

Men defeat MBU 6-3

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Editor in Chief

The men's tennis team faced a bigger challenge than originally expected in its season-opening dual last Thursday against Missouri Baptist University.

Having defeated Mo. Baptist 8-1 in a fall dual, the Bulldogs were looking to cruise to a dual victory before entering last weekend's Principia College (Ill.) Tournament.

But playing without senior No. 1 singles player Peter Bracha, the men fell behind 2-1 after doubles play and needed to win five of six singles matches to claim their 6-3 victory.

Senior John Rothfusz, who normally only plays doubles matches as he continues to battle a chronic shoulder injury, helped swing the tide in favor of the 'Dogs. With Truman trailing entering singles play, head coach Pete Kendall asked Rothfusz if he could compete in singles.

Rothfusz did and won 6-1, 6-2 at the No. 3 spot. His insertion into the singles lineup also allowed the three players below him to slide down in the lineup and earn wins.

"We've always said, if we need [Rothfusz], he can always tough it out," Kendall said. "I mean, we don't want to take the chance of losing that match.

"As long as he doesn't serve hard in singles, he's OK. And we were pretty confident he could beat the guy without trying to knock him off the court with his serves. [The injury] doesn't bother the rest of his strokes. So he just three-quarter serves."

Rothfusz said that not being able to serve at full power places a greater emphasis on not falling behind in matches.

"It's tough, especially when I get down in a match, because I usually rely on my serve to help pull me out," he said. "Luckily, the guy who I played, I didn't need to really do that. I really got ahead so I was able just to serve it at medium pace and still easily win so there wasn't a lot of stress on my shoulder."

Bracha missed the match against Baptist and the Principia Tournament as he recovers from an apparent muscle strain in his shoulder region.

"He's been dealing with it for a couple weeks, and we just thought it would be OK for a period of time, but it just never went away," Kendall said.

With the win, Truman improved its dual record to 4-0.

While Rothfusz was a key factor in Truman's win against Baptist, it was senior Kyle Schlotz who stole the show for the weekend.

Schlotz moved up to No. 2 in the singles lineup with Bracha out but didn't miss a beat against the tougher competition. He compiled a 4-0 singles record in the dual and tournament combined and teamed with Rothfusz to go 3-1 in doubles.

Schlotz was the only player to earn a singles win against the University of Missouri-St. Louis at the tournament, and he and sophomore No. 3 Eric McCollough were the only two players to garner singles victories against Div. III powerhouse Washington University.

"My return game, I think, helped keep me close in singles," Schlotz said. "I thought overall my game was just clicking this weekend, so hopefully that's a good preview of what's to come this spring."

The Bulldogs compiled a 9-12 singles record at the tournament, boosted by a 6-1 mark against Div. III Principia. Truman went 5-4 in doubles.

Schlotz has won six straight singles matches dating back to the fall, and he is 10-3 overall this season. But he took two of his singles matches to the wire last week, needing come-from-behind efforts to win third-set tiebreakers against opponents from Mo. Baptist and Wash. U. In both tiebreakers, Schlotz fell behind by at least four points, but he said he started returning serves better late, which helped him claim victories.

In doubles play, Schlotz and Rothfusz' only loss was an 8-5 defeat to Wash. U.'s Dushyanth Srinivasan and Cameron Chiang. Rothfusz did not play singles during the tournament, and he said he didn't quite feel warmed up leading into that doubles match, which resulted in a couple double faults.

After their lone loss, however, the duo went right back on the court against Principia's No. 1 pair, and Schlotz and Rothfusz prevailed 8-6.

Kendall said Rothfusz traditionally does a pretty good job of competing well in doubles at tournaments even after sitting out for long periods during singles play.

"Sleep for eight hours and then go play," Kendall joked.

The men will not compete again until March 17 in a home dual against the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Kendall said he hopes to have Bracha back in the lineup for that match.

TRACK | Men finish last at conference meet, women finish near bottom of pack

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the national meet. "She was tired by the time she got done, but she battled and then won [the pole vault] and that is more of what you expect," Cochrane said.

Other top competitors for the Bulldogs included sophomore distance runner Dani Dell'Orco. She placed third in the 5,000-meter run with a time of 17:06.07 to beat her own school record by more than four seconds. This is the third school record Dell'Orco set this year. She placed third in the 3,000-meter run with a time of 9:55.27, less than 0.40 seconds out of first place.

