



Senior Chris Kovach putts during practice last semester. Kovach finished 19th at the Southern California Intercollegiate Tournament last weekend. Logan Jackson/Index

'Dogs struggle in first tourney

BY KIRK SCHLUETER
Staff Reporter

Truman's men's golf team sought relief from a long Missouri winter as they opened their spring season at the 61st annual Southern California Intercollegiate in Mission Viejo, Calif. The Bulldogs shot team rounds of 352, 340 and 329 to finish 13th out of 14 teams in the two-day event.

Senior Chris Kovach led the way, finishing 19th overall with rounds of 80, 79 and 76. Kovach said the tournament field, which included teams from throughout Div. II, was very competitive.

"There was pretty tough competition there," Kovach said. "There were five nationally ranked teams there and the team that won, [Central Oklahoma University], is fifth in the country. And then the California teams are good."

Kovach said his scores improved throughout the tournament as he became more familiar with the course at Mission Viejo.

"It was a pretty tough course," Kovach said. "It was really tight, and the greens were really hilly and really fast. It just took a while to get used to, and getting used to the greens was a big thing so that you knew where to hit your ball."

Kovach said there was a favorable shift in conditions that occurred from Monday to Tuesday.

"The first day was pretty tough," Kovach said. "We played 36 holes [Monday] and it was pretty windy. I think it was about 20 to 25 miles per hour. And then for a while

there it was raining off and on, so it was definitely tough."

In a twist to an otherwise normal trip, the team had a different coach during the tournament — Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering. He accompanied the team in place of co-head coaches Tyler Madsen and Jim Berrey, both of whom were unable to avoid scheduling conflicts that kept them in Missouri.

"Coach Berrey could not get away to travel with the team because of his full-time job," Wollmering said. "And then Coach Madsen, who usually travels with the team, started the masters in leadership graduate program and he has a class on Tuesday that only meets once a week that he didn't think was a good idea for him to miss. Both of them thought it was important for the team to go to this tournament, so I decided to volunteer and take them."

Wollmering said he did not coach the players at the tournament.

"You know, once you get to the tournament, it's really more team management rather than coaching," Wollmering said. "Things such as making sure they get to their tee times on time and things of that nature. There's not really any actual on-course coaching."

Senior Andy Herington, who finished 63rd and shot a third-round 83, said the team's limited practice was a factor in their performance.

"I played all right, considering we only had practice for about a week," Herington said.

"But obviously I wanted to play better than how I finished."

Kovach also said their lack of practice affected the team's performance.

"We haven't played a tournament since October," Kovach said. "So getting back out there was kind of hard. I think a lot of how we did stems from the fact that we only had one week or so of practice. It's just tough going out there to one of the hardest courses I've been on in my college career without your game being sharp."

Both Herington and Kovach said the news that the men's golf program will be discontinued after this year was not a factor in how the team played.

"Kind of going into it, I guess we're still kind of bitter about the whole thing, the whole situation," Kovach said. "But once we get out there, then no. We get back to a good thing."

Junior Nik Bentzinger and sophomore Jake Hanrahan tied for 71st. Sophomore Alex Key finished 78th to round out the five-man team.

The men's golf team returns to action next Monday and Tuesday at the Western Illinois University Invitational in Macomb, Ill., where they will compete against a mostly Div. I field.

"Personally I'd like to get some conference points at one of the conference tournaments," Herington said. "And as a team we'd like to possibly move up a couple of spots in the conference standings. I feel those are some good goals."

Bulldogs swept in MIAA opener

BY SAM SHERMAN
Staff Reporter

The women's team picked up its first conference win with a 7-2 victory against Missouri Western State University Wednesday.

In doubles, the pairings of senior Kelsey Kuykendall and junior Dagmar Velez and sophomores Maggi Schutte and Lauren Higgins both picked up 8-0 victories to start the cold and windy day for the Bulldogs.

In singles play, the Bulldogs won all of the matches but one. Ochs (6-2, 6-0), Russell (6-2, 6-0), Kuykendall (6-0, 6-1), Velez (6-0, 6-1) and Hawkins (6-1, 6-0) all won their singles matches. Schutte suffered a close (6-4, 6-3) loss in her first singles match since recovering from her injury.

Velez said, despite the less than favorable weather, she was pleased with the way the team played.

"We played really well," Velez said. "The conditions were awful, so we tried to get the ball in as much as possible and just played against the wind."

Both the men's and women's tennis teams suffered losses last weekend against the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Head coach Pete Kendall said the results should have been the complete opposite.

"We should have, and could have, won both of those matches," Kendall said. "We definitely look forward to hopefully seeing [Nebraska-Omaha] again in the conference tournament."

On the men's side, the doubles pairing of freshmen Joe Murphy-Baum and Mike Merchant started the day for the Bulldogs, winning 8-4 to pick up the lone doubles win for Truman.

In singles play, freshman Kirk Schlueter had to rally back after dropping his first set, 6-7. After winning the second set 6-4, Schlueter won the tiebreaker in convincing fashion, beating Nebraska-Omaha's freshman Anthony Forcucci 10-4 to take the match. The other two winners for the Bulldogs in singles were Merchant (6-2, 6-1) and Murphy-Baum (6-2, 6-4). Juniors Eric McCullough and Mark Sturley both lost their matches in tiebreakers.

In women's tennis, the Bulldogs suffered a 6-3 loss at the hands of the Mavericks on Saturday.

In singles play, the Bulldogs had three winners — Kuykendall (6-1, 6-2) and Velez (6-0, 6-1) and junior Jennifer Hawkins (6-3, 2-6, 10-5). The team did not have any doubles victories, with the pairing of senior Amy Ochs and junior Ellen Russell losing 9-7.

Both teams' next match is at 4 p.m. today against Northwest Missouri State. Kendall said it's going to be tough for both teams.

"Northwest might have the best men's team the school has seen in a long time," Kendall said. "So that's going to be a really tough match for the guys. On the women's side, they are a very good team and I expect the women's bracket to be very close."



Senior Amy Ochs returns a shot last weekend against the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Ochs lost her singles and doubles matches in the conference opener. Joyce Wong/Index

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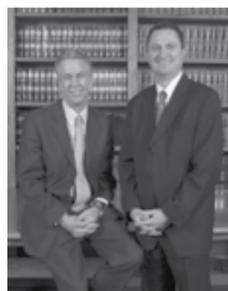
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