

## SWIMMING | Women hope to reclaim national title, men desire more national qualifiers and top-10 finish

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"We have a strong team, it's just whether or not these newcomers are going to be able to perform as well as we need them to in their first year," he said.

No matter how the team pans out, Gole said that if they earn anything other than a national championship, the women will have not reached their goal.

"The senior class wants more than anything to win it again this year," Gole said. "The senior class experienced winning nationals as freshmen and sophomores and then having it taken from them last year. I'll be honest, I have a sour taste in my mouth just talking about it, ... and I know that those girls have that same taste."

The men, coming off a 15th-place finish at nationals last year, are looking to improve to a top-10 team. In the 2005-06 campaign the men finished 11th, and in the 2004-05 campaign they finished 10th at nationals.

To become a top-10 team, the men must qualify more swimmers for nationals this year. Having qualified only four swimmers last year, the men had a tough time competing at nationals because they could only compete in a limited number of events.

Last spring, only alumnus Tom Applegate, seniors Ryan Ferrell and Alex Totura, and junior Jason Stokes qualified for nationals.

The men will try to qualify the majority of people at their taper meet against

Miami (Ohio) University in December. Last year, the four swimmers qualified through the 200-yard freestyle relay at nationals and competed in all the relays as well as some individual events they qualified for.

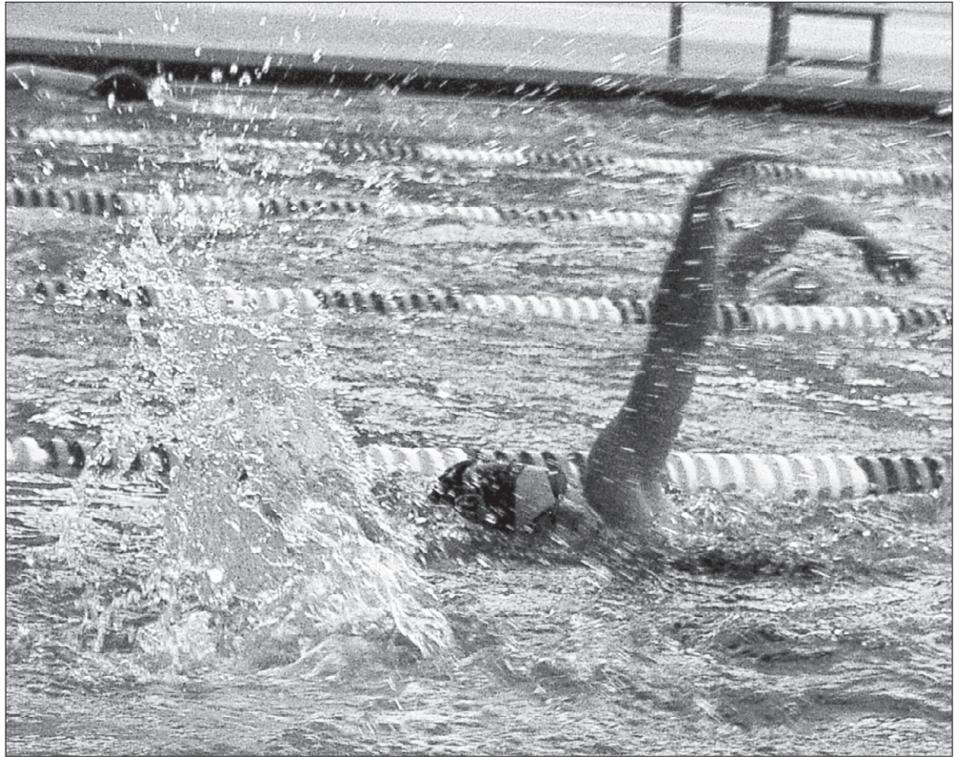
"We're a little let down by [placing 15th]," Stokes said. "We know that this year we have a lot of stronger guys, so we're going to hopefully get more guys qualified in order to get a better placing at nationals."

Stokes said that if the men had made their A cuts in relay events, more people would have made nationals both in relays and in other events in which they made B cuts. Many of the team members have lowered their times gradually from year to year, Gole said.

"The men have consistently gotten better every year," Gole said. "We have many individuals who were nowhere near making nationals two years ago to being close last year. We're hoping that trend continues and we get there this year."

Last year at nationals, the four swimmers had to race in numerous relay races to fill the spots of people who weren't there. Gole said he thinks the relay teams are a strength of the team this year.

"Our relays have always been our strength," Gole said. "I have a feeling that we have the right cast of characters on the team to place very high in some of the relays."



