

Tough season ends with bittersweet goodbyes

By Paige Carswell
Features editor

It's been a tough season all the way around for both of the tennis teams this year. Claiming one win apiece, neither the men nor the women made it to the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Tournament for the second season in a row. This makes the KCAC Individuals Tournament on April 29 and 30 the last hoorah for both teams this year.

For some like Morgan Hubele, special education senior, the tournament will be their last ever.

"It is a weird feeling to be done," she said. "In high school, I knew I had at least four more years to compete if I wanted to. Now, I realize I am truly done."

Hubele said she hopes she and Katie Jackson, early childhood education junior, can win No. 1 doubles. The two have stayed competitive with other teams all year, and took a doubles match from Friends University on Saturday, giving them momentum going into the tournament.

"Every match we lost was extremely close, so my goal is to take the doubles title," said Hubele. "I am just going to go out on the court, try my hardest and do the best I can."

Finishing up her senior year with a 1-5 team record may not have been all she dreamed of, but Hubele has no regrets about the way she finished. "The season went as I had expected, but not as I had hoped," she said. "Of course I wish I would have won more matches, but I did the best I could."

One of the things she made sure she did was the age-old strategy of playing fair. "Since tennis is a sport without referees or line judges, there are many players who are not honest, and do whatever it takes to win," she said. "My goal for this season was to be as honest and respect-

able as possible. Even if I lost, I wanted coaches and players from other schools to respect me, and to know I played a fair game regardless of the outcome."

The men will say goodbye to master's student DJ Wilson, but the rest of their team will still be together next year. They will go into the tournament with a 1-5 conference record, their lone win coming over Kansas Wesleyan. With three freshmen in the top three spots, the inexperience the men battled was sometimes tougher than what was on the other side of the net, but that was only part of the story this year, said Jessie Riggs, liberal arts sophomore.

"The level of competition this year is much higher than last year. A lot of teams returned the majority of their top players and it really showed in conference play," said Riggs.

The high moment of the season was when the men won 7-2 over Kansas Wesleyan, with Riggs and doubles partner Jacob Mires, business junior, winning a nail-biter 9-7. But, that win came in the last part of the season—too late for the men to make a run at a conference tournament bid.

"The hardest part of the season would have to be losing two of our last three matches," said Riggs. "We knew that we would not be able to compete in the conference tournament."

Riggs and the rest of the squad at least have next year to look forward to, although this year was disappointing partially because of the amount of talent he felt was on the team.

"I hope next year I will just be able to continue to go out and play my game as I have these last two seasons and then be able to improve on my technique," he said. "[Randy Smith] has really been a real help in allowing my game to be raised to the next level. I hope this will

continue through the next two seasons I have of eligibility."

While Riggs gets next year to hone his abilities, Hubele finishes up a career that has spanned 10 years.

"I started tennis in seventh grade. My options were tennis or track, so I decided to go out for tennis," she said. She chose tennis again in high school—this time over volleyball—and has stuck with it until the end. "I never took lessons or went to camps. I have worked hard to get where I am today and have had the best coaches throughout my career."

Season records aren't what will stick out in Hubele's mind when she thinks back about her time as a college athlete. Though she said she enjoys the competition, there are other aspects that have made her time on the team invaluable.

"What I will miss most about tennis is the team, doubles, traveling and the relationships I have made. I love being part of a great team," said Hubele. "I will miss meeting other teams and learning about other schools' tennis programs. In a sport like tennis, there is a lot of time to talk to other players and build relationships within the KCAC which I enjoy. All in all, I will miss being part of a team and competing."

It's a mixture of relief and sadness for the senior, who says her goodbyes to playing the sport competitively in just a few short days.

"It is a relief to know I worked hard and was a college athlete," she said. "Being done with tennis makes me excited to become a coach and teacher in the future. It is sad to know all the practices and matches have come to an end, but I have no regrets on my tennis career."

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Samantha Gillis/Collegian photographer
Nick Morris, sport management freshman, focuses on the ball during the meet against Friends University on Saturday at SC. The men lost the meet 9-0, ending the season sixth in conference. The women also ended their season in sixth place in conference. Both teams grabbed one win for the season and will not be moving onto the KCAC tournament.

SC Relays serves as preparation for track team before KCAC meet

By Clinton Dick
Sports editor

Saturday brings the 50th Anniversary of the Southwestern College Relays. It will also be the last meet before the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Championships May 5.