Sophomore distance runner Anne Ratermann also placed in her events despite a slight ankle injury at the Knox Invitational on Feb. 13. Ratermann placed third in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:19.06.

"I was still having a little trouble [with my ankle]," Ratermann said. "I was just nervous because I hadn't really raced. I hadn't run the 800 in a couple weeks. I was nervous that my foot and my ankle wasn't going to hold for those laps.

"I wouldn't say [my ankle] wasn't necessarily detrimental to my race," Ratermann said. "It was more just a mental thing that I had to block out, and that was the hardest part."

Ratermann also ran the first leg of the women's 1,600-meter relay with a time of 1:01.70. Sophomore distance runner Kaci Sargent ran the fastest time for the relay team with a time of 1:01.00. The team placed sixth

with a time of 4:07.64.

Top competitors on the men's side included senior thrower Alex Van Delft. He placed sixth in the shot put with a throw of 51-05.00 feet. This is the first time this season Van Delft has placed ahead of junior Derek Atwood in this event. Van Delft said Atwood's throw was shorter because his shot was not at the normal weight.

"It was a pretty big shock to me," Van Delft said. "Derek has been throwing really well at practice but I think his shot not weighing in that day was a pretty big issue. He didn't say anything about it. ... His shot put was 15.98 and it's supposed to weigh 16 pounds, and he weighed in and he did a pretty good job, but not being used to the material of the shot I think really affected him."

Van Delft said he has not thrown consistently in meets because he has been occupied with his teaching internship this semester. He said throwing for three meets in a row helped him find his rhythm again and compete well last weekend.

The NCAA Indoor Championships are March 12 to 13 in Albuquerque, N.M. After the national meet, the team competes in their first outdoor meet of the year March 26 at Washington University in St. Louis.

"You have to have an awakening," Cochrane said. "Again, these are not bad people. We're just trying to teach them how to compete in the world. We can get right in the middle and we can battle and we can come out with no excuses and no regrets."

JANSSEN | Long-time radio announcer has worked at Kirksville Daily Express, A.T. Still and developed relationships with former coaches

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Bulldog athletics, Janssen rarely needs help from a media guide to jog his memory.

"As I call him, he's 'Mr. Bulldog,'" Boyer said. "What he is for me, and I think for the listeners, he is my media guide that's alive."

Janssen can re-tell games, such as the 1999 men's basketball playoffs and the 2001 Ol' Hickory Stick football game, which was the last time Truman won, as though they happened yesterday. He can also recall the 1980 football game against Pittsburg State University. He remembers Truman kicked a late field goal to win 17-14 and that the game was played in St. Joseph.

But Janssen also said he remembers when the Truman-PSU game was the Moila Shrine Bowl. He said that bowl game lasted only a couple years while the Mineral Water Bowl has continued. You can't find that information in a me-

dia guide.

"What I can read in a media guide, I can get it in a form from Hank in a colorful manner," Boyer said. "He can present in a way that I think really brings a vivid picture for the listener about Bulldog players and about Bulldog teams of the past."

Boyer said one of Janssen's favorite sayings is to say a basketball team is made up of all "shapes and sizes" before going into detail about the dimensions of the players.

Janssen hasn't adapted to anyone else's radio style during his tenure. He doesn't use clichés — he said he's never used "red zone" during football or "trey" in basketball. Instead, he says a team is in scoring position, or a player hit a 3-pointer.

Janssen said he would rather spin his own descriptive dialect than fall into the "Sportscenter mentality" of catch phrases.

"I'd like to think that I'm old-fashioned in that regard," he said. "Just give it to me. Don't fluff it up, and don't wangle it out. Just tell me what's happening."

The beginnings

Janssen grew up in a small town in northern Iowa but moved to Kirksville in the early 1970s to attend Truman. Janssen said he wanted to get out of town, and the price was right at Truman — \$340 per semester at the time.

"I had never scoped it out and just said, 'Sure, let's go,'" Janssen said.

Janssen originally studied social science and history but ended up in communication. He was editor in chief of the Index for a summer before he worked for the Kirksville Daily Express for 15 years, working in three different positions.

Janssen became close friends with many of the football players, including some who went on to coach at Tru-

man. Janssen said he remembers those old games more than recent ones because he knew everyone at a personal level. John Ware, who left in 2003, was the last coach from that era.

