John Cochrane said. "They got the lead in the next 30 meters and they were gone."

Cochrane said he expected the runners to post a faster time in the first mile.

"They both started out way slow," he said. "They let a couple [Missouri University of Science and Technology] girls take the lead, which should not have happened. So they went through the first mile at about 6:10, which was very very slow. I would have expected them to be more like 5:45."

Gronemeyer said her goal for the race was to stay with Kelly and follow her pace for as long as she could.

"I didn't really know what to expect because I know that I've got a lot faster, and this was just a race to see where I was," she said.

Gronemeyer said she should benefit from staying with Kelly during the races and learning how to pace herself in future meets.

"Danna knows how to pace herself more at the beginning, and she starts out faster than I did in high school," Gronemeyer said.

Cochrane said the meet wasn't a very competitive one for the team and that he thought Kelly and Gronemeyer would do well going in.

"I thought she'd do pretty well in the meet," Cochrane said. "I guess I actually expected them to finish first and second from what I actually knew of the people in the meet."

Cochrane said Gronemeyer and Kelly have trained well together in practice and pushed each other to improve.

"[Michelle] apparently did what I asked her to do in the summer," Cochrane said. "So she came in and she's run real well and she's trained real well with Danna, and it's worked out very well that way. They'll both get better because of that."

Cochrane said he told Gronemeyer to stay with Kelly for the duration of the race. That strategy has worked well for Kelly and her training partners in the past.

"[Kelly] and Grace DelNero, last year, trained together real well, and the year before that she and Jacquie Faust trained together real well," he said.

Cochrane said that having Kelly and Gronemeyer stay together during the race will work for now, but that might not be the strategy for the whole season.

"As we go on here we'll see what happens because the meets will get much, much more difficult than this one was," he said. "We'll have to see what happens when they have to go out faster in the early part of the race to see what she'll do."



Photo Submitted
Freshman Michelle Gronemeyer made an immediate impact in her first NCAA cross country meet. She finished second in Rolla on Saturday.

Bulls rugby shut out 31-0 in season opener

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

Bulls rugby endured a rough day in the first game of the 2008 season.

The team was shut out on the road against the University of Missouri-Columbia, 31-0. The team made costly mistakes that Mizzou capitalized on.

"The game actually was not that lopsided as it sounds," head coach Bill Sexton said. "We gave them a couple of pretty easy scores off of some just really questionable decision making."

Sexton said there are some positives that the team will take from the game, but several areas still need improvement.

"Our scrums were good," he said. "We won all of our first phase ball. Our line-outs were terrible. The timing of our jumps and throws was just not very good and therefore that's an

opportunity for first phase position that we just didn't have. We kept having to claw for the ball, and it was always up for grabs."

Sexton said before the meet that he didn't think the team would be 100 percent match-fit going into the game because of the limited number of practices before the game. But he said fitness wasn't the determining factor.

"We had guys tackling hard, but we didn't reorganize very effectively," he said. "As a result, there were gaps that got exploited on a couple of occasions and two of their tries came off of sheer mistakes on our part."

Mizzou carried a 12-0 lead into the half and the Bulls tried to regroup in the second half, but they gave the Tigers a couple possessions in their red zone, allowing them to pull further ahead.

"We're down 12-nil at the half, thinking that the game's turned around,

we're playing better and then bang-bang, two quick scores and the game is out of reach," Sexton said.

He said the team lacked consistency and missed a couple of key tries.

"It was a hard game to see where our deficiencies are," Sexton said. "We got really taxed, and we need to make some serious adjustments on how we play the game."

Senior vice captain Dustin Ralph said he still likes the team's chances this year, though the team didn't play as well as expected this week.

"I think for the first time since my freshman year we have all the pieces to be a successful team," Ralph said. "Each individual that is starting or close to starting has what it takes to contribute to a successful team."

Ralph said the team needs to become more familiar with one another before seeing any serious improve-

ment. He said the players know what they have to do to be successful and how to do it.

"We just need to work on working together as a unit," Ralph said. "It's not out of selfishness that we're not working together perfectly yet, it's just we haven't figured each other out. We're still working with some different combinations to figure out which combination works the best."

The Bulls have plenty of experienced players, but Ralph said they lacked consistency in the first game.

"The individual efforts were really good," Ralph said. "There were individual moments when players played really well and did some amazing things. It's just we need to maintain that level of performance throughout the game."

Junior forward Paul Edgerley said he thought this game was a good one for the Bulls to begin with because

it allowed the team to get back into game shape without hurting its record in league play.

Edgerley said he will look to improve his technique in rucks and scrums in practice this week and come out stronger against Benedictine University (Kan.).

"[The forwards] realize that we need to be there to help out more in the rucks and just work on our technique and hopefully that'll translate to better consistency and better continuity between forwards and backs," he said.

On a positive note, the B team was victorious against the Tigers, 27-7. The team will look to regroup this week against Benedictine in its home opener Saturday.

The Bulls have two more weeks to make adjustments before league play starts Sept. 27 to 28 against Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma.

MIAA Opening Weekend

Football v. Central Missouri

Saturday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m.

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