

SPORTS

WOMEN WIN

Bulldogs claim 87-80 win in Pershing Arena

Page 18



Thursday, February 12, 2009

www.trumanindex.com

15

Baseball Preview



Bulldogs aim to snap streak of 26 straight losing seasons

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Sophomore pitcher Kyle Veazey will be one of the players on a pitching staff consisting almost entirely of freshmen and sophomores.

Team to rely on young roster

Bulldogs feature 22 freshmen and sophomores, transfer adds power bat

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

Sporting a roster with 17 freshmen in 2008 did not help the baseball team's record last season. But all the playing time the freshmen garnered last season will be a key factor as the Bulldogs begin the 2009 campaign.

The Bulldogs finished the 2008 season 8-42, setting a school record for losses. But as the season wore on, the young players gained valuable experience. Head coach Dan Davis said he

hopes the experience gained by these players will translate into more wins this season.

"There's nothing that can compete against getting good experience or game-time experience, and that's what we got last year," he said. "There were times when we were starting seven freshmen in the field, and you start four freshmen on the mound for weekend games, which are all conference games."

Davis is beginning his third season with the Bulldogs and is trying to build a winning attitude for a program that has not had a winning season since 1982. With so many young players, Davis said he is up for the challenge.

Please see **BASEBALL**, Page 19

Improvement needs to start on mound

Talk to baseball head coach Dan Davis for a few minutes, and you'll quickly figure out his simple strategy for the Bulldogs to improve on the mound this season: Throw strikes.

COMMENTARY



Blake Toppmeyer

a strikeout-to-walk ratio of 1:22 to 1 — worst in the MIAA. Add in hit by pitches, and the Bulldogs'

"We have to give ourselves a better chance," said Davis, who begins his third season as Bulldog head coach. "We got to throw more strikes. We can't walk guys like we have been the last couple years."

Though the strategy is a simple one, the Bulldogs' execution has been lacking during Davis' first two seasons at Truman. Last year, Truman's pitching staff had

Please see **PITCHING**, Page 19

Week with Showgirls yields more respect for dancers

A few weeks ago my girlfriend told me that, as a member of the Truman State Showgirls dance team, she was required to spend two hours every week at the Student Recreation Center. I thought she was kidding, and when she told me she was serious, I laughed at her. At the time I thought to myself, "Is dancing really that strenuous?"

Last week the laugh was on me. I got to experience firsthand what the Showgirls go through every day. Once a year at halftime during a home basketball game, each Showgirl picks a male dance partner to perform with during the game.

For one week, I became a Truman Showguy.

I expected this to be difficult because I am by no means light on my feet. I spent two hours every night last week learning the choreography and listening to more Michael Jackson music than I ever wanted to. Learning the moves wasn't quite as tough as I thought it might be, but what I didn't realize was how difficult dancing was. I admit that my arms, legs and back were sore all last week. I realized why the girls go to the rec center every week. Dancing can take a toll on the body. Doing the lifts really made me stretch muscles I'd forgotten I had.

When I agreed to do this, I set three goals for myself. Goal No. 1, don't drop my partner. Goal No. 2, don't look like an idiot. Goal No. 3, do a better job dancing than Mark Madsen did after the Lakers won the 2001 NBA Championship (if you've never seen it, YouTube Mark Madsen's name. He's more famous for that disturbing dance than anything he did with the Lakers).

As for not dropping my partner, I failed about 20 minutes into the first rehearsal. I picked her up for a lift and something on my end didn't go well. My hands went one way, she went the other way. She fell and hit her head on the hardwood. So things started out a little shaky for me. I ended up dropping her a couple more times during rehearsal. For my first goal I give myself a D. The only reason I'm not giving myself an F is because I didn't drop her during the performance.

Goal No. 2 ended up touch and go. Coaches always say that you win games in practice, so I tried my hardest to perfect my moves in the dance studio. For the most part I thought I did. There were several slip-ups on my part during Saturday's performance. There was a section where I think I was about a half-step behind, and a few people were nice enough to point that out to me afterward. But overall I thought I didn't make too much of a fool out of myself, so for goal No. 2 I give myself a solid C. My performance was a few notches below Patrick Swayze, but it couldn't have been any worse than the time members of Congress stood up and did the Macarena.

As for goal No. 3, I'm pretty sure Mark Madsen might be the worst dancer in the history



For a slideshow of the Showgirls dance routine on Saturday, visit trumanindex.com

Men approach spring opener

Entry into new region will make return to nationals more difficult

BY JACK NICHOLL
Assistant Sports Editor

The road to the NCAA tournament will be a little tougher for the men's tennis team this spring.

The Bulldogs, who have made the tournament the last four years, and the rest of the MIAA joined the LoneStar and Heartland conferences prior to the fall season to make a tennis powerhouse in the South Central Regional.

Eight of the 15 teams from the

region are ranked in the top 40 in the preseason Fila ITA Rankings. Only six will make it the NCAA tournament: the three conference winners and three at-large teams.

"That probably means that for the men that probably only the [MIAA] winner is going to get into the national tournament," head coach Pete Kendall said. "There's a possibility that we could get a second one in, maybe. That would be a borderline."

The last time the Bulldogs won the MIAA tournament was 1983. Prior to the 2008-09 season, tennis teams in the MIAA were paired with the weaker Rocky Mountain and Northern Sun conferences to form a region.

The switch was made so that every sport could play in the same region, and it applies to both the men's and women's tennis teams. Before this season, all eight tennis NCAA regions qualified eight teams for the tournament, but after the resizing some regions will qualify as many as 12.

"We'll get better competition of course, which will be good, but at the same time it'll just make it that much harder to win at nationals," junior Kyle Schlottz said.

Rules also allow any dual match with a Div. II school in the same or neighboring state to be considered a regional matchup to allow teams to

Please see **TENNIS**, Page 19



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior Peter Bracha returns to the team after studying abroad in the fall.