

# Track earns five provisionals at Open

BY JOCELYN NEBEL  
Staff Reporter

Although the men's and women's track teams competed against a small field last weekend, that did not diminish the magnitude of their performances.

The Bulldogs competed at the Cyclone Open in Ames, Iowa, and left with five provisional marks and two new school records.

"We had some good performances this week," junior thrower Derek Atwood said. "Everyone's starting to step it up a little bit, so it's getting pretty exciting. Everyone just feeds off each other. You see a good performance and you want to match it and do better."

Atwood won the shot put with a provisional mark of 53-07.00 feet, a new personal best. Atwood said he had been training with assistant coach Leslie Hardesty to improve his throw and relax in competitions. He has placed among the top five shot put competitors at every indoor meet this year and currently ranks fifth in the conference standings.

"Over the past few weeks, we've been working a lot on explosive training in the weight room and throwing, using all my strength instead of holding back," Atwood said. "Really that's been my problem, just getting mentally through the barrier of qualifying for nationals and then just throwing and having fun like I need to be."

Atwood said he has thrown farther in practice and attributes his shorter throws to the stress of conference competition and scratching.

"I was surprised [getting a provisional mark] took so long," Atwood said. "I've put too much pressure on myself this whole



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Senior Katrina Biermann, shown here practicing the pole vault, set an NCAA automatic mark in the triple jump last weekend in Ames, Iowa.

year to do it, and I thought I was going to get it the first meet, and when it didn't happen, I just kept pressing. But I feel like now that it's happened, I can just relax and go do what I need to do."

Head coach John Cochrane

said Atwood needs to throw at least another 1.5 feet to compete in the national meet.

"[Atwood] has the potential because he's thrown well in practice," Cochrane said. "In field events sometimes you are on a

roll technically where you're doing things pretty well and you take off. ... Right now he's not in a bad position if he can stay at it and throw pretty well."

Other top competitors that continued to improve were senior jumper Katrina Biermann, senior thrower Tessa Letuli, sophomore distance runner Dani Dell'Orco and senior distance runner Fiona Williams. All four competitors made provisional marks Saturday, and Biermann and Dell'Orco broke school records.

Biermann's new triple jump record of 39-04.00 feet is an automatic qualifying mark for the NCAA national meet in March.

"My goal the past couple meets for triple jump [was] to hit that automatic mark," Biermann said. "We've been working on the second phase of the triple jump and getting my left leg up so I can push myself farther into the sand. We actually got to work in the sand pit this week instead of jumping inside, so that was helpful."

Biermann said she scratched her first two marks in the meet and said she knew she had to hit her mark on the last jump.

"I had to psych myself up for it," Biermann said. "As soon as I landed and walked over to the measuring tape, I knew I had hit 11.90 [meters]. It was a good feeling."

Dell'Orco also made Bulldog history Saturday. She placed first in the 5,000-meter run with a

provisional time of 17:11.24. The time broke the record Beth Lubbering had for nearly 10 years by more than 20 seconds. Dell'Orco also ran a personal best in the mile run and placed fifth with a time of 5:04.27. Williams placed fourth and got a provisional mark in this event with a time of 5:03.46.

Letuli led the women's throwers with a provisional mark throw of 44-00.50 feet. Letuli placed sixth in what Cochrane said was a tough women's field.

The men's distance team also had strong performances Saturday. Junior distance runner John

Venner set a personal record and placed third in the non-seeded 3,000-meter run with a time of 8:51.07. Sophomore middle distance runner Mike Dial placed 10th and also had a personal best in the same event with a time of 9:00.59. Senior middle distance runner Jacob Schrum ran a career-best time of 1:56.09 in the 800-meter run.

Cochrane said that despite so many good performances, the men's team still has to improve and build in their events to

compete well in the conference meet.

"Right now we've got to start to crescendo it out a little bit to improve," Cochrane said. "We had a lot of pretty decent people this meet, but we need to keep doing that stuff."

The men's and women's teams compete Saturday at the Knox Invitational in Galesburg, Ill.

"I've put too much pressure on myself this year to do it and I thought it was going to happen in the first meet. ... Now that it's happened, I can just relax."

Derek Atwood  
Senior, on earning a provisional mark in the shot put

## Athlete of the Week

### Vesko Filchev

Sport: Basketball  
Position: Center  
Year: Sophomore  
Hometown:  
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Sophomore center Vesko Filchev recorded 17 points and 10 rebounds in a loss against Southwest Baptist on Saturday. He is averaging 11.7 points per game this season. He has scored in double figures in 15 out of 22 games this season.

