



File Photo

Senior Sara Ramza controls the ball in action last season. The 2004 squad which went 19-1-2 enters the fall season ranked 10th in Div. II. Despite the loss of five seniors, one of which was star Sara Murray, the Bulldogs are confident they will see similar results this year. Truman's season kicks off against the University of Minnesota-Duluth on Aug. 26 in Kirksville. Key opponents standing in the 'Dogs' path this season include University of Nebraska-Omaha and MIAA rival Southwest Baptist University.

Soccer in the hunt for title

John Weeks
Staff Reporter

For the past two seasons, the women's soccer team has been the most dominant force in Div. II, compiling a 36-1-3 record during the regular season.

Unfortunately for the Bulldogs, their winning ways came to an end both years at the hands of the University of Nebraska-Omaha early in the playoffs.

With the departure of star forward Sara Murray and four other strong players, it appears as if Truman will have a tough time with UNO for the third year running. However, head coach Mike Cannon said losing a player of Murray's caliber doesn't change the team's approach.

"We're not going to replace Sara [Murray] straight-up," Cannon said. "It's just a matter of finding different combinations and different personnel that's going to fit."

Shortly after graduation, the team packed their bags and spent 10 days of July in England, going 4-1 against some highly talented teams. Two of the players didn't make the trip because the second of the two bombings in London exploded a week before the team left.

Cannon said he would have been completely OK with not taking the trip because of the terrorist attacks, but 18 players and two assistants were adamant about going.

"I was a little bit worried going over," Cannon said. "But when we were there in London, there was increased police presence, and people were going about their business."

Cannon said the trip allowed the girls to get to know each other, which might help him decide who will make up the starting lineup.

"We need to play," Cannon said. "We need to kind of have dress rehearsals because it looks good in practice, but you're playing against your teammates."

In his 12 years as head coach of one of the most successful Div. II women's soccer programs in the country, Cannon said he still dreams of the ultimate prize.

"My dream would obviously be to get to the Final Four and have a shot at the title," Cannon said. "We're not quite as explosive as last

year's team, but we knew that coming in. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't win the conference and make it into the playoffs again."

Newly appointed captain senior Lauren Cepicky said she hopes to lead the pack to another outstanding year.

"I think it's going to be a great season," Cepicky said. "I have no doubt that we can be as good, if not better than we were last year."

She said winning every game comes down to being mentally and physically prepared.

"We need to come out fired up, and we will," Cepicky said. "And if we do, we're going to have a great year."

"I hope as a captain that I can lead the team as well as the captains before me. You learn how to be a leader. You just don't become one."

This year's 30-member squad is highlighted by a well-balanced mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Sophomore defender Rachael Schmidt said she plans on helping the incoming players just like many upperclassmen did for her when she was a freshman.

"I think we're all really working well together, and I'm excited to see us have another undefeated season," Schmidt said.

She said it's hard to move on after losing so many talented seniors but knows the team will be prepared for every game.

"With all the seniors ... they were just great leaders, even if they weren't captains," Schmidt said.

Freshman center-midfielder Katie Buning said she was tentative coming in to her first college season at Truman.

"I was really nervous at first because I don't know anybody on the team," Buning said. "But everyone's really welcoming and really open. Once we played a couple of times together, it was just easy to play how I normally play."

Buning said she also sees the opportunity to play soccer in college as a dream come true.

"I've always known I wanted to play in college," Buning said. "It almost seems surreal that I get to play, so I'm really excited but I'm sure I'm going to be really nervous, too."

SPORTS In Brief Former soccer star adds another award to list

Alumna Sara Murray was named the female South Central regional winner of the NCAA Div. II Commissioners Association Scholar-Athlete of the Year award this summer.

Murray, who graduated last spring, was one of eight regional winners of this award that highlights the extraordinary achievements of Div. II athletes.

She is now eligible for the national award, which will be announced in late August.

Basketball team earns academic honor

The Bulldogs women's basketball team ranked 24th in the nation in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) Academic Top 25 Div. II teams for the 2004-05 season.

