

# SPORTS



Winning Form

Women's track wins Yellowjacket Classic, men finish in second.

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## Recruiting important for success



### Academic standards and location prove challenging to 'Dogs

Joseph Barker  
Assistant Sports Editor

Swim team head coach Mark Gole sat at his desk looking at a piece of paper. On the paper were the winning and top eight times for Div. I and Div. II swimmers at the recently completed national meets.

Gole looked at the sheet and explained how this piece of paper — just numbers on a page — is a key to his recruiting strategy.

"[In Div. I] to get all-American in the 50-freestyle, for the women, ... it's 22.44," Gole said. "To get all-American in Div. II is 24.00. Say we're going after a girl that goes 23.6, that's top eight. She goes 23.6, she doesn't even make Div. I nationals. And what are you going to write on your résumé, I was all-conference or all-American. I think all-American means a lot more."

Gole said he uses this information to help convince athletes who are on the fence about whether to compete at the Div. I or Div. II level. By showing potential athletes the raw numbers, he hopes to convince recruits to join his squad.

"Every day I am on the phone, I'm trying to battle Div. I or Div. II," Gole said. "To be successful at the Div. II level, you need to get those athletes that are borderline Div. I."

The Truman women's swim team exemplifies what a good recruiting class — or six — can do for the program. The six-time defending national champion swim team has graduated three consecutive groups of recruits who know nothing but winning national titles because of recruiting.

But the swim team is not

alone in the quest to bring talent to the University.

Every year the roster of a college team is changed from the year before. Players graduate, transfer or leave the program for other reasons.

Meanwhile, a new crop of freshmen and junior college players move onto the depth chart to take the empty spots on the roster, all thanks to recruiting.

A good recruiting class can mean a winning season or two. A bad bunch of classes could leave the coach in the unemployment line.

"Recruiting is an art," softball head coach Lacey Schanz said. "You have to be as serious about recruiting as you are about coaching."

Bringing players into the fold is challenging for all the coaches. The challenge is made more difficult for coaches who don't have a winning tradition.

After back-to-back 2-9 seasons, head football coach Shannon Currier is in that position. He has to recruit players to join an unproven program and help build up his program.

"Recruiting is sales to a certain extent," Currier said. "... When you're not winning games, you have got to show kids that you are on track to winning games. ... You sell the fact that we are on the right track."

One way in which Currier has tried to bring talent to the football team is recruiting out of state — way out of state.

The football team has student athletes from 14 different states stretching all across the map of the United States and one country (Australia). The team has players from as far away as Florida, California and Minnesota.

One of the states Currier has hit up for recruits has been Texas. The football-crazed state provides a deep talent pool to choose from and the potential

to find hidden players.

"Because of so many players, there's a lot of kids that get passed up," Currier said. "And because there are so many good players, a lot of Div. I players that come out of Texas, a lot of Div. II kids get looked over because of that. They are outshined by guys who are going to [the University of] Texas instead of coming here and maybe being all-conference."

Currier said he knew from his first day on the job that he had to go away from Missouri to get the right type of player.

"With our academics, here we are going to have to recruit a bigger territory than other schools," Currier said. "For examples, in the state of Missouri, let's say there's 100 prospects. For us, that might mean 40 to 30 because of that 100, not all 100 are going to get in our school."

Currier's concerns about the academic requirements are something that all coaches have to deal with. Truman is renowned for its strict requirements and doesn't provide allowances for student athletes to bypass the system.

The academics can either be seen as a blessing or a curse by the coaching staff. Schanz said she sees the tough academics as a good thing because it is a unique selling point for the Bulldogs.

"We get kids based on our academic reputation," Schanz said. "No one else in our conference can compete with us academically. ... I would rather coach academic-minded kids that I don't have to worry about passing or going to class."

Although Schanz doesn't worry about academics, she does have to worry about the budget. Each team only has a certain number of scholarships

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Chris Tharp/Index

Junior wide receiver Ryan Bonner from Tuscola, Ill., runs with the ball last fall. The football team has gone outside of Missouri in search of more talent.

### Numbers don't tell 'Dogs' story

In the fourth game of the series against Pittsburg State University last weekend, freshman shortstop Neil Bleish strode to the plate in the bottom of the ninth with a chance to extend — and possibly win — the game for his team.

The Bulldogs had lost 15 straight contests but were furiously trying to come back against the Gorillas, collecting three straight two-out hits and cutting Pittsburg's lead to 6-5.

With freshman third baseman Corey Eagen representing the tying run at second and senior second baseman Adam Davis at first, Bleish had a chance to continue late-game heroics or set the table for 'Dogs' top hitter, senior Sean Zaborowski, waiting on-deck.

Bleish hit a ground ball to first baseman Travis Jensen. As Bleish raced down the line, Jensen bobbled and dropped the ball, sending the 'Dogs' dugout and their fans into a fevered pitch.

Jensen managed to corral the ball and flip it to pitcher Daniel Shepard in a bang-bang play at first.

A split-second hesitation later, the umpire made a fist and ferociously put his arm up into the air and down and shouted, "Out!" giving the Gorillas a victory and a four-game sweep.

