



Junior Cindy Grauel runs at a practice last fall. Cindy, along with her twin sister Karen, will be called on to be the leader of the women's cross-country team this season. Cindy finished in the top 15 in all four of the regular season races last season.

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# Grauel sisters lead team

BY TYLER SIGRIST  
Staff Writer

They can't count on conditions being perfect. They can't count on their times always being consistent. They can't even count on the course being familiar. There are only three things a cross country runner can count on before a race: a start line at the beginning, a finish line at the end and their teammates there to help them the entire way.

"It is a very interesting, individual team sport," said John Cochrane, womens cross-country head coach. "You don't need a stopwatch in this sport. The course doesn't have to be exactly 5,000 or 6,000 or some odd distance. It doesn't have to be the same as every other course. So where you place, being close together and being far up in the race really matter. It's just a different kind of thing."

These facts are ones junior Karen Grauel, defending conference champion and the 'Dogs know too well after their disappointing sixth place finish at the conference meet last year. Although Grauel advanced to take 78th at nationals, her twin sister Cindy's last minute illness and performances by the rest of the team hampered the teams final score.

This year, the twins said they have intensified summer workouts and have been pushing each other so they are better prepared for the 2011 season.

"It helps that I have Cindy to run with," Grauel said. "We push each other and it's always better to have someone to run with. It's easy to lose motivation when you're running by yourself. Especially with a longer run, you tend to go slower. Cindy has been trailing a little bit behind me in time, but she really wants to beat me and I think that will help motivate her to be faster and me to be faster."

Pushing each other isn't the only practice the sisters have

been having now that they are back on campus. The whole team returned to Kirksville a week before classes began and have been practicing twice a day.

"It helps because Karen works really hard," senior Anne Ratermann said. "She's a great motivator and a good role model. When you have the conference champion on your team, it makes the rest of us just want to run with her so it makes the rest of us better"

There is a two minute gap between the first and fifth best runners on the team this year. This allows them to run as a pack to spur each other along and keep up a solid pace for a good portion of the race.

Experience could be a contributor to how the team performs this year. Last year Grauel was not the only Bulldog to achieve success. Ratermann has been to the national meet before and said she has intentions of making her senior year a successful one.

"[Junior] Michelle Gronemeyer is very, very talented," Cochrane said. "[Sophomore] Katie Hirsch is entirely different from last year. She's improved a lot. And so has [sophomore] Hannah Farnsworth."

Cochrane said that during the last couple of years, the team has grown closer and developed a great deal of chemistry, which he said is key to having success. He said the built up camaraderie will be beneficial toward the end of the season and if they find a way to really get into this, it could be something special.

"I think all of us are really stepping up this year," Cindy Grauel said. "Each of us are kind of just taking turns pumping each other up. We are really cohesive right now so I just want all of us to stay up and try our best. I think as long as we stick together and work as a team, we're going to do very well. I'm pretty confident. I have a lot of in myself and my teammates,"

## 'Dogs look to rally after first round loss

BY KIRK SCHLUETER  
Staff Writer

When the Truman State womens volleyball team suffered a disappointing loss last year in the first round of the NCAA tournament, senior Molly Sinclair and the other returning upperclassmen knew they had to refocus. They made a list of goals for the 2011 season, a list now hanging in the locker room, a list Sinclair looks at every day before practice.

"I think Molly's a great story of someone where you work hard, and you keep with it, and you do what you have to do, and great things will happen," head coach Ben Briney said. "She put in the hard work and bought into what we're doing here. This isn't something that's been given to her."

Sinclair's senior year is starting off much differently than her freshman year did. She arrived on campus as a late commitment to Truman, initially unsure of whether she would stay. Although she found the school to her liking, she was by no means roaming the court in matches.

"Freshman year was definitely a learning year," Sinclair said. "That team was full of All-Americans, so it was just learning by example. I think what my class really learned from them was the heart they had for the game. Everyone on that team wanted to win."

Whatever the lesson, Sinclair learned it well. She became a starter her sophomore year, but Briney said she reached her full potential during her junior season. She was given an all-MIAA honorable mention, led the Bulldogs by averaging 2.85 kills per set, had five kill/dig double-doubles and was named the National Player of the Week following a 17 kill, 12 dig performance against No. 4 Indianapolis.

"[Last year] was her breakout year," Briney said. "She just said, 'I'm going to take this spot. I'm going to be a big reason why this team is successful.' To be [National Player of the Week], you're doing something special," Briney said.

Sinclair said while winning the award was an accomplishment, her teammates deserved their share of the praise.

"I think getting [National Player of the Week] was a big turning point in my confidence," Sinclair said. "I developed really good relationships with the setters, and they were the ones sending me the ball. I was just finishing. I think a lot of it had to do with just everyone playing together."

Briney credits Sinclair with changing her game for the better and said her consistency is a large contribution to the Truman offense.



Senior outside hitter Molly Sinclair follows through on a serve against Nebraska-Omaha last season. Head coach Ben Briney said Sinclair has earned all of her achievements throughout her college career with her hard work and dedication.

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"Molly has the best ball control of all our outside hitters," Briney said. "She has a textbook arm swing, and that helps out a lot, especially in the faster offense we run. Her arm's always there and no matter where the ball is, she has the control every time."

Sinclair's personal goals for the season mirror the role Briney has in mind for her as a key component of the Truman lineup.

"I want to try to be one of the go-to hitters for the setters, even an outlet," Sinclair said. "I want to be able to put the ball down

even if it's a bad pass."

Briney said that's not far from what he is planning.

"I expect Molly to be someone that we know we can consistently go to and get a kill from, and be someone who's going to put the ball in a place where it'll be difficult for the other team to get back in system," Briney said. "She's come in right away and done that."

Senior Kylie Easlon said she predicts nothing but another great year for her teammate.

"She was a big threat last year, and she's definitely going to be a big threat this year," Easlon said.

Sinclair now is one of the senior leaders on a Bulldog team currently ranked 20th in Div. II, but an echo of her freshman year can be heard when she talks about the upcoming season.

"We want to win," Sinclair said. "Everyone wants it."

Truman's first tournament is Sept. 2 at the Midwestern State Hampton Inn-Vitalational in Wichita Falls, Texas.