

## Basketball Cash



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Men's basketball head coach Jack Schrader (left) presents a check for \$1,000 to freshman William Jenkins of Beta Theta Pi, which won first place in the Bombs Away promotion. Beta Theta Pi can apply the money toward its organization. Bombs Away was a tournament-style three-point competition, in which teams competed during media timeouts in home men's basketball games.

## SOFTBALL | Offensive struggles continue for team heading into conference play

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Problems started early for the Bulldogs when they allowed a three-run homer to QU in the first inning. It was a deficit the Bulldogs could not come back from.

In their next game the Bulldogs were out-hit by a margin of 11-4. Aside from the home run that Concordia hit in the third inning, the game was mostly Concordia playing small ball and pushing runners across the plate with timely hitting.

The Bulldogs out-hit Upper Iowa but were unable to get their runners home. Despite being out-hit, UIU got hits when runners were in scoring position and captured a narrow victory.

Wayne State out-hit the 'Dogs, 8-3. Wayne State hit a two-run homer that put the Warriors up permanently in the fourth inning.

Last weekend highlighted many of Truman's weaknesses. The Bulldogs walked only six times the entire weekend. Currently, the Bulldogs have the lowest team batting average (.224), team on-base percentage (.270) and slugging percentage (.280) in the MIAA. The team is next-to-last in walks drawn in with 29.

"It seems as like everyone as a whole, instead of individuals, are going through a slump," senior third baseman Rebekah Shea said. "I don't know if we just feed off of each other. We didn't have horrible at-bats. We made good solid contact with the ball. Sometimes it seems the luck is kind of against us."

Brown said she was unsure of the reason for the current offensive slump.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Stephanie Johnson was saddled with two of the weekend losses.

"I feel like we work on [hitting] more than anything else in practice because I know that we need to improve upon it," Brown said. "I wish I could figure [out our hitting problems], because in practice we hit the ball well, in pre-game we hit the ball well."

Brown said despite the team's current offensive troubles, she does not want to tone down the team's approach at the plate. She said most of the pitchers the team faces are consistently working in the zone, so trying to draw more walks would hurt the Bulldogs more than it would help them.

These early-season struggles might not be a huge impediment to the team, however. None of the games Truman

has played so far have been in the MIAA, so the Bulldogs still have a clean slate in conference play.

All that will change this weekend. The team will begin conference play against Emporia State University on Sunday. The Bulldogs then travel to Topeka, Kan., for a double-header against Washburn University on Monday.

"It's our first conference games, so people are going to be slightly more focused and serious about it than what we have [been]," senior outfielder Dani Mayer said. "Not to say the other games weren't important, but at the same time, you get a different mindset when you're going into your conference game."

## SHOCKED | Players say Currier was well-liked by players, team ready to play for Vlcko

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Although the current players were informed of the coaching switch Thursday morning, Phillip McKinnon, who signed a national letter of intent to play with Truman next fall, said incoming players have not received any announcement from the University that a coaching change was made.

McKinnon said he received a text message from fellow recruit Erik Stone that Vlcko would replace Currier as head coach in 2009. McKinnon said that even if he had known Currier would not be Truman's head coach next season, he still would have come to play football for the Bulldogs.

"I think I would have come to Truman anyway because the school sells itself," McKinnon said. "But I really

liked Coach Currier."

McKinnon said Vlcko was the coach who recruited him and that he thinks Vlcko should help the team succeed.

"I feel comfortable around him, and I think he has a lot to bring," McKinnon said.

Truman's entire 2009 roster consists of players recruited by Currier, and Sternberg said it's tough to lose a coach like Currier, who Sternberg said was well-liked by the players.

"I've been with Coach Currier my whole career here," Sternberg said.

"It's kind of hard, and he's been really helpful with me throughout my ca-

reer, and I'm sure a lot of other guys too. So it's kind of hard to lose a guy,

like that because he's a really good guy and he was willing to help us with anything."

Even so, Sternberg said he doesn't think the coaching change will prevent the Bulldogs from being successful in 2009.

"I don't think anybody should doubt the way our football team is going [to] perform next year just because of this," Sternberg said. "I think Coach Vlcko is really qualified, and he's going to bring us a lot of victories."

**"I don't think anybody should doubt the way our football team is going [to] perform next year because of this."**

**Vanness Emokpae**  
Junior wide receiver

## VLCKO | Team averaged 28.7 pts/game in '08

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than 18 points per game in 2003 and 2004 combined. In Vlcko's four years as offensive coordinator, Truman's offense averaged more than 24 points per game. The offense had its most productive seasons under Vlcko in 2007 and 2008, when the Bulldogs averaged 28.7 and 26.5 points per game, respectively.

Vlcko was part of a schematic change before the 2006 season that saw the Bulldogs switch to the spread offense, which relies heavily on the shotgun formation and spreads several receivers out wide.

Vlcko said he does not plan to change Truman's offensive or defensive schematics next season. He intends to continue handling the play-calling duties next year, he said. Despite the coaching change, Vlcko said he thinks the program is stable because, for the most part, there has been little turnover of the coaching staff during the offseason.

No offensive coach left after 2008, and for the first time since 2004-05, Truman will have the same defensive coordinator for two consecutive seasons.

"I think it will be a smooth transition, at least on the offensive side of the ball — and the defensive side of the ball — because the full coaching staff besides Coach Currier is going to be intact," junior wide receiver Vanness Emokpae said. "As far as the offensive standpoint, [Vlcko] kind of implemented our system, so there won't be anything new. I think we'll kind of pick up where we left off."

In addition to Currier, defen-

sive line coach Nathan Holtz will not be returning to the coaching staff for the 2009 season. Currier said Holtz resigned earlier this year.

Vlcko said Currier helped coach the defensive positions. Because of this, when the program looks to add a coach after Currier's contract ends July 1, Vlcko said the need for an additional coach will come on the defensive side of the ball. Vlcko said he does not intend to add an offensive coordinator from outside the program and that if someone is awarded the offensive coordinator title, it will be an offