

# Track nets 3 provisionals at Mini-Meet

BY JOCELYN NEBEL  
Staff Reporter

The men's and women's track teams competed at the Washington University Mini-Meet on Friday and earned three provisional marks.

Senior jumper Katrina Biermann and sophomore jumper Jenny Zweifel recorded provisional marks and placed first and second in the triple jump with jumps of 38-07.50 feet and 38-04.25 feet, respectively. Sophomore Dani Dell'Orco placed first in the 5,000-meter run with a time of 17:13.96, also a provisional mark.

The Bulldogs opened their outdoor season with seven first-place finishes. The women finished second out of five teams, and the men finished fourth. This high placement for the women was likely because of the small number of teams at the meet and the lower level of competition.

"It wasn't as intense," sophomore sprinter Kaci Sargent said. "It was kind of like a beginner meet to kind of get our feet wet and then push off to build confidence and push off into the weeks that are coming."

Head coach John Cochrane said this meet was too small to be considered a significant result for the Bulldogs. It did not include the largest conference competitors and had many Div. III schools competing.

The highest level of competition in the meet came from Washington University. The distance teams had many returning runners from the cross country season to rival the Bulldogs, but the Bulldogs placed in the top five 10 times.

Top competitors for the men's distance team included juniors John Venner and Bob Gorman. They played one-two in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. Sophomore Mike Dial placed second in the 5,000-meter run, and senior

Jacob Schrum placed second in the 800-meter run.

"We all have our things we can do regardless of what the competition is," Cochrane said. "We're doing what we need to do to develop people."

Assistant coach Tim Schwegler said the distance runners competed well in the meet and are focusing on volume training this week. The distance teams will focus on increasing the mileage they run in practice to increase their stamina and build a solid base for the outdoor season.

"There's not a lot of time left," Cochrane said. "You have to remember you also have to do what [Coach Schwegler] is doing with keeping up with volume, or if you come out of the indoor season you'll run fairly fast and then [plateau]."

Other top competitors included freshman sprinter Lisa Kucharski. She placed first in the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 1:06.30.

This was the first time Kucharski had run in the event. Sophomore distance runner Anne Ratermann placed second in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:19.12.

The men's throwers swept the top three spots in the shot put, led by senior thrower Alex Van Delft. The women's relay teams also placed first in both the 400-meter and 1,600-meter relays. Kucharski and Sargent were part of both teams. Sargent ran the anchor leg for the 400-meter relay and said handoffs were a key part of doing well.

"I think we were a little bit ahead of the next team, but Lisa and I had a really good handoff, and I was able to get out and go," Sargent said. "There's always room for improvement, but [the handoffs] were pretty good for our first meet."

Sargent could not compete in the outdoor season last year because of a thigh injury. She said

the meet was a good introduction to the outdoor season, especially since she felt like "new blood."

Cochrane said many of the issues with the track team performances last weekend were because of the addition of new events to the outdoor season, especially for the throwers who have added three new events. The outdoor season is also subject to weather changes, which is a new obstacle for training and competing.

"There are some outdoor events that weren't indoor events that we need to improve on," Cochrane said.

The Bulldogs will compete in the Northwest Missouri Invitational on Saturday. The teams will compete against conference team Northwest Missouri State University and some schools in the NAIA. Cochrane said the competition will not be as tough as meets in the coming weeks, but everything should be in preparation for the conference meet.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior shortstop Alex Weber fields a grounder against Emporia on Sunday. Weber was 8-for-13 for the weekend.

## Weber excels in 2nd year from left side

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Sports Editor

What a difference a year makes.

Junior shortstop Alex Weber entered the 2009 softball season with no experience from the left side of the plate. She came to Truman as a right-handed hitter, but switched to a left-handed slap hitter after her freshman year because of her speed.

After batting .222 from the right side of the plate in 2008, Weber again struggled last season with just a .224 average and a .262 on-base percentage.

It has all changed in 2010. Weber leads the team with a .361 average, .386 OBP and .411 slugging percentage. She is the only player to have started every game.

"This year I just feel a lot more comfortable," Weber said. "I feel like a left-handed hitter. ... It just took a lot of repetition and at-bats to see the ball as good as I was from the right side."

The team-leading production was on display last weekend at home against Washburn University and Emporia State University. Weber was 8-for-13 at the plate with six runs scored. She also added to her team lead in stolen bases.

Weber followed up the weekend by going 2-for-6 with a run scored in a split against Missouri Western State University on Tuesday.

"I think that she's really taken ownership in her development this year," head coach Erin Brown said.

Weber had at least two hits and two runs scored in three of the weekend games, and her performance led the 'Dogs (7-13) to a 3-3 start to the conference season and consecutive wins for the first time since the season-opening tournament in February.

Brown said that when Weber and the rest of the top of the lineup have success, the team has success. Weber scored five runs in the three wins during the week and

two runs in the losses. She has seven multi-hit games this season, but only two of them have been in losses.

Weber's best play of the week could have been when she scored the walk-off run in the second game against Washburn.

With one out and a runner on second, Weber came to the plate representing the winning run. She reached with an infield base hit. Two batters later, she showed her speed once again by scoring from second on a fielder's choice for the winning run.

The quickness on the basepaths is nothing new for Weber this season. She leads the team with 18 stolen bases in 19 attempts. In 2009, she was just 3-for-5 in stolen base attempts.

"I think I'm getting better jumps this year off the pitchers, and I'm just getting on base a lot more than last year," Weber said.

It's just another facet of the Weber's game that has improved in last year.

## Athlete of the Week

Alex Weber

Sport: Softball

Position:

Shortstop

Year: Junior

Hometown:

Manhattan, Ill.

Junior shortstop

Alex Weber was

10-for-19 at the

plate with seven

runs scored last

week. She leads

the Bulldogs in

average, on-base

percentage and

stolen bases.

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