

HOME DEFEAT

Women lose at Pershing Arena for first time this season

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SPORTS



Wrestling: 3 p.m. Saturday Feb. 9 vs. Central Oklahoma
Wrestling: 3 p.m. Sunday Feb. 10 vs. Missouri Baptist



No scheduled events

Thursday, February 7, 2008

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Football adds 32 for fall

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Assistant Sports Editor

Last November, James Hurt received player of the game honors after his Keokuk High School team won the 3A Iowa state championship. Hurt had two touchdown receptions and intercepted three passes.

The next day, the Des Moines Register named Hurt to its all-state team as a wide receiver for his 79 receptions and 1,318 receiving yards in his senior season.

Next fall, Hurt will be a Truman Bulldog.

Hurt is one of the headliners of a 28-member recruiting class that signed national letters of intent during Wednesday's National Signing Day to join Truman's football team next season.

"I just feel like [Truman is] a team on the rise," Hurt said. "If they bring in a few more players, then they can be really good in the future. I just look forward to helping them win some games."

Hurt said he received offers from other schools such as Northwest Missouri State University, the Div. II runner-up from 2005-07. But Hurt said he ultimately decided on Truman because he liked the spread offense and the coaching staff, and he also received an attractive scholarship offer from the University.

"Truman just seemed a little bit more interested [than other schools]," Hurt said. "I got to meet all their coaches multiple times, which was important to me. They recruited me the hardest so that at the end of the day, they had the best offer."

In addition to Hurt and the other 27 signees, the Bulldogs also have added four transfer players to the roster. Overall, a total of 10 states were represented by the signing class and the four transfer players. Truman signed 12 players from Texas, seven from Missouri and five from Illinois.

The 28 signed recruits are three more than the Bulldogs landed last year and the most head coach Shannon Cur-

rier, who took over the program prior to the 2004 season, has ever signed at Truman.

Currier said the team's two straight winning seasons, facility improvements such as lights and the upcoming installation of synthetic turf and good efforts from the coaching staff led to a great recruiting class.

"This is the best staff that I've had in my time as the head coach," Currier said. "... All coaches on staff did a great job. It's the first time we've went through the recruiting season without a coach leaving. That makes a difference. Coach [Thomas] Kearney, our recruiting coordinator, has done the best job of any recruiting coordinator we've ever had."

The recruits should fill some of the Bulldogs' needs. Twenty of the recruits were signed for defense, which should help improve the Truman unit that finished last in the MIAA in total defense in 2007.

The 'Dogs lost only four seniors from last season's team, but two were defensive backs. To help alleviate this loss, seven of the signees play in the

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Meet the recruits

The Truman football team inked 28 recruits Wednesday on National Signing Day to accompany four transfer players who will join the 2008 roster. It is the highest signing total for the program in the tenure of head coach Shannon Currier, who took over the program prior to the 2004 season. Here are some of the top recruits who signed yesterday.

Player	Fact
James Hurt wide receiver	Player of the game in Iowa's 3A state championship game. 79 receptions, 1318 receiving yards, 19 TDs his senior year.
Tracy Milo running back	Received interest from Div. I schools. Played for 5A The Woodlands High School, Texas.
Taylor Breen quarterback	Passed for more than 1,000 yards his senior season.
Patrick Blackwell defensive end	Texas 5A all-state selection. Had 90 tackles his senior season.
Joe Murray offensive line	6-foot-6, 245-pound offensive tackle. Played for 8A quarterfinalist Maine South High School in Illinois.

Design by Antonette Bedessie/Index



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior forward Patrick Fandja goes up for a contested layup in Wednesday night's game against Central Missouri. The Bulldogs lost 65-64 in overtime.

Bulldogs fall in OT

BY JACK NICHOLL
Staff Reporter

The Bulldog men's basketball team was unable to come through in the final minutes Wednesday night.

Truman (4-16, 3-8 MIAA) lost to Central Missouri University (13-7, 6-5) 65-64 in overtime. Sophomore guard Gabe Landau's game winning attempt was blocked, enabling the Mules to leave Pershing Arena with a win.

The loss puts Truman in an even deeper hole in the conference as they fall two games behind eighth-place Washburn. The top eight teams out of 10 in the conference qualify for the MIAA tournament.

The Bulldogs couldn't hold onto leads of nine with six minutes to play and with less than two minutes to go. They were hanging on to a two-possession advantage with 16 seconds to go.

Freshman forward Ethan Freeman missed two free throws in the waning seconds. This set the stage for UCM's Kevin Wollbrinck's game-tying free throw to send the game to overtime.

"We outplayed them, we played tougher than them, we deserved to beat them, and it was taken from us," head coach Jack Schrader said. "The only thing we could have done better was shoot free throws."

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Freshmen earning time

Trio of first-year players providing plethora of minutes for Bulldogs

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Assistant Sports Editor

Jack Schrader might never have coached a team as inexperienced as this year's men's basketball team in his 13 seasons as the Bulldogs' head coach.

