

# SPORTS

**VOLLEYBALL  
TOURNAMENT**

Bulldogs open season tomorrow in Rolla

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## Former Bulldog takes fourth at Beijing Olympic Games

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER  
Sports Editor

It was the last day he would compete in a track meet on Truman's Kenneth L. Gardner Track, and Bulldog sprinter Brian Dzingai wasn't interested in running.

Temperatures were quite cold on that spring 2002 day, and Dzingai was an international student from Harare, Zimbabwe, and therefore not fond of cold temperatures. In addition, the track's timing system was broken, meaning no matter how fast Dzingai ran, this race could not qualify him for nationals because no accurate time could be recorded.

So Dzingai — who was scheduled to transfer to Div. I Florida State University before the 2003 season — planned on sitting

out the 200-meter dash, said John Cochrane, current Bulldog track head coach. Cochrane coached the women's team during the 2002 season, but still knew Dzingai quite well.

"He comes up to me, and he goes, 'Coach, I don't know if I can really get in to running this,'" Cochrane said. "And I go, 'You know Brian, you're telling me that you're going to [transfer]. This is going to be the last time that you're going to get to run here.' I said, 'If you really are going to make something out of your life, you got to be able to make things happen when you don't feel good, when the weather is not great and stuff like that.' And I said, 'I don't think I'd let [this opportunity] slip by.'"

Dzingai listened to Cochrane's advice. He ran the race and won by a wide margin,

sending his fellow Truman international students into an excited frenzy.

"All the international students are down by the finish line — I didn't realize we had that many international students — and they're all [chanting], 'Brian, Brian, Brian!'" Cochrane said. "And he got all done, and I said, 'See, it was worth it.'"

Last week, more than six years after that 2002 track meet in Kirksville, Dzingai needed the same perseverance he showcased at the Truman Open.

This time, Dzingai was set to compete in the 200-meter finals of the Olympics in Beijing against the world's greatest sprinters.

Cochrane, who still stays in contact with Dzingai, said that before the finals he received

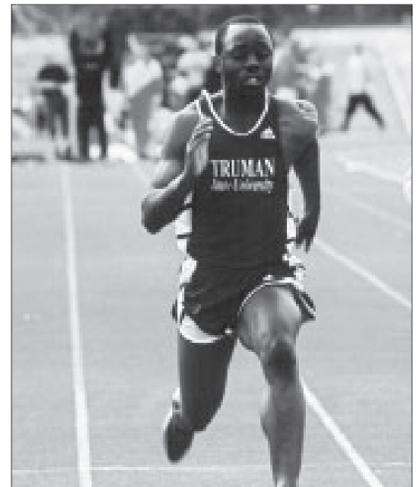


Photo submitted  
Former Bulldog Brian Dzingai runs a race during his years at Truman. He competed in Beijing.  
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## Quarterback sets example on and off field

Ticich enters senior season fifth in career total offense for Bulldogs

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Assistant Sports Editor

It's 9 p.m. Monday night and Matt Ticich has just left the library after the first day of school.

A senior biology and history double major from Temecula, Calif., Ticich has graduate school lined up after Truman.

But first, he has to finish his senior year as the football team's starting quarterback, where expectations are high.

"We expect him to be one of the better players in the country this year," head coach Shannon Currier said.

In just two seasons as a Bulldog, Ticich is fifth all-time in total offense and seventh in career passing at Truman. His 2007 season ranks third in total offense, and he has the record for passing yards in a game. He was named last season to the academic all-MIAA team, given to student athletes who are named to an all-conference team and have at least a 3.5 GPA.

Four years ago, Ticich had never heard of Truman. After going to the University of San Diego for one semester and then a community college for another, offensive coordinator Aaron Vlcko found Ticich on a routine recruiting trip.

"I think the first thing that impressed me was a young man at a community college that had a 4.0 grade point average," Vlcko said. "... On top of that, when you watched him play, he was a natural leader on the football field, and he made a lot of plays."

