

Spaulding ties for first, leads team to fifth

Senior shoots four under before rain shortens event

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

Three straight birdies to open the tournament got senior Michael Spaulding off to a hot start and propelled him to the top of the leader board.

Spaulding tied for first at the Missouri Intercollegiate golf tournament Tuesday in Lake Ozark, Mo., after finishing four-under-par. The tournament was scheduled for three rounds, but the third round was rained out Wednesday.

Spaulding's hot start put him in front of the entire field after the end of the first 18 holes, in which he shot a 68 on a par 72. He then shot a 72 in the second round to secure a first-place tie with the University of Central Missouri's Justin Yoder. Yoder

shot a 70 in both rounds.

Eighty-five golfers competed in the event.

"I got going pretty well, got a good head start and did a good job of hitting the fairway and getting high percentage shots," Spaulding said.

The team finished fifth overall out of 16 teams at 28-over-par. Truman finished just five strokes behind Lindenwood University (Mo.) and Missouri Southern State University, which tied for third.

Spaulding said he thought the bad weather would be an advantage for him going into the third round and that he was striking the ball well enough to pull away from the rest of the field.

"I was looking forward to playing the second day," he said. "I really thought that I had a good chance of winning outright."

The 18th hole of the second round could have cost Spaulding his chance to keep first place to himself as he posted

a triple bogey. Spaulding said mental fatigue played a role on that particular hole.

Spaulding played the back nine holes first in both rounds, and he said he was able to turn things around by the time he finished the second round on the front nine. He said entering the season with another year of experience has helped his game.

"I really feel like my game's a lot different," he said. "I've been a lot more patient. I approach the game differently, and I just really wanted to go out there and get it right in my head. I was so ready to play in this tournament."

Senior Scott Danielsen was the Bulldogs' second best finisher. He shot eight-over-par and finished 24th.

Sophomore Chris Kovach tied for 40th and finished 13-over-par. He shot an 80 in the first round before improving with a 77 in the second round.



Senior Scott Danielsen chips during a practice. Danielsen was the second-place Bulldog finisher and 24th overall at Tuesday's 16-team Missouri Intercollegiate tournament.

Kovach said the tough course led to a streak of bad holes.

"I didn't really get to play my best," Kovach said. "I wasn't playing that bad, I just didn't score too well the first two rounds. I could have done a lot better [Wednesday], and I think the team could have moved up and made the top four, top three."

Head coach Jim Berrey said he was disappointed the team didn't get a chance to

improve its score with a third round of play.

"We really would have liked to have played today because there weren't very many strokes between second and fifth," Berrey said. "We felt like we could have made up a little bit more ground as far as a team today."

Sophomore Andy Herrington (+18, tie-49th) and freshman Nik Bentzinger (+11, tie-34th) also compet-

ed this week.

In the first two rounds of the Missouri Intercollegiate last season, the team shot an overall 630 compared to a much-improved 604 this week.

"I'm definitely pleased with the steps in the right direction that we're taking," Berrey said. "You look at where we were last year in this tournament, where we shot this year, and 26 shots is quite a few shots to make up in one year."

Rugby returns veteran corps for '08 season

Bulls finished 5-4-1 last spring, open season Sept. 6

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

The Bulls rugby team looks to capitalize this season with a roster heavy with leaders and returning players.

The Bulls lost just three players from last year's team, with the graduation of Leonard Stephens, Tim Hage and Shea Cleveland. Thirty-four members of last season's squad return this year. The Bulls A-team posted a record of 5-4-1 last spring, after finishing 2-6 in the fall.

Head coach Bill Sexton said the team needed to make some adjustments in recruiting and retaining players for it to improve.

"Beginning last fall we really realized that our numbers were not where they needed to be," he said. "We needed to work on the team camaraderie, and the team mentality and to focus heavily on recruiting players and providing them a good platform to enjoy the game."

It seems the change in focus last season will pay off this year with such a large number of returning players.

"We had over 30 players at every practice last week, and we're excited about the idea of maintaining 35 to 40 players with the team so that we can really begin to develop our program again," Sexton said.

Seniors Justin Lacy and Dustin Ralph served as captain and vice captain, respectively on the team last year and both return this season.

"Justin's an excellent play-

er," Sexton said. "He brings a lot of leadership with him through his experience with military ROTC. He's just a good leader and role model."

Lacy said the players will be more comfortable this season after gaining experience at their position last year.

"I think we really established player positions really well," Lacy said. "Last year we had some questions as to where to put players, and this year with everyone but one player returning in our starting lineup, where guys are good at, where they're solid at has really become clear."

Lacy said he would like to make it back to the West Collegiate All-Stars Championships, something the team hasn't done since the spring 2006 season when the team took third place.

"Our goal is obviously to win ... to make it into westerns," Lacy said. If we can make it into westerns, go from there, possibly go for nationals."

The Bulls have some big schools standing between them and postseason competition, such as Oklahoma State University, University of Oklahoma and Kansas State University. The first game will be a real test for the team when

the Bulls make the trip to Columbia to play the University of Missouri on Sept. 6.

To be able to compete with those schools, Lacy said the team will need to concentrate heavily on fitness.

"Being more fit and being able to run at the end of the game is always a huge advantage," he said. "It makes getting hit hurt less, and it makes hitting hurt less."

Sophomore Aaron Loida returns to the team this year after the team voted him Outstanding Back and Most Improved Player last spring. Loida said the team is fortunate to have such experienced captains on the team.

"In order to meet our goals, really good leadership is what we need and we have that this year," he said. "Lacy and [Ralph], they're the best we could ask for and we know what we need to

do and how to get us to do it."

For the Bulls to continue to build, Sexton said they will have to keep up with recruiting even though they have such a large number of returning players this season.

Sexton said the new recruits such as freshman Jason Ralph and senior Dylan Rohr will be able to see considerable playing time in both A-side and B-side games as soon as they can prepare themselves for competition.

"We always talk about needing 25 healthy, interchangeable players to keep 15 good players on the field at any time," Sexton said. "Availability or somebody gets a ding and they have to come out, we need to have people who are trained so those newer players actually step into important roles more quickly than they realize."

"In order to meet our goals, really good leadership is what we need, and we have that this year."

Aaron Loida
Sophomore

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