At this time last year, almost half of the Truman roster probably was starting to think about high school regional games — six of Schrader's 14 players are freshmen.

So when the Bulldogs were preparing for a Jan. 31 game against the University of Central Missouri, Schrader wasn't concerned about their struggles in recent years against the Mules.

"Half our team doesn't even know who they are," Schrader said.

Although the freshman class might not be fully versed yet on all their opponents, conference schools are starting to become familiar with the Bulldogs' first-year players.

For the first time since the 2003-04 season, Schrader has three freshmen — Ethan Freeman, Alex Henderson and Stefan Garrison — averaging at least 14 minutes per game. And as the schedule advances into conference play, the trio is starting to see even more time on the floor.

Henderson has played at least 20 minutes in all but one conference game. Garrison played a season-high 24 minutes Saturday against Missouri Southern State University. Freeman has started in every MIAA game and is averaging more than nine points and seven rebounds in conference play.

"They have some young players, and as the season gets older, young players are starting to mature and really grow," Jeff Guiot, Southwest Baptist head coach, said earlier this season.

Each member of the freshman contingent brings a different set of skills to the court.

Freeman is the player most physically ready for the college game. At 6-feet-5 and 225 pounds, he can play on the perimeter or in the post. He leads MIAA freshmen in rebounds and is third in points per game.

"[Freeman] has caught on to what we do about as well as any freshman we've had," Schrader said. "And he's playing two positions. We have an inside and outside position, and he's played them both. So I think that speaks volumes to



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Stefan Garrison is one of three Bulldog freshmen averaging at least 14 minutes a game this season. He played a season-high 24 minutes Saturday.

his focus — being able to run our system at two positions so early."

Henderson has provided ball handling. Schrader said Henderson has a point guard mentality. He has a 2-to-1 assist-to-turnover ratio — by far the best mark on a Truman team that has 66 more turnovers than assists.

Henderson also shoots the ball well. He leads the team from beyond the three-point arc, where he shoots 39 percent, and has missed just one free throw in 25 attempts.

Garrison adds speed and athleticism to the lineup, Schrader said. Garrison — who scored more than 2,500 points in his high school career — said he continues to get more accustomed to aspects of college play, such as increased physicality, with each game.

"It's a big step going from high school to the MIAA," Garrison said. "As the season has progressed, I've started to feel more comfortable with my role with the team. ... I'm not trying to drop 20 points

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Super Bowl viewing experience rekindles love of sports

I got paid to watch the Super Bowl. No, I didn't get a promotion to a mainstream media job. I was at work.

Like a lot of college students, I have a part-time job. All the hours I spend at this paper just don't pay the bills, so I work on the weekends.

Initially, when I found out I would be on the clock for the duration of the big game, I was not a happy camper. I am a major sports fan. For me to miss the big game would be like a movie buff not watching the Pope or the Pope not going to Easter Mass — things that just don't happen.

Fortunately, my job allows me to watch TV, so all I was forced to miss

out on was the wings and pizza.

And, of course, I missed the social aspect of the game.

I have never realized how much watching sports is a communal activity. Part of the joy I get from watching a game is talking about it with friends and family. On Sunday, I was alone.

I had no one to annoy with my expert analysis. I had no one to complain about the officiating with. I couldn't even make fun of the announcers because I would just be talking to myself.

Basically, it was just me and the TV. It was pretty cool.

I didn't have any of the distractions of the typical Super Bowl event. I avoided people talking about their square ages or how much the spread had moved since the conference championship games.

I didn't have to hear anyone but myself curse Tom Brady.

I didn't have to deal with the annoying guest who pretends to know football rules but just comes off as a moron. I got to watch the commercials in peace and really liked down which ones were good (I liked the FedEx pigeons one, myself) and which ones were a waste of movie (salesgen.com should've just thrown its money away).

The best part about not being at a Super Bowl party was that I didn't have to put up with Patriots fans — or

someone who is pretending to be a Pats fan to get on my nerves. I was able to pull for the Giants and not have the urge to punch someone in the face.

Beside Tom Brady, that is. When Eli Manning made his crazy escape from the grips of several Patriot defenders to hit David Tyree for a 32-yard gain, I jumped up and down and did a little fist pump. I would have gotten much ridicule for this move from my roommates, but they never saw it.

As much as I enjoyed watching the game in relative peace, it did have one major drawback: no one to high-five. When it became apparent that the Giants were going to pull off the historic upset, I was all ready to celebrate with someone ... anyone. But no one was around. My

raised hand went unslapped.

Still, that was a small price to pay for actually enjoying the Super Bowl — something I hadn't been able to do since 2001. Being at work and away from the frills of the Super Bowl helped me watch it just like I would any other game.

Who knows, maybe this is the start of something. Maybe next year I'll ask to work again. Or maybe I'll just lock myself alone in my room to watch and enjoy the game.

But then, I might miss out on the reaction on my roommate's face as he realizes he's about to lose a bet that would require him to go see the chick flick "27 Dresses."

And friends, that is simply too much to pass up.