

SPORTS



NARROW DEFEAT

Women let late lead slip away

Page 17

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15

Editor issues midseason report cards

Here it is, back from the fall sports season by popular demand — OK, I admit I'm not sure how popular or in demand it was — my midseason report card for the Bulldogs.

Men's Basketball: D+

Maybe my expectations were just too high for Truman, but I really thought the Bulldogs would have more than one conference win by mid-January. The Bulldogs returned four starters from last season's team and gained a couple of junior college transfers.

But a struggle to find consistency offensively and an ultra-competitive MIAA has plagued this team.

Truman ranks last in the MIAA in points scored. The Bulldogs average just 63.9 points per game, which is more than six points below the conference's next-worse offensive team.

Senior forward Patrick Fandja, sophomore forward Ethan Freeman and senior guard Banks Estridge have been brilliant at times this season, but all have been unable to piece together several good performances in a row.

The Bulldogs have been especially bad on the road, posting a 0-7 record away from Pershing Arena.

In those losses, Truman has been outscored by an average of almost 19 points per game. Dating back to Jan. 16 of last season, the Bulldogs are just 1-14 in their last 15 road games.

COMMENTARY



Blake Toppmeyer

On a good note, the Bulldogs were a perfect 5-0 in their home non-conference games, but two of those wins were against NAIA schools and another was against NCCAA's Central Christian College.

Women's basketball: C-

I feel a little guilty giving the women's team a higher grade than the men's team despite the women having two fewer wins than the men, but I really didn't expect much from this women's team.

Truman lost four starters from last season's team and returned just two players — granted, senior forward Georgia Mueller arguably was the MIAA's top player in 2007-08 — who averaged at least 16 minutes per game last season. Add into the equation new head coach, Michael Smith, in his first season as head coach at the Div. II level, and I would have figured four wins to be a good mark for the entire season.

But the Bulldogs have been competitive, even in many of their losses. Truman has lost by six points or fewer seven times this season.

This team does have its problems — namely, turnovers. Truman's assist-to-turnover ratio of .571 is simply atrocious. No other team in the conference even comes close to that mark.

Also, it's a shame to see that Mueller is going to come up short of Carol Jarrard's all-time scoring record. With 10 games to play, Mueller would have to average 29.6 points per game for the rest of the season to break Jarrard's mark of 2,006 career points.

Please see GRADES, Page 19

Braidlow rules the mat

"I'm a very competitive person. I don't play my girlfriend in golf because she played in high school, and she'd beat me. I pick and choose my battles and make sure that I have the upper hand and can win." - Loyde Braidlow



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Junior (top) Loyde Braidlow has compiled a 13-9 overall record and placed in four invitationals this season.

Junior wrestler gives Bulldogs an All-American candidate at heavyweight

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

Every team needs at least one leader. For a young team like Truman wrestling, it's especially important. So far this year that leader has been junior heavyweight Loyde Braidlow.

"Without a doubt he's the leader on this team," head coach Dave Schutter said. "He's been the most consistent at tournaments, he doesn't let frustration bother him, [and] he's always got a positive attitude. He's the type of athlete that everyone would like to have in their program."

Braidlow has compiled a 13-9 record so far this season and a 2-0 record in dual placings in the five tournaments the squad has competed in.

Braidlow said he contributes much of his success to how much he hates to lose.

"I'm a very competitive person," Braidlow said. "I don't play my girlfriend in golf because she played golf in high school, and she'd beat me. I pick and choose my battles and make sure that I have the upper hand and can win."

Braidlow started wrestling at an

early age. His father was a high school wrestler and took Braidlow to a kids' club practice for the first time when he was eight.

"Everybody was in there going crazy, having fun, and I've done it ever since," Braidlow said.

Braidlow said he made the decision to join the wrestling team at Truman because of the relationship he formed with Schutter.

"He's a great guy," Braidlow said. "He cares about you as a person. Other sports, other teams, other schools, you're just a number."

Schutter said Braidlow is the best
Please see BRAIDLOW, Page 19

"He's the type of athlete that everyone would like to have in their program."

