



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Members of the track team practice earlier this winter for the upcoming outdoor season. The Bulldogs kick off the outdoor track and field season this weekend at the Washington University mini-meet in St. Louis. It is the first of seven regular season events the track team will compete in this season.

Track gears up for spring

BY JOCELYN NEBEL
Staff Reporter

A new outdoor season for the men's and women's track and field team means new events and new challenges ahead.

The Bulldogs open their outdoor season at Washington University in St. Louis this weekend at a six-team mini-meet. Head coach John Cochrane said that although the meet will be small and include Div. III teams, the competition still will be fierce.

"We've got to get after it pretty hard and heavy all the way through the rest of the way out," Cochrane said. "It can't be like high school where you run [poorly]. Some of them will have that mentality. ... You remember the last time we convened as a group to compete, we didn't exactly set the world on fire. We have to get rid of that mentality."

Both teams will compete in a variety of new track and field events. The throwers will face three new events in the outdoor season, including the javelin, discus and hammer throw. Cochrane said many of the freshmen women's throwers have shown promise this season from their improvements during the

outdoor season.

"We have some of these women throwers that could throw pretty well around the end of the indoor season," Cochrane said. "Maybe they will come along too. There's that possibility."

The distance runners also will compete in new events such as the 3,000-meter steeplechase, and hurdlers will compete in the 400-meter hurdles, a longer event than those offered in the indoor season.

The 3,000-meter steeplechase involves a variety of obstacles for competitors, including hurdles and a water pit. Two Bulldogs will be competing in this event for the first time — senior distance runner Zach Chapman and freshman distance runner Debbie Boedeker. Cochrane said

these athletes will run this event to see how they compete. Veteran steeplechasers juniors Bob Gorman and John Venner will return to this event. Cochrane said Venner is in better shape to run this year and expectations are high for his performance.

The Bulldogs also lost another competitor this season who will not return because of an injury. Senior Shaina Dochterman said she could run unattached starting April 17 at the Dewey Allgood Invitational in Rolla. Dochterman ran hurdles for the women's team last year and advanced to the Div. II National meet in the 400-meter hurdles. If she competes in any meet this year, it will not be for Truman. She would run the 200-meter and 400-meter dashes to stay in racing shape. Despite her absence from this season, Dochterman still has a year of eligibility left at Truman and said she will compete next season.

"[Cochrane wants me to compete] so I don't forget about the world," but it's really so I

don't lose my competitive edge, to see how it feels again," Dochterman said.

Senior distance runner Joey Walls is one of several Bulldogs who has suffered injuries and sickness this season. Walls suffered a foot injury after the cross country conference and battled sickness during the indoor track season.

"I definitely don't feel like I'm as in shape as I was," Walls said. "I just want to get over this injury and stop being sick."

Other athletes to watch this season include senior jumper Katrina Biermann, winner of the indoor national pole vault title March 12. Senior thrower Alex Van Delft and junior thrower Derek Atwood also will compete this season. Both throwers qualified for the national meet last year.

Dochterman said that despite many quality individual performances, the teams still suffer from a lack of depth. Cochrane agreed and said many athletes still have to grow up and get over their "high school mentality" to prepare for the conference meet.

"Our team is so small right now," Dochterman said. "It's really sad, but hopefully we'll get going pretty well."

"I definitely don't feel like I'm as in shape as I was. I just want to get over this injury and stop being sick."

Joey Walls

Senior, on the injury and sickness that hampered him during track and cross country.

Plenty to look for this weekend in TSU athletics



Commentary

JACK NICHOLL

Thank goodness for March Madness.

Last Thursday through Sunday is the best four consecutive days of the year in sports. It should be a four-day national holiday. The 48 Div. I college basketball games are filled with buzzer beaters and Cinderellas.

I don't even mind that my champion — Kansas — and nine of my Sweet 16 teams have been eliminated.

Comparing mainstream sports to Truman athletics, the start of March Madness came just at the right time.

Last week was one of the most boring weeks in Truman athletics this year. It's true that baseball, softball, golf and tennis all competed. But none competed at home.

