

Athlete of the Week

Candace McGee

Sport: Basketball

Year: Senior

Position: Guard

Hometown: Longview, Ill.

Candace McGee has provided steady offensive production to help lift the women's basketball team to a 4-0 start. The senior guard made four three-pointers Tuesday night against the University of Illinois-Springfield and scored 15 points. This came on the heels of her 21 point performance in the team's Nov. 20 win against William Penn College.

McGee's shooting drives 4-0 start

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff Reporter

Candace McGee is an individual. Some might try to lump the senior in as a package deal with her twin sister, Carmen. But there are plenty of aspects of her game that separate her from her sibling.

"I'm definitely more of a shooter, and she is more of a driver," McGee said. "I like to shoot off the pass while she likes to have more of a set shot."

And it is her shot that has made her a weapon in the Bulldog arsenal, especially from the perimeter. So far this season, McGee leads the women's basketball team in both attempted and made 3-pointers, coming in at 13 of 31. She has scored 14 points or more in three of the Bulldogs' four games this season.

McGee said one of the reasons she is so good from behind the arch is her speed.

"I would definitely say the getting the quick shot off is one of my strengths," she said. "I like to use that to my advantage as much as I can."

Although head coach John Sloop has come to know McGee primarily as the team's long-range sharp-shooter, the role she plays for the team is much bigger.

"Last year, she didn't shoot [the 3-pointer] quite as well as she had when she was a sophomore and honorable mention All-Conference," Sloop said. "It is easy to say that she didn't have a good year, but she did because she is so important to the things we do defensively."

And the numbers back that up. With 11 defensive rebounds and six steals on the season, McGee has proven she is not to be taken lightly on either side of the ball.

Still, with all of these strengths,

McGee knows there are areas that need improving.

"When I came to college, I became more of a set shooter," McGee said. "I had problems making room for myself. When we were in conference, people were playing me for my shot and giving me open lanes. I had to learn, and am still learning how to take it to the basket."

She said the confidence and comfort that come from hard work and practice are going to be the keys to improving her drive.

Sloop said that type of hard work is one of the hallmarks of McGee's game from early on.

"Since the day she got here, she shows up and she works hard every day," Sloop said. "She gives everything she's got every time she's out here on the practice floor. She became a captain, in part, because of just that type of leadership."

Leadership is something McGee has become used to as one of the season's captains. However, she said she sees the effort as a much bigger job than she can do alone.

"I think all of our seniors right now ... play really hard, and I think the younger kids can look up to that," she said. "We really just want to show them that hard work really does pay off."

The payoff, McGee hopes, will come when the Bulldogs make their way into conference play. With a 3-15 record in the MIAA last season, the 'Dogs will need the talents of McGee to improve, even if it is indirectly.

"If one person is having a good game, it gives other people open shots and opportunities," she said. "It all just feeds back into the team."



Photos by Jackson Groves, design by Jackson Groves and Jason Williams/Index

WOMEN | Bulldogs roll past the Prairie Stars on Tuesday, improve to 4-0

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"I don't pay a lot of attention to statistics," Sloop said. "What I have seen is we've got some balance right now. We've had kids making some shots at a pretty good percentage from the perimeter, and that's opened things up for us in the post."

In addition to the increased offensive efficiency, the 'Dogs have shown improvement on the defensive side of the ball. The team is averaging more than 12 steals a game — over five more than the average a year ago — and set a school record with 10 team blocks in a game against William Penn University (Iowa) earlier this year. Mueller's seven blocks that game were also a school record.

The Bulldogs are allowing only 47 points a game this year in their 4-0 start against non-Div. II opponents.

"I think we can get a lot better defensively, but it's been pretty good for this point in the year," Sloop said. "It played a big role in the win at Lincoln [University] and the win against William Penn."

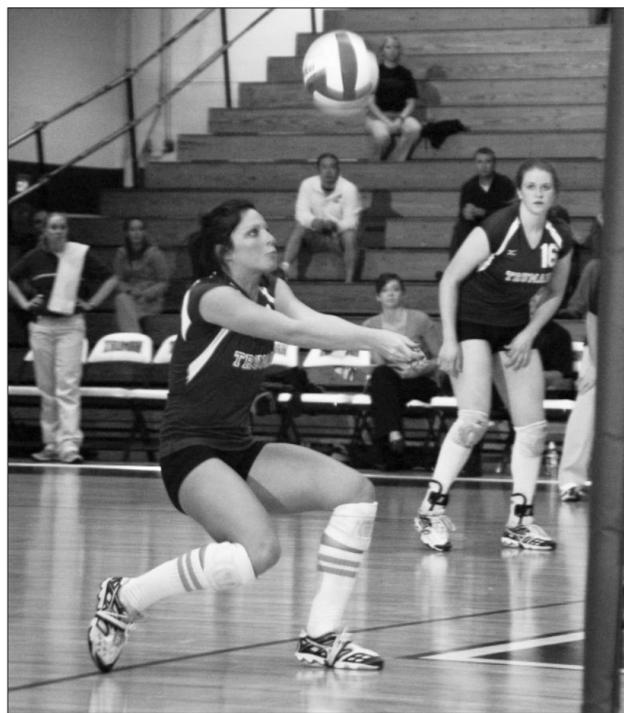
With all four wins coming by double digits, the Bulldogs' younger players have received a chance to get valuable experience that Sloop said is going to pay off down the road.