Jackson Groves/Index

Sophomore Andrew McCall performs the freestyle at practice Tuesday. The men's and women's swim teams' season opens up with a three-team meet Saturday at Missouri State University.

## MIAA | Cross country to host MIAA meet Saturday

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Kelly said the course will be the hardest of the season, especially in the middle mile. The women's race strategy will be to pace themselves the first mile and then move up in the race in the last two miles, she said.

"After the first mile the downhills and the uphills basically build up your lactic acid so much that you're not going to make it if you go out hard," Kelly said.

Last season the women finished seventh of eight teams at the championship.

Men's head coach Tim Schwegler said his team is more strength-oriented than last season, which will prepare it more for the hilly course.

Schwegler said he thinks that the course will favor Truman because some teams might not be ready for the difficulty.

"The course is different than the last couple years," he said. "Hopefully there is going to be a surprise factor when [the other teams] jog it on Friday, when they find out that it is a lot hillier, and hopefully that will play in our hands."

The key to success for Truman will be to attack the middle of the race, Schwegler said. For the most part the

course is the same as the women's, but the men's course is longer, with extra hills in the middle. This puts an even bigger focus on the second leg of the race, making it essential to the team's success.

"We're really focusing on pushing the uphill through the middle portion of the race," senior Bryant England said. "If you can run up the hills with a little greater effort and the same speed as the rest of the course, you're going to move up a lot."

Sophomore Zach Chapman said the team is continually working on pack running and that running together will be a key to the team's success this weekend.

"We're hoping that our more focused pack mentality is going to help us get a better score," he said. "Last year we were a bit more all over the place, and this year we're more together."

Last year, the team finished sixth of eight teams at conference. Schwegler said this year the top three spots are set, but Truman will compete well with the rest of the teams.

"Hopefully, the course and the way we've been training will all come together on that day, and we'll see how we fare," Schwegler said.

## EXCUSES | Performance determines national championships, not external factors

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in good athletes, but it's the athletes — and not the money — who win titles. If money wins titles, then why haven't the New York Yankees won the World Series since 2000?

And where in the rules of swimming does it say that international swimmers have an advantage in the pool? No matter what country a swimmer is from, they all get to dive into the water at the same time. So for anyone to make the claim that someone is faster because they come from another country is erroneous.

Maybe the women should take a peek at the results from the 2007 national meet.

Cara Fadel — the top swimmer on the Drury squad, the one who demolished the competition, claimed two individual victories, a second- and third-place finish, and swam on three first-place relay teams — was from Idaho. The last time I checked, Idaho was located in the heart of the American West.

While the Bulldogs are looking at the results, they should check out the finish in the 800-yard freestyle relay, an event which Truman won at the national level from 2000 to 2006. Not only did the Bulldogs not

win the event last year, they finished sixth, nearly 10 seconds behind Drury, which won the event.

Were all five relay teams ahead of the Bulldogs powered by international swimmers? Again, nope. Of the 20 members comprising the relay teams who finished ahead of the women's 800-free relay team, only three were internationals. Three teams didn't have an international swimmer on the roster for that relay. And poof, there goes the theory that Truman lost because of international swimmers.

I know what some people might be thinking. Second in the nation isn't that bad, right? Well, maybe not for most teams. But I'm guessing the number of women who came to Truman to finish second is somewhere between none and zero. If they wanted to place second, they would have gone to Drury, which had that position on lockdown during Bulldogs' six-year reign as national champs.

"I think for our team, you have to set your standards higher than [second place]," Greenwood said. "... I wouldn't call [last year's finish] a failure, but it definitely wasn't a success."

If the women want to reclaim

the No. 1 spot this year at nationals, the excuses have to go, starting at the very onset of the season.

When the team lost three straight dual meets to open the season last year, Gole wasn't overly concerned. He said the team doesn't concern itself much with winning dual meets and that the losses didn't reflect the true talent of the team because it often was competing against Div. I competition.

I think I believed that excuse then. But not anymore. Truman scaled down its schedule this season to just two Div. I opponents and added more Div. II schools.

So the level of competition shouldn't be a problem this year. And as for dual meets, if you get yourself in the mentality that it is acceptable to lose these meets, then how are you going to be able to flip on the right mindset for nationals?

The women have to swim to win every time this year. When I talked to Gole last week, he was wearing a shirt with the slogan, "No excuses. Play like a champion," written on the back. If the women want to regain the national title, the entire team needs to take this motto to heart. No more excuses.

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