

# Track star continues to set high expectations in new season

By **Garrett Chapman**  
Staff reporter

Sports have always played a role in Taylor Needham's life. Needham is a biochemistry junior and is a sprinter on the track team. Growing up, Needham participated in basketball, volleyball, cross country, and track.

Needham said, "My favorite sport is track. I love the sport because I know I can be successful, and it helps pay for school."

Southwestern College was not the only college that was interested in recruiting her. According to Needham, there were "many other schools" that offered her a scholarship.

"I felt at home at Southwestern. I loved the faculty in the natural science department as well as the coaching staff. I liked the small school atmosphere and felt like this is where I belong," said Needham.

The faculty at Southwestern helped to lure in Needham. Anticipating on graduating in May 2018, she is majoring in biochemistry with a minor in mathematics.

As Needham stated, the coaching staff played a role in her decision to attend Southwestern as well.

Landing on the Southwestern women's track and field team has proved to be nothing but virtuous in her freshman and sophomore seasons.

During the indoor season she runs in the 600m/600yd and the 400m. She also competes in the 400m hurdles and the 400m.

The 400m hurdles is not an indoor race, but it is her favorite to run.

In only two seasons Needham has earned numerous awards and shattered her personal records as well as school records.

Awards that she has earned thus far include; KCAC Athlete of the Week, KCAC Academic All-Conference, 8x KCAC Champion, 3x NAIA All-American, and 3x NAIA Runner-Up.

400m, 600yd, and 600m. Her outdoor records are in the 400m, 400m hurdles, and the 4x400 relay.

Needham prefers to run outdoor track. She said, "The air is really dry indoor so it's harder to breathe and I get a bad cough," said Needham. She explained that the track is also smaller indoor with tighter curves, so the times are typically slower.

the breaks to get ready for the season."

Needham's goals for the 2017 season include setting a new PR (personal record) and becoming a KCAC Champion as well as an NAIA Champion.

"I want to be the best I can be. Which means working hard and staying focused. I know what I can do, so I want to go out and accomplish that," said Needham.

Needham hopes to graduate and continue her education to get another degree in chemical engineering. She says she will never fully give up on sports, but she does not want to coach after graduation.

Needham said, "I want to inspire others to be their best. If I work hard and have something to show for it, I hope someone will see that and be able to do the same. If I give up, that may give the ones looking up to me an excuse to give up."

Outside of track, you can find her studying, playing basketball, or water skiing.

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Needham has set new personal records while racing at Southwestern. Her personal records are; 600m (1:33.19), 600yd (1:23.72), 400m (56.82), 400h (59.23).

Beyond personal records, she holds six school records as well.

Yes, you read that right, in only two years of Collegiate competition Needham has set an impressive six school records. These six records consists of three indoor and three outdoor. Her indoor records are in the

Despite already having athletic awards and records, Needham is hungry to add to her track resume.

She said she "has been training every day, all fall and over



Taylor Needham, biochemistry junior, dominated the 400m hurdles and defeated her opponents with a time of 1:01.22 at the 2016 Track and Field KCAC Outdoor Championships held at Friends University. Needham won the event by more than four seconds and improved her meet record by .5 seconds. (Brian Shoehofer/Courtesy Photo)



Taylor Needham, biochemistry junior, prepares for practice before traveling to her first indoor meet of 2017 in Joplin over the weekend. (Garrett Chapman/Staff Photographer)