

LIMSIACO | Golfer chooses Truman for academics, uses natural swing for top ten finishes in second season

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said. "Just to be on top five was an amazing thing at my high school. To be No. 1 you had to shoot even [par] or lower."

Being on a top team, Limsiaco practiced 18 holes five days a week. She said her experience in high school was similar to what players experience in college at schools that treat golf as the most important thing.

Truman head coach Sam Lesseig does not place golf first, which got the attention of Limsiaco. She said high school golf had worn her out, and she began looking for a place to play golf where the sport was not the top priority. She was looking for something to better suit her laid-back personality.

After looking at some schools in Texas and North Carolina, she found Truman. She liked the idea of playing for Lesseig because he would allow her to pursue her academics first.

"He lets us put school ahead of golf, which is my No. 1 thing that I was looking for in a school because there is a reason why they call us student athletes," Limsiaco said.

The transition from high school to college was not without its problems. First, Limsiaco had to deal with a new course. In high school, the team had five courses to play — a new one for each day of the week. One of the courses was the nationally renowned TPC at The Woodland — a former host of PGA tour events.

Now she practices exclusively at the Kirksville Country Club. Limsiaco said the biggest difference between the KCC and her high school courses had nothing to do with golf — it was all about jeans.

"It's way more laid-back at Kirksville," she said. "We'll just go out there in jeans and a T-shirt, and it's fine. I remember my first couple of weeks here at Truman I would show up completely in golf attire because that [was] what I was used to because we would play at these really nice golf courses where jeans were not allowed whatsoever. ... People here would look at me like, 'Why are you all dressed up?'"

Besides getting the dress code down, Limsiaco also had to deal with being far from home. In her first semester she thought she made the wrong decision in leaving Texas and heading to northeast Missouri. But after a few practices and golf trips with the team she began to get more comfortable at Truman.

"Once I got to know the team I got to really know the girls, and I felt like there was no way I could ever leave," she said. "They kept me around long enough for me to start liking the school more and more. I enjoy it now."

Senior teammate Marta Samojluk said Limsiaco fit with the team instantly.

"She has the greatest personality ever," Samojluk said.

Samojluk said that during her first year with the golf team, the team wasn't that close. With

the addition of Limsiaco, things changed for the better.

"She almost completed the team," Samojluk said. "I feel like we needed someone with her personality to bring us all together."

Once Limsiaco got comfortable at Truman, she became comfortable on the golf course. In two years, she earned 10 top-10 finishes. She has earned medalist honors twice, most recently at the Upper Iowa Classic in early April.

Lesseig said much of her success can be traced to her natural swing.

"She has a great swing," Lesseig said. "I have several players who have really great swings — what really helps her is she can duplicate it time after time."

Limsiaco has two more years left as a Bulldog after this one. She said she doesn't have any major goals in terms of where she finishes. But she said it would be nice if people learned how to pronounce her name properly — the correct way is LIM-shock-O.

"That would be cool," she said. "I wouldn't mind that at all. It's a tough name so I wouldn't be surprised if people still can't say it by then."

Before that happens, she said she just wants to get better at her new sport. Years after giving up tennis, Limsiaco said she doesn't have any regrets about switching to golf.

"I think it's the best decision I've made so far," she said.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Limsiaco hits an approach shot to the green. She has finishes of second, first and sixth in the three tournaments this spring, each of which have placed her first on the Truman squad.

SOFTBALL | Team finishes conference season, awaits fate for MIAA tournament

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Truman only got four hits, but the team manufactured runs in the first and fifth innings to secure the win against the Lions (6-29).

In Game 2, it was Noski's turn to shine. She allowed only one hit and two walks and struck out two. She mixed in off-speed pitches on the inside and outside parts of the plate to coax 12 ground balls from the Lions.

Missouri Southern threatened to score only once, in the fourth. A base hit would have given the Lions the lead after a sacrifice fly advanced two runners, putting runners on second and third with two outs. However, on the first pitch to the next batter, Noski induced a ground ball for an easy putout.

Missouri Southern had to contend with two different types of pitchers with the left-handed Jeannin and the right-handed Noski. The Bulldogs did not have hitting charts on the Lion hitters going into the games, but by the end of Game 1 they knew what to throw to certain hitters, Noski said.

"We both have a different look," Noski said. "She's left-handed, so it's a lot different. Her curveball is going to be inside to a right-handed batter while my curveball is going to be outside."