## Improved stamina helps Filchev net 17

BY BRENT FOSTER  
Assistant Sports Editor

The more time sophomore center Vesko Filchev has spent on the floor this season, the more productive he has been.

That was the case Saturday when Filchev scored 17 points and grabbed 10 rebounds in 28 minutes during the Bulldogs' 73-65 loss to Southwest Baptist University. He also had nine points and nine rebounds in the loss to Washburn University on Feb. 3.

Filchev said his increased production this season has been a result of being better conditioned, which has allowed him to be on the floor more.

"That's what actually prevented me from playing longer periods of time," Filchev said. "It shows up in the stats."

Filchev's minutes per game have doubled this season compared to last, something head coach Jack Schrader said has been directly correlated to his increased production.

Filchev averaged just more than 12 minutes per game last season. This season he is up to almost 25 minutes per game, and he played a career-high 32 minutes and scored a career-high 21 points Nov. 24 against the

University of Missouri-Saint Louis.

Filchev leads the team with 11.7 points per game and is second on the team with seven rebounds per game. He picked up his fifth double-double this season during the loss to SBU. Last season Filchev averaged 6.7 points and three rebounds per game.

Schrader said Filchev uses his height and soft hands as an advantage in the post and that he uses these advantages to win rebounding battles.

"He's gotten feistier," Schrader said. "He grabs it and holds on to it."

Schrader also said he wants to see Filchev's minutes per game increase a little more next season.

"I think if you can get him up to around 30 minutes, I think that would be good," Schrader said. "I think that would be a goal for him."

Filchev scored 11 points and grabbed seven rebounds during the first meeting with SBU on Dec. 30. He said Saturday's game against SBU was a little different from the first meeting, because SBU was without Matt Rogers, the MIAA's second leading scorer, who is out with a knee injury. Rogers scored 29 points against Filchev in the first meeting. Schrader said

that even without Rogers, Truman prepared the same against SBU because they remain aggressive and attack the basket.

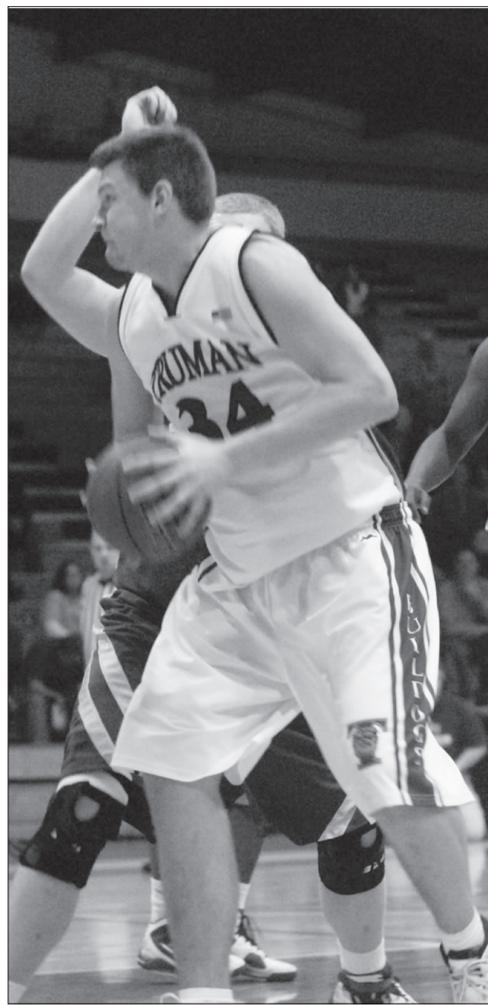
"Where they notice it is the end of a possession where if you don't have anything you can just throw it to him and he's pretty good," Schrader said.

Filchev continues to adjust to the American style of basketball after growing up in Bulgaria. Schrader said a major difference in European basketball is that rivalries are not as developed as they are in the United States. He said it has taken time for Filchev to adjust to some of the competition because of this.

"The competitiveness is ingrained in American players at a younger level," Schrader said. All these guys come up playing their arch rival. That's not quite the same over in Europe. They do develop rivalries, but it's usually at a later age."

Even with the increased minutes and being more competitive during games, Filchev said he will continue to work on conditioning during the offseason to improve his stamina.

"I'll definitely do whatever it takes for me to work on physical improvement," Filchev said.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Sophomore center Vesko Filchev, shown earlier this season, recorded 17 points against SBU on Saturday.



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