Ticich liked what he heard from Vlcko. He said Truman was the best academic fit for him, and he also had a chance to start right away.

"Originally I wanted to go to the highest level I could, and that was the [Div.] I-AA level," Ticich said. "After cranking out that first tuition check, I realized it would be more important to have my school paid for."

When Ticich first became a Bulldog, the team was coming off of back-to-back 2-9 seasons. In 2005, the team went 0-8 in conference play.

"It wasn't a turn [off] for me," Ticich said. "I knew that was kind of the administration's real first year with their guys, and I think you really need to give a coach at least three to four years before you can really see just what kind of product he can put on the field. So I wasn't really worried about that. I

had all the confidence in the world that we could turn it around, and I think we have so far."

Since Ticich arrived at Truman before the 2006 season, the Bulldogs have had two 6-5 seasons in a row, and they have beaten every team in the MIAA at least once except for perennial powers Northwest Missouri State University and

"He's one of the most competitive people I have ever coached or even been around."

Aaron Vlcko  
Offensive Coordinator

Pittsburg State University. Ticich makes a large impact from the things that can't be measured from looking at stats, Vlcko said. Ticich is a team captain for the second straight year, and he sets a good example both on and off the gridiron.

"He's one of the most competitive people I have ever coached or even been around," Vlcko said. "And sometimes in practice that becomes an issue because he's so competitive."

The work ethic he brings to practice transfers to the field. Last year, in games in which Ticich produced at least 300 yards of offense, the Bulldogs were 4-1.

Truman's spread offense fits his strengths of being able to run, pass and make quick

## Central Methodist site makes sense

It was not supposed to be like this. The football team was supposed to open the season tonight playing on new synthetic turf under the lights at Stokes Stadium. Instead, the team will play 85 miles away in Fayette, Mo., on NAIA Central Methodist University's field as construction continues on Truman's new field.

Tonight was supposed to be an opportunity for fans to pack the bleachers at Stokes Stadium. Attendance likely would have reached more than 4,000. Instead, the Bulldogs will play at a field that has a capacity of fewer than 2,000 people.

"I feel bad for the players," Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering said. "They worked so hard over the summer. But we can't let this ruin our season either because we're still playing a football game.

... I feel bad for our student body too because I think it would have been a great game for our student body on a Thursday night. But you do what you got to do."

And Wollmering did the right thing by choosing Central Methodist as a neutral site for the Bulldogs' opener against Missouri University of Science and Technology. The site makes the most sense for several reasons.

Reason one: Playing at Central Methodist allows the Bulldogs to avoid playing a true road game Week 1. Yes, the team will be an hour and a half away from Kirksville, but Missouri S&T also will be away from home.

Missouri S&T offered to host the game at its field when it became clear that Stokes Stadium wouldn't be

COMMENTARY



Blake Toppmeyer

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## Redshirt freshmen set to start against MU S&T

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Assistant Sports Editor

It's a good thing for a football team to have 20 starters returning. It's even better when freshmen work hard and take away the starting job from returners.

Redshirt freshmen offensive lineman Dan Tweeton and cornerback Terrence Byrd stayed in Kirksville during the summer and beat out the respective upperclassmen at their positions.

Byrd overtook junior Derek Rodriguez on the depth chart, who played in just two games last season but was in line for the starting job this year. Tweeton beat out senior James Williams to gain the starting job on the offensive line.

"Last year [Tweeton] was close to playing," head coach Shannon Currier said. "But as a true freshman, we decided it was going to be best for him and for our program to redshirt him."

Tweeton, who twice was Lifter of the Week last year for the Bulldogs, will complete an offensive line which only lost one starter from last year and is anchored by senior all-conference offensive tackle Jon Frantz.

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Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Freshman running back Donald Harvey (21) stands on the sidelines at practice. Harvey will get the start today.