

SENIORS | Veteran quartet will be key in women's quest to advance through MIAA tournament

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"It was really sad, and we worked since we were in seventh grade playing basketball all the time," McGee said.

"Just to know it is kind of coming to an end is definitely very sad. It is definitely going to be a big time void to fill."

Carmen agreed with Candace.

"I think Truman has helped me develop a lot as a person and a player," McGee said. "Like Candi said, I've also enjoyed it, and I think we've definitely grown as a team since I was a freshman."

The four seniors have shown a lot of progress on the court during their four years. That is evident in how much their playing time has increased. Candace, Carmen and Fowler all are averaging more than 30 minutes a game in conference play. Montebello is averaging a shade less than 25 minutes a game.

The increase in minutes has led to an increase in production. Candace McGee leads the four in scoring, averaging 12.5 points a game. Fowler is averaging eight points a game. Carmen McGee leads the team in steals, and Montebello is averaging more than three assists a game.

With a lot of the weight of the team on the seniors' shoulders, Fowler said she is not going into the tournament wondering when her last game will be.

"I take more of a positive outlook," Fowler said. "I've had a good career here. The game we end up playing I'm going to go out and play as hard as I can. If you win you keep on going. That's all I want to focus on."

The four seniors will need to step up for the Bulldogs to advance past Empo-

ria. ESU clobbered the Bulldogs by 30 points last week on Senior Night, leaving a bad taste in the 'Dogs' mouths.

Emporia lit up the Bulldogs from behind the arc, hitting several shots from NBA range. The Bulldogs will have to put a clamp on Hornet senior and MIAA player of the year Michelle Stueve. Stueve hit six of the Hornets 14 threes and scored a team-high 24 points.

Sloop said the problem teams have when trying to defend Emporia is that it is a dynamic team.

"The challenge that Emporia presents that no one else that we've played or seen presents is that they have tremendous balance," Sloop said. "They are the No. 1 three-point shooting team in the country. Over 43 percent, which is phenomenal. I mean unbelievable."

Emporia State and Washburn head into the tournament as the heavy favorites. Both finished 14-4 in the conference and are nationally ranked. Truman struggled against both Washburn and Emporia this season, going 0-4 against the two. Truman did play Washburn tough in a game three weeks ago but ultimately fell by five.

Sloop said the team has to concentrate on one game at a time.

"Our goal obviously is to win the championship," Sloop said. "You can only do that one game at a time. Prepare as best we can and show up Thursday night and hopefully give our best physical and mental effort. You hope to be playing your best basketball at the end of the year. ... Go down there and give ourselves an opportunity to win and advance."

MIAA MVP By the Numbers

Michelle Stueve of Emporia State University was named the MIAA Most Valuable Player on Wednesday, despite ranking behind Truman's Georgia Mueller in several statistical categories. Mueller was selected to the first team All-MIAA but did not receive a single vote for player of the year. Here's a statistical comparison of Mueller and Stueve and how these numbers rank among MIAA leaders:

Stat	Stueve	Mueller
Scoring	22.0 (2nd)	22.4 (1st)
Rebounding	8.4 (3rd)	9.8 (2nd)
FG percentage	50.1 (3rd)	57.2 (1st)
Blocks	0.78 (NR)	2.52 (1st)
3PT percentage	47.8 (1st)	38.5 (NR)

Photo by Joe Barker, Design by Joe Barker and Blake Toppmeyer/Index

BASKETBALL | Bulldogs defeat Pittsburg State 79-72 to end regular season at 15-12, enter Thursday's conference tournament as No. 7 seed

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scoring record with a layup less than 30 seconds into the game. That layup sparked an 8-0 Mueller run that put the Bulldogs ahead early in the game.

Mueller finished the game with 1,425 career points and 666 career rebounds. Both of those are good for sixth on the career Bulldog list.

Senior guard Candace McGee also was in double-figures for the 'Dogs with 13 points. Senior guards Katie Fowler and Julia Montebello chipped in with nine points apiece.

Fowler also had eight assists and seven rebounds to complement her nine points.

The Bulldogs led by 13 midway through the first half, but a late 11-0 Pitt. State run cut the Bulldog lead to four at halftime.

The Gorillas came within five points with 2:40 left, but the Bulldogs hit their free throws down the stretch to pull out their first MIAA road win of the season.

Truman shot the ball well throughout the game, shooting 47 percent in both halves.

