

Dual meets key for team

BY JACK NICHOLL
Staff Reporter

For the swim teams to compete at the level they are capable of at the important meets, they must have a consistent mindset throughout the season.

The season has three important meets: the Miami University (Ohio) taper meet in December, the conference meet and the national meet at the end of season. This year, the team is putting more focus on the smaller dual meets scattered throughout the season to better prepare for the big three meets.

"It's to the point where they train all season long and then they have their taper meets and their rest meets, and oftentimes swimmers expect the result to be there at the taper meet," head coach Mark Gole said. "They're not really emphasizing how fast they're swimming in the dual meets, and all of a sudden they get there and they may not have pushed themselves enough in those dual meets, and they weren't ready for how their body was going to feel when they were rested."

Gole said the team will continue to practice normally before dual meets even with the added emphasis. He said he wants the team to race as hard as it can during every meet.

Senior Emily Greenwood said the team is striving to swim its hardest at every meet this season.

"I think all-around, our entire team is working on swimming with more intensity this year every chance we get," Greenwood said. "We're just trying to take advantage of every chance that we get to swim a dual meet because really no matter who it is, we want to win against them because we want to win at nationals. It's just another opportunity for us to get up and race with the intensity that we want to be swimming with at the end of the season."

Working harder won't guarantee an improvement from last year's dual meet record. The men finished 1-5 and the women finished 3-3 in dual meets last year. The squads face three Div. I opponents in their seven dual meets this season, and they face Div. I Missouri State University twice.

Sophomore Andrew McCall, a short-distance freestyler, said the mindset is different in the more difficult dual meets compared to the bigger meets.

"It definitely takes the focus off of winning the dual meet and puts it on to simply swimming the best you can and almost turns it into racing each other," McCall said. "There will be meets where three [from the other team] swimmers are way out in front, and then you know those three and [our] three are racing each other. ... The competition disappears, which makes it a little harder to get going."

Greenwood said it can be



Jackson Groves/Index

Senior Kyle Ruiz dives into the pool during a practice this season. The swim team will face three Div. I this season.

hard for the team to keep a consistent mindset at the tougher dual meets.

"It's hard to get up and race whenever you know you're going to get beat, but you can take those opportunities and swim with people," Greenwood said. "It just gives us more opportunities to swim faster because we're going to have somebody else who we're going to be trained to run down."

The scoring of dual meets also makes it harder to win, es-

pecially on the men's side. First place receives nine points, then four, three, two and one. This means the squad that accumulates the most first-place finishes almost always wins the meet.

The scoring at nationals is different than scoring at dual meets. The national system favors Truman's depth, Gole said. He said that the men rely more on depth to do well because they have a limited number of swimmers who can place first in races.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Women's soccer: Goals coming for entire team

As the soccer season winds down, the Bulldogs continued to get scoring from many sources. Sophomore forward Jessica Wiegert, who led the team in scoring last year, repeated as team's scoring leader again this year with seven goals and five assists, for a total of 19 points.

Every forward and midfielder on the team has registered at least one point. The Bulldogs also have four players all with double digits in points. When one of the forwards can't score, another steps up and gets the team on the board.

Football: Two quality opponents await team

The Bulldog football team (5-4) will need to reverse a season-long trend to finish the season with a winning record.

The 'Dogs prevailed Saturday 33-30 against Emporia State University (3-6). Truman is a perfect five for five this season in games against teams that now have a losing record.

But the Bulldogs have been on the short end of the stick in each of their four games against teams with winning records. The 'Dogs' final two opponents — Missouri Southern State University (5-4) and Missouri Western State University (7-2) — currently are above .500.

Senior safety Jesse Cooper said the team's comeback victory Saturday should help the team as they enter the season's final stretch.

"[Saturday's win] is going to give us a huge boost going against these last two teams," Cooper said. "... They're going to be pretty tough, as [is] everybody in the MIAA, but we got a lot of momentum right now from our Homecoming win."

