



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Head coach Joe Nedelec said the roller hockey team had its two hardest practices of the season this past week.

Roller hockey returns with three matches

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Coaching in his last season before retirement, roller hockey head coach Joe Nedelec has one more thing to accomplish.

"I, personally, really want to have the best season we can possibly get in terms of the final," Nedelec said. "Every day I see two second-place regional trophies right there, and I'd like to see a first place for the regional and maybe a national trophy displayed here at Truman."

The hockey sticks and pucks have laid dormant since Nov. 16 — the last time the roller hockey team skated out to play in a game. A 4-2-1 record overall stands testament to the strong first half the Bulldogs had. Truman currently sits third in its division.

The first half is long gone, however. As the Bulldogs get ready to suit up for the second half of the season, they have one goal in mind: winning the regional and returning to the national tournament.

Winter Break kept the roller hockey team from playing together for more than a month. As a result, the Bulldogs are working hard to get back into shape.

"[We've been working on] a lot more conditioning at practice," senior goalie John Pecher said. "We're trying to get back into shape after the holidays. A lot of rigorous practice work, a lot of skating and just trying to find that chemistry again. I think it's going pretty well so far."

Nedelec said the team had its hardest two practices of the season last week to get the team ready to play deep into games.

"It's really about getting back into a physical condition where [the team] can play third-period hockey," Nedelec said. "You can't be tired in the third period, because that's when games are won and lost. That's basically what we've been doing, is getting the conditioning going."

The team also has been working on other basics, including puck control, power

plays and breakouts to be prepared for its first match of the second half of the season.

For the first game back, Truman squares off against Western Illinois University at 10 a.m. Saturday in St. Peters, Mo. The Fighting Leathernecks have not had a good showing this season, with an 0-8 record. After Saturday's matchup, the 'Dogs face St. Louis Community College at 8 a.m. Sunday. The Magic sits at 1-5-1 for the season.

"We got kind of lucky," captain and senior forward Drew Vandas said. "This is the first year I can remember that we haven't come back and gotten thrown in the fire in our first game. Our first game ... will hopefully be a nice game for us to warm up and get back into the flow of things."

The biggest challenge for the Bulldogs will be in their last match of the weekend. Long-time Div. I rival University of Missouri-St. Louis will be squaring off against the 'Dogs at 2 p.m. Sunday.

"[St. Louis Community

College] is a good team," Vandas said. "They've got a couple guys on their team that are really good, but they don't play well together. [UMSL is] one of the best teams in Div. I, so that's going to be just a hard-fought game."

Pecher said he thinks the Bulldogs have the tools to make a deep run into the playoffs.

"We're still ranked in the top 10 in the nation," Pecher said. "We've played well when we've had to. We want to win the regional championship as well. We've been to that game twice in the past two years and haven't been able to pull it off. I do think we're definitely a good enough team, especially with all the talent we've picked up, to win the national championship."

The Bulldogs are preparing themselves for another run at the national tournament. With a strong second half they hope to make a push at the regional tournament and maybe secure a national title for Nedelec as a parting gift.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Men's swimming: Stokes misses meet

Four-time national-qualifying men's swimmer Jason Stokes did not compete in the Bulldogs' meet Saturday at Missouri State University.

Head coach Mark Gole said Stokes did not compete because of a "violation of team rules." Gole said Stokes also will be sitting out the men's home meet Friday against Missouri University of Science and Technology. Stokes should be back in the water in time for the Bulldogs' conference meet in February, Gole said.

Stokes is the only men's swimmer who has an A-cut time in an individual event. Three other men have national-qualifying times via relays. In November, Stokes set the Pershing Natatorium pool record for the 50-yard freestyle.

MIAA: No vote yet on possible MIAA expansion

Conference officials have yet to vote on the possible expansion of the 11-team MIAA.

Rockhurst University and Lincoln University submitted bids to join the conference. Previously, there was talk that a vote might occur at the Jan. 14 to 17 NCAA National Convention, but the vote did not take place. Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering said he expects a vote to be conducted via e-mail by the end of this month.

Each school in the conference has a three-person representatives council, consisting of the school's athletic director, senior women's administrator and faculty athletic representative. These three officials from each school get to vote, totaling 33 votes.

Linda Anderson is Truman's senior women's administrator and Jeffrey Gall is Truman's faculty athletic representative.

