

# Track takes home 14 top finishes

BY JOCELYN NEBEL  
Staff Reporter

The men's and women's track teams competed at the Dewey All-good Invitational in Rolla, Mo., and took home 14 first-place finishes.

Three Bulldogs took two firsts in their events. Freshman thrower Rachel McCarroll placed first in both the hammer throw and the discus, senior jumper Katrina Biermann placed first in the pole vault and triple jump, and junior thrower Derek Atwood took top placements in shot put and discus.

"Overall it was a smaller, less competitive meet but still a reputable meet," McCarroll said.

Head coach John Cochrane said the lower level of competition helped

the Bulldogs achieve many of their first-place finishes. Many athletes did not achieve personal bests or conference provisional marks and still placed first or second.

"Some things we did OK, but it's not quite what we wanted to find out with some of them," Cochrane said. "We had hoped for better performances. Some of the events were not that wild. The throws were not that wild."

Despite the lack of provisional marks, some athletes continued to improve. Junior jumper Demetrius Lavant placed first in the long jump with a distance of 23-03.25 feet. This was a new personal best for Lavant.

"We've just been working on my speed down the runway and getting my foot down to jump off it better,"

Lavant said. "I finally got it down this weekend. ... I was happy with it, but I still want to jump further. That's the furthest I've ever jumped, but I still want to do the best I can."

Cochrane also was pleased with Lavant's performance.

"He's still learning, [but] he's getting more things right," Cochrane said. "We changed some things this week, worked on his approach to get more speed."

Other top performances for the men's team included personal improvements for some of the distance runners. Senior Zach Chapman and junior John Venner improved their times in the 1,500-meter run and placed third and fifth, respectively. Senior Adam Kell also improved his time

in the 5,000-meter run with a time of 15:36.38 and placed second.

The men's throwers also placed well. In addition to Atwood's two top placements, senior Alex Van Delft and freshman Matt Smith each placed within the top-five in the same events.

"The three [men's] throwers are all pretty good physical talents, so we really need them to throw well because they have the ability to do stuff in the conference meet," Cochrane said.

On the women's side, freshman distance runner Debbie Boedeker placed first in the 3,000-meter steeplechase with a time of 11:53.17, a 23-second improvement. This was Boedeker's second time running the event.

Sophomore distance runner Michelle Gronemeyer also improved her time in the 3,000-meter run and placed first.

"There's a reality here that we need to do things," Cochrane said. "Some things we won't do well enough to score, but some things we can."

Despite many top placements, the Bulldogs will need to make improvements in all areas to prepare for the conference meet, which is three weeks away.

"We all have our better meets," McCarroll said. "I wasn't disappointed [in my performance this weekend]. ... I always throw better in discus when I don't have to throw hammer right before it. ... Next week, I definitely want to throw better."

## Athlete of the Week

### Luke Crader

Sport: Baseball  
Position: 2nd base  
Year: Junior  
Hometown:  
Burfordville, Mo.

Junior second baseman Luke Crader had six hits this weekend against Southwest Baptist University. He is batting .314 this season. He recently moved to the No. 2 spot in the batting order, where he is batting .372.

## Crader provides steady bat at No. 2

BY LOGAN JACKSON  
Staff Reporter

Junior second baseman Luke Crader hasn't allowed a small switch in the lineup to mess up his swing.

Crader started the season in the leadoff spot, but injuries and lineup changes have moved him to the No. 2 spot. Crader is 16-for-43, with a .372 average in 13 games at No. 2. When he leads off he is 28-for-97, for a .289 batting average. Head coach Dan Davis said Crader always has a positive mindset when he goes to the plate.

"It doesn't matter what part of the lineup he hits in," Davis said. "He just hits. I don't think he ever lets any type of pressure get to him. He lets the bat fly and sees what happens."

Last weekend against Southwest Baptist University, Crader led the Bulldogs with six hits. He had two RBIs, two doubles and scored one run.

On Wednesday against Missouri University of Science and Technology, Crader had four hits in two games.

He scored one run and also added an RBI. He also had a walk in the first game of the series.

"A lot of the times when I hit, the ball looks like a pebble," Crader said. "This weekend, it looked like a basketball coming up there. I had a lot of confidence. It's all mental when you go to the plate."

His biggest hit came in the final game of the Southwest Baptist series — the lone Bulldog win. Truman scored four runs in the second inning of the game, with two runs coming on a Crader single. He later singled in the top of the ninth to keep the inning alive for freshman outfielder Brett Budd, who doubled home three runs.

Crader started the series off well and went 2-for-3 with two doubles. He didn't get a hit in Game 2 but got two more hits in Game 3.

He is second on the team with a .314 batting average. He has 44 hits this season, which is eight more than he had last season. He leads the Bulldogs in walks with 26 and has a .439 on-base per-

centage which is the highest on the team.

Crader batted .352 during his freshman season and was named to the all-MIAA honorable mention team. He started 20 games that year and finished the season with a .465 on-base percentage. He only struck out eight times in 71 at-bats as well.

However, last season, Crader fell into a sophomore slump. He ended the season with a .231 batting average in 51 games.

He also had a .298 on-base percentage which was the lowest for a Bulldog that played in at least 23 games.

Last season Crader didn't have a specific spot in the lineup, however. He started 47 games and batted in seven different spots. Most of his at-bats came in the sixth and second spots, and he had at least five starts in six different spots.

"My mindset at the plate has changed," Crader said. "Last year, I took too many pitches and had too many strikeouts. I'm seeing the ball a lot better and being more aggressive."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Junior second baseman Luke Crader fields a ball against Missouri S&T. Crader is batting .314 this season.

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