

Track seeks successful outdoor season

By Garrett Chapman
Staff reporter

The Southwestern track and field team continues their indoor season as the 2014 outdoor season quickly approaches. The Builder's first outdoor meet is the Southwestern Invitational on March 13 in Jantz Stadium.

Both women's and men's track came away with a first place victory in the KCAC indoor championships in 2014.

Southwestern is returning nine All-Conference women and six All-Conference men from the 2013 squad.

"Most people don't see it, but you have to treat track and field like a year-round sport. You either train or you don't. We have been working hard to sharpen our tools day in and day out. I like to approach practice just like it's a meet," said T.J. Harris, assistant coach.

DISTANCE

Colton McNinch, senior, is returning for his final year to help guide the Builders in the distance runs. He recently had some injuries, but he is back to form and ready to compete at the top level.

Senior Trey Bruton joins McNinch as the two male distance runners that will be expected to set the pace for the rest of the team.

"It is hard to single these two out, we have a deep roster and anyone could be a leader," said Harris.

HORIZONTAL JUMPS

The Builders have raw talent at this event.

One in particular is sophomore, Zach Meeker.

Harris said, "Although Meeker is still learning, he is unbelievably talented and will do a worthy job at every meet."

Freshman Kayla Wilson is coming off a spectacular performance in the 2014 indoor track and field season where she broke school records in the long jump and was a quarter-inch short of being a National Qualifier. She says she is confident she can do the same thing outdoors.

VERTICAL JUMPS

Junior Hunter Cline will lead the vertical jumpers in the 2014 campaign.

The Builders will also look for added depth from newcomer Seth Topham, freshman, from Peabody, Kan.

THROWS

Christopher Paddock, senior, is a returning All-Conference senior and will be the highlight thrower for the Builders in 2014.

Harris said, "Chris is a National Qualifier and he has the potential to be a National Qualifier in three events by the end of this season. He is more than ready to compete at a very high level."

On the women's side, Alex VanSickle, freshman, will hold down the women's throws. Harris said she had the best freshman indoor season as a thrower.

RELAYS

Although the 4X4 and 4X8 events are looking good for the Builders, the 4X1 is questionable this season because of the smaller number of participants. Harris said, "The guys are very competitive runners and I'm sure we will have volunteers to step up and race."

The Lady Builders have an uncountable number of women who can step in any event and help the team to victory.

SPRINTS

The story for the sprint events is the same as the relays for both the men and the women.

The women will have a deep squad while the men are thin in numbers but still have the talent to compete.

HURDLES

The Builders are happy to be returning a 400m-hurdle national qualifier, senior Brandyn Willard. Willard will carry the men in the hurdle events as he seeks to repeat as a National Qualifier.

The Lady Builders are expected to show well in the 400m hurdles.

Garrett Chapman is a freshman majoring in communication. You may email him at garrett.chapman@sckans.edu.



Christina Meyer, biology freshman, takes off out of the blocks during practice. Meyer competes in sprint events for both the indoor and outdoor season. (Garrett Chapman/Collegian photographer.)