

Women try to build on fall success

Men try to bounce back following disappointing fall

BY BRENT FOSTER
Assistant Sports Editor

The women's golf team finished the fall portion of its season by winning the Avila Fall Invitational. The Bulldogs will look to carry that success into the spring when they begin play Sunday at the University of Illinois-Springfield Invite.

The women won three tournaments and never placed lower than sixth during the fall. They hope to use the successful fall to reach the regional tournament for the first time since the 2008-09 season.

Head coach Sam Lesseig said it might take the Bulldogs a little bit of time to return to their fall form. The team practiced indoors with nets last month, and most of the team has practiced very little outside prior to this week because of weather conditions. He said most of the schools at the Illinois-Springfield Invite are from northern schools, which puts them at the same early-season disadvantage as Truman.

"We may not be totally ready by this weekend when we have our first tournament," Lesseig said.

Junior Jen Lawson led the team with a 79 scoring average during the fall. Senior Krystal Limsiaco finished second on the team with a 79.3 average followed by sophomore Liz Lestmann at 83.1. Lawson, Limsiaco and Lestmann combined for 10



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior Vincent Kurth pitches onto the green during the Bulldog Classic in the fall. Kurth is the men's No. 4 golfer.

top-five finishes during the fall, with Lawson winning one tournament and losing a tie-breaker for first in another.

Lesseig said an important factor in whether the team reaches its regional goal is for golfers to keep bad shots to a minimum. Lestmann said bad shots are often mental things.

"It just takes confidence and making sure you are playing smart," Lestmann said. "Instead of being daring, just take a smart shot

and you're really going to eliminate the high numbers."

Lesseig said the team's regional goal would be tough to obtain because most of the teams in the West Region are from Texas and Oklahoma and have had opportunities to be on the course.

"You can't worry about it," Lesseig said. "You just have to go out and play the best you can and hope that's good enough."

The men will look to



Blake Toppmeyer/Index

Senior Krystal Limsiaco pitches the ball out of the fairway during a tournament last spring.

bounce back from a disappointing fall that left the team tied for last place in the MIAA when they open up play with the women Sunday in Springfield, Ill.

The team's play in the fall will make it difficult for the Bulldogs to reach the regional tournament. The team's highest finish was sixth place at the Bulldogs Classic.

"We put ourselves in a tough spot as a team," co-head coach Tyler Madsen said. "With the region we

are in, we have to play A-minus golf the entire year. We didn't play a lot of A-minus golf this fall as a team. We had some individuals put up some good numbers at times. ... As a team it will be difficult to make up the ground at this time."

Madsen said the Bulldogs are set at the top four spots with juniors Chris Kovach, Andy Herrington and Vincent Kurth and sophomore Nick Bentzinger. He said he expects there to be open competition among

the rest of the team for the remaining spot. Seven of the 10 golfers are freshmen or sophomores, and Madsen said much of the spring would be used to see which of the younger golfers can step into the fifth spot.

Kovach, who won the Maryville Invitational to end the fall, had a team-low scoring average of 74.8. Bentzinger followed him at 77.4 and Herrington finished at 79.9.

Despite the Bulldogs being a long shot to make the regional tournament, Madsen said he is hopeful the Bulldogs will get an individual to qualify for the regional tournament. Kovach was the last Bulldog to advance to regionals in 2008.

Kovach said it will be tough to start the season because of the long layoff from the fall.

"You can't get mad about shooting the higher scores because pretty much everyone around here is going to be in the same boat," Kovach said. "Basically we go back to fundamentals this week."

Madsen said consistency is the most important aspect for the team to focus on during the spring. He said everyone on the team is capable of shooting in the low 70s, but those who can do it on a consistent basis and avoid rounds in the 80s will make the difference.

"That's just making that four-footer here, having three guys that make that four-footer that goes down," Madsen said. "That changes everything. Whether it's a 300-yard drive or four-foot putt, every stroke in this league can cost you."

Athlete of the Week

Julia Jones

Sport: Swimming
Year: Junior
Hometown:
Daphne, Ala.

Junior Julia Jones won four All-American honors at the national swimming and diving meet last week in Canton, Ohio. Jones accounted for 29 individual points and helped lead Truman to a fifth-place overall finish.

Jones nabs four All-American honors

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Editor in Chief

Joining the same company as three-time national champion senior Kate Aherne is always a positive for any member of the women's swim team. Junior Julia Jones accomplished this at the national swimming and diving meet last week in Canton, Ohio.

Jones joined Aherne as the only Bulldog swimmers to place in the top 16 of four different individual events.

Jones placed 12th in both the 1,000-yard freestyle and 400-yard individual medley before ratcheting up her performance and finishing the meet with a 10th place in the 500-yard freestyle and a seventh-place finish in the 1,650-yard freestyle.

Jones earned 29 individual points for Truman, second only to Aherne's 70 individual points. Jones' 29 points accounted for nearly 20 percent of the Bulldogs' individual point total and earned her high praise from Aherne.

"It's only her second nationals, and it can take a couple years to really get into it, so for her to be able to come in there and do that was just really fun to watch — especially those

distance events, they're so hard," Aherne said.

Jones' national meet didn't get off to an ideal start with her 12th-place finish in the 1,000-yard freestyle. Jones said her pacing was off and that she started out the race too fast.

But she corrected her pacing by the 1,650 on Saturday, the final day of the meet. Head coach Mark Gole said Jones' performance in that race was "a model of consistency."

"I was really happy with how she swam that mile," Gole said. "That's kind of what distance swimming is all about, is just putting those paces down one after the other and just repeating that same exact time."

Each of Jones' 50-yard split times in the 1,650-yard freestyle were within about a tenth of a second of each other. Her final split time of 31.46 was actually her fourth-best split of the race. This showed marked improvement from her 1,000-yard freestyle swim, during which her split times often varied by at least a half a second.

"Day by day, I just kept getting better," Jones said. "I was very happy by the end of the meet. ... It just felt like everything clicked

Racking up the Top 16s

Julia Jones

- Claimed four individual All-Americans
- 1,650-yard freestyle: 7th place, 17:21.78
- 500-yard freestyle: 10th place, 5:01.44
- 400-yard individual medley: 12th place, 4:27.44
- 1,000-yard freestyle: 12th place, 10:28.78



Julia Jones

on that last day."

Jones was seeded 14th in the mile and swam the event Saturday morning in the second-tier heat. When the top heat of eight swimmers swam the mile Saturday evening, Jones was positioned in third place.

While the top heat raced, Jones stood on the pool deck with a clipboard of her split times and compared them to the split times the swimmers in the water were posting. As the swim progressed, it became clear that Jones' mark was going to be good enough for a top-eight fin-

ish, marking the fourth top-eight of Jones' career. She notched three at nationals in 2009.

Although Jones had her best placing in the 1,650 freestyle, she was most pleased with her performance in the 500-yard freestyle. She finished 10th, but her finals time was almost two and a half seconds better than her preliminary time, and she finished in a season-best 5:01.44.

"I think that was probably my best event at nationals," Jones said. "Even though I did get 10th, I dropped more time [per-

centage-wise] in the 500 than I did in the mile."

With Aherne graduating, Jones will return next year as the Bulldogs' top individual performer. It's a role Gole said he thinks Jones should be able to shoulder.

"Julia is one that gets the job done every single day," Gole said. "I mean, she has her share of bad days, but they are rare. It might be one bad day out of a three-week stretch, where typically every swimmer on the team has four good days and two bad days every week. But Julia is very consistent with things."



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