

## CANNON | Leadership off the field garners respect from players and opposing coaches while producing results on the field

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"We were kind of in a slump before that," Bauler said. "... Northwest was to the point where we realized that if you're going to be successful in the season you really need to just start turning it up."

Truman got off to a blistering start this season. The Bulldogs started off the year 8-0 before hitting a rough five-game patch in the middle of the season where the team went 1-3-1.

During Truman's struggles, Cannon said the team continued to compete well, but that the team struggled to catch breaks when they needed them. He added that the game against

Northwest stood out in particular because he went to his bench more, something he said he thought he hadn't done as often in the previous five games. Cannon's move paid off for the Bulldogs when Mahn came off the bench to score the game-winning goal.

Success is nothing new to Cannon. Under his leadership, the Bulldogs have advanced to the NCAA Tournament six times, have won the MIAA regular season championship eight times and won the MIAA Tournament in 2007, its only year of existence. He has won 217 games during his career and taken the team to

the Elite Eight three times. He has coached six All-Americans and has had 42 players, including five this season, earn all-region-honors. Two Bulldogs have been named Academic All-Americans under Cannon's watch as well.

His winning ways have not just been limited to making decisions from the sidelines.

Cannon was a member of the men's soccer team from 1988-91. He was named the team's most valuable player his senior season.

Cannon said that he owes a lot of success to the work of assistant coach Martin Claves and that the coaches lay the ground-

work for the team. He said that ultimately how successful the team becomes is up to the players and their work ethic.

"Almost all of our success goes to the kids," Cannon said. "They are the ones that are playing the games. We've just been lucky over the years to keep getting kids that want to buy into what we are doing and work hard."

Other coaches have taken notice of Cannon's preparation for games. Washburn University head coach Tim Collins said the Bulldogs are almost unbeatable when they grab the lead. He said the possession style of offense the

Bulldogs play means Truman constantly puts pressure on their opponents.

"He just has a terrific mind for the game," Collins said. "Every year I use him as an example as how they are tactically prepared, and that's something we want to work to achieve."

During his time at Truman, Cannon has also been able to build a strong relationship with potential recruits when they are deciding where to go to college.

"I came here, and I wasn't really sure if I was interested in playing soccer," Bauler said. "I came here and met with him, and he kind of discussed with

my parents several things, and I decided that I really did want to come here and play."

Collins added that players who play under Cannon will be well versed in areas beyond soccer.

"We tend to recruit some of the same kids, and as much as I hate losing a player to him, I know that in the grand scheme of things it's all about those kids getting a good education and being that much more prepared in life and for the real world," Collins said. "Going through his program is just one step that is going to launch them that much quicker into another stratosphere."

## AHERNE | Aherne completes junior season with back-to-back national championships

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Aherne said. "I wouldn't have been able to do what I have been able to do without them."

Gole expanded upon the reason for Aherne's success. He attributed it to her attitude as a competitor and couldn't say enough about her strengths as an individual and the hard work she put in throughout the season.

"Her general attitude on a daily basis is indescribable, as far as the second she shows up, she gives everything she has in everything we do," Gole said. "I don't think anybody works harder than her. Kate only needs about five minutes at practice, and then she's going as hard as she can. I don't think anybody has been put in situations that she has been put in as far as even dual meets go either. ... She's been tested, and she's stepped up every time she's been tested."

Aherne was the first junior ever to be elected captain of the women's swim-

ming team, which Gole said should show in itself what kind of a leader she is.

"She is all about the team," junior Kendra Brunkow said. "She's swimming for the team, and she's not swimming for herself, which I think a lot of [swimmers do]. They just try to do the best that they can for themselves, but she tries to score as high as she can for the team and tries to get the team as many points as she can. Obviously, everyone thinks very highly of her, and she is an awesome leader."

Gole said her leadership abilities extend further than the pool.

"[She leads] by example both academically and in the pool, and she is probably the most vocal person on the women's team during practice as far as cheering people on and getting people going," Gole said.

Despite all of the external reasons she might have for wanting to do well, Aherne admitted the desire

to win also plays a huge role in her self-motivation. Brunkow said Aherne's competitive spirit helps not only herself, but it motivates the team do better as a whole.

"She is a great competitor," Brunkow said. "You know she's going to be giving it her all [while training and in meets]. ... [She pushes everybody in the pool, and you can just see that all the training that she's put in is the reason that she swims so fast and has improved so much. She pushes herself to the limit, sets her goals high, then achieves them.]"