The victory gives Truman two wins in its last three games heading into the MIAA Tournament.

"You're able to be on a positive note," Sloop said. "I think it gives the kids a little more confidence. ... It's obviously better than losing, that's for sure."

The Bulldogs used a strong defensive effort all game to stymie the Pitt. State attack. The Gorillas shot 30 percent for the game and chucked up a school record 86 shots. Pitt. State had 31 three-point attempts Saturday, which shattered the school record of 26.

"We started out really strong and I think they were missing a few of their guards, and so I think we were able to exploit some people that weren't used to handling the ball," Fowler said. "The game started out at a really fast pace, so it kind of played into our hands in the beginning."

Even with the strong defensive effort and victory, turnovers continued to plague the Bulldogs. Truman turned the ball over 16 times on the afternoon. The 'Dogs have turned the ball over 511 times this year and are last in the conference in turnover margin at -2.89 per game.

The Bulldogs will take on second-seeded Emporia State University tonight at 6 p.m. in the first round of the MIAA tournament at Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Mo. Emporia State defeated Truman last Wednesday on Senior Night by 30.

Mueller will get a chance to play against MIAA player of the year Michelle Stueve in the first round of the MIAA tournament. In the last head-to-head match up, Mueller outscored and out-rebounded Stueve.

Mueller said she was not disappointed with being passed up for the player of the year honor.

"It's just a title," Mueller said. "I am happy where I am. It really doesn't bother me at all."

TRACK | Biermann and Lauer are national bound after placing in top three in triple jump at MIAA indoor meet

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"That just gives me something to work towards next year," Dochterman said.

The other female Bulldog to earn a conference title was jumper Katrina Biermann in the triple jump. The sophomore was a dark horse for the title, considering her teammate, junior Christen Lauer, took first in the event at six of the team's eight indoor meets this season.

However, when the sand settled, Biermann came out to a distance of 38 feet 4.75 inches, edging out Lauer by half an inch.

The jumps qualified Biermann and Lauer for the March 14 to 15 Div. II indoor national meet.

The competition was not nearly as forgiving on the men's side. None of the Bulldogs won a conference title. In fact, few of the men even finished high enough to score for the team. That resulted in the men's team finishing last of the eight teams with a team score of 29 points.

The 'Dog who came closest to a conference title was senior Sean Bergstedt, who took second in the 400-meter dash, with a time of 49.38 seconds, about .3 seconds behind the top spot.

The 400-meter dash was the event Bergstedt won at last year's conference meet and at which he earned an All-American title. This year, though, he was almost a full second off his time from a year ago.

"I was absolutely disappointed with my conference time this year," he said.

Bergstedt said the one thing that might have held him back was that he

allowed himself to get boxed in during the race, preventing him from passing, but he also said he does not blame his finish entirely on that fact.

"I'm not trying to give myself excuses," Bergstedt said. "I should have raced more intelligently and gotten out in front of these guys early on. It was a mistake."

Other Bulldogs who finished high for the men included seniors Joe and Jake Ackermann, who took fourth and fifth places, respectively, in the 60-meter hurdles. The men's 4x400 relay team took fourth, as did senior Kevin Cream in the 800-meter run.

However, assistant coach Tim Schwegler said he was frustrated with the men's team's performance after it failed to meet expectations.

"We were kind of looking forward to making a move this year, and it didn't happen," Schwegler said. "The seniors didn't quite come through as much as we hoped they would. So we are disappointed in that area."

Schwegler said he hopes both teams can improve as they make their way into the outdoor season, which starts March 21 at the Central Methodist Easter Open in Fayette, Mo. The switch from indoor to outdoor competition won't be easy, though.

"It's almost like tennis, where the French Open is on clay, and when you are at Wimbledon, it's on grass," Schwegler said. "It's different in that respect, but if you are going to go on Wimbledon, you better have a pretty good French Open."

WRESTLING | After two wrestlers qualified for nationals in 2007, Peterson and Nahlik will attend the 2008 national meet March 14 and 15 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

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Nahlik said he is looking forward to moving on to the national tournament for the first time in his career.

"I'm really excited," he said. "I'm glad the pressure is kind of off. I don't feel any pressure to be an All-American. I just want to try to end my college career like I ended my high school career, having the best tournament of my life. Save it for the last one."

