

Dell'Orco leads track at Collegiate Challenge

Kucharski, Williams, Biermann also take top marks for Bulldog women

BY JOCELYN NEBEL
Staff Reporter

With the MIAA Indoor Championships looming, the men's and women's track teams continue to push themselves toward their personal and provisional goals.

At the Collegiate Challenge at the University of Missouri-Columbia last weekend, one Bulldog set her second school record in the 3,000-meter run. Sophomore distance runner Dani Dell'Orco ran

the race with a time of 9:52.03, 0.81 seconds faster than Kerry Knepper's former record, set in 1990.

"That's probably one of the records that I thought would be hanging around for a long time, and I think that's good," head coach John Cochrane said. "Knepper's comment was, 'Hey, she got that pretty early in her career.'"

Dell'Orco said she had admired these records and had dreamed of breaking one of them in her career at Truman.

"[I was not expecting this] at all, and that's what made it so exciting," Dell'Orco said. "At the beginning of the year I told myself, 'One of these days I'm going to break a Kerry Knepper record,' because Kerry Knepper holds all of the woman's distance records. ... The woman was a beast."

Dell'Orco said her coaches had told her that she could break the 10-minute mark at this meet and

that it was a nice surprise.

"It wasn't until the last 50 meters, there was a clock," Dell'Orco said. "I just remember looking up and seeing 9:42, and I had about 50 meters to go and I was like, 'I could get this.' I knew the record was [9:52.84], so when I crossed the line I knew I had gotten a really low 9:52 or a high 9:51. I was in shock because I knew that if I hadn't gotten it, I was really close."

Dell'Orco said one of the most special moments about this race was that her whole family had come to Mizzou to cheer her on.

"It couldn't have gone better," Dell'Orco said. "The element of surprise is the best thing. I couldn't sleep that night."

"It couldn't have gone any better. The element of surprise is the best thing. I couldn't sleep that night."

Dani Dell'Orco
Sophomore, on setting the 3,000-meter school record

Other top competitors for the Bulldogs last weekend included freshman distance runner Lisa Kucharski, who placed first in the 600-yard run with a time of 1:29.98. Senior distance runner Fiona Williams placed first in the 1,000-meter run with a time of 3:05.04. Freshman distance runner Karen Graul had a personal best by more than 30 seconds in the 3,000-meter run and placed third with a time of 10:10.96.

Senior jumper Katrina Biermann took first place in the pole vault and the triple jump. Sophomore jumper Jennifer Zweifel improved her provisional mark in the triple jump with a jump of 37-10.75 feet.

The women's 1,600-meter relay team also placed first in their race with a combined time of 4:09.96. Sophomore distance runner Anne Ratermann led the women's team with a time of 1:01.40. She ran

with a sprained ankle. Kucharski ran the relay as well with her other events and also finished in 1:01.40.

On the men's side, junior jumper Demetrius Lavant placed second in the long jump with a distance of 22-02.25 feet. Lavant is one of the top-10 competitors for the national meet.

Sophomore distance runner Brandon Gutteridge placed second in the 1,000-meter run with a time of 2:36.21. Three competitors for the men's distance team placed fourth in their respective events. Senior throwers Derek Atwood and Alex Van Delft placed fourth and fifth, respectively, in the shot put.

"We've definitely had a few meets at Iowa State, Iowa, Missouri, where they've gone up against Division I competition," assistant coach Leslie Hardesty said. "That helped in terms of being competitive in terms of a meet, but in terms of our conference, it's very tough. There's a lot of throwers in our conference that would throw a lot farther than some of the throwers in the Div. I programs."

Hardesty said almost all the throwers are in top physical shape to compete in the conference meet this weekend, and they will be working to improve their mental attitude for the upcoming meet.

"I think there's always something to work on, it's the nature of the beast," Hardesty said. "[Worrying about the competition has] never been their problem throughout the season. Technically, we were working on a couple of things at this meet and that's what we went into this meet planning to do all along, because it's all about conference."

The men's and women's teams will compete in the MIAA Indoor Championships in Joplin this weekend.



Top: Senior Katrina Biermann took first in the pole vault and triple jump at the Collegiate Challenge last weekend.
Bottom: Freshman sprinter Ron Kimp practices earlier this week.

Women dominate at season-opening tourney

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

The women's tennis team took care of business throughout its entire lineup at the spring-opening Principia Tournament last weekend in Elsah, Ill.

The Bulldogs won every doubles flight and had five singles players make it to the finals in their respective flights.

It was the depth of the team that again stood out as Truman's No. 3 and 4 and No. 5 and 6 singles met each other in the finals of their flights. Also, the No. 2 and 3 doubles pairs lost a combined eight games in four matches.

The competition at Principia consisted of mostly Div. III schools.

The depth was strong despite the absence of junior Anna Greenwald, who had a 6-2 fall singles record. Freshman Lauren Higgins filled in nicely by going undefeated to add to her 5-1 fall record.

Higgins won her first match 6-4, 6-1 and her second 6-1, 6-4.

"I think consistency was the key for singles, which I struggled with for some



Freshman No. 1 Maggi Schutte finished second in the top flight last weekend at Principia.

time, but I ended up being able to pull it out," she said.

Higgins, junior Kelsey Kuykendall and sophomores Ellen Russell and Dagmar

Velez each did not drop a match at Principia. But it was Velez who stood out the most — both her singles opponents had double bagels.

Velez said she played more aggressively than usual because of the relative strength of her opponents.

"Since my serve was get-

ting in, I didn't really have to hit it back because the girl would just hit it off," she said.

While the depth of the team continued its success from the fall season, it was freshman No. 1 Maggi Schutte who emerged with the biggest difference from the fall. Schutte, who had a 3-6 fall singles record, finished second in the top singles flight.

Schutte dominated her first match before pulling out a 13-11 tiebreak victory against Evangel University's Janelle Quesenberry in the second round. Schutte took an early 5-2 lead in the breaker before losing seven of the next eight points.

"When I tied it back up at 9-9, even that was the most amazing feeling in the world because I'm a fighter, but usually I get so nervous, and I make mistakes," Schutte said. "It was one of the best wins and match feelings that I've had in a long time. Definitely the best feeling I've had this year."

Schutte lost the final 6-4, 6-1 to the No. 1 player from Evangel.

But even with the loss she said she "played out of my

mind" for the weekend. She said she came out hitting the ball harder than in the fall, when she played more defensively while fighting knee and ankle injuries.

"I just went into my first match and just started hitting the ball as hard as I could and playing my game," she said.

The results were nearly the same for No. 2 junior Amy Ochs. Ochs won her first match, then lost to the same opponent as Schutte in the second round before defeating Quesenberry in the third-place match.

Like Schutte, Ochs won in a tiebreak. And like Schutte, the first two sets were 6-2, 4-6. However, Ochs pulled away in the tiebreak with a 10-2 victory.

"I think she got a little tired, let that second set get away," head coach Pete Kendall said. "I think she got a little more determined right there knowing she shouldn't have lost that second set. She played a little bit tougher in that tiebreak."

The Bulldogs have the next few weeks off before taking on the University of Nebraska at Kearney 4 p.m. March 17 at Truman.

Like pictures?

Check out our staff photo slideshows at www.trumanindex.com