Nesbitt said he talked to Janssen before Nesbitt became head coach, and he wants Janssen to get involved with the football team to help bring back a winning tradition. The football team has 26 MIAA titles, most in the conference, but none since 1988.

"There's a rich, storied tradition, and Hank's a big piece of that," Nesbitt said. "So I hope to utilize him. He's a Bulldog. If you cut him open, he's going to bleed purple. It doesn't matter if it's football, basketball or any sport."

Janssen's love of sports persisted when he wasn't reporting. Janssen organized basketball games in the winter and softball games in the summer, which is how he originally got

to know Schrader and Nesbitt. The softball team played more than 100 games for three straight years and then about 70 after that for 25 years. He organized about 40 games each winter for basketball.

Schrader said he remembers only a couple of times when Janssen took the basketball court — he would never play unless there wasn't a full team.

"He was the consummate team player," Nesbitt said. "Hank liked playing as much as anybody. But if we had enough, he would pull himself out and move into the manager's role."

Around town

Janssen has worked at the Thompson Campus Center for 20 years. He helps organize events and used to play basketball four to five times per week. He also worked for the city after he left the Daily Express.

He has coached youth

sports for about 30 years — partly with his son, who is a senior in high school. He also continues to officiate youth sports. Monday he wore a cap with "IH" on it. It's the cap for his 18-and-under basketball team that Ice House sponsors.

"I've got to know a lot of people over the years through playing ball and watching and broadcasting and the whole deal," Janssen said. "I guess sports has just been a pretty big deal, for a lot of reasons."

You can start his story just about anywhere, but he'll end it at Pagliai's Pizza where there is a collage of photos on the wall chronicling Kirksville athletics. Pagliai's, like Janssen, has been a staple in Kirksville for many years, and he is welcome to a free soda there at any time.

Maybe he can relive a story from a picture on the wall — if you catch him at the right time.

BIERMANN | Senior jumper rebounds from down 2009 conference meet, has two automatic berths to nationals this season

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her in the pole vault her sophomore year and she broke her first school record. At the UCM Classic, Biermann jumped 11-11.75 feet to break Kristi Morton's 2001 indoor record of 11-08.00 feet. This jump was nearly a two-foot improvement from her best jump in high school. Biermann also broke the outdoor pole vault record her sophomore year.

"I think the biggest difference [is] she has a lot of confidence, just on her own she has a lot of confidence," Schwegler said.

Biermann's junior year was filled with bigger jumps. During the indoor season, Biermann made provi-

sional marks in both the triple jump and pole vault. Her provisional mark in the triple jump improved three times and ended up at 38-02.25 feet. Her pole vault of 12-04.00 broke her own record.

Unfortunately for Biermann, her best jumps during the season were overshadowed by an unsatisfactory competition at the 2009 conference meet. Biermann placed sixth in the triple jump and fourth in the pole vault, but she only qualified for the national meet in the pole vault. She finished with All-American honors at the indoor meet and finished eighth.

During the outdoor season last year, Biermann refocused her efforts

on the pole vault and excelled. Her provisional mark for the pole vault improved four times and ended at 12-08.00 feet, a new school record and a personal improvement from the year before by more than eight inches. She went on to take first at the conference meet.

She also made provisional marks in the triple jump and improved her provisional mark by nearly a foot, finishing at 38-11.75 feet. Biermann qualified for the national meet in the pole vault and finished sixth, earning All-American honors for the second time.

"She's a really hard worker, and she's battled injuries since I've known her, but she still goes out ev-

ery day, every practice and still gives 100 percent," senior Amber Clayton said. "It definitely shows in her performance at track meets."

This past indoor season, Biermann continued to grow and improve her jumps.

"She doesn't second guess," head coach John Cochrane said. "In terms of triple jumping too, she has learned a lot about it and she's tougher than she was. One of the things she used to do was melt down."

Biermann said her less-than-stellar performance at the 2009 indoor conference meet helped push her to do her best in her events this year. She received a second chance during the indoor season this year when

she qualified automatically in both pole vault and triple jump. Her jump of 13-00.25 feet in the pole vault became her first MIAA conference record.

"[Jumping 13 feet has] been my goal since freshman year," Biermann said. "That's probably one of the best feelings I've had since coming here and competing."

Last weekend Biermann won both the triple jump and pole vault at the MIAA indoor conference meet. This is the first time she has qualified for the indoor national meet.

"I think she's going to do well," Schwegler said. "She has a lot of confidence right now. After last year, I think she's really come of age."



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