"You never know — fouls, injury, illness — at some point you're going to need a contribution from most the kids on your roster in a game that's meaningful," Sloop said. "Anytime they can get some experience, hopefully that will help them the next time out."

Fowler said the younger players already have improved this senior-laden team.

"We have a strong group [of returning players], and also the kids that have come in and worked really hard," Fowler said. "That's going to lead to good things. I think that's really been what's been key to our success."

The Bulldogs will play host to Lincoln University (Mo.) on Saturday afternoon when the Blue Tigers come to Kirksville looking to avenge their 61-51 loss from earlier this season. Mueller led all scorers in that contest with 19 points.



Jason Williams/Index

Senior setter Amanda Holliday will be the only Bulldog graduating from the volleyball team. The Bulldogs' season ended in the regional final.

SEASON | Volleyball team finishes season 36-6

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Truman also played some of its best matches against some of the nation's top teams. The Bulldogs finished the season 13-4 against ranked opponents.

Junior middle hitter Allie Cherven said the team had to fight through a lot of adversity this season and just couldn't overcome it in the end.

"As a team, we all worked really hard," Cherven said. "We had a lot of up and downs and a lot of injuries. I think we overcame a lot of that, but in the end, we just couldn't come out with a win."

The Bulldogs had a slew of players step up this season. Cherven and junior right side hitter Melissa Keck were both named first team all-MIAA. The duo also was named to the AVCA All-American team. Cherven was a second-team selection and Keck was a third-team selection.

Cherven led the team in blocks with 184 and came in second on the team in hitting percentage at .324. Keck led the team with a .335 hitting percentage and in kills per game, with 3.20.

The injury bug was with the Bulldogs all season long with several key players having nagging injuries throughout

the season. The Bulldogs were without starting libero junior Whitney Boehler for much of the NCAA tournament. Boehler, who led the team in digs this season, saw only limited action in the regional championship against Washburn, and the Lady Blues seemed to take advantage of her absence by outdigging Truman 110-85 in the title match.

Several freshmen played well for the Bulldogs, including setter Ashley Petak, who posted a team-high 6.49 assists per game.

Next year, the Bulldogs will have to overcome the departure of only one senior, setter Amanda Holliday. Holliday was a key member of the team during her four years. She finished in the top 10 all-time in assists and was a leader on the court during her time as a Bulldog.

Skoch said Holliday will be very hard to replace on next year's team.

"She's hard-nosed," Skoch said. "She is a little bit tougher with the team than most of the players, so she pushed them. Talk about leading by example, she was always sacrificing her body on the floor and willing to do the little things. ... I'm very proud of her. If every kid could progress the way she did and have the difference from her sophomore and junior year to her senior year, ... the program would be Final Four every year."

MIZZOU | Bandwagon fans should learn etiquette, respect before reaping the benefits of the Tigers' season

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is they tend to rock the boat of the diehards. When the Cards were on their way to a World Series title, I wanted to physically hurt some of the "fans" wearing Cards hats with the price tag still on them.

I didn't actually hurt anyone, but diehard fans still are a bit on the crazy side. With that being said, I have some advice for those wanting to jump on the Mizzou bandwagon — or to those who already have.

For the love of all that is good, do not talk out of your rear end. It's more than likely that you don't know much about this team other than the fact that they are No. 1 in the latest BCS poll. Please stick to what

you know. Don't pretend you know things. You don't.

Like some wise person once said, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt."

Watch the game, cheer for the Tigers and have a good time. Don't start talking about zone defense and blitz strategies if you don't even know what a blitz is and all of your football knowledge is gleaned from countless hours playing video game football.

With that being said, try and do a little research. Know who the big name players are and what position they play. For instance, Missouri's quarterback is Chase Daniel. Not

Daniels as some people say. If you throw the "s" at the end, you are basically revealing yourself to be a bandwagoner.

If you are going to talk up how good Mizzou is, never ever, ever, ever use the word "we" when talking about the team. This is something that casual fans don't understand about die hard fans.

Those of us who probably need a little help use "we" frequently. We think that we actually can have some impact on the game — be it by wearing your lucky hat to the game or by sitting in the same seat every week.

You, random bandwagon jumper, are not part of the we. Your cheering

does not help the team win. Your new shirt isn't lucky.

The last piece of advice is the most important. Be kind if Mizzou loses. A loss will be a kick to the stomach to the Tiger faithful. They will take it as hard as if their significant other broke up with them.

Bandwagon fans simply can hang up their black and gold in their closet and get along with their lives as if they never cared about Mizzou — because they didn't before the wins started.

If you follow these simple rules, your Saturday night should be a fun-filled extravaganza. And you won't get punched in the face by an angry Tiger fan when Mizzou blows it.

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No lofted beds?

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