



Football: Sat. Noon vs. Winona State
Soccer: Fri. 4 p.m. vs. Southern Indiana



No events scheduled

SPORTS



Catching the MIAA

Football looks to improve record with new faces in 2005

SEE FOOTBALL PAGE 17

Sunday, August 21, 2005

Men's Soccer kicks into gear

New coach looks to lead Truman to a playoff appearance

Tyler Madsen
Staff Reporter

The year was 2003. The cast consisted of a group of freshmen and sophomores who learned how to win early in their collegiate careers. The result was an undefeated regular season and a trip to the NCAA Quarterfinals.

The year is now 2005. The cast consists of a group of juniors and seniors who are ready to let their previous experiences lead them to a national title. The result? That's to be determined.

After a season plagued with injuries and bad breaks, the men's soccer team is preparing for a campaign that has the potential to be as good as, if not better than, the 2003 season. That team carved their names into the record book as they finished the season 20-1.

"The 2003 team had some special players, and last year was difficult with some of the injuries we had. I think that this year's team could go very far. They're very strong mentally, and their dedication level is second to none. Most importantly, they all believe in themselves," said Alf Bilbao, the former Truman head coach who took the reins this past off season at Drury University.

The biggest difference is the man behind the wheel. New head coach Duke Cochran

comes back to Truman after serving as the Director of Coaching and Player Development for Valley AFC, an instructional youth soccer program in Roanoke, Va.

Cochran was a player for Truman from 1991-1994 and also played in the United States Soccer League for three seasons. He was an assistant coach at Truman from 1995-1997.

"Everybody enjoys having him here. He's an intense coach and is willing to push us hard to make the team even better," junior goalkeeper Nathan Gibson said.

Last season's leading goal-scorer Martin Clayes will be joined by two players coming back from injuries, juniors Sean Birrell and Lars Pottgiesser. Midfielders Paul Link and Nate Gaudreault will help lead a potent offensive attack for the 'Dogs.

But if the old saying, "Offense wins games, defense wins championships," holds true, this team has a great foundation to reach the promised land of Wichita Falls, Texas - the site of the 2005 Final Four.

Senior defenders Jared Atwood and Mike Boyle, along with juniors Matt McCarthy and Ryan Cravens, return to prevent opposing teams from putting crooked numbers on the scoreboard. Seniors Geoff Brengle, Chad Baldwin and Ben Hicks look to add their expertise for additional support.

"We know how to work together and got in sync last year," McCarthy said. "It means a lot to



Freshman Dan Wehrmann does an aerial kick prior to Thursday's scrimmage.

Photo Illustration by Chris Waller
Designed by Lindsay Koski

have everyone back to maintain the level of familiarity we have."

The anchor of the Bulldogs defense is undoubtedly Gibson in the net. Last season, Gibson only allowed 14 goals in more than 1800 minutes of work. He posted 57 saves and nine shutouts in 2004, a testament to how strong the returning back line currently is and could have the potential to be.

After starting last season with back-to-back 3-1 wins over regional opponents, the 'Dogs hit a wall. The team's 27-game regular season winning streak was snapped in a scoreless tie with Quincy University. Truman couldn't right the ship the following weekend in their trip to the Chicago area, dropping 1-0 decisions to Lewis University (Ill.) See **SOCCER, Page 19**

Top 5 Games of 2005

Wisconsin-Parkside
Tues. Aug. 30, 2 p.m.

S. Illinois - Edwardsville
Fri. Sept. 9, 7 p.m. (Away)

Lewis
Sun. Sept 18, 12 p.m.

Mercyhurst (PA)
Sat. Oct 8, 11 a.m.

Drury (MO)
Wed. Oct. 26, 3 p.m.

Eleven returners, five freshman seek coveted NCAA title

Six key players return, including All-American Sarah Shearman

John Scognamiglio
Staff Reporter

The past few seasons of Truman State University volleyball might have been just a bad wedding story: always the bridesmaid, never the bride.

Three seasons ago, the Bulldogs finished second in the nation to Brigham Young University-Hawaii. In 2003, they lost to eventual national champion North Alabama in the South Central Regional semifinal.

Last campaign, they were one victory away from a perfect season when the win was snatched away by Barry University (Fla.) in the national championship game.