Aherne helped the Bulldogs to a fourth-place finish at nationals and reminisced on what it felt like to meet, and even exceed, her expectations this past year.

"It is just kind of surreal, looking up at the clock and seeing your times, because you always kind of have an idea of what you want to go in the race, and to look up and see that either that time is there or have it be even faster than what you were expecting, it's just like, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe that I did that,'" Aherne said. "It is just a great feeling knowing that all the hard work we put in this year paid off, and it paid off so well."

**"Kate only needs about five minutes at practice, and then she's going as hard as she can. I don't think anybody has been put in situations that she has been put in as far as dual meets go either."**

**Mark Gole**  
Head coach

## FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

Seven members of the Index sports staff submitted their top three picks for freshman of the Year. Points were awarded on a 3-2-1 basis, and tiebreakers were broken by most number of first-place votes, then second-place, etc. First-place votes are in parenthesis. Here are the results:

1. Eric Kaestner — Swimming	11 (3)
2. Coedy Walker — Track and Field	6 (1)
3. Breanna Daniels — Basketball	6
4. Megan Buri — Women's Soccer	5
5(tie). Ellen Russell — Women's Tennis	3 (1)
5(tie). Kylie Easlon — Volleyball	3 (1)
7(tie). Michelle Gronemeyer — XC/Track	2
7(tie). Devon Myers — Baseball	2
7(tie). Brian Tillis — Swimming	2
10(tie). Steven Rose — Baseball	1
10(tie). Alex Maus — Wrestling	1

## FRESHMAN | Kaestner wins award

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trip to Florida made a huge difference in the way Kaestner approached practice.

"[His] work ethic is still a work in progress," Gole said. "At the beginning of the year it was like pulling teeth trying to get him to go hard. He went hard everyday, but he really saved up for the last [race of practice]. It was during [the Winter Break trip] that he started to realize that he needed to push it more sooner in practice."

After Winter Break, Kaestner came back with a new attitude. He was more vocal, something that Gole was surprised, yet glad, to see.

"[The trip] was a huge deal for me," Kaestner said. "It drastically improved my swimming overall. I came back in better shape, and it really helped me a lot."

His times also started to get better, so good, in fact, that he started drawing comparisons to one of his teammates.

Senior Jason Stokes won 17 All-American awards in his career and has been the Bulldogs most consistent swimmer for the last four years.

Kaestner and Stokes swam the same events and also participated in most of the relays together, so it's easy to compare them. Stokes said their practice styles also are very similar, opening up another chance for comparison.

"[Kaestner] actually practices kind of like me," Stokes said. "We have good days and we have bad days. But, when we're on, we really hit the water hard and put down some good times. We both love to get up and race. We don't like losing. If we have a bad race, it really, really gets to us. We're both very, very competitive."

Being one of only three seniors on the team, Stokes was one of the team's lead-

ers, and he possessed that role for a couple of years. Because this was Stokes' last season, Kaestner will be looked at to fill his shoes. Stokes said he gave Kaestner quite a bit of advice so he could lead the team effectively.

"[I told him], 'Mark knows what he is talking about,'" Stokes said. "[Kaestner needs to] pay attention to what the coaching staff tells him because they know what it takes to get [to nationals]. I told him to really focus on the team, and that we're swimming for the team. We swim to make the team better."

Gole said a better comparison to Kaestner possibly could be Matt Pray, who was a member of the team from 1999-2003. Pray has his name written all over the Bulldog record books, especially the butterfly events. Kaestner's best event is the 100-yard butterfly, which Pray has the school record for. Kaestner's time of 49.14 in the event is fourth-best in Truman history.

Kaestner said swimming at the national meet was really encouraging for his development.

"[The national meet] showed me what was out there and what was possible for me later," Kaestner said. "It gave me a glimpse of the times I could achieve. It really made me want more."

He was one of three men's swimmers to be named to the all-NSISC team. He also broke the school record in the 200-yard freestyle, one of his lesser events.

Gole said he expects great things from Kaestner during the next three years.

"With some more technical work, he theoretically could graduate as the most successful swimmer in school history," Gole said.

## RECAP | Volleyball and women's soccer postseason runs among highlights from busy year

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are played at Kirksville Primary School.

