

SPORTS

WEEKEND WINS

Women's tennis beats two MIAA opponents

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Vlcko in, Carrier out

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Sports Editor

Aaron Vlcko will have a new job title for the 2009 Truman football season, but the Bulldogs' interim head coach for next season said he doesn't plan to change the offensive or defensive strategies.

"One of the things we're looking forward to this year is not having a lot of change on both sides of the football, which we, in turn, hope will allow our kids to play faster and more confident," Vlcko said.

Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering announced last Thursday that head coach Shannon Cur-

rier's contract will not be renewed for next season and that Vlcko, who was offensive coordinator for the past four seasons, will be the interim head coach.

"I just came to the professional decision that we needed new leadership in our program," Wollmering said.

Wollmering said Vlcko will lead Truman in spring practice, which starts Monday, and Vlcko officially will become interim head coach July 1 when Carrier's contract ends.

Wollmering said that after the 2009 season ends, he will begin the search for a permanent head coach.

"Immediately after the season we'll conduct an open-wide

search and get it done," Wollmering said. "We obviously want to get it done as soon as possible, so when we head into recruiting in December and January that we're not hanging with an interim tag on somebody because obviously that's going to be hard for recruiting."

Wollmering said he expects Vlcko to be among the candidates for head coach after the 2009 season.

"We wouldn't have given him this interim tag if we didn't think he would be a strong candidate or we didn't think he was capable of leading the program," Wollmering said. "I know he wants it for the long term, and he has a great past, so that's definitely part of the equation."

When Vlcko came to Truman prior to the 2005 season, he inherited an offense that averaged less

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Aaron Vlcko

The Coach Stat Sheet

Shannon Carrier:

- Truman head coach from 2004-2008
- 20-35 overall record
- Best seasons were 6-5 in 2006 and 2007
- 52-47 career coaching record

Aaron Vlcko:

- Truman offensive coordinator from 2005-08
- Bemidji St. (Minn.) assistant coach from 1996-2003
- Bulldog offense averaged 344 yds/game in 2008, sixth in MIAA




Design by Cameron Ballentine/ Index



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Sophomore left-handed pitcher Kyle Veazey took a one-hitter into the seventh inning in the first game Saturday, a 3-2 loss against Pittsburg University. At one point Veazey retired 18 straight. The 'Dogs won one out of four against the Gorillas.

Baseball wins 1 of 4 at PSU

Bulldogs outlasted in 43-run affair in Game 4, Staihr garners ANOTHER win

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

The baseball team scored a season-high 20 runs Sunday — and still lost.

With the help of a strong wind blowing toward the outfield fence, Pittsburg State University tied an MIAA record with nine home runs and defeated the Bulldogs 23-20.

The loss was part of a 1-3 weekend that dropped the Bulldogs' record to 5-23, 4-12 in the MIAA.

The game was wild from the outset. Despite scoring 20 runs, the Bulldogs played from behind for most of the game. Truman led 7-4 going into the bottom of the third inning when Pitt exploded for eight runs, including three home runs and six extra-base hits. The offensive montage included two home runs in the inning by Pitt State shortstop Rhett Rigby. He tied an MIAA record with home runs in four consecutive at bats. The Bulldogs never

led throughout the rest of the game.

"Honestly I wasn't really worried," head coach Dan Davis said. "I knew we were going to score a lot of runs that day. I didn't think we were going to give up 23, but at the same time I knew we were going to score a lot of runs. I never felt like we were really out of it."

The Bulldogs had the tying run at the plate in the ninth with only one out, but junior outfielder Keaton Jones and sophomore first-baseman Kevin Zukaitis flew out to center to end the game.

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Team 'shocked' by Carrier's non-renewal

'Dogs don't expect wins to drop with coaching switch

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Sports Editor

Junior linebacker Eric Sternberg suspected something important was going to be announced at last Thursday's 7 a.m. emergency team meeting. He just wasn't sure what the announcement would be.

Sternberg said head coach Shannon Carrier sent the team an e-mail last Wednesday afternoon calling the meeting. Carrier's announcement at Thursday morning's meeting that his contract was not being renewed for the 2009 season shocked the team, Sternberg said.

"Just the way the e-mail was, a lot of guys kind of thought there was going to be some pretty big news because it just wasn't Coach Carrier's normal e-mail," Sternberg said Monday. "But nobody really knew what was happening."

Junior wide receiver Vanness Emokpae said the news that Carrier would not be returning for next fall's season came as a total surprise to him.

"A bunch of the players were shocked," Emokpae said. "It was kind of like a blindside. ... I think it's pretty safe to say it was a complete surprise. Nobody that I know of saw it coming."

Both Emokpae and Sternberg said it will be difficult

not having Carrier on the sidelines next season, but they also agreed that interim head coach Aaron Vlcko is capable of leading the team to success. Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering announced last Thursday that Vlcko officially will take over as interim head coach July 1 when Carrier's contract ends (see related story, above).

Emokpae said the team received little information as to why the coaching change was made.

"I think it's pretty safe to say it was a complete surprise. Nobody I know of saw it coming."

Vanness Emokpae
Junior wide receiver

"The only information we had was that the [Director of Athletics] felt we needed to go in a different direction as far as leadership," Emokpae said. "... Other than that, there really hasn't been an explanation. It's not really our job to judge whether he's telling us the truth or anything.

It's just our job to accept it and move forward. Everyone at this point is trying to look forward."

The transition from Carrier to Vlcko came less than two weeks before the opening of spring practice, which starts Monday. Emokpae said the transition will be made easier because most of the coaching staff other than Carrier is set to return for the 2009 season and because the team is already familiar with Vlcko.

"I don't think it will be detrimental," Emokpae said. "It might set us back a little bit, but I'm pretty sure we'll be able to recover because we hired from within, and we didn't bring in a whole new staff or anything."

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Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Senior Stephanie Johnson follows through on a line drive earlier this season. Johnson pitched five innings in a 4-0 defeat against Wayne State last Sunday. The 'Dogs did not win a game last weekend.

Softball drops four

Team record drops to 8-15, Bulldogs open MIAA play this weekend

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

The number four has been the source of mixed fortunes for the softball team lately.

Last weekend, the Bulldogs played in the Missouri Western tournament, where they played four games and lost all four. The tournament brought an end to Truman's four-game win streak. The Bulldogs' record now stands at 8-15.

During the tournament, the Bulldogs lost two games by at least four runs, while only scoring a total of four runs during the entire weekend. The offense stranded at least four runners

on base in each game.

The softball team started its weekend with a rematch against Quincy University, which it had played twice the previous week. The result was a slim QU victory, 4-3. In their next game, the Bulldogs lost 8-0 to Concordia University-St. Paul.

Sunday, the 'Dogs lost a close game to Upper Iowa University, 2-1. The team ended the weekend on a sour note, when it was shut out 4-0 against Wayne State University (Mich.).

"We just didn't play very well this weekend," head coach Erin Brown said. "We didn't hit very well, and we could get better on the mound, too. ... I think that overall you hate to go 4-0 [losses to wins]. ... I think we could have beaten all those teams this weekend if we would've played to our potential."

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