

## MEN | Bulldogs suffer from low shooting percentage

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Senior guard Banks Estridge led Truman with 12 points and a career-high 12 rebounds for his first career double-double.

Missouri Western attempted 14 three-pointers in the game. Threes often can lead to long rebounds. This puts more pressure on the guards to contribute in rebounding, and Estridge helped in this department.

"They're a really good offensive rebounding team, so I just really focused on defense making sure I went to the boards and got rebounds," Estridge said. "I'm a taller [guard], so I just took advantage of that. ... It was nice to get a double-double before my career is over."

Estridge and Henderson were the only Bulldogs to score in double figures. Aside from those two players, the rest of the Bulldogs combined to hit only 30 percent of their field-goal attempts.

"We got a lot of good looks," Schrader said. "We got the ball to the basket a lot. We just missed."

Freshman center Vesko Filchev, who has been an increasing factor in Truman's offense as the season progresses, played just five minutes Saturday and scored four points on 2-of-4 shooting. In the two games against the Griffons this season, Filchev totaled 12 minutes.

Missouri Western features a quick lineup and prefers to spread the floor offensively, and Schrader said Filchev not playing Saturday was because of matchup reasons defensively.

Schrader said Filchev should see plenty of playing time in the Bulldogs' season finale 3:30 p.m. Saturday in Pershing Arena against the University of Central Missouri.

UCM beat Truman 76-46 in Warrensburg earlier this season. Schrader said the Mules, who are ranked No. 1 in the region, defend the Bulldogs' ball-screen offense very well, and thus the Bulldogs will try to utilize the 6-foot-10 Filchev in their low-post offense.

"They play probably the best defense out of anyone we've seen, so we're just going to have to put it all together on both sides of the ball," Henderson said.

## WOMEN | Mueller nets 29 points and grabs nine rebounds

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The 'Dogs iced the game late by going 6-for-6 from the foul line in the final 1:05. For the game, the Bulldogs finished 17-for-20 from the line.

Junior guard Laura Joya chipped in with 15 points and six rebounds and junior guard Julie Guinn finished with six assists.

"We just tried to spread out our offense," Mueller said. "We made smart passes [and] ball fakes."

Truman out-rebounded Western 40-29 and used this advantage to out-score Western 17-6 on second chance points.

The Bulldogs improved their performance in two parts of their game that have plagued the team all season. The 'Dogs turned the ball over just 10 times Saturday. This is the second fewest turnovers Truman has had in a game this season. The 'Dogs turned the ball over nine times in a Dec. 3 loss to Missouri Southern State University. Overall, Truman averages just less than 20 turnovers per contest.

The Bulldogs also finished with 16 assists on 24 made baskets.

"We were more patient and moved the ball around," Joya said. "We took care of the ball."

The win avenged a defeat against Western earlier this season. The Bulldogs lost at home 69-64 to Missouri Western on Jan 14. That was the first win of the season for the Griffons. Since that time the Griffons have gone 5-6, putting themselves in position to make the MIAA Tournament.

Truman would be in position to make the conference tournament if the team would have beaten Northwest Missouri State University last Wednesday. The Bulldogs lost 67-66 on a free throw with less than one second left.

Truman will honor seniors Eli Medina, Mueller and Sarah Gordon during a ceremony prior to Saturday's season finale against the University of Central Missouri. Tip-off is set for 1 p.m.

Mueller has been a four-year starter for the Bulldogs and holds numerous records, including the single season Bulldog scoring record set last season. Gordon transferred to Truman before the 2006-07 season from Div. I University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, providing minutes off the bench. Medina joined the basketball team in December after a four-year career on the volleyball team that included reaching All-American status as a senior. She found her way into the starting lineup late this season, after a five-year hiatus from the game.

"It's my last time to play with my team and I just want to play as hard as I can" Mueller said. "Hopefully we'll end it with a win."