Along with a new floor, Pershing also receives a new scoreboard. Volleyball returns to the setting to practice Sept. 30 and plays their first match Oct. 11, a 3-0 to win against the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The new floor is finished two weeks before basketball practices start.

**Sept. 18:** After many delays, the football team finally takes the home field for their first football game on the new turf at Stokes Stadium. The 31-28 loss to the University of Central Missouri fails to disappoint as Truman nearly overcomes a 17-point deficit.

Despite the improved field, the Bulldogs record was only 2-4 at home, including a 49-0 drubbing to Northwest Missouri State University on Family Day.

**Nov. 15:** Senior quarterback Matt Ticich accounts for five touchdowns and 317 yards in his final game. Ticich ends his career ranked second in Truman history in touchdown passes and passing yards, as well as leading the team in rushing all three years he started.

**Nov. 20:** The women's soccer team, led by head coach Mike Cannon (see page 15), hosts the first of two regional playoff games — the only two playoff games any varsity sport at Truman will host all year. The

Bulldogs defeat Texas A&M University-Commerce 2-1 before falling to No. 4 Seattle Pacific University 1-0 in the Elite Eight. Truman finishes the season No. 7 in the nation with an 18-4-2 record.

The 'Dogs also could have hosted the first round of the playoffs a week earlier, but all of the nearby hotels were filled because of the start of deer season.

**Nov. 22:** Senior cross country runner Danna Kelly finishes 24th at nationals, five spots better than then-senior Jacquie Faust did two years ago. Kelly's finish is fourth-best in Truman history and the best since Kerry Knepper finished fifth in 1988.

Kelly also owns the school record in the steeplechase for the track team, and she has an outside chance of winning the national title in the event this spring.

**Nov. 23:** Volleyball advances to the Elite Eight after limiting No. 5 Emporia State University to a -.044 hitting percentage in the regional championship. This comes a day after the 'Dogs defeated No. 12 UCM 3-1.

Truman loses two weeks later in the Final Four to No. 2 California State University-San Bernardino. The loss ends the volleyball careers of six seniors, including Eli Medina and Allie Cherven.

**Jan. 30:** In a unanimous vote, the MIAA accepts Lincoln University's bid to

join the conference. Lincoln was a member of the MIAA from 1970-1999, and the school will start competing in the conference in 2010-11. Lincoln should provide an easy matchup in most sports, except for track and field.

**Feb. 28:** Georgia Mueller, senior forward for the women's basketball team, ends her career with a 23-point, nine-rebound performance against UCM. Mueller finishes her career second in career points in Truman history. She set the single-season record in 2007-08.

Mueller averaged 19 points and 8.6 rebounds her last three seasons, and she was named first-team All-MIAA her sophomore and junior years.

**March 11:** Volleyball head coach Jason Skoch resigns and accepts the same job at Div. II West Texas A&M University. Skoch informs the team of his decision three days later. Assistant coach Ben Briney assumes coaching duties, but a new head coach is yet to be hired.

In four years at Truman, Skoch compiled a 137-22 record with four NCAA appearances, two Elite Eights and one Final Four. He inherits a team at West Texas that went 34-5 last season.

Truman and West Texas compete in the same region. The two teams are scheduled to play each other Oct. 3 at the Washburn Tournament.

**March 11-14:** Women's

swimming finishes fourth and men's swimming takes 20th at nationals. Top performers include senior Jason Stokes, junior Kate Aherne (see page 15), sophomore Emily Buss and freshman Eric Kaestner (page 15).

Despite breaking a plethora of school records, the swimming teams declined from recent years. The last time the women placed outside the top three was 1997-98 and the men had finished better than 20th every year since 1994-95.

**March 19:** Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering announces head coach Shannon Currier's contract will not be renewed for the 2008-09 season. Unlike the non-renewal of head women's basketball head coach John Sloop a year before, Wollmering never cites team performance as a reason for Currier's non-renewal.

Currier compiled a 20-35 record as head coach from 2004-08. Offensive coordinator Aaron Vlcko, whose offense averaged 344 yards per game in 2008, is named interim head coach.

**April 25:** The spring football game is the last football game played on the turf field at Stokes Stadium. Repairs will be made to the turf during the summer, ensuring that news about the improved field will be reported on at the beginning of next school year.

Maybe something will happen by the end of finals week. I'm still 57 words shy of 900.

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