This year, the 'Dogs begin the season as the No. 2 team in all of Div. II volleyball. They also have been selected as the team to beat in the MIAA conference, receiving five out of the nine first-place votes in the coaches' poll and edging out Central Missouri State University by two points.

For the legions of Bulldog volleyball fans who have been accustomed to nothing short of perfection, new head coach Jason Skoch has some discouraging news as the 2005 season begins.

"My expectations are mediocre at first and then better as the season goes on," Skoch said. "I expect us to be a lot more solidified on the defensive side and be a lot more aggressive on transition."

Junior outside hitter Kelsey Wackerman said the team is adapting to the new style of volleyball Skoch advocates.

"It's a different system," she said. "We work hard every drill to get the right technique and discipline down so we can use it correctly during a game."

One of the looming questions going into the 2005 season is how to replace the leadership of former outside hitter, now graduate assistant coach Jessica Sears. The former All-American decimated teams in her career, bringing an entirely new meaning to the statistic kills.

The obvious choice in a leader is junior outside hitter Sarah Shearman. Shearman was an All-American second team last year after being named AVCA Freshman of the Year in 2003. Skoch said this year's edition of Bulldog volleyball will be more balanced and have two to three leaders who will anchor the squad.

"Hopefully Sarah [Shearman] will get a little bit more commanding and lead the team," he said. "She's got the physical ability to do it and she's smart enough. All four of our middles have shown signs of taking charge. Micaela [Walter] can be scary good if she takes more command of the team."

Another question mark that puts Skoch in a good bind is the battle for a majority of the positions.

"From a coaching point of view, it's a good situation to be in," he said. "It's not because no one is doing good; multiple people are doing good."

Skoch said the toughest position battle lies with the libero position.

"It really depends on who really steps up and takes charge of the back row," he said. "Amanda [Holliday] sacrifices her body a See **VOLLEYBALL, page 20**

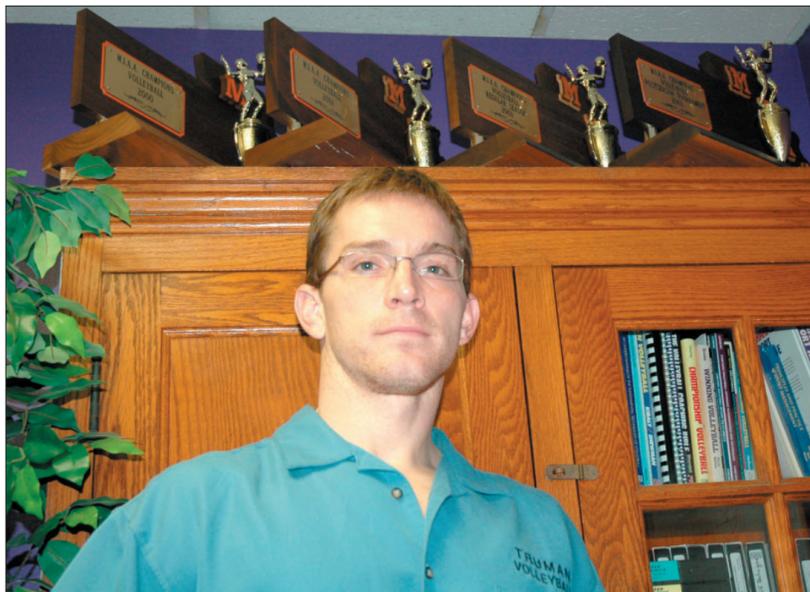


Photo Illustration by Chris Waller

Head Coach Jason Skoch was an assistant at Div. I Mississippi State University in 2004. He helped MSU improve their win total from 3-23 in 2003 to 14-16 last season.

New volleyball coach ready for the next level

Jason Skoch takes over squad ranked No. 2 in preseason polls

Conor Nicholl
Sports Editor

For junior outside hitter Kelsey Wackerman and her teammates, the decision was simple.

After nearly six weeks of searching, they wanted Div. I Mississippi State University assistant volleyball coach Jason Skoch as the replacement for Qi Wang, the most successful helmsman in Bulldog volleyball history.