## ESTRIDGE | Senior guard has stepped into an increased leadership role for 'Dogs this season

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season of high school. His assists ranked third that season in the St. Louis metro area.

Sodemann contacted Truman, and a week later assistant coach Tim Deidrick went to Mizzou Arena to watch Banks play in the state tournament. Banks put up sound numbers — 21 points, five steals and 11 assists in a two-game span — and Deidrick said he was the "prototypical point guard" Truman was looking for. Deidrick said the ball was right on Banks' hand at all times, like it was a yo-yo.

Banks was recruited by other schools, including Rolla, which offered him a full-ride scholarship — something Truman could not. Deidrick convinced Banks to come to Truman, even though he had to sacrifice some scholarship money his freshman year.

"Basically [I] told him we could offer that same type of education, [a] little bit more [broad] in areas, and also — I don't know how much this played into it — but we have a few more girls on campus here," Deidrick said with a smile.

### Becoming a Leader

In the final seconds of the Jan. 28 home game against Pittsburg State University, Banks was called on to provide senior leadership. Banks said that game "was as hard as I've ever played a game last time I can remember."

Truman was down 60-58 with 11 seconds left, and Banks had two free throws to tie the score. He missed the first and made the second. Truman immediately fouled and Pitt State missed the front end of a one-and-one. This gave Banks another chance to erase the deficit.

He drove the length of the floor and put up a layup, just as planned. But after bouncing on the rim for what seemed like several seconds, the shot didn't fall.

"I was just heartbreaking because, you know, we were so close, and who

## Money in the Bank\$

Senior guard Banks Estridge will play his final game as a member of the men's basketball team Saturday. Estridge has been Truman's starting point guard for three seasons.

Points/game: 10.2  
Assists/game: 3.12  
Rebounds/game: 4.7  
Career assists: 313 (seventh all-time)  
Career steals: 140 (sixth all-time)

Design by Antonette Bedessie/Index



knows what we could have done if we had won that game," Banks said. "And I was just crying hysterically after the game. And I'm not typically the guy that would cry, but it hurt so bad to know that you came so close and ended up losing by one."

Banks said Schrader talked to him in the locker room about pushing himself out of his comfort zone, and how the basketball team is his family, so he shouldn't be afraid to show emotion in front of them.

This is the first year Banks has had the go-to role he exhibited in the Pitt State game. He is one of three seniors on the team, along with forward Patrick Fandja and guard Todd Kulage, but Banks is the only one who has played four years at Truman.

"I think Banks — his strongest point is leading by example," said

junior guard Gabe Landau, who lives with Banks. "I think the heart he plays with on the court is a kick-start to all of us and inspires us to all play harder, because he plays harder than anyone I've ever seen."

Banks' ascent to the leadership role has been progressive. His freshman year, the team reached the NCAA tournament behind a core of juniors and seniors, including Chip Sodemann, and Banks averaged only nine minutes a game. Banks' sophomore year, he replaced Chip and averaged 10.7 points and four assists per game.

Banks serves as a bridge between the older players from that 2005-06 team and the newer, younger players on the team now.

As for last year, Schrader said Banks was the leader while then-senior Nick Certa was the stabilizing influence. With Certa there, Banks

was able to focus on his own task. This year, Schrader said Banks has worried about the other players as well as himself.

"It's definitely been different for him this year, trying to find those lieutenants that help him out a lot with the stuff," Schrader said. "He's got a lot of great leadership qualities, and he tries to bring those to the team."

This season, Banks' responsibilities have added up. As the leader and the point guard, he gets blamed when things don't go right, and he has to accept it.

"I think [Schrader has] been pretty hard on me this year," Banks said. "But he's taken me aside at the same time and said, 'You know I'm doing this for the younger guys.'"

### Family Influence

Bill Estridge is a former quarterback at Walford College (S.C.), but he has never been on to pressure Banks to play football. Banks switched to soccer after one year of football when he was young, and he has played basketball for as long as he can remember.