Playing away games isn't anything new. Baseball and softball have played a combined 40 games this season, but none at home. Tennis played at home for the first time two weeks ago, and golf is yet to have its

annual home meet. Track won't compete at home for the second straight year because of the 2008-09 turf project at Stokes Stadium.

When I look for column ideas, it's nice to have a home event. The statistics that come from box scores don't go very far when I try to form an opinion on a team.

I could write about baseball. I have a bias here because I know some players well — but the baseball team is clearly better than past years. The Bulldogs took No. 10 Emporia State University to extra innings. Their run differential is better than 2009. Sophomore Ryan Trimble has

been a force on the mound.

With softball, senior Richelle van Gennip has continued her strong performance from MIAA play in 2009. She has a 1.75 ERA and 107 strikeouts in 76 innings.

But numbers like those are just numbers. It's difficult to draw positive or negative opinions about a team's performance if it never plays at home.

The dead weekend also came just a week after two Truman athletes — seniors Katrina Biermann and Kate Aherne — won national championships. Unless a big news story comes up in the next six weeks, the two national champions will be the biggest Truman sports story

for the rest of the year.

The good news is that the dead time only lasted one week. On Saturday, baseball, softball, tennis and women's golf will all have home events simultaneously. It is the first time this school year that four teams have had home contests in the same weekend.

With four sports at home, here are four things to watch for in Truman athletics between third-round action of the college basketball tournament.

• First, I'd like to see how the women's golf team performs against a large field at Kirksville Country Club. Truman finished first and second a year ago, but it likely won't be as easy

this year.

• Second, I want to see a couple of baseball's newcomers. Junior transfer second baseman Mike Reese and freshman outfielder Brett Budd each are hitting above .300.

• Third, van Gennip will likely get a start on the mound for softball. She has twice set a school record this season for single-game strikeouts and her dropball is a big key to her success.

• Fourth, it'll be interesting to see how tennis performs in its conference opener against Southwest Baptist University. SBU is traditionally one of the best teams in the MIAA and will provide a tough test for the 'Dogs.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS

News and Notes

Tennis: Weather changes schedule

Weather forced changes to the women's tennis schedule. The team originally was scheduled to play matches Saturday against Colorado Christian University and Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kan., but the matches were changed due to the weather.

The match against Colorado Christian was canceled and the Bulldogs are scheduled to play Fort Hays on April 23 in Kansas City the day before the start of the MIAA Tournament.

The men's schedule did not change.

Men's Basketball: Camp dates set

Men's basketball head coach Jack Schrader announced the dates for the summer youth basketball camps for students in grades 4-12. The first camp will be June 4-6 and the second camp will be July 30 to Aug. 1. The camp costs \$100 for non-commuters and \$125 for participants wanting to stay in the residence hall.

For more information you can contact Jack Schrader at (660) 785-4171 or Schrader@truman.edu.

Baseball: Team's offense improves

Although the baseball team has gotten off to a slow start, the team has shown improvements from last season. The Bulldogs won just twice in their first 20 games last season. This season they have doubled that with four victories. The 'Dogs' offense also has improved. Through the first 20 games last season, the team scored 69 runs. This year they scored more frequently with 89 runs in 20 games.

The pitching staff also has shown improvements. Last season the team had a team ERA of 8.73 and opponents batted .359. This year, the Bulldogs have a team ERA of 6.80, and opponents are batting .318.

Golf: Lawson wins MIAA award

Junior golfer Jen Lawson was named the MIAA Golfer of the Week. Lawson shot two rounds of 82 at the Illinois-Springfield Invite on Sunday and Monday in Springfield, Ill. She defeated teammate senior Krystal Limsiac by one stroke.

Lawson has won her last two tournaments, dating back to the Avilla (Kan.) Invitational in October.

Athletics: CBS show on Web site

The CBS show featuring Truman athletes is now available to view on Truman's athletic Web site trumanbulldogs.com. The show, which aired on CBS College Sports, follows college athletes. Athletes featured included senior swimmers Andrew McCall and Kate Aherne and freshman wrestler Ryan Banning.

Sophomore baseball player Steven Rose, senior golfer Jen Lawson and senior track thrower Derek Atwood were also featured on the show.

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