And with that, the Truman baseball field quickly returned to a sense of quiet normalcy, as the purple and white suffered its 16th straight defeat and fell to 6-24 on the season.

All the losses this weekend were especially frustrating, but

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### Transfer's arm leads team

Conor Nicholl  
Sports Editor

Sean Zaborowski paused, thought about the question again, and then paused a second time.

"It's Greg Maddux," he said when asked who his favorite pitcher is. "Maddux has been around for so long and has had so much success, but he's never thrown harder than 90-91 [mph]. He spots pitches and locates very well and has an incredible change up."

And so far this season, Zaborowski, the senior first baseman and staff ace for the Bulldogs, has emulated the current Chicago Cubs hurler and future Hall of Famer.

Zaborowski, a quiet, 6-foot-1-inch right-hander, doesn't crank it up the radar gun to the mid-90s like some of other pitchers in the conference. Nor does he strike out every other batter he faces.

Instead, he baffles opponents with a varied repertoire that includes a darting, 83 to 84 mph two-seam fastball that cuts in on left-handers and moves down and away to right-handers, a breaking ball and a circle change that

Sean Zaborowski		
MIAA PITCHING RANKS		
	Zab's Numbers	MIAA Ranking
ERA	2.21	2nd
WALKS/9 innings	1.96	4th
Complete Games	2	Tied-5th
Opp. Batting Avg.	.268	9th
Innings/Game	5.24	9th

Source: themiaa.com

Design by Stephen Emlund / Index

is Maddux-esque in the way it has fooled the conference's top hitters.

He averages only 5.40 strikeouts per nine innings — last among the conference's top eight ERA leaders — but he has a two-to-one ground ball to fly ball ratio, one of the MIAA's top marks.

"He definitely doesn't throw a straight pitch," sophomore catcher Matt Over said. "The fastball looks like a hittable pitch to batters, but then it slides off the plate and runs

with a little downward movement. It's not overpowering, but it's effective. He also throws with the same mechanics on every single pitch."

Head coach Lawrence Scully agreed with Over.

"Sean can throw three pitches and, more importantly, he can throw them for consistent strikes," Scully said. "Not many people can do that at this level. He just pounds the strike zone."

Like Maddux, Zaborowski

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Chris Tharp/Index

Senior pitcher/first baseman Sean Zaborowski waits for the pitch during a game earlier this season.

### Baseball team drops all four games to Pittsburg State

#### Losses extend losing streak to 16 games, longest since 2003

John Weeks  
Staff Reporter

The baseball team hopes at this point to be the little engine that could. It's not giving up, despite losing 16 consecutive contests.

"We're competing really well with a lot of teams, and we're not out there playing institute of the blind or anything, we're playing some really tough competition," junior starting pitcher Mike Franz said. "... We're matching up well enough with them to where we're staying in games, and even when we're not in the game, we fight our way back to make it competitive, and it just seems like we can't

get that one big hit or that one big strikeout when we need it."

The last time the Bulldogs added another win to their total was March 16. A month later, during their losing streak, the 'Dogs have lost six games decided by two runs or fewer.

Franz pitched the second game of a doubleheader against Pittsburg State University last Saturday, surrendering five runs on five hits while striking out five. A curveball in the fourth inning hung out over the plate for the Gorillas' John Brummett to pummel. And he did.

He jacked a three-run bomb to put Pittsburg up 5-1 at the time.

The Gorillas took all four games during the weekend, winning them 5-4, 8-4, 13-6 and 6-5. They're now 22-12 overall, fourth in the MIAA.

Head coach Lawrence Scully said he thinks many of the close games could turn out in the 'Dogs' favor if they had some power in the lineup.

"Once we get guys in scoring position, we're kind of limited," Scully said. "The bottom line is we haven't done that with the consistency that we need to. ... We

have one, two, three, four, five legitimate .300 hitters. Now we need guys who can hit for power."

Sophomore first baseman Larry Hall said the 'Dogs can't seem to get over the hump during games to win.

"It seems like right now we're playing just good enough to lose, and that's especially frustrating," Hall said.

At 6-24, the 'Dogs are in a rut. They haven't lost this many games in a row since the 2003 season when the team dropped 21 straight at one point. However, the pitching staff has a collective ERA below 6.00, and opponents are hitting below .300 for the first time in at least 10 years. Yet it's the same old story — the baseball team still can't manufacture a win.

"I think right now if we get a win, we can be real dangerous,"

Hall said. "We're on the verge of breaking out. We're a much better team than our record shows."

Franz said throwing the ball over the plate effectively and consistently isn't as easy as it looks.

"Pitching is a lot of mental discipline," Franz said. "You can't just go out there and fire the ball at the plate and hope things go the best way because you're either going to miss it, or you're going to get rocked. ... The more you try to zone in and hit a spot perfectly, the more it seems you're going to miss. And then once you dig yourself into a hole pitching, it's lonely out there on the mound."

Franz said he knows how to make sure he doesn't blow up and lose control on the mound, however.

"You got to have a short memory," Franz said. "Pitching's about

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