

Bulldogs set relay records, Drury up next

Women sweep weekend duals, prepare for meet against national champs

BY JACK NICHOLL
Staff Reporter

The record board in Pershing Natatorium received two New Year's gifts last weekend.

In the first home swim meet of 2008, the women's swim team broke pool records in the 200-yard medley relay and the 200-yard freestyle relay. The 200-yard medley relay was the first home event of the new year.

Winning those two events, as well as sweeping all of the other events, propelled the Bulldogs to a 77-18 dual meet victory against Missouri State University last Friday. The meet avenged Truman's 124-115 loss to the Div. I rival Oct. 20.

"It was really nice to come back and get a win against Missouri State," senior Karen Goolsby said. "This was a great way to show them that we really were a tough team and we were ready to take them on."

With a win and a second-place finish in the 200-yard medley relay, the Bulldogs jumped off to a 15-2 lead and they never looked back. Seniors Emily Greenwood and Laura Harp, junior Erika Anderson and freshman Carina Pautz combined to win the event with a time of 1:47.18.

Harp said that although the medley did well, she can better her own individual time in the event. She said the relay team has more consistency this year than in the past.

"This year it's been nice because we've been able to stick with the same girls every time, and that makes a big difference from last year," Harp said.

The 200-yard freestyle relay victory was less of a surprise. The quartet of Greenwood, Pautz, senior Emily Pufall and sophomore Kate Aherne swam the race in 1:36.41, breaking their own pool record of 1:37.03 set earlier this year. The group has been strong all season and has a shot at placing first at nationals, head coach Mark Gole said.

"They have a lot of speed, and the 200 freestyle relay is all about speed, power, reaction time and the relay take-offs," Gole said. "... If we could steal a 200 freestyle relay and win the national title in [the relay], that would be a big boost for this team."

The women also cruised to a 163-42 Senior Day dual meet victory Saturday against Lewis University. The Bulldogs won every event in that meet as well, making it two meets in a row with firsts in every event.

Gole said the 200-yard breaststroke and the 200-yard freestyle provided the only competition for Truman against Lewis.

No new A cuts were made from the weekend, but there were three



The women's swim team never lost an event this weekend in its dual wins against Missouri State and Lewis University. The team broke pool records in the 200-yard medley relay and 200-yard freestyle relay.

new B cuts. Senior Whitney Wodstrchill had a B cut in the 200-yard freestyle to go with Pufall's B cut in the 1,000-yard freestyle and senior Molly Polette's B cut in the 200-yard individual medley. Gole said it is unlikely for either Pufall or Polette to swim those events at nationals.

The team also set numerous season-best times during the weekend. Pufall had a season-best time in the 200-yard freestyle. Pautz and Aherne both beat their season-best times in the 50-yard freestyle, and Aherne beat her season best in the 100-yard freestyle. Greenwood also beat her time in the 100-yard backstroke.

Unlike the previous weekend at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, Gole said the team did not show any signs of

having to work out kinks from the holiday racing lay-off.

"Every event, not a single swimmer backed down, from the girl in [third] to the girl in [first]," Gole said. "Every lane, everybody swam with their hearts the whole way through and gave it everything they had. It was nice. When you swim with that kind of attitude, there is no need to work out the kinks."

The squad has its biggest dual meet of the season against defending national champion Drury next weekend. Truman won the contest last season, and Drury won it two seasons ago. Each year, the team who lost the meet went on to win the national title.

To try to get a head start on qualifying more people for nationals, ju-

nior Jessie Lemaster and freshman Anna Grinter both will taper for the Drury meet to try to get individual A cuts. Truman has 12 national qualifiers right now. Up to 18 can qualify for nationals.

Truman will have to overcome a 32-point deficit against Drury because of diving, and because of that, Gole said his goal is to win the swimming portion of the meet. He said Truman will have to work hard, especially in the butterfly, in which Drury has four women ranked in the top 10 in the nation.

"Drury is full of talent," Gole said. "They don't have the numbers, but they are just loaded with talent. It's just a matter of how well we can respond to swimming in those pressure-packed races."



Junior Alex Pippett competes in the butterfly during Saturday's meet against Missouri State. The men lost to the Div. I Bears 80-15 but beat Lewis University (Ill.) 123-77. The Bulldogs claimed the top three spots in the 50-yard freestyle to fuel the win.

Men's swimming splits weekend duals

BY JACK NICHOLL
Staff Reporter

To be a top team, you have to be able to beat a top team, and that's just what the men's swim team did last Saturday.

