



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Sophomore Joey Walls practices Wednesday on the track. Walls placed first with a time of 15:49.0 in the season-opening meet.

Walls leads pack to start season

Sophomore places first at Miner Invite, leads 'Dogs to first

BY CORY WEEKES
Staff Reporter

In the men's cross country competition Saturday, the Bulldogs took the first four places. This success is due in large part to sophomore Joey Walls.

In the 5k race, Walls broke the tape with a time of 15:49.0. Walls also managed to pace his teammates to a sweep of the top four finishes.

"Joey did really well," head coach Tim Schwegler said. "Anytime you win a college race you had better enjoy it, because it may not happen again."

Schwegler said Walls has improved since his freshman year.

"Joey just races really well," Schwegler said. "And really, it was like the second meet — the Les Dukes meet last year — that he got into the middle of it and I think something just clicked. He

got into the middle of it and he had a really good finish. He had never finished like that before."

Walls said the team has done a good job stepping up its game this year.

"I feel like even though we lost some guys and it's a small team this year, the guys we have will do well and are also stepping up to the challenge," he said.

Walls, who is a returning honorable mention All-MIAA runner said he feels good about the improvements he has made as a runner.

"I feel pretty good about the race," Walls said. "I feel like I started out too fast and slowed down a bit in the end, but I feel like this year I'm in a lot better shape and am more prepared for not only cross country but track as well."

A big part of any athlete's success, however, takes place off the field.

"He's really competitive in workouts," Schwegler said. "I think he's going to die sometimes in workouts. He gets out on the track

and leaves it all out there. And he scored in the 1500 in track outdoors, so he's a competitor. He really is."

Walls agreed with Schwegler.

"Sometimes I think I'm going to pass out at practice too," he said. "But I know the pain I'm feeling in workouts is no more than the pain I will feel in an actual race."

"I try not to think too much when running. I just keep going, because in the end it's all about getting to that finish line."

Walls' next race will be the Les Dukes 8K, the same race where Schwegler said he really found his stride in last year. Only this time, with a year of experience under his belt, Walls is confident that he will not only duplicate last year's performance, but he will exceed past accomplishments.

"I'm thinking I will do really well in the 8K," he said. "My coach wants me to break 27 minutes. As for me, I feel like a 26:45 would not be out of the question."

Athlete of the Week

Joey Walls

Sport: Cross country

Year: Sophomore

Hometown:

Columbia, Mo.

Sophomore cross country runner Joey Walls paced the Bulldogs to a first-place finish at the Miner Invite last Saturday. The 'Dogs had runners place in the top four spots in the 5K race, with Walls leading the pack in a time of 15:49.0.

COCHRANE | Head coach's career started long before he signed on as a Truman coach

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Cochrane said. "It's a good cheap way. ... We were doing men's tennis that way at the time. We were doing wrestling that way at the time. We were el cheapo."

Cochrane did stay on, and during his second year he became the assistant to the athletic director. He handled game management and ticket sales. As time went on, Cochrane was given more responsibility. He became a 12-month employee thanks to then-Dean Darrell Krueger, he said.

In 1980, Cochrane took over the women's track and cross-country teams, a role that eventually expanded. He became the head coach of the men's team after former coach Ed Schneider

retired in 2006. He even spent a year as interim athletic director during the 1990-91 school year.

Cochrane has won a number of awards. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the NCAA Div. II cross country coaches in 1992 and won the same award from the track coaches in 1996.

Cochrane's teams have achieved a high amount of success during his 30 years at Truman. He has coached his teams to six MIAA track and field championships and one cross country crown during his career. Since 1980, 25 All-Americans and three national champions have come through the program.

"The training that he instilled upon me and kind of coached me through was something that brought me

to as successful as I was able to be while I was at Truman," said former All-American runner Danna Kelly. "Coming from high school I really didn't have a lot of training under my belt. With his workouts and motivation ... and driving factor, he was kind of able to push buttons to get you to motivate yourself."

But Kelly, who ran track and cross country for the Bulldogs from 2005-09, said she not only admires Cochrane for his coaching ability, but for connecting with athletes off the track on a personal level.

"I think the thing that really makes me admire him the most is his ability to relate to his athletes outside of running," Kelly said. "For example, being his athlete [and] being able to go into his office and sit down and not even talk for a minute about running. And whether ... [there are] things going on in my life or things going on in his life, I think that's something that is very special that not every coach is able to have with

their athletes."

To Cochrane's friends and fellow coaches, his loyalty to his athletes and the people he works with means more than anything anyone can learn on the track.

"He believes in the philosophy of the University," Schneider said. "He believes in the students he recruits. John is a very hard worker, very conscientious with regard to the students he works with [and] everything he does. ... Evidently he's really enjoyed it or he'd [have] moved on to something else I suppose."

Assistant track coach Tim Schwegler said one thing that has made Cochrane special to the University is that his support for Truman has never wavered.

"He's very loyal to the University, I mean very loyal," Schwegler said. "He loves this place. This is where he wants to be. Maybe in his early years, and he had a couple opportunities to leave, but he and his family decided to stay. He's a Bulldog through and through."

INVITE | Dell'Orco, Walls lead Bulldogs to wins

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that — gives us a point to work from," head coach John Cochrane said.

Unlike the men, the women squared off against Missouri S&T and Lincoln University. Lincoln, which has mostly track athletes on its cross country team, placed just two women in the top 20 out of 27 finishers. Missouri S&T finished with 55 points.