"Some dads will pressure their children so much when they're young to where they don't even enjoy sports anymore — but it's never been like that," Banks said. "It's always been something fun. To this day, every time my dad and I see each other we go out and toss the football around or shoot some hoops."

The Estridge family lived in North Carolina until they moved to St. Louis when Banks was 14, but they moved back to North Carolina when Banks was a sophomore at Truman. Even with the distance, Banks' parents have watched every game for the last three years either in person or via the Internet.

This Saturday, the Internet won't be needed.

Bill, and possibly Banks' mother Amy, will make the trip to Kirksville to celebrate Senior Day, and the end of an era, with their son.

## FINAL FOUR | Comeback win against Washburn sparked 15-game win streak leading to Final Four

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Parker averaged 17.5 points per game that season and remains Truman's all-time leader in career points.

But Parker received plenty of support. He was helped in the post by then-junior forward Jason Reinberg, who Janssen described as the glue of the offense. An exceptional passer for a low-post player, Reinberg ranks in the top seven all-time in Truman history in points, rebounds, assists and steals.

Peterson and then-juniors Jason Ramthun and Brian Brown filled the wing positions. Then-junior Andy Guethle, who started every game during his career, manned the point guard position.

Then-seniors Chris Foulk and Spencer Douglas filled out the top eight and had key leadership and defensive roles.

Together, Janssen said the unit ran the motion-heavy offense of head coach Jack Schrader — now in his 14th season as Truman's head coach — to perfection.

"They were the best I think that I've seen at getting into their half-court [offense] when it broke down," Janssen said. "These guys reset and re-entered and got it going as good as anybody. Part of it was they could enter into their offense from several spots. It didn't have to just be a guard starting it."

### 'They started believing in themselves'

The Bulldogs were coming out on the losing end of every close game and even got blown out a few times before the comeback win against Washburn. But after the victory Feb. 1, Truman started winning the nail biters.

Six times between Feb. 1 and the NCAA tournament, the Bulldogs won by five points or fewer.

"It just seemed every game was down to the wire, but we were just calm and collected, and somebody would step up every game," Schrader said. "Nothing changed, they were the same team. When you win like that [against Washburn], and you follow it up, then you start believing. And what they did, they started believing in themselves."

Just before the MIAA tournament, the Bulldogs knocked off Pittsburg State University, ranked No. 1 in the nation at the time, at home.

A little more than a week later, the Bulldogs faced the Gorillas again, this time in the semifinals of the MIAA tournament. Parker's shot from near the top of the key in the final seconds gave the Bulldogs a 76-74 win and snapped Pitt State's 40-game home winning streak.

Truman advanced to the MIAA championship and hosted Northwest Missouri State University. The game was played in front of a full house in Pershing Arena, as 3,050 fans crammed the bleachers. It took Truman five home games this season before it hit 3,000 in total attendance for the season.

"Pershing was packed, probably the last time it's been packed," Janssen said. "It was pretty cool."

The Bulldogs and Bearcats gave fans a memorable performance, and yet again, Truman found itself in a game that came down to the final shot. With the score tied, the Bulldogs had the final possession. Reinberg received

a pass in the lane, where he was fouled in the act of shooting with one second to play. As Reinberg stepped to the free-throw line for his two attempts, he said he caught the eye of his mother, who was sitting in the stands, and Reinberg signaled to her to let her know that he was going to drain the shot.

"I actually did point to my mom in the stands before the free throws," said Reinberg, who now works as a dermatologist in Washington, Mo. "I was at the free-throw line, and I actually happened to just look up and see her in the crowd, and she's kind of freaking out like moms do. I just wanted to tell her it was going to be all right."

Reinberg connected on both free throws to make his mom proud and send Pershing into pandemonium. The Bulldogs were headed to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1981.

