However, time off from competition was not beneficial to the Redbird’s first meet of the spring season.

The Illinois State women’s team fell 88-61 while the men were defeated 98-46.

“We have a lot of work ahead of us,” head coach Elvis Forde said. “We had a long break, and I see we need to work on our overall fitness and competitiveness.”

Senior Brittany Smith started the meet with a face off against Indiana State’s Felisha Johnson in the shot put and weight throw. Johnson is currently the collegiate national leader in both events.

Johnson took out Smith in the shot put with a first-place throw of 55’11.25”, leaving Smith in second-place with a throw of 52’06.50”.

But Smith fired back in the weight throw, ending with a first-place finish and a day’s best throw of 69’09.75”.

Top finishers in the men’s field events included senior Luke Wielgopolan in the weight throw (56’11.25”) and long jumper Jacob DeJaegher (21’05.50”).

With the women’s mile kicking off the running events for the day, Forde was happy with the women’s performances.

“Rachael Brewer, Kristen Zillmer, Kelly McShea and Ashley Kamin all had a really good day in the mile. Then Rachael coming back in the 3,000-meter [first-place, 9:49.73] was a good performance. She came out and worked hard,” Forde said.

The distance runners claimed the top four places in the women’s mile race with Zillmer finishing first (4:55.37), followed by Brewer (4:55.54), McShea (5:01.19) and Kamin (5:11.56), respectively.

Along with Brewer, Zillmer doubled-back in the 800-meter and took second-place (2:15.28).

The Redbirds did not see another first-place finish until Sade Sealy made her season debut in the 400-meter dash with a time of 55.45 seconds. She also claimed another first-place finish when she doubled-back in the 200-meter dash (24.93) later in the day.

On the men’s side, Coty Kramer ran a 50.07 400-meter dash worthy of a third-place finish and Antonio Farley rolled in at 50.90, claiming the fourth-place spot.

In the 60-meter-dash, Printassia Johnson finished in third with a time of 7.80 seconds, and on the men’s side Ben Sparkman also finished third with a time of 7.06 seconds.

“We have a lot of work to do in all areas of performance … the kids have to recognize that training soft and not doing as much as they could have is going to lead to a slow start,” Forde said.

The Redbirds have a week of practice before they compete on Friday and Saturday in Madison,

Wis., at the Wisconsin Elite Invitational.