"I am expecting over 20 teams," said Jim Helmer, head men's track coach. "Everybody is trying to put it together at this point in the season and it will be outstanding competition."

Mike Kirkland, head women's track coach, says that this is the time of the year where the level of competitiveness plays a large role.

"We are at the tail end of the season and every meet takes on a little bit more importance," said Kirkland. "Everybody's level of competition keeps creeping up because everyone wants to finish on a good note. This is the fun time of the season."

SC Relays is the second home meet for the Builder track team this year and the team will remain home for the conference championships.

This past week featured two track meets and four days of competition for the team. Many athletes attended the Kansas University Relays Thursday through Saturday, while those who did not qualify competed at the Tabor Invitational Wednesday.

"We had a lot of good results other than just the logistics of spreading people around," said Kirkland. "You kind of come to expect at this time of the year that the performances will get better. The athletes sense that and there is no lack of effort or competition."

Amy Pierson, nursing senior, stole the show on the women's side, running 2 minutes, 15.31 seconds in the 800-meter run and hitting a provisional qualifying mark for nationals.

"She had great competition around her and it was about eight-tenths of a second off of the school record she set two years ago," said Kirkland. "She is rounding out to her top shape."

Pierson's time also earned her fourth place in the race.

In the 1500-meter run, Jennifer Hendrixson, business administration and marketing junior, Jacey Cullop, biology junior, and Erica Duniagan, communication junior, hit season-best marks with times of 5:17.84, 5:23.51, 5:44.16 re-

spectively.

"Thursday night was great condition-wise and the result was a lot of season best and career best performances," said Kirkland.

From the Tabor meet, Mandy Bostwick, elementary education junior, and Allyssa Zentner, athletic training sophomore, both made improvement in the shot put. Bostwick threw a season best distance of 39-2 1/4 to finish seventh overall. Zentner followed with a career best throw of 36-4 3/4.

On the men's side, Colton McNinch, biochemistry freshman, and Andrew Topham, biology senior, both hit automatic qualifying marks in the 10,000-meter run.

"They guys in the 10,000 ran outstanding," said Helmer. "Colton moved up to second all time in the 10,000 at Southwestern and he is just a freshman."

McNinch finished with a time of 31:09.65 and placed fifth. Topham finished with a time of 31:32.79.

Helmer said that he was pleased with the team's performance overall.

"It was a very successful meet for us," said Helmer. "We were trying to get people to be consistent and perform well so their confidence level would go up for these next couple of meets."

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Softball salutes seniors during games against Spires

By Samantha Gillis
Managing editor

After splitting games with third place Ottawa University and seventh place Tabor College, the Builder softball team looked to win both games against St. Mary Tuesday evening. A win would ensure a leap over Kansas Wesleyan University for fifth in conference placing on Tuesday evening.

Although results were not available before press time, before the game St. Mary had a 2-12 record and sat last in the conference rankings. The Builders were 7-7 in conference and 9-3 at home.

During the Tabor games, the women won 10-2 in the first and lost 14-6 in the second game. The Builders out hit the Bluejays 15-2 in the first game, but in the second game their performances were comparable. Builders only out hit them by one, 15-14. Neither team had any errors. Both had 15 put outs. But the Builders are looking to step it up against the Spires.

Kaylee Hicks, junior infielder,

said, "We know going into the St. Mary games that we can beat them, but we still have to come out and play like we know how." Sara Blackburn, freshman outfielder, said, "We need to stay tight on defense and put points up on the board and back up our pitchers."

The games not only mark the end of a season—with only the conference tournament to go—it marks the end of two players' careers: Morgan Stacy, senior outfielder, and Nicole Wilson, senior utilities. Stacy was the designated hitter for many games but also stood out in the outfield. For the majority of Wilson's first three years she played second base and occasionally short stop, but this year she has stepped up to fill the center field position.

Throughout Stacy's SC career she has racked up 209 at bats, 50 hits, 28 runs, and 39 RBIs. Wilson has tallied up, 461 at bats, 123 hits, 70 runs, and 34 RBIs. In the field Wilson has 415 catches and 202 put outs over 135 games.

Both players will be missed by their teammates. Hicks has

played with them for three years. She said, "I admire that they have both been through some tough times during their careers, but have still stuck it out and never quit."