### 'A bunch of guys just out there passing and running an offense'

The Bulldogs traveled to Wichita Falls, Texas, for the regional round of the NCAA tournament. After taking care of Missouri Western State College — the last team to defeat the Bulldogs before they started their winning streak — in round one, Truman was set to face regional host Midwestern State University.

Midwestern State was the region's No. 1 seed, and leading up to the game, Schrader said no one was giving the Bulldogs much of a chance. He said the media didn't think Truman could match Midwestern State's athleticism.

"I'll never forget the press conference after [the win against Missouri Western]," Schrader said. "The guy from Wichita Falls, says, 'Well what are you going to do against Midwestern State? They run.' They sort of likened us ... to the Hoosiers, a bunch of guys out there just passing the ball and running an offense. I said, 'Well we like to run too.' He actually laughed at me."

When the game started, the joke was on Midwestern State. Truman sprinted out to a 30-13 lead and never looked back, taking the game 81-68 to move on to the Sweet 16.

"There were articles all over the place about how it was not a fair matchup athletically," Ramthun said. "That kind of got us fired up I think. And we really went out and just hammered them, especially early."

After Truman defeated Abilene Christian to win the regional, they cut down the nets and headed to Louisville to play in the Elite Eight against the College of St. Rose (N.Y.). The game was an epic affair, and Truman won in triple overtime, 106-101.

Truman trailed near the end of regulation and the first and second overtime, but each time the Bulldogs either made a shot or free throw in the final seconds to prolong the game.

The 'Dogs thought they had won the game at the end of the second OT. Reinberg was at the free-throw line with his team trailing by one point. He made the first free throw but missed the second. A scramble for the ball ensued, and Reinberg tracked down the ball near the sideline. He heaved a desperation, no-look shot toward the basket that resulted in an air ball. But



Photo submitted by Truman athletics department  
Jason Reinberg attempts the shot that he was fouled on during the MIAA championship game against Northwest Missouri State. Reinberg knocked down both free throws to seal the win and a berth to the NCAA tournament.

Ramthun was there waiting for the rebound, and he jumped and put up an acrobatic shot that dropped through the net.

"It was the best play I ever saw," Schrader said.

But the officials waved off the basket, having decided the buzzer already had sounded. It didn't matter, however, as the Bulldogs won the game in the third overtime.

But this game was the last time the Bulldogs unleashed their heroics that season. Possibly fatigued from their triple overtime game from the day before, the Bulldogs fell 69-65 in the semifinals to Metro State University. Truman used a strong second half to pull the game close but couldn't clear the final hurdle.

Even though they didn't reach the national title, Truman proved to its detractors that it could compete with athletic squads and was not just a team that passed around the ball. Despite never being ranked throughout the regular season, the Bulldogs ended the year as one of the top four teams in Div. II.

"The moniker kind of got hung on them that, for a team that wasn't very athletic, they were very successful — but they were very athletic," Janssen said.

**Fallout of the 1998-99 season**  
The Bulldogs returned their top six players the next season after their

Final Four run and seemed poised for another trip to the NCAA tournament, but they never made it there.

The top three recruits that Schrader targeted to join the team for the 1999-00 season chose to attend different schools. Also, the team missed Foulk and Douglas — the two seniors from the 1998-99 team and the seventh and eighth men in Schrader's eight-man rotation.

"You sometimes forget the importance of No. 7 and No. 8," Ramthun said. "The six main guys were back, but we didn't realize, I think, the leadership of those two guys, as well just the fact that they could get 10 minutes and be productive minutes."

Truman finished the 1999-00 season with a 16-11 record, and the Bulldogs were eliminated from the MIAA tournament in the opening round.

But in the end, no one could take away the memories and the history that the members of the 1998-99 team made in their trip to the Final Four.

"I think it just showed that when you put the right group of guys together who work well together as a team, you can a lot of times overcome maybe some certain positions where you might not have the athletic ability as some of the other teams would," Reinberg said. "But if you play together, you can definitely be successful."