Truman got off to a quick start in both contests. Senior leadoff hitter Christen Belcher got on base to start each game and eventually scored. Belcher was 4-for-6 with three stolen bases, and she scored three of

Truman's five runs in the two games.

The Bulldogs needed the two wins to climb the conference standings after their two close losses to Emporia State.

"I really feel like coming off the last two conference games before the tournament, coming off with two wins was big for us in our ... confidence going into the tournament," LaCombe said.

Against Emporia State, the pitching was solid in both games. Each starter lasted at least six innings, but Truman had only seven hits combined in the contests. Truman took the lead in the sixth inning in Game 1, but Emporia State responded with a run in the seventh before the Hornets' shortstop Miranda Campbell hit her 13th home run of the season in the eighth inning.

In Game 2, Truman had four hits in the first two innings and took a one-run lead, but the team was hitless the rest of the game. Emporia State scored one in the third and two in the fourth for the two-run advantage.

Next up for Truman is a home non-conference doubleheader against Lincoln (Mo.) University today. The team will close out the season with five games at the Minnesota State University-Mankato Tournament to gear up for the MIAA conference tournament starting May 1 in Kansas City, Mo.

Tuesday's non-conference doubleheader versus Quincy University was canceled and will not be rescheduled.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Freshman Alex Weber fires a throw to first base on Monday. Weber has seen increased playing time in the last two weeks.

SMITH | New women's basketball coach has Missouri ties which could help in recruiting

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Wollmering said that during the hiring process he was seeking a coach with women's coaching experience, Div. II experience and good recruiting skills.

Smith worked for six years as an assistant coach and graduate assistant coach at the Div. II level before going to Moberly. He takes over a Bulldog team that finished 16-13 last season but just 7-11 in the MIAA. The women have not had a winning record in the conference since the 1999-00 season, the year before Sloop became head coach.

Smith said he wants Truman to be a greater force in the MIAA.

"It's not going to be easy," he said. "We're not going to be able to just flip on the light switch and win the MIAA next year, but I think we can take steps to be where we need to be to compete."

Smith will have the challenge of replacing 80 percent of the Bulldogs' 2007-08 starting lineup as the team started four seniors. He does, however, have an advantage because the returning starter is two-time first team All-MIAA forward Georgia Mueller. She will be one of two seniors next season.

Mueller, who has 1,457 career points, flourished in Sloop's offensive system, which featured an up-tempo pace last season. Smith said he has worked with numerous offensive systems in the past, including a fast-paced offense when he coached Moberly. But he said he plans to use a different style of play at Truman.

"The coach that I worked under at Arkansas-Little Rock, Joe Foley, ... ran a motion-style offense, mainly a half-court offense," Smith said. "And that's something that I plan on implementing because I truly feel that we can recruit, and we currently have the type of players that we need to be successful in that system."

Mueller helped lead team workouts during the absence of a head coach. She said she's happy Wollmering hired a coach with experience at the Div. I level and that she is open to playing in any offensive system.

"I've always played in a fast-pace [offense], kind of run the ball and try to get fast breaks," Mueller said. "That's just what I'm comfortable with and just throw in a couple plays when you need a quick basket. I'm more of a create-your-own kind of player, but really whatever you throw at me, I'm willing to try."

Because Smith's hiring comes in late April, it could

prove difficult to bring in recruits before next season. Smith said he's comfortable with next fall's current returning roster.

"I'm going to be selective about filling maybe one more spot and maybe save whatever scholarship money I have, save it back for next year, so I can actually go out over the summer and evaluate athletes

for myself," Smith said. Once Smith gets established, he could have success recruiting Missouri athletes. A native of Sturgeon, Mo., Smith attended college and graduate school in Missouri and has coached at colleges in Missouri for six years.

And because of his experience coaching at the community college level, Smith might have an inside edge in attracting junior-college transfers — an area that Truman traditionally has not targeted in the past. In 2007-08, the Bulldogs only had one junior-college transfer on the roster.

"The best thing about a junior-college player is you get instant experience," Smith said. "There's no doubt about it that we're going to be looking. We're not going to have 10 of them. But I wouldn't mind having maybe one or two every year."