"We pounded them pretty well because our kids ran pretty well," Cochrane said.

Cochrane said the meet was a good opportunity for everyone to see their teammates because there were three teams at the meet. He said the course was not difficult, albeit being slightly hilly, and that it is comparable to what the team will see at the MIAA Championships on Oct. 24 in Emporia, Kan.

The men and the women will compete next Saturday at the Les Duke Invitation in Grinnell, Iowa. It will be the first 8K race of the season for the men.

ARMSTEAD | Bulldog great, who was All-MIAA three times in track, is the only Truman athlete to ever win a medal at the Olympics.

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with a time of 2:57.91. Armstead ran the second leg of the relay.

"It was something that I was looking forward to and you just kept seeing that when you [were] in training camp — you stand on that podium," Armstead said. "So it was like a dream come true. It happened the way I thought it was going to happen."

As a Bulldog

A large placard sits in a glass case halfway up the steps in Pershing Building. In it is a picture of Armstead with his gold medal, along with his Truman Hall of Fame bio. Armstead was inducted in 1994 and is the only gold medalist ever to attend Truman.

But if it hadn't been for a number of Bulldogs, Armstead might never have made it to the Olympics.

There was Tim Schwegler, his former teammate and current men's cross country coach. Schwegler is older than Armstead but still keeps in contact with him today and at one point tried on Armstead's gold medal.

"My first memories of Ray, when he was a freshman, we went up to Drake University for an indoor meet and I had just got done running the two mile, and he had run the 4x4, and we were in the locker room showering and he had his head in the trash-can throwing up," Schwegler said. "And I always kid him about that when I see him."

There was the late Kenneth Gardner, who had the final contact with Armstead before he came to Truman. Gardner was head track coach until he retired in 1981 after Armstead's second year at Truman.

There was Ed Schneider, who coached the track team after Gardner. Schneider put Armstead in every race he could at track meets and wrote endurance workouts for Armstead in the off-

season.

"He was a very coachable individual," Schneider said. "If you talked with him or had some suggestions of how he could make himself better he would certainly listen and worked hard. I think of Ray as always doing a little bit extra."

"He certainly had a great deal of speed and natural talent, but with the extra work that he put in, he was able to develop a little more than the other kids we've had over the years. But he was an outgoing, very friendly individual. I don't remember ever hearing any type of a cuss word from him."

There was Rex Sharp, the trainer who nursed Armstead back to health after his hamstring cramps during his senior year. If not for Sharp, current head coach John Cochrane said, Armstead never would have made it to the Olympics.

There was a collection of coaches, including former football coach John Ware, who helped Armstead with summer training. Instead of going home — Armstead had attended Northwest High School in St. Louis — he stayed at Truman for workouts. Ware gave Armstead some weightlifting drills, but Armstead said "everybody kind of had their own hand in just helping me out."

Possibly the one who had the most influence on Armstead's success was Cochrane, who was an assistant when Armstead attended Northeast Missouri State.

Armstead often entered Cochrane's office asking for advice, which was how the two first started talking. During the fall seasons, Armstead asked Co-

chrane to write him workouts because Gardner was busy coaching cross country.

Then, during the summer of 1983 — the summer after Armstead redshirted — he again asked Cochrane for workouts. Except this time, Armstead trained without a coach because Cochrane babysat his kids during the day and worked at night.

"I assumed he was doing the workouts — I didn't know, I had no clue," Cochrane said. "One day, I parked down by the Kennels for some reason and he's out on the track. And so I kind of look, and he's running 200s ... and he's supposed to be doing 200s. So I kind of sneaked and timed him and he's not doing too bad. And I'm going, 'Well, the guy has done his work.' And he kept telling me that fall, 'Coach, I'm going to make the Olympic team.'"

Cochrane and Armstead went out to the track for an 800-meter time trial in the fall, which Cochrane said Armstead ran in a "pretty quick" 1:51. Nearly a year later, Armstead qualified for the Olympics after continuing to improve, no matter whom he was running against.

"He was the type of guy that if you wanted to run one race against him, you would be in trouble," Cochrane said.

Post college

After his gold medal, Armstead competed across the world while running the individual 400-meter dash. At one meet in Germany, he defeated the 1976, 1980 and 1984 Olympic individual champions.

He continued to train with Cochrane for four years after the Olympics. Cochrane said Arm-

"It was like a dream come true. It happened just the way I thought it was going to happen."

Ray Armstead
On winning his Olympic gold medal



Photo submitted by Truman Athletic Department
Ray Armstead poses with his gold medal. He was inducted into the Truman Hall of Fame in 1994 and still owns the school record in the 600-year dash. Armstead currently resides in St. Louis.

stead would train somewhere else for a while, then come back to Kirksville where he and Cochrane trained at an all-weather track in Bloomfield.

Armstead did not qualify for the 1988 Olympics. He made it to the trials, but finished fifth in the semifinals of the 400-meters.

Soon after that, he earned a master's degree in business and administration from Fontbonne

University in St. Louis.

Armstead has never given up his track roots.

He currently works part-time as a track coach at University City High School in St. Louis, and helps train athletes in the winter.

"People keep coming up to me saying, 'Congratulations on 25 years,'" Armstead said. "Even Cochrane called me, and I was like, '25 years, has it been that long?'"