Dave Schutter
Head Coach

Key swimmers

<p>Jing Hua: 2007 national champion in the 100- and 200-yard butterfly and 100-yard freestyle</p> <p>Abbey Musch: 2008 national champion in the 400-yard individual medley</p> <p>Janelle Slattery: 2008 national champion in the 100-yard backstroke</p> <p>Li Tao: 2008 national champion in the 100-yard butterfly</p>	<p>Kate Aherne: 2008 national champion in the 200-yard individual medley</p> <p>Emily Buss: Recorded nation's second-best time in 200-yard breast stroke at fall taper meet</p> <p>Erika Anderson: Has won 11 All-American honors</p> <p>Anna Grinter: School-record holder in the 200-yard butterfly</p>
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Design by Antionette Bedessie/Index

Swim rivalry renews Saturday

Truman, Drury women's swim teams compete in battle of Missouri powers

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Sports Editor

Head coach Mark Gole said "there's bad blood" between the two schools. Senior women's swimmer Erika Anderson compares it to Div. I football's Ohio State-Michigan rivalry.

No matter how it's described, the rivalry between Truman and Drury University has been the biggest in Div. II swimming for more than a decade.

"They're as much of a rival as it can get," Gole said.

That rivalry continues 1 p.m. Saturday in Pershing Natatorium when the two schools compete in a dual

meet. The meet is Senior Day for the Bulldogs.

In each of the last 12 seasons, the road for the women's swimming and diving national title has gone through Missouri. Starting with the 1996-97 season, no school other than Drury or Truman has won a national championship. The Bulldogs have seven of those national championships while Drury claimed the remaining five.

The Panthers had the edge in the late 1990s, winning four straight titles from 1997 to 2000. But the Bulldogs captured seven of the last eight championships and finished second to Drury in 2007.

Drury head coach Brian Reynolds said Monday that the University of California-San Diego is a top-two women's swimming team this season and should challenge Drury for the title in March. Reynolds said he thinks the Bulldogs have slipped to the third-

best team in the nation. Still, the Truman-Drury rivalry remains strong, and Anderson said that Saturday will be the perfect setting for her final meet in Pershing Natatorium.

"What better way to end it than with a race against Drury?" said Anderson, one of three Bulldog seniors. "That's always the most exciting."

By hosting Saturday's meet, the Bulldogs will gain a slight advantage because there will be no diving. Truman does not have any divers on its roster, and the "Dogs" natatorium is not equipped for diving. In years the meet is at Drury, which has divers, the Panthers gain 32 uncontested diving points.

Partly because of the diving element, the school hosting the meet has been victorious in each of the last six seasons. Yet even with the home-pool
Please see RIVALRY, Page 19

Biermann leads track with two wins

Women total five first-place finishes, Walls picks up second-place finish on men's side

BY JOCELYN NEBEL
Staff Reporter

Head coach John Cochrane expects his team to work harder in practice to meet their potential after the Iowa Hawkeye Open indoor track meet Saturday.

"We've got a long way to go," Cochrane said. "We've got to be better fitness-wise, and we've got to compete better."

The Bulldogs competed against a variety of teams Saturday, including Div. I Western Illinois University and University of Wisconsin-Whitewater — two teams sophomore distance runner Josh Mantooth said were competitors to watch for in the events.

The women's team placed first in five

events Saturday and had three second place finishes.

Junior jumper Katrina Biermann won multiple events at the open. She placed first in pole vault with a vault of 3.5 meters and triple jump with a jump of 11.07 meters.

Biermann said the competition at the Iowa Open was about the same as it had been in years past.

"I've competed with the same girls for the past two years, so I kind of knew what to expect from them," Biermann said. "I knew there was going to be some good competition and that was definitely a motivating factor."

Biermann said the workouts Cochrane assigned his athletes during Winter Break helped her perform well Saturday.

Freshman distance runner Joey Walls was the highest finisher for the men. Walls placed second in the 3,000-meter run with a time of 8:55.37, almost 10 seconds faster than his seed time of 9:04.00. The men also placed in

the shot put and weight throws.

Sophomore distance runner Josh Mantooth placed fifth in the mile run with a time of 4:25.16, about a second slower than his seed time of 4:24.00. Mantooth said that although he raced well on Saturday, he wants to focus on practicing his turnover for future meets.

"Right now, we haven't done a whole lot with speed work yet, so really it was just kind of finding out what kind of shape I was in," Mantooth said.

Mantooth was out with an injury during the fall cross-country season and said this meet was used to find out how much progress he had made.

"The base is there, it's about fine tuning that toward whatever you're going to race," Mantooth said.

Mantooth said some of his teammates competed very well, but others need to work on being more aggressive.

Please see TRACK, Page 19



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior Katrina Biermann picked up two first-place finishes at Saturday's Iowa Hawkeye Open.