

Bulldogs still finding form

BY TYLER KILLEN
Assistant Sports Editor

The men's tennis team had four underclassmen place in the Western Illinois University Invitational last weekend. Freshmen Kirk Schlueter and Mike Merchant finished third in the No. 3 and No. 4 singles brackets. Freshman Joe Murphy-Baum and sophomore Jonathon Gooch each finished fourth in their respective brackets.

Schlueter said the youth of the team should not be a disadvantage because there is not much change from the high school game.

"Maybe you have people getting used to college tennis, but I know the courts are the same area," Schlueter said. "You know you're still hitting the same balls with the same rackets. I don't think there's that much of an adjustment you have to make."

Head coach Pete Kendall said the team had a solid tournament overall, especially because the Bulldogs only had two upperclassmen, senior Colin Boswell and junior Eric McCollough, on the tournament roster.

"I thought we did pretty well," Kendall said. "Six of the eight [players] that were there were freshmen. So, it's good to see that three of them got in the top four [of their brackets] out of nine teams."

Kendall said the tournament gave Schlueter and the other freshmen more confidence. Schlueter won his first match against Western Illinois junior Jim Capalbo on a 10-8 tiebreaker. He dropped his second match in straight sets but came back to win the third-place match.

"It was good for Schlueter," Kendall said. "Because in the dual match on Wednesday at William Jewell [College], he had had a big lead and let it get away from him. Well, in the first match he was way down, and he came



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Junior Dagmar Velez returns a shot last year during practice. Velez won her first singles match of the season last week against William Jewell University. The Bulldogs lost the dual match 5-4.

back. And that was really good for him."

The Bulldogs struggled in doubles play, finishing 1-6 overall. However, all three of the pairings were new this year. Kendall said he

expects them to play better after practicing together more.

The lineups for future tournaments have not been set either. Kendall said he will base them on who is playing well at the time.

"It's going to be different guys at different times," Kendall said. "I think, when you've got all of those young guys, it's probably going to change around a little bit."

The women's team will host the

Truman Invitational this weekend. The four-team tournament also includes Northwest Missouri State University, Quincy (Ill.) University and Johnson County Community College.

Truman opened the season Sept. 8 with a dual match at William Jewell University. The Bulldogs split the singles matches but dropped two of the three doubles matches to lose 5-4.

Senior Kelsey Kuykendall and juniors Ellen Russell and Dagmar Velez all won singles matches. The pairing of sophomore Maggi Schutte and freshman Jessica Genuso won the lone doubles match.

Kendall said the team should do better in the future but will have to improve in doubles play.

"If we can get our doubles together, then we're going to be OK," Kendall said. "We just have to win a couple of doubles every match."

The first doubles pairing is Russell and senior Amy Ochs. Though they struggled in the first match of the year, Russell said she has high expectations going forward.

"This will be our third year together," Russell said. "So we should be rolling over people. Not that [William Jewell] was bad, because they weren't. But I think it's going to be a good year for us."

The Truman Invitational will begin tomorrow at 4 p.m. on the new tennis courts. Russell said the tournament will wear her out, but she's excited to start.

"The Truman Invite is always a lot of tennis," Russell said. "I know for myself, I just want to go out there and play some good tennis. Saturday when I wake up, I'm always real tired from the day before. So, perseverance for [the tournament] is big."



Photo from Index Archives

Senior Chris Kovach practices his chipping at practice last season. Kovach finished third individually in the Lincoln University Invitational this week.

'Dogs still struggling early in tournament play

BY BRETT MCMILLAN
Staff Reporter

The men's golf team finished ninth out of 12 teams this week at the Lincoln University Invitational with a score of 625. The Bulldogs finished 57 over par at their first MIAA conference tournament of the year in Camdenton, Mo. Senior Chris Kovach finished third in the individual rankings with a 146.

Madsen said Kovach made several big shots. Tuesday he sunk a shot from 150 yards out on the sixth hole and hit a 50 foot right-to-left putt for birdie on a par three.

"He made a lot of great shots," Madsen said. "I don't want to discount that. He made a lot of very good shots, which is what you got to do to be top three."

Kovach said hitting the fairways and greens were the keys to his success. "This course was pretty tight," Kovach said. "The first day, I hit it pretty straight. The only green I missed was 18 on day two."

Madsen said there is still room for Kovach to improve. He said Kovach had a rough time on the final hole of the tournament. Even so, Madsen still liked what he got out of his senior leader.

"He started a little slow," Madsen said. "He just fought, fought hard and made some good shots." Junior Nik Bentzinger picked up where he left off last week and tied for 12th with a score of 150. Madsen said he appreciates the dependability Bentzinger brings to the table.

"I don't talk to Nik much during the rounds," Madsen said. "He's just a very consistent golfer. He's just one of those guys you know what you're going to get round in and round out. He just kind of does his thing and that works best for him."

Madsen said he was disappointed in his team's performance this past week but thinks they will settle down in the coming weeks.

"We're still at a point of trying to figure ourselves out, trying to figure out our identity as a team," Madsen said. "If you think of our five man team as a rotation in baseball, we just need some

consistency from the back end of that rotation."

Kovach said the team may have taken a big step forward in Camdenton this week, especially senior Andy Herington.

"I think a lot of it is confidence for [the back end]," Kovach said. "I know Andy has been nervous with his driver. I think he got some confidence back. [Myself and Bentzinger] tell the other guys, 'Go out there and do what you can. Don't try to do too much.'"

While the men showed slight improvement this week, the women's team took a step backward at the Drury (Mo.) University Fall Shootout in Branson, Mo., head coach Sam Lesseig said. The team finished 12th out of 19 teams with a score of 678.

"They know they can play better than what they showed," Lesseig said. "It is what it is. It's already over with. They just didn't play well."

After the Bulldogs won the Mount Mercy Invitational last week, Lesseig said the difference in this tournament was in the Bulldogs' terrible short game.

"We didn't putt well at all," Lesseig said. "I think they let that get into their head, and they're thinking they have to hit it really close in order to make pars, because the putts weren't going in for them. They're really pressing trying to hit it really close, and sometimes that leads to bad shots."

Senior Jen Lawson had the best score of any Bulldog this week and tied for 39th.

"She hit the ball very well the second day," said Lesseig. "She just didn't score, but she hit the ball very well. If she keeps doing that it will come around."

Lesseig said the women on his team were deserving of the poor finish they earned. None of the five Truman golfers broke 80 in either round of the tournament.

"The course itself is not as difficult as we made it," said Lesseig. "I mean look at some of the scores of the other players. We just need to settle down and play our game and not worry about those other things."

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