

Track travels to Jim Duncan

BY HOLLY CANTALUPO
Staff Reporter

It was competitive weekend for the men's and women's track and field teams, who left the Jim Duncan Invitational with a total of three first-place finishes and many individual improvements of season and career best times.

The Invitational was at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, and both teams had much to look forward to going into the meet due to the tough competition and good facilities. Div. I and Div. II schools comprised the competition for the weekend.

"When you have good facilities and good competition, you're bound to do better," junior Becca Nelson said.

Nelson was among the winners of the weekend with a first place finish in the long jump. With a mark of 17-06.25 she continued her success Saturday morning with a fourth place finish in the javelin and seventh place finish in the 100-meter hurdles, scoring a personal best time of 14.71.

"It's getting closer to conference where everyone is wanting to peak," Nelson said. "So I think people are expecting and wanting more."

Other notable finishes from the women came from the 3,000-meter run led by junior Katie Hirsch. She placed eighth with a time of 11:46.40, beating freshman Emma Burditt by more than two seconds after she finished with a time of 11:48.66. Junior Abby Palm placed 11th with a time of 12:08.98. Seniors Karen

and Cindy Grauel were also successful, placing sixth and 11th in the 5,000-meter run, with times of 17:42.61 and 18:03.79 respectively.

More improved season and personal marks came from sophomore Nora Kueny in the 400-meter, freshman Lauren Westen in the 800-meter and freshman Beth Keene in the triple jump.

The men proved to be equally competitive with two event wins, an NCAA provisional mark and more improved individual times.

Junior Matt Schaefer started the weekend scoring an NCAA provisional mark in the 800-meter run. Schaefer was able to set a personal best time of 1:52.19 and won the second heat of the 800. He came together with sophomore Zach Thomas, sophomore Dominic Kacich and senior Ryan Peterson for a fourth place finish for the 4x400 relay.

A third place finish in the 400-meter and a sixth place finish in the 200-meter were just the start for Peterson, a member of the winning 4x100 relay which included freshmen Nick Anderson and Jared Boyd and sophomore B.J. Smith.

A focus on details during practice was a big difference in the 4x100 relay team from last weekend to this weekend, Boyd said.

"Our handoffs went well in practice which translated to the meet," he said.

Senior Matthew Smith also placed high with a fourth place finish in shot put. Junior Andrew Sheets scored a personal best, breaking ten minutes in the steeple chase for a fifth place spot while sophomore Brad Hart se-



Sarah-Wonder Agbehia/Index
Senior sprinter Ryan Peterson, middle, and freshman sprinter Dominic Kacich, right, practice earlier this week. Their 4x400 relay placed fourth at the tournament.

cured a personal best in the 5,000-meter run, beating teammate junior Alex Volstromer by just two spots.

With Div. I athletes at the forefront of competition, improving individual times was the main goal of the weekend, head coach Tim Schwegler said.

"Wins come harder against Div. I schools, but it's important to take advantage of the

competition," he said. "We're not afraid to line up against anybody."

As the season continues and conference approaches, both the athletes and coach agree about the importance of working to get better each week.

Selected athletes from both teams will head to Lawrence, Kan. for the Kansas Relays April 18.

Bulldogs drop conference matchups

BY JONATHAN REMBOLD
Staff Reporter

The conference tournament is approaching and the season is winding down for Truman State tennis.

During a challenging weekend for the men and women, some individual players found the winning side of the court.

The women lost both matches against Fort Hays State and Washburn. Both teams were conference opponents and ranked ahead of the Bulldogs. The losses ended the women's chances of reaching the MIAA tournament. Freshman Tess Severin had the only point for the Bulldogs against Washburn.

"Sometimes you play well and

sometimes you don't," Severin said. "I was lucky enough to be playing well that day. Everything just lined up and my serve was really on which helped a lot."

Severin said she focused on her match and more specifically her style of play. Teams don't get scouting reports about players, which is how Severin said she likes it.

"Before a match we never know the person that we are going to play," she said. "I just know I will play in the number four spot. I like not knowing who I am going to play so then I can go in focusing on my game and not what the other person is going to be doing."

The Bulldog women will not play in the MIAA conference

tournament because they did not place in the top eight. The women ended their season against conference opponents the Lincoln University Blue Tigers and the Northwest Missouri State University Bearcats Monday and Wednesday.

The men faced a similar fate against conference foe Washburn, but two players scored points for the Bulldogs.

During doubles, juniors Adam King and Joe Murphy-Baum won a marathon match. The final score was 9-8 with a 7-2 tiebreak.

"We had trouble breaking their serves, which contributed to the long match," King said. "We were attacking the net very well in our doubles match and we had better volleys, so that

was key for us."

During King's match, he knew it would be an important win for the team.

"We try to focus on our match, but we try to be aware of the matches around us," King said.

King's match was a sample of what had been a common trend all season for the Bulldogs — long matches with a very close score in each set.

"Those close matches are very tough," King said. "We have a lot of deuce points that our opponents just happen to win, so the difference is just who wins the key points."

Another narrow victory for the Bulldogs came off the racquet of sophomore Griffin Smith who won in three sets at number two

singles, with the last two going into the tiebreak.

"I saw my opponent in singles playing doubles and struggling after my [doubles] match," Smith said. "And I was just thinking of how to come out strong and take advantage of the fact that he was getting upset."

After a long day, Smith pulled away in the third set.

The men's team will play at the conference tournament this week. With only one more match before the tournament, the team is looking to gain some momentum.

"I think we have a good shot," Smith said. "I think we can play teams a lot closer than when we played them in the regular season, so that will help us."



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