Ultimately, however, the admission of any school comes down to the presidents of the conference's universities. Two-thirds of the presidents of the 11 MIAA schools must vote in favor of a school for it to be admitted.

Football: Work continues on field at Stokes

The AstroTurf GameDay Grass 3D installed for the 2008 football season has been rolled up as crews work to regrade and level the surface underneath.

Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering said he hopes to have the field project — which was supposed to be entirely finished before the football season — completed by Spring Break.

Wollmering said there are no problems with the turf itself and that the same turf used this season will be unrolled and used again next season. Wollmering said several people, including officials, commented during the season that the turf itself was high-quality.

Women's basketball: Stats don't tell true story

The women's basketball team is experiencing some statistical quirks this season. Entering last night's game, the Bulldogs rank fifth in the MIAA in field goal percentage, free throw percentage, blocked shots and assists, and third in defensive rebounds.

Turnovers continue to contribute most to the team's 4-13 record this season. Truman ranks last in the MIAA in turnovers with 20 per game and turnover, margin at -5.71. The turnovers also are affecting the Bulldogs' points per game. Truman is last in the conference in this category, averaging 61 points per game.

Men's basketball: Offense will impact future

Head men's basketball coach Jack Schrader said the recent changes to the offense will benefit the Bulldogs in the future, partly because big men freshman Vesko Vilchev and sophomores Dave Scott and Andrew James have two to three years left at Truman.

The new offense involves one player on the inside and four on the outside, contrary to the three-out, two-in system the team has historically run.

"Having Vesko and Dave and James for the next few years, I think this is the way we go in the future, because I think it really allows them to use their strengths, and it allows all of our other players to still play," Schrader said.

Schrader said the older offense was more ideal for undersized post players, such as senior forward Patrick Fandja.

Two 'Dogs meet in 285-pound final at open

Swedenhjelm defeats Braidlow in final, but four 'Dogs suffer injuries

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Last weekend saw the coming together of the old and the new for the Bulldogs.

The Central College (Iowa) Open provided a place for newcomer, senior Andy Swedenhjelm, to make his presence known. Swedenhjelm was a nose tackle for the football team his past four years at Truman, but joined the wrestling team at the beginning of this semester.

Swedenhjelm won the 285-pound weight class. He took his first three matches by pinfall. None of those matches lasted longer than the three and a half minutes it took for Swedenhjelm to unseat top-seeded Ryan Groom of NAIJA's William Penn

University (Iowa). The matches preceding the upset were finished in 52 seconds and 1:07.

Winning these matches led to a showdown with teammate junior Loyde Braidlow. The new and the old squared off, but it ended with Swedenhjelm winning 7-2.

"It shows a lot [about] them," freshman 125-pounder James Crone said. "[It shows] that they will compete against each other and push each other to be better wrestlers all the time."

Braidlow had an impressive run to the championship match as well. In his first match, Braidlow squared off against the No. 2 seed Zach Rosol from North Iowa Area Community College. Braidlow defeated him by a score of 6-2. Braidlow also defeated the No. 3 seed, Spencer Bauer of Bacon College, 6-3, on his way to the final, which he lost.

"The heavyweights, it was awesome watching them in the finals,"

junior 135-pounder Mitchell Bainbridge said.

Redshirt freshman 125-pounder Jeremy Minter also had a good showing at the meet. Minter, the No. 2 seed in his bracket, won his first three matches and advanced to the semi-finals in his weight bracket. He lost to the No. 3 seed by a narrow margin of 2-1.

The open also saw four Bulldog wrestlers go down with injuries. Head coach David Schutter said the injured wrestlers will be out for at least a week and up to three weeks for some of them.

Among the injured 'Dogs were red-shirt junior 165-pounder Bryan Isbell

and redshirt freshman 174-pounder Chad Kurvoski, who had to be taken to the hospital for stitches because of an eye injury sustained during the meet.

Swedenhjelm and Braidlow were the only Bulldogs who brought home placings from the open, and Minter was the only other who advanced as far as the semi-finals.

This meet was another mark on the Bulldogs' already tough season.

"We're facing a lot of adversity right now, a lot of frustration," Schutter said. "[It was] kind of expected. We're in a rebuilding year ...

so you're going to have some adversity and some frustration. You're go-

"The heavyweights, it was awesome watching them in the finals."

Mitchell Bainbridge
Junior wrestler, on watching teammates senior Andy Swedenhjelm and junior Loyde Braidlow in the 285-pound final

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