Equestrian team saddles up

BY HUONG TRAN
Staff Reporter

The Truman State Equestrian Team took second place Saturday and tied for first place Sunday out of eight teams during its first Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Western show of the season at the University Farm.

Twenty-five Truman students competed in a pool of 81 riders from schools across the four-state region of Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Iowa.

Senior Stephanie Crecelius, the team’s hunt captain, said judges award riders points for riding skill and body positions in Western competitions, and the team qualifies for regional shows based on points accumulated throughout the year.

Each year, riders can qualify for regional and national shows by participating in five or six regular season shows. Riders can compete in Western shows, which involve a slower ride around the ring focusing on style, or English shows, which involve jumping over obstacles.

She said that compared to other school teams, the English team is very strong while the Western team is not as strong.

For the past two years, the Truman’s Western equestrian team finished third in the region, and the English team has been the regional champion, said horsemanship instructor and equestrian team coach Emily Costello.

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The team placed second Saturday and tied for first Sunday.

Crecelius finished third in her individual jumping class at nationals. Crecelius said the Western team qualified for a show during the last weekend of October hosted by Missouri State.

The English team will have a show this weekend hosted by Illinois State in Bloomington. The Truman, equestrian teams usually travel 10 years ago. The team currently has between 80 and 90 members which is comparable to other schools and keeps about 30 horses at the Farm.

Students can practice with horses up to five days a week at the University Farm and can also travel within the region, mostly in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and Kentucky, for the shows.

Costello said the agriculture department gives the team a $6,000 budget each year and that it costs $2,000 to host a show.

“Mostly financial support comes from the agriculture science department, especially from Student Horsemanship,” she said. “Some of the support for the show comes from the Student Interest Committee on campus, private donors, parents and member fees.”

The University provides vans to transport the team to shows. However, team members have to pay for their own food and entry fees themselves.

Costello said that compared to other schools, Truman’s indoor facilities are much smaller, but the outdoor rings and pasture space is much larger. The horses are provided by whichever school hosts the show.

“It is nice that our university has our own farm and horses,” Crecelius said.

She said the majority of schools within the region have to do the show at a barn that is leased for the duration of the show and the horses are not necessarily theirs.

Crecelius said the team doesn’t receive much recognition from the University because they are just a club sport.

“We get a little more recognition within the agriculture science department just because we are pretty closely linked with that, but overall the farm and everything the students...”