The Truman squad recorded a 3.325 GPA. Six of the eight eligible members of the team were named to the MIAA commissioner's academic honor roll last season.

The four freshmen on the team would have received the award, but one must be a sophomore to be eligible.

Truman athletics takes third in Div. II rankings

The National Collegiate Scouting Association (NCSA) ranked Truman third in NCAA Div. II and 40th among all college schools in their annual collegiate power rankings.

The Power Rankings are compiled to allow prospective student-athletes to evaluate the particular strengths of universities based on academic and athletic factors, as well as student-athlete graduation rate, according to the NSCA.

Gole selected as new swimming coach

The Truman Athletics Department named Mark Gole as head swimming coach for the men's and women's program.

Gole was an assistant coach for Wayne State University (Mich.) before coming to Truman. He helped coach the men's side to an eighth-place national finish and a 22nd place women's finish.

Bulls rugby looks for continued success in fall season

Joseph Barker
Staff Reporter

With the summer over and only five months after playing their last game, the Truman's men's rugby squads return to the pitch for the fall 2005 season.

In their last incarnation, the spring 2005 Bulls finished with a 5-4 record. They compiled wins against several Div. I opponents including a 45-3 win versus Iowa State on the home pitch.

"Last year was a good season," head coach Bill Sexton said. "We started off really slowly and then gathered momentum and overcame injuries to play effectively."

The Bulls managed to outscore their opposition last spring 197-176; however, in the four losses they only managed to put up 26 points. Injuries to several offensive members contributed to the low scores.

"We had some injury problems last semester with some guys being out," graduate student Kyle Stephens said. "We really just want to stay healthy this fall."

With the summer months used

as time to heal, the men's fall campaign kicks off Sept. 10 in Lawrence, Kan., home of the University of Kansas. From there, the Bulls head to the University of Missouri. Last fall, the Bulls handily beat the Tigers 63-14.

"Mizzou is always a fun game," Stephens said. "They have gotten a lot better over the years, but we have yet to lose to them in five years."

The schedule is full of matches versus Central League rivals; however, the team isn't focused on just one team.

"Any match that is involved in the Central League, which leads to the territorial and national playoffs, is important," Sexton said. "The game that is most in our heads is the game against the University of Kansas."

The Bulls will be at home only twice this fall, both times in October. On back-to-back Saturdays the Bulls will host the Homecoming Alumni Game and Kansas State University. Those games will take place Oct. 22 and 29, respectively.

"The games are a lot of fun and real laid back," Stephens said. "Even if you don't under-

stand you can usually find someone on the sidelines to explain what is going on."

This year's squad will take on a different look than in years past. With six players having graduated and various others leaving the program, there will be many new faces for the Bulls.

"We lost some really key players who have been with us for several years who really anchored down their positions," Sexton said.

The replacement of those players will be important in determining whether or not the Bulls are competitive this season. Sexton plans to fill the spots mostly from within using members of last year's 'B' team. However, they will also look outward at incoming freshmen who have previous rugby experience.

"We have guys coming up who have been playing on the second team. This is their chance to step up and take a role," Sexton said. "Also, we have three players who have contacted me who have played two and three years of high school rugby and respective under-19 programs who will bring athletic ability

and a basic understanding of the game."

Goals for the Bulls are fairly simple: come together as a team and win some matches.

"Our immediate goals for the fall are to fill in for the players we lost and to reestablish an effective performance level," Sexton said. "And secondly, secure wins in our league matches. We are going to use the fall to really focus on developing our team for the spring season."

Even though the team will be without several contributors from last year's squad, talent still remains. Fall 2004 Most Outstanding Back and team captain senior Sean Foley returns. Also coming back is Spring 2005 Most Outstanding Forward Tom Tajkowski.

"We have a lot of work to do to reshape the team," Sexton said. "But I think we have good personnel and can potentially go into the spring and have a better squad than last year."

For those interested in joining the Bulls rugby squad, informal practices will be held Aug. 23 and 25 at 6:00 p.m. at the rugby field behind the tennis courts.



Photo submitted
Junior Tony Giubardo charges up the field in a match last fall. The Bulls take on the University of Kansas on Sept. 11.

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