Peterson was the No. 2 seed in the 165-pound weight class and defeated Carson Newman's Justin Ransom by technical fall in the first round. Peterson then advanced to the regional championship match with a 12-3 victory against Jesse Sheets of Central Missouri. Peterson lost

4-1 in the championship match to No. 1 Kyle Becker of Wisconsin-Parkside.

Senior Dan Keller ended his Truman wrestling career with a sixth-place finish at the tournament in the 133-pound division. Keller picked up a 4-3 win over Central Missouri's Marcus Walker and suffered three losses, including a loss to No. 2 seed Craig DeGreef of Wisconsin-Parkside.

Keller said he had a rough time during the final leg of the season.

"I just didn't really wrestle well all day," he said. "I've been kind of banged up lately. This last month of the season I just haven't wrestled very well." Keller qualified for the national tour-

namment three seasons ago. He said several factors have played a part in not qualifying for a second time.

"Every year is different," Keller said. "A lot of injuries. I blew my knee out. I moved up a weight class, and my weight class is real tough."

Head coach Dave Schutter said he wasn't disappointed with the team's performance at all. He said the team wasn't expected to have anybody advance to the national tournament.

"We really weren't supposed to have any," Schutter said. "The week before the regional tournament, Rob [Nahlik] was ranked fourth. Two weeks before regionals, Rob was ranked sixth, and Blake [Peterson] was ranked fifth. Those were the only guys that we had ranked right in there. We weren't really supposed to get anybody out, and we got two out. We always like to have more, but we could have easily not had any."

LOSSES | Baseball falls to 0-6 this season after getting swept by Missouri University of Science and Technology in weekend series

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scoring six runs of their own. Freshman second baseman Jeff Davison knocked in two runs in the frame.

"I hit the first pitch in that at-bat," Davison said. "I was just looking for something I could [hit] — a fastball because he was throwing a lot of fastballs early in the count. I was just looking to get something I could handle. I didn't hit it solid, but I hit it up the middle and got it through the infield. ... It was my first college hit, so it was nice to get that under my belt."

The Bulldogs' lead lasted un-

til the bottom of the third inning, when the Miners put up a six-spot of their own to take a lead that would turn into a 12-7 final.

"The big inning is just tearing us up," Davis said. "We gave up 11 runs in two innings. Eleven runs in two innings, that's unacceptable. When we score seven runs in a game, we need to win."

The 'Dogs were able to avoid the multiple big-inning problem in game two but still couldn't come away with a victory. Freshman starter Christian Witt held the Miners to three runs on three hits in 4.1 innings pitched.

"I think my command over the fastball was really good that day, but my offspeed stuff was very bad," Witt said. "I really need to work a lot with that."

Witt became the first Bulldog starter to pitch into the fifth inning, but he said he was pulled for a reliever because he began showing some fatigue.

The Bulldogs' comeback attempt came up short. They scored one run in the seventh, four in the eighth and one in the ninth but couldn't put one more run on the board, and lost the game 9-8.

Game three was another loss

for the Bulldogs, but there was a bright spot in the form of freshman pitcher Kyle Veazey.

In his second start of the season, Veazey pitched 6.2 innings of three-hit ball. He gave up four runs, three of them earned.

"He was able to pitch to contact," Davis said. "He let guys swing it. When guys pitch to contact and have teams put the ball in play earlier in the count, they stay in the game a lot longer. He pitched well."

Veazey was pulled for fellow freshman Matt Herrick in the seventh inning. Herrick eventually took the loss, giving up

three runs in the bottom of the seventh.

Davis said Herrick came in and did his job — the results just didn't show it.

"He did what he was supposed to do," Davis said. "He got ahead of the hitter, got ahead 0-2 and threw a very nice 0-2 pitch that could've went either way. We didn't get the punch out there, and it's up going the other way. [The hitter] hits a ground ball, and we don't field it, and two runs score and tie the ball game. The next thing you know, they take the lead, but he did his job." Herrick was the second relief

pitcher to pick up a loss against the Miners. Davis said he expects more from his relief corps.

"I think overall we're pitching poorly out of the pen," Davis said. "... Our relievers have to have a little more sense of pride as far as not allowing inherited runners to score. Now that's got to be something that when you take a starter out or you take a reliever out and put in another reliever, they've got to trust the fact that the guy coming in behind them is going to shut them down and not pour kerosene on the fire because that's what we're doing right now."

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