

'Dogs seek MIAA title

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

The MIAA becomes tougher for the Bulldog women's soccer team this season.

The University of Nebraska-Omaha, a major regional rival of the Bulldogs, joins the MIAA this season. The Mavericks have advanced to at least the quarterfinals of the NCAA Tournament every year since 2002.

Truman beat UNO in the regular season, but lost to the Mavericks in the first round of the MIAA Tournament last year. UNO will add to the depth of good teams the MIAA will feature this year.

"It's going to be a battle," head coach Mike Cannon said. "Last year, there were ... five teams who had a legitimate shot to win the conference. This year, it will be six out of nine with UNO coming in."

The Bulldogs, though, expect to remain near the top of the pack. Truman has captured the MIAA title eight times in the last nine years, and they have their sights set on doing it again this year.

"Our goals [for this year] are to out-work the other teams and to, overall, win conference again," junior forward Isabel Gaeta said. "We're taking it one game at a time, but in the back of our minds that's everyone's ultimate goal is to repeat the [conference] win and to make it back to the [national] tournament."

The team returns eight of its starters from last year, though the Bulldogs lost several key components from its

team that finished 15-7-1 last year, including all-region defender Emily Newsham and starting goalie Emily Roark. The influx of eight freshmen, a transfer from Missouri Southern State University and the returning veterans could prove to be the puzzle pieces needed to build another MIAA championship team.

"[Junior] Denise Childress is our only returning goalie," Cannon said. "She backed up last year, and she was our starter in the spring and did well. I think going in, right now, she's 'in the lead' [to replace Roark]. We still need to get a better feel for the freshmen, since we've only seen them for a couple of days, to see if either of them will push Denise. It's an open competition, though ... so it's up for grabs."

As far as filling in other gaps left by the departed starters, junior Theresa Bauler and several of the incoming freshmen are likely candidates to replace defender Emily Newsham.

"Our backline and our defense will be one of our strengths," Cannon said. "Normally we're pretty strong defensively. We'll need to be starting either a team with no experience, one of the freshman in goal, or one with a little bit of experience, but it's going to be a new starter, basically, for us in goal, so our defense needs to play extremely well. We just need to let them find their feet and get some confidence, and a little experience."

The Bulldogs will return their top scoring trio of juniors Jessica Wiegert, Isabel Gaeta and Katie Reuck.

"We're strong up top, our forwards are very good," Cannon said. "It's just



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Junior forward Isabel Gaeta controls the ball during practice Wednesday. Gaeta tied for the team-lead with seven goals last season and tied for the MIAA-lead with five game-winning goals.

a matter of we're good, but can we be great? We'll score goals, but can we score a lot of goals?"

Cannon said the leadership and chemistry shown by the team thus far will prove to be a major advantage.

"They're already doing a good job with the new players, helping to bring them into the fold," Cannon said. "Our leadership is really good. Our senior group this year is exceptional on the field but also their leadership

and their personalities and how they get the rest of the girls to work hard and play hard."

The women's season will be tough top to bottom. With the addition of another conference opponent, the women will play only four games against non-conference opponents.

"[Our schedule] is always going to be tough," junior Kim Wolff said. "We have one of the hardest conferences. We're away a lot in

most of the beginning of the season, and away games are always tough. But it's going to be nice to finish our season [at home]. Our last five games are home games, so we always come out real fired up if it's at home."

The women begin their season Aug. 29, at Quincy University. Their first home game will be Sept. 11 against Northwest Missouri State University.



File Photo

Sophomore Scott Biggerstaff goes after a ball during a game last fall. Biggerstaff started in 14 games last season and was second on the team with four assists.

Men aiming to build on 2007 campaign

Most of the team returning from winning season

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Experience is what the men's soccer team is counting on to get them back to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2005.

"We're getting a little bit older," sophomore goalie Kyle Talbot said. "We've got a little bit more experience under our belts, which is going to help this year. ... I think it just really helps to know that we're getting older and we're starting to work better as a team."

Experience is one of the things the Bulldogs have in spades this year.

"We only lost two players from that team last year," head coach Duke Cochran said. "Granted, one was a most valuable player, Drew Vogt. But I think the team from last year, going into this next season, is going to benefit a lot from last season and the year before, just gaining more experience."

The defense appears to be another strength for the 'Dogs. The defense, which tied a school-record with eight consecutive shutouts last season, returns all its players except for backfielder Gavin Kempe.

The shutout streak helped the Bulldogs jump to an 8-2

start last season, but the team finished 10-7-2.

Junior Matt Taylor also returns this year after sitting out last season.

Taylor, who played forward during the 2006 season, will now be playing in the Truman backfield.

Taylor led Truman with five goals in 2006.

Another year of experience also leads to more expectations from the offense.

"The offense [was] all freshmen last year," Cochran said. "Getting older, the attack will be better. But, to be successful, you have to have a very good defense."

The Bulldogs added a bit of depth to the starting lineup during the recruiting season. Midfielders Jonathan Brown and Charlie Backus and goalie Tyler Knierim were added and are expected to each make a strong push for the starting lineup, Cochran said.

Sophomore Ben Friesen, a transfer from Eastern Illinois University, and new goalkeeper junior Danny Baker also bring skills and experience to the team.

"[Friesen's] going to add a lot of depth to our backline and even push to start as a defender," Cochran said. "Danny Baker is going to continue to add depth to our goalkeeper spot and to help with training."

Junior Ben Green said he is very confident about the season.

"So far, [our team] is look-

ing really good," Green said. "We have a strong incoming freshman class. The two-a-day [practices] are going really well so far. It definitely helps we had the trip to England before preseason. That kind of got the group together, got them bonding a little more. I'm really optimistic for the season. I think it's going to be a great year."

Bonding between teammates also will play a large part in how well the team does, on and off the field.

"We're really close. Really, really close," Talbot said. "I've never seen a team with chemistry like this. On and off the field, we're all hanging out. All of my best friends are on the team."

Because the men don't play in an actual conference, their schedule is one of the tougher ones in Div. II soccer. The majority of their games are played against regional opponents and the Great Lakes Valley Conference.

"We're going to have one of the toughest schedules, arguably, out there," Talbot said. "We're going to play a few games against some good teams we haven't played in a few years."

The men open their season Aug. 29 at Northeastern State University (Okla.). They will play at Missouri Southern State University on Aug. 31 before returning for their home opener, Sept. 5 against the University of the Incarnate Word.



Sonny's Collision Center

Quality work for 30 years

- Insurance estimates
- Cheerfully furnished
- One-stop repairing
- All domestic and imports
- Frame straightening
- Modern paint & body repair



660-665-8533

515 N. Marion
Mon to Fri 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nobody notices our work, and that's the way it should be.

\$ CHECK CASHER \$

No local bank account?
We cash almost any check!

We cash student loan checks
1/2 off check cashing with student ID

Send money or receive money via Western Union with us

2408 N. Baltimore
Kirksville, MO 63501
Phone: 660.665.7711
Fax: 660.665.9009
Hours: Mon-Sat

\$Pay day loans available\$