The Bulldogs beat Lewis University (Ill.) 123-77 in a dual meet on Senior Day in the Pershing Natatorium last weekend. Lewis finished 13th at nationals last year and Truman finished 15th.

The team surpassed expectations in more than one way. In addition to beating a higher-ranked team, the Bulldogs exceeded their pre-meet goals as well. Head coach Mark Gole said he had the teams tied at 103-103 in his mock scoring prior to the meet.

"I had us being in a dogfight, and, based on paper, it was going to be anywhere from a four- to five-point meet, but just the way that we stepped up I think we really took the wind out of Lewis' sails," Gole said.

Although this meet did serve as a confidence booster, the men still will have to perform well at nationals to crack the top 10. They only have five national qualifiers at this point, compared to 12 on the women's side. Gole said everyone will have to step up in relays at conference to get more national qualifiers because he doesn't see any new people getting individual A cuts.

"We're starting to show signs that we can be [a top-10 team]," Gole said. "Our strength year in, year out has always been relays. Based on how some of those relay team members who are already

qualified are swimming, I'm confident that we're going to be able to have a handful of individuals score in order to get the top 10."

Truman did its part in winning the short-distance races, but it still had to overcome Lewis' strength in the distance events. Senior Kyle Ruiz finished third in the 1,000-yard freestyle, which was five seconds behind Lewis' top two swimmers, who both were in the top eight in the nation in the event last year. The Bulldogs negated the 1,000-yard freestyle loss by finishing first through third in the 50-yard freestyle.

Truman did have a slight advantage with Lewis' best swimmer absent from the meet, but Gole said it wouldn't have mattered either way. Senior Alex Totura swam a 1:55.91 in the 200-yard butterfly which bettered the Lewis swimmer's season-best time in the event by more than two seconds.

The Bulldogs took the scoring advantage right from the beginning, with a one-two finish in the 400-yard medley relay. This staged a 15-2 lead. Gole said taking a 13-point lead, instead of a nine-point lead from a first and third finish, really put a wrench in Lewis' plan.

Freshman John Gloss said starting the meet out well helped give Truman momentum going into the rest of the meet.

"You just get momentum coming off of the [relays]," Gloss said. "You get really pumped up for the rest of your events, and then it's kind of demoralizing for the other team to come in third in [its] best relay."

Gole said the clincher came five events later when Truman placed first, second and third in the 200-yard butterfly.

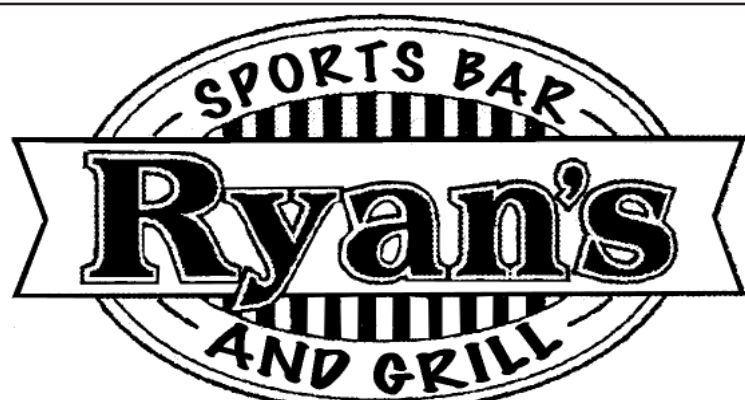
"That's when I knew the meet was pretty much in our hands," Gole said. "... Every dual meet, every point counts. We ended up winning a lot of the close ones. Our guys wanted it more on the back half of the races."

The men also had a dual meet Friday against Missouri State University, which resulted in an 80-15 loss. Missouri State placed first in every event. Gole said he would have liked the men to swim better at the meet and that they still were working out some kinks from the Florida training program from Winter Break. Freshman walk-on Krish Singhal did have a highlight with a 5:02.21 finish in the 500-yard freestyle, which beat his season-best time in the event.

The men were not able to collect any new A or B cuts in either meet, and they will start their tapering for the conference meet this week. Even with the lack of new qualifying times, senior Chris Pearson said the team was pleased with the results in the Lewis meet.

"The guys' team on Saturday seemed ready to go — we got pumped up for that one," he said. "We saw some good time drops that will lead into the end of the season."

The Bulldogs travel for two dual meets next weekend against Missouri University of Science and Technology (Rolla) and then to Drury University (Mo.) to face the defending Div. II national champions.



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