

Women win second straight meet

Cross country teams both win Les Duke Invite, head into two-week layoff

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

It took just two meets this season for the women's cross country team to accomplish something it had not done since 2000.

The Bulldogs placed first twice in one season.

At the 11-team Les Duke Invitational Saturday in Grinnell, Iowa, the 'Dogs had five runners in the top 12 and scored 44 points as a team. Bethel University (Minn.) was second with 55 points.

"We weren't exactly expecting to get first," sophomore Dani Dell'Orco said. "We didn't go in with that mindset. We knew that it was possible, but everyone has been working so hard in practice. ... We knew

that we could do better than what we did last year for sure."

Dell'Orco again paced the 'Dogs with a third-place overall finish in 22:05. Sophomore Michelle Gronemeyer, freshmen Cindy and Karen Grauel and sophomore Anne Ratermann rounded out the top five for the Bulldogs.

The 'Dogs placed fifth at the same meet last fall against many of the same teams.

Head coach John Cochrane said he saw improvement from the first meet of the season at the Sept. 5 Miner Invitational.

"We ran better," Cochrane said. "We still have a little too big of a hole between Dani and Michelle and we need to close up a little bit more with the next three people. And our sixth and seventh need to get to the point where they are inside the first five runners of some of the schools we are competing against. So we've got a lot of things to do yet."

Dell'Orco finished more than a minute ahead of Gronemeyer, but Truman's second-through-fifth runners were within 17 seconds of each other. Dell'Orco said the conditions were perfect.

"The course was a great example of a cross country course," she said. "It had a little bit of everything in there. I know last year it rained, and we literally had to jump a river. So this year it was warm and 70 and gorgeous, and so it was perfect conditions for racing."

Senior Fiona Williams placed sixth for the 'Dogs, with junior Kylie Raithel right behind her. Freshman Annie Crites finished eighth in her first college race.

Cochrane said the improvement from last year seemed from nearly everyone posting faster times. He said the team went out from the starting line at a pretty quick pace in the first 6K race of the year.

"It was a little difficult at the end because the second time through

you went through the hills again after 3,000 meters," Cochrane said. "So it was a little tougher because the thing is, if you don't go out and position yourself, you're not going to move up 60 people."

The men's cross country team followed the early-season trend of keeping up with the women. The 'Dogs placed first at Les Duke, which was also their second win of the young season. Truman defeated Grinnell College (Iowa) 49-87 as a team.

It is the first time the men accomplished the feat since 2001, when the team finished fourth at the national meet.

"They raced really well, stuck to our race plan really well, and I think they gained a lot of confidence," head coach Tim Schwegler said. "They feel really good about themselves right now."

Juniors Adam Kell and Bob Gorman finished one-two for the 'Dogs, and sophomore Joey Walls, junior

John Venner and sophomore Mike Dial placed in the other three scoring spots.

"The first 8K is always kind of scary, and they just have to remember what the distance felt like," Schwegler said. "And I think most of them did pretty well as far as that goes, and the freshman Chad Petrofsky did a really good job for his first 8K."

It was the same top-five runners as the first week of the season, despite the longer 8K distance. Schwegler said the top three should be the same every week, with Venner, Dial and Petrofsky fighting for the fifth spot. Senior Zach Chapman, who has missed the first two meets, could also be in the top five when he returns to the team.

The Bulldogs have two weeks off before their next meet Sept. 25, at the Brissman-Lundeen Invitational in Rock Island, Ill. Cochrane said the race will feature primarily Div. III schools, and the course is very flat, which will favor the track-oriented runners.

Athlete of the Week

Dagmar Velez

Sport: Tennis

Year: Sophomore

Hometown: Rolla

Dagmar Velez finished a perfect 5-0 at the Truman Open last weekend. Velez competed in the 5/6 flight and won two matches against players from Northwest Missouri State University, the team that ended Truman's spring season in the MIAA Tournament.

Velez goes 5-0 at Truman Invite

BY BRENT FOSTER
Assistant Sports Editor

The tennis season could not have gotten off to a better start for sophomore Dagmar Velez.

Velez went 5-0 Friday and Saturday to win the 5/6 flight at the Truman Invitational.

"I just tried to play my matches match by match and I really moved my feet well," Velez said. "I tried really, really hard, and I felt like I needed that to win."

Velez defeated her five opponents with relative ease. She won both of her first two matches 8-4, which included a victory against Northwest Missouri State University's Emily Hoffman. She won her third match 8-0 and her fourth match 8-2. In her fifth and final match she faced another Bearcat, Allison Wulff. She defeated Wulff 8-5 to complete her undefeated weekend.

Last season the Bearcats defeated Truman 5-0 in the semifinals of the MIAA

Tournament. That loss ended the Bulldogs season. The Bearcats went on to win the tournament and played in the NCAA Tournament where they were defeated in the first round.

Velez' play was part of a strong weekend for the 'Dogs. Seven players placed for Truman at the open. Velez and sophomore Jennifer Hawkins finished first in their flights. Freshman Lauren Higgins placed second in the 7/8 flight with a 5-1 record.

Last season Velez played in the fifth spot all season, and head coach Pete Kendall said she probably will remain in the fifth position this season. Velez went 18-10 during 2008-09.

Velez said she spent the summer trying to improve her game, and hopes she will see results from her hard work.

"I took a lot of lessons [during the summer]," Velez said. "I didn't really play in any tournaments over the summer but I conditioned and played a lot

over the summer."

Kendall said he can tell that Velez played a lot of tennis during the summer.

"That's all I can ask of them is go out and play" Kendall said. "The ones that don't it becomes obvious."

"She's just a solid, very competitive. [Velez] doesn't give you a lot of points, makes you play."

Velez played in only three doubles matches last season but said she played a lot of doubles matches during the summer. Kendall said Velez will play doubles season with junior Anna Greenwald at the No. 3 spot.

Velez said she hopes to use her success at the Truman Invitational and what she learned during the summer as a springboard into the dual season.

"My highest hope is to be undefeated," Velez said. "I think like I can do that at No. 5. For my team I hope we do well overall. I think we have a really good lineup this year. I just hope we do well in conference especially."



File Photo

Sophomore Dagmar Velez was undefeated in the 5/6 flight at the Truman Invitational last weekend.

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