Men's soccer: Stats show similarities to 2006

Despite having two more wins and one less tie, the Bulldogs of 2007 own statistics that bear striking resemblance to the stats of last year's 8-7-3 Truman squad.

Both teams scored 26 goals, and last year's team actually managed six more shots on the year. But the 2007 Bulldogs were able to get 120 shots on goal compared to just 107 in 2006.

Despite the development of the defense during this year, the Bulldogs actually allowed two fewer goals in 2006 when they boasted a 0.85 goals against average. This year's team achieved a 0.93 average.

But maybe the biggest reason for the improved record this year was the 10 shutouts, including eight in a row, that Truman picked up. In last year's campaign, Truman only managed four.

Roller hockey prepares for weekend opener

BY NATHAN BECKER
Editor in Chief

The Bulldog Roller Hockey A Team is ready to cut its losses after last season's abrupt playoff defeat, but it's careful to remember how quickly last season's success vanished.

The team returns all but two players from last year's team, which went 17-1 in the regular season but lost 17 seconds into overtime in the opening round of the national tournament.

"I've replayed [the losing goal] 100 times in my head," head coach Joe Nedelec said. "It was just that shot and how many times it bounced off of different people and went past [junior goaltender

John Pecher], and he didn't even see it, and it was unfortunate. You try to put that behind you, but you also remember that ... You use it as a learning experience."

Nedelec said that this year, the team won't be satisfied with just making it to nationals.

"We're going to work hard to win nationals, and that's our focus — not just to get there," he said.

The schedule, which begins this weekend with games against Missouri State University and Southeast Missouri State University in St. Peters, Mo., at Matteson Square Garden Tri-Plex, includes two Div. I matchups: one against rival University of Missouri-St. Louis, which was Div. II last season, and one against Lindenwood

University (Mo.), a team that went 18-0 last season.

"It'll be a really good challenge," Pecher said. "I enjoy playing at those high-intensity upper levels of play."

The A Team added two freshman skaters — forward Zach Rohne and defenseman Nick Blechle — to help replace the graduated duo of Chris Radigan and former captain Jimmy Cruse.

"As a team, we've got some work to do in terms of gelling, but it's hard for the new guys because they haven't played on the big rink," Nedelec said. "You can only tell them, 'Well, on the bigger rink, this is how it's going to be' so many times."

Adjusting to life without Ra-

digan and Cruse will be tough, but Nedelec said several leaders have stepped up, including new captain senior Dane Moody, junior forward Drew Vandas and senior defenseman Neil Bales.

"Rather than leaving a void, Chris and Jimmy actually left a legacy of how to be a leader — how to act as a leader — in the dressing room and on the floor," he said.

Returning between the pipes is Pecher, who led all Div. II starters with 17 wins, a 1.67 goals against average and six shutouts in his first year as the starter. Nedelec said Pecher has been improving his game steadily.

"He's played exceptionally well in practice," Nedelec said.

"He's that big-save goalie, and that's what you want out of your goaltender. Save us when you need to save us. If you're going to let any crappy goals in, do so when it doesn't matter, and that's what we see out of John."

Vandas and Moody are the team's top returning scorers, with 52 and 40 points, respectively, last year, and Vandas said he thinks the team can keep putting points on the board, especially with Rohne's help on the first line with Moody.

"[Rhone's] got real good hands and an amazing shot," Vandas said.

Junior Truman Patterson rounds out the defense along with

Bales and Blechle, although Nedelec said that sometimes Blechle could play up with only Patterson and Bales playing defense.

"Both of them are in exceptional physical condition, so they can handle it," he said.

Because junior forward Jon Watson is studying abroad during the first half of the season, Nedelec said junior Jim Dougherty might take a spot on the blue line as well.

Conditioning again will be the team's staple and the key to a successful season, Pecher said.

"It's just definitely going to be a huge factor, being able to skate teams into the ground in the third period, being able to play an entire game like that," he said.

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