

Runners look to finish strong

BY MARY LEHNEN
Staff Reporter

The Truman State men's and women's cross country teams' 2013 season came to a close Saturday at the NCAA Midwest Regional meet hosted by Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wis.

The men's team placed 23rd overall with senior Chad Petrofsky placing 76th in the men's eight-kilometer race. The women's team placed 16th overall with junior Emma Burditt placing 55th as Truman's top runner.

The men's top three runners were Petrofsky (33:33), senior Andrew Sheets (34:28) and junior Brad Hart (34:38). The women's top three runners were Burditt (23:00), freshman Laura Tarantino (23:29) and freshman Lindsey Egan (23:31).

"As a team, we had higher expectations going into the race and there were some circumstances that didn't help our cause," Petrofsky said. "Obviously Brad

being hurt — he's our top runner, so not having him finish hurt the team."

Petrofsky said everyone gave a solid effort even though their finish was not ideal. Senior Abby Palm said that the GLVC brought the team to new courses, and even as far as Minnesota for the Roy Griak meet at the University of Minnesota. "Everyone went out there and did their part," Abby Palm said. "We had our little huddle before the race and just kind of told everyone we have nothing to lose, and everyone just go out there and put it all out on the line, and they did."

Senior Katie Hirsch said she was happy with how the women's team finished the season. Hirsch said the team's goal going into regionals was to do their best and see what they could do to finish the season strong.

With the cross-country season coming to a close, the men and women reflected on their respective teams' performances during the season. Palm said the season

went great with the new freshmen. She said most of the team is made up of freshmen and sophomores with only one junior and two seniors, creating a young team in which everyone improved each meet.

"I feel like we saw a lot of growth in them and that's always really encouraging, so it was kind of a big growing year," Hirsch said. "I think a lot of people improved and built off of where we started, so that's what you want [is for] people to keep getting better, so I hope to see them keep getting better in future seasons."

Petrofsky said throughout the season everyone had a race they were particularly satisfied with, but the team came into the season with higher expectations of how they wanted the season to go. He said everyone improved throughout the season and hopefully they can build on their progress going into the upcoming track season this spring.

This season brought some changes for the Bulldogs with the introduction into the

GLVC. Hart said he liked the new conference and it was a little more difficult than during years past, which was good for the team, especially for the freshmen. He said next year will be a rebuilding year for the men's team because three of their top five runners will leave, but he thinks the team will be better within the conference, he said. Hart said they have a lot of good, young runners that will contribute to the team next year.

"I think for next year we need to realize where we are at the beginning of the year, try to run together, push each other and then hopefully each race is better than the last one because this year we got kind of caught in a rut where we thought we were a little bit better than we were and we kept trying to push harder and it just didn't work out," Petrofsky said. "For next year, we just got to have more fun with it, be more confident, and I think everything will come to us then."

Rugby gains experience early

BY ANGIE DANIELSEN
Staff Reporter

Before football, rugby players played a game just as brutal, but with only mouth guards. Since 1991 Truman State's women's rugby team, the Bullets, have been fighting hard on the field and forging lifelong friendships.

During previous years, the team was in the Heart of America conference but recently switched to the American Collegiate Rugby Association. Because of the team's new home, the players had to adjust to the AMRA's scheduling procedures. The national playoffs now take place during the fall while the spring is filled with exhibition games.

Last weekend, the Bullets placed third at their national play-

off games. The top four teams qualify for the national playoffs, but only the top two teams move on to Western, the final round of nationals.

Sophomore Breanne Durovic said during past years the team has made it to Western. However, with the new conference came more challenges and the team was stopped during the second round.

Although the Bullets did not go as far as they would have liked, senior captain Allysa Rimkus said the team still has a reputation for being well-established in the Midwest. She said they are dedicated to their practices and will strive for better results next year.

When it gets closer to tournament time, Rimkus said the team practices with scrimmages. Earlier during the season, the team runs drills and plays.

During the winter offseason, Durovic said the team still will host practices until the semester ends so everyone can continue to improve. She said it makes for a great stress reliever when finals roll around.

During the spring, the Bullets said they let their rookie players have some fun. Junior president Anna Staudacher said the team starts the spring season with friendly matches for their rookies to gain experience.

The biggest event during the spring is Rugger Fest, an annual tournament in St. Louis open to about 100 collegiate and high school teams. Staudacher said this tour-

namment is geared toward rookies and throws them into the game to gain experience.

The team is open to accepting new players at any time with one rule — one has to want to play. Rimkus said the team started inexperienced together, but with practice and determination, they have gotten to where they are now.

"We take whoever wants to play. We make great rugby players, great teammates and great friends," Rimkus said.

Rimkus said the team is run by student coaches and she thinks this aspect has made their team stronger because they have grown together.

The team hangs out together not only during their three days of practice each week but also spends as much time outside of rugby as possible. Rimkus said the team definitely has become a family and her life.

Staudacher said the main reason she loves the sport is because it is fun to play and everyone is friendly toward one and other. She said during last weekend's tournament, even though teams lost, the players stayed to watch the remaining games and even broke out their barbecues for tailgating parties.

"I have never met a group of girls that are so close knit, but also so willing to let other people in and be accepting of them," Durovic said.

With the spring season ahead, the Bullets are preparing their rookies for their upcoming time on the field. Rimkus said every practice is crucial and they'll continue to improve. She said the team awaits next fall where they once again will show their worth and hope to make it farther in this new conference.

"We take whoever wants to play. We make great rugby players, great teammates and great friends."

- Senior Allysa Rimkus

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