Hicks said she had some great memories with both players but her favorite memory isn't just a single memory. "All of my favorite memories with both of them are just the random things that they say on a daily basis. I am really going to miss the bizarre comments they make."

Blackburn has a specific memory. She said, "Morgan brought her, '235 ways to say Good Job.' It was a paper and she printed them all out for practice. It was just a bunch of random ways to say good job, and it was a lot of fun."

Both players have taught Hicks valuable lessons. "Morgan [Stacy] has taught me a lot of new words, but I also really appreciate all of the ground balls she has hit to me for extra practice throughout the years. Nicole [Wilson] has showed me that I can be a leader without having to say a word."

As a freshman, Blackburn admired how the two didn't try to put the incoming players down and belittle them. "They back up the team do it well, and don't have a snobby attitude toward incoming freshman. They are there to help rather than degrade."

Both players may be leaving, but Hicks and Blackburn can attest that the lessons Wilson and Stacy taught them will carry into the next season.

Blackburn said, "Always being there for each other, backing each other up and picking each other up. The things you don't necessarily think about, but it really does help."

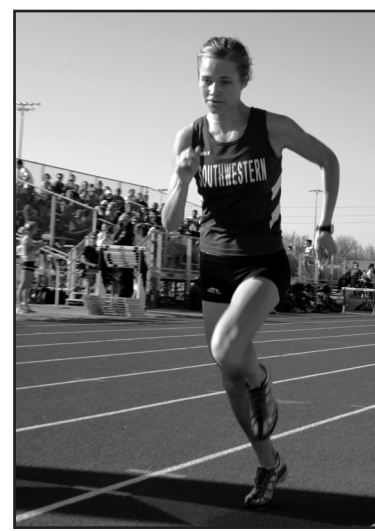
Hicks agreed. She said, "They have contributed great leadership skills and hard work every time they step out onto the field."

The Builders will play in the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference tournament on May 4 and 5 at Twin Rivers Complex in Wichita.

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Amy Pierson KCAC Women's Outdoor Track Athlete of the Week

At the Kansas Relays, Pierson finished fourth of 52 runners in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:15.31. That time puts her at the top of the KCAC and in the top 25 in the NAIA. Pierson also ran a 2:19 split in the third-place 880-yard relay.



By Clinton Dick
Sports editor

There is a passion you can't take away from sports, especially when you feel like you are a part of them. No, I'm not an athlete, but I am a part of Southwestern College and I love Moundbuilder

Being part of the team doesn't always require a uniform | **Play on Words**

sports. Attending games, cheering on teams, analyzing statistics and putting out articles and radio broadcast for the public is my area of expertise.

One thing that irks me every now and then is when I think of larger schools with larger athletic departments. Teams associated with the National Collegiate Athletic Association, who get an abundance of national recognition compared to our tiny college, take over the collegiate spotlight. Not that they don't deserve to, but then I think of how student sports enthusiasts chat

up the "team" they root for. That team is rarely Southwestern.

Of course many of us grew up rooting for KU, K-State or maybe some other team. For me it is the Tennessee Volunteers. Don't ask me how that started, but since I was a youngster I love watching the Vols play football.

It might have had something to do with watching Phillip Fulmer trot the sidelines with his large, protruding belly and watching his reaction to a wild play.

When I got to SC and really started to grasp the college life,

my passion for the Vols or for more local teams such as KU started to fade. I still root for Tennessee, but it has taken a backseat to following Southwestern athletics.

It is true that the level of play in the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference doesn't compare to the competitiveness of the Big 12. I don't doubt that people who fill the stands in the Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium or in Allen Field House get an amazing sporting experience.

I am not asking die-hard

NCAA fans to stop cheering their team on, I am hoping more that fans will show enthusiasm and pride for their school's athletics.

We live in an atmosphere where we know most of those on campus and those who play in sports.

I take great pride in going out and seeing those who I personally know compete in person rather than watching people who I will probably never have the pleasure of knowing run around on a television screen.

There is a connection made

that makes school athletics worthwhile.

The school year is coming to a close, as is spring sports. Come next August, many of us will be moving back in to our new dorms and preparing for the rigorous class schedule. The sporting season will roll around soon enough and, when it does, I hope there is passion, pride and whole lot of rowdy cheering.

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