"There was no debate," Wackerman said. "We came to the conclusion that we liked what he had to offer. We were

very impressed during the practice and interview session that [Coach led]. He was very organized and very intense and delivered a high energy practice. He left a good impression."

Senior middle hitter Megan Remley echoed similar sentiments.

"We definitely thought he was the man for the job," Remley said. "He was very enthusiastic during his interview and answered all of our questions. We really liked that he wanted to really come to Nowhere, Mo., to coach this team."

Skoch, after going to interviews at Div. I University of Connecticut, a junior college in Arizona and an NAIA school, also knew Truman was the right fit for him.

"It was a no-brainer for me to

take the job," he said. "I loved my job at MSU, but the goal was to always be a head coach. Truman fits my personality."

I come from an academic background, and the environment was what I wanted. I knew I didn't want to go to a school that had only 2,000 kids.

Truman was a perfect size. Plus, it's always nice to walk into a school that's preseason No. 2 in the country."

Soon, Skoch was named the eighth coach in Bulldog volleyball history. He'll bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to a program that enjoyed a 133-17 mark over the previous four seasons.

Ten years ago, though, it didn't seem possible Skoch would arrive in Kirksville to See **COACH, page 19**

The 'Dogs deserve dedication

In the words of old-school Nick-elodeon, I, your Assistant Sports Editor, would like to say, "Welcome Freshmen!"

The first semester of your collegiate career will be quite the experience. You will realize you actually have to read and study to do well in classes, Wal-Mart is one of Kirksville's most prized hang-out spots and the "SUB" and the "Student Union Building" are synonymous terms.

You also will unfortunately realize that our sports teams don't garner the respect they deserve. Be it studying for a 300 point exam (yes, they do exist) or researching and writing a paper worth a quarter of your semester grade (they also exist), Truman students can't seem to muster the energy required to

Commentary



Ross Houston

head to Pershing Arena or Stokes Stadium for two measly hours.

Either that, or they just don't give a hoot about people who can hit a white ball with their hand, or run long distances or catch an oblong brown object.

But that's going to change, class of 2009, isn't it? Because after reading this column, all 1,000-something of you will realize Truman athletics aren't all that bad. In fact, I wouldn't hesitate to say I would rather attend a Truman sports event than most Div. I sporting events.

Trust me, I'm not crazy. Well, maybe I am.

I might be crazy to attend any sporting competition I want - football, basketball, swimming, baseball, soccer and volleyball to name a few - for free. Yes, I said free. At our southern neighbors, Mizzou, students shelve out a hefty \$207 to enjoy all of these sports at their leisure. Compared with Truman's \$0 fee, that leads to a savings of \$207.

Did I mention I'm really good at math?

I might be crazy if I wanted to meet new people my freshman year. Even if you're not a huge sports fan, gathering a group of residents from your floor or fellow classmates and rallying around the Bulldogs is a great way to get to know each other.

Attending sporting events also enables you to interact with your professors in a relaxed environment. I'm going to pass on a little secret - if you get to know that foreign creature at the front of your class, you will discover he or she is a nice person who only wants the best for you.

I might be crazy to watch genuine student-athletes play their hearts out for 60 minutes. Granted you probably won't see any of Truman's athletes on a box of Wheaties or endorsing a shoe, you will see them give it their all - on the field and in the classroom. Student-athletes at Truman are actual students. I'm not generalizing that all athletes at Div. I schools aren't intelligent, but let's not lie to ourselves; most of these blue-chippers aren't going to discover the cure for HIV.

Every student-athlete here goes through the same curriculum regular students are forced to take on. Just like you, they will pull all-nighters, drag themselves out of bed for that occasional 7:30 a.m. class and spend countless hours at Pickler doing research for a thesis. Combine that with practice every day (sometimes twice a day), Truman's student-athletes put in more work than most students here. That effort should be admired by us students. Compared to them, we're living life on Easy Street.

I might be crazy to support my school. In case it hasn't occurred to you, you are now a Truman State Bulldog. You chose to go here; be proud of your school. I certainly am.

So am I crazy? As far as being a supporter of Truman athletics, I honestly don't think so.

As far as eating an earthworm for a five dollar bet - yeah, I might not be the sanest person on campus.