

# Filchev sees increased minutes

**6-foot-10 center has shown improvement in new offense**

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

He has not been seen much on the basketball court for most of the season, but recently freshman center Vesko Filchev's presence is becoming impossible to ignore.

During the last five games, Filchev has played an average of 14.2 minutes per game, up from an average of 4.8 minutes per game in the previous four games. During the last five games, Filchev averaged 5.6 points and 4 rebounds per game, highlighted by an 11-point, 6-rebound performance against the University of Nebraska-Omaha on Jan. 7.

The increase in Filchev's playing time has allowed Truman to switch its offense strategy.

Head coach Jack Schrader said the offense previously had been utilizing a three-out, two-in strategy, but other teams began exploiting the offense by putting a lot of pressure on the Bulldogs. As a result, Truman's shooting suffered. With Filchev on the floor, Truman can run a four-out, one-in offense that Schrader said he hopes will lead to an increase in scoring.

Filchev has garnered more

playing time for one reason: Improvement.

"[Filchev has] shown continued improvement, as has our other big guy, David Scott," Schrader said. "... As a result of their [improvement], we have adjusted the offense where they can stay closer to the basket and not have to handle the ball as much and they're more effective with the adjustments."

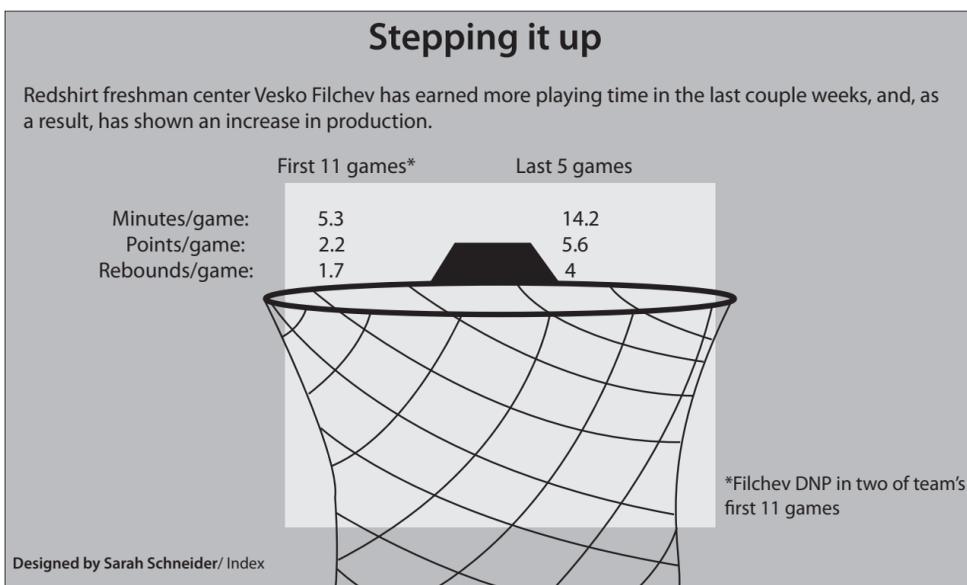
Listed at 6-foot-10, Filchev's stature is impossible to miss. He stands at least three inches taller than any of his teammates, with the exception of sophomore center David Scott.

It's not only Filchev's height that is garnering him this new-found attention.

Filchev is healthy this year after he missed almost the entire 2007-08 season with injuries. After breaking his foot twice, Filchev's season ended. He played in just five games last year and took a redshirt season.

While the improvements for Filchev have been very real, there are several aspects of his game that are still in need of improvement, Schrader said. He

is still adapting to the American way of playing basketball, as opposed to the way that basketball was played in his native Bulgaria. Filchev said a much stronger emphasis is placed on defense in the U.S. and it is an area he is trying to improve upon. The Bul-



"We have adjusted the offense where [centers Vesko Filchev and David Scott] can stay closer to the basket and not have to handle the ball as much and they are more effective with the adjustments."

**Jack Schrader**  
Men's basketball head coach



Freshman center Vesko Filchev, shown here in Truman's preseason scrimmage, has seen more playing time recently. At 6-foot-10, Filchev gives Truman another post presence.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

dogs often use zone defense when Filchev is on the court, as opposed to Truman's usual man-to-man defense, but this is an adjustment that Schrader is willing to make.