NOSKI | Senior starter returns to mound after only throwing 14 innings in first two years

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"Last year she kind of got thrown in there when we needed her to pitch," senior pitcher Katie Jeannin said. "This year she came in knowing that she was going to be a pitcher. [She] got to work on what she needed to work on to be ready for the season."

Noski had 24 starts at first, 16 at designated hitter and 14 at pitcher in her junior year.

She went 6-5 as a pitcher last season, with 14 starts and 83.2 innings, which were both second on the team.

This year, after 2006-07 staff ace Ashley McDougal graduated, Noski said she came in knowing she would play a big role on the mound.

Sophomore Erica LaCombe, who has started 54 games at catcher the past two years, said Noski has made improvements from last season in both location and in style of her pitches.

"Throwing the rise ball for a strike, like low in the strike zone, has been really big for Kate — we've changed that," LaCombe said. "Also, her curveball last year, it was effective, but it was kind of like a drop-curve, so she was throwing kind of a blend of the two pitches, and it worked really well, but for getting strikes, sometimes it was hard."

Noski said adding pitches to her repertoire has changed the way she approaches batters this season.

"Last year I was more of an inside pitcher throwing the rise ball," Noski said. "This year I've been more of a curve, drop pitcher just to keep them honest. I would say my pitches have changed a little bit in the way we approach batters."

The changes, especially with the breaking pitches, have helped Noski use her defense and become more of a ground ball pitcher than a strikeout pitcher, which is where she said her success comes from.

She is averaging 3.9 strikeouts per seven innings this season.

"I'll take a ground ball any day, all the time," Noski said. "With the way our defense is, just getting [the hitters] to ground out is awesome."

The defense includes many starters who have multiple years of experience, and many of the seniors have been starters with Noski for four years.

LaCombe said Noski has been working with a device called a spinner to help with breaking pitches and a bungee cord to help with speed.

Whatever happens the rest of the season, LaCombe said Noski will be mentally ready for any hitters she has to face.

"She dominates them and is better than them, and she snaps her pitches like she knows how, and whenever somebody gets a hit, she steps right back and says, 'It's not going to happen again,'" LaCombe said.

COLUMN | Sports ends run with final commentary that discusses wide range of topics including column topics and director of athletics

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kid who was playing hard — it never really served a purpose outside of getting someone angry.

Instead, I decided to try to make people laugh. I'd make fun of myself in hopes that I wouldn't have to make fun of the athlete who messed up that week or the team that failed to perform. My idea was that even if people didn't care about Truman sports, they might want to read about the Super Bowl and in the process see the headlines about the goings on with the Bulldogs.

Did it work? I'm not sure, but I know that if you're not a fan, dear reader, just wait a week. A different

(better looking) face will be in this spot.

Another thing I've been wanting to say is that I think Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering does a good job.

Jerry gets a bad rap from some people as being all about football, but that's not the case. The guy goes to just about every sports event and genuinely cares about the teams and players — not just the football team. If other people in power at this University cared about improvements like Wollmering does, Truman would be a better place. I don't always agree with everything that has gone down, but I know he's trying to do what's best for the Bulldogs.

Plus, Wollmering always has been willing to talk to the paper, even about difficult subjects. He never shies away. Sure his voice drops a few decibels, but he still talks.

Fortunately for me, Wollmering is not the only person who has talked to me. I know I must suck for athletes to have a tape recorder shoved in their faces after playing a game. Most athletes have not had a problem with this and have understood that I'm just doing my job, just as they were doing a few minutes prior.

Talking with athletes has been, hands down, the best part of my three years covering sports. I love watching

the games, and I love the behind-the-scenes work I have to do for the paper, but nothing beats talking to the players.

Plus, some of them are really good. It's always bothered me that some members of the student body think that because this is a Div. II school, the athletes aren't any good.

That's not true, so get your facts straight. I have seen several amazingly talented players. I could list them, but I have a word count and more things to say.

My only complaint with the athletes here is they seem to want to have their cake and eat it, too. They want to be special-normal students. When an athlete breaks the law and is in the

paper, the chorus wonders why it's not "freshman student" instead of "freshman quarterback."

Then I hear about a motion that will allow athletes to register for classes early. So which one is it? Do you deserve special treatment or are you just one of the countless students here at Truman?

When I took over as sports editor, I had two goals. The first was to produce a quality section that put the spotlight on all teams, not just those in the big sports like football. The second goal was to have fun. I don't know if I accomplished the first goal, but the second definitely was achieved.