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UIS notebook: Class 2A boys supersectional draws largest TRAC crowd yet

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The Class 2A boys basketball supersectional between Robinson and Decatur St. Teresa high schools Tuesday brought the largest crowd ever to The Recreation and Athletic Center on the University of Illinois Springfield campus.

A throng of 2,600 spectators, according to UIS athletic director Rodger Jehlicka, packed the stands of the four-year-old facility that holds nearly 3,000. Those in attendance saw Robinson and University of Illinois recruit Meyers Leonard win 81-60. That's the fullest Jehlicka has ever seen TRAC.

TRAC has seen lots of action in the past week and a half.

About 1,100 spectators saw Springfield High edge Belleville Althoff 60-59 in overtime in a Class 3A girls basketball supersectional game March 1 at TRAC. The NCAA Division II Great Lakes Valley Conference held its men's and women's basketball championships there last weekend.

The men's semifinal session on Saturday drew the largest crowd of 889.

"We've had four major events in the last nine days," Jehlicka said. "That's a heck of a schedule. "It's been a really positive experience.

Is it something we want to do every other week? Probably not."

Golf teams head south

The UIS Prairie Stars women's golf team leaves today for the Embry Riddle Eagle Invitational in Daytona Beach, Fla. after opening the season last weekend at The Shoot Out at Aquila in Phoenix.

Freshman Abby Vorreyer placed 14th out west, but her teammates couldn't finish the final round due to darkness. Vorreyer and senior Tiffany Blumhorst have the team's best scoring averages.

"Abby and Tiffany kind of went back and forth (in the fall)," UIS women's coach Nichole InkelPongracz said. "I see that happening again this spring."

The UIS women's and men's golf teams both play Saturday and Sunday at the Embry Riddle Eagle Invitational.

This is the spring opener for the men's team, which is made up of six sophomores — Sean Bostrom, Ryan McKillips, Zach Phillips, Mike McKillips, Shane McCafferty and Mark Klinger — and two freshmen.

"The six sophomores played about the same in the fall," UIS men's coach Frank Marsaglia said. "They were all within one stroke of each other. At one time or another, each of them had the best round of the day.

No. 3 Michigan State Tennis teams hit road, too

The UIS men's tennis team got off to a good start at the Principia Tournament in February.

The Stars won or tied for first in all eight singles flights and won three of the four doubles titles.

"I'm pretty sure we're going to win the ones we're supposed to win and win some that we're not supposed to win," UIS coach Manny Velasco said.

The Stars' No. 1 and 2 singles players, juniors Punsisi Dayaratne and Josh Patrick, are transfers from Lake Land Community College. The Stars' Nos. 3 through 6 players are senior Connor McGowan, sophomore Matt McGowan, sophomore Sharma Kumar and senior Patrick Callahan.

Both the UIS men's and women's tennis teams play Great Lakes Valley Conference matches on the road Saturday and Sunday against Bellarmine and Southern Indiana, respectively.

Junior Thiyumi Abeysinghe is the Stars' No. 1 women's player. Three of the top six players are freshmen. Senior Rosanna Ramilo and freshman Jane Brown, a Sacred Heart-Griffin High School graduate, are Nos. 2 and 3. Senior Priyanka Deo, freshman Brooke Tweedy and freshman Clair Connor round out the top six.

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