"When [Filchev] plays, we have to adjust a little defensively if the match-up's not correct," Schrader said. "We do play more zone so that he can be on the court offensive-

ly. You have to adjust to your personnel. I think it's a good adjustment, but we are in a period of adjustment and it takes a little bit of time."

Filchev's conditioning has affected him since his arrival at Truman. That problem was inflated by his injuries last year.

"I think the biggest thing for him right now is just getting in shape," senior guard

Banks Estridge said. "He's still trying to get in shape now. But he's the kind of guy who works hard. He's starting to help us."

Filchev is striving to improve his conditioning and learn the way the college game is played in the United States. With these overall improvements to his game, Filchev said he hopes to be able to better aid his team.

"[The increase in playing time] is Coach's decision", Filchev said. "It's something that he considers useful for the team. Whatever I do, I try to do it for the team. I've been working real hard, too. [Coach] sees improvement from last year. I'm trying to gain experience in the league so we can be a factor in the future."

## Wrestling prepares for Central College Open

**Loyde Braidlow returns to open after second-place finish last season**

BY ARRON HUSTEAD  
Staff Reporter

After the winter layoff, Truman wrestling will travel north.

The team travels to Pella, Iowa, this Saturday to compete in the Central College Open. This will be the Bulldogs' first action of 2009 as they get ready to kick off the second half of the season.

The team went through two-a-day practices for two weeks during the break to stay fit and ready for the remainder of the season.

"Wrestling's a long season and we're relatively young this year, so we're working a lot on technique, and we're not as focused on conditioning," head coach Dave Schutter said.

The team struggled with several injuries before the break, and the time off gave some members of the roster a chance to get healthy again.

"We're still banged up," Schutter said. "We're not as banged up as we were, but hopefully we can get some guys healed up by the end of the season."

Schutter said the team should field between 15 and 17 wrestlers at the tournament and probably will have a representative in each division.

"We have every weight class filled, but sometimes we'll wrestle a guy up [in weight]," he said. "We won't [drop] him down to his lowest weight class, because there's no reason to [drop] him down yet until we need him."

Just before the nearly month-long break in competition, the Bulldogs picked up a win in their first dual of the season Dec. 4 at Hannibal-LaGrange College 40-12, but were routed in their first home dual of the season by Upper Iowa University, 43-3. The team also competed at the Simpson Invitational in which two Bulldogs placed.

If history is an indicator, the team could have a strong performance at

the Central College Open this weekend. Seven Bulldogs placed at this tournament last season, including two first-place finishes.

The team has competed in three similar opens already this season, with a combined total of six placements.

Junior Loyde Braidlow is the only Bulldog to gain two placings so far this season in the open format. He placed sixth at both the Lindenwood Open and University of Central Missouri Open.

"[The Central College Open] should be just a good solid tournament, a way to get back in the swing of things," Braidlow said.

Braidlow had success at this tournament in the past, taking second place there last season.

Braidlow finished the first half of

the season strong with a third place finish at the Simpson Invite. He also picked up two dual victories, including the team's only points against Upper Iowa.

A potential challenge for the Bulldogs could be not knowing which teams will be at the competition this weekend until they arrive. However, Braidlow said it won't affect the way they prepare for the tournament.

"You go through the same steps no matter if it's a putz or somebody that was a national champion last year."

Braidlow said the biggest challenge for him this week will be getting used to wrestling bigger athletes again after training against mostly smaller

wrestlers during break.

"They say that steel sharpens steel, so hopefully we're getting that going on right now," Braidlow said.

Freshman Alex Maus will look to follow up on his first intercollegiate tournament placement with another strong showing this weekend. This will be his first tournament competition since placing fourth at the University of Missouri Open in November.

Maus sat out the last couple of competitions of the first half of the season with an infection, but he said it shouldn't have an effect on him now that he's healthy again.

"I've kept in shape, kept running and lifting," Maus said. "So I didn't really lose anything."

Maus didn't compete much during Winter Break, which could be an advantage for him going into this weekend, because he might be better rested than some of his opponents.

"I should be pretty fresh as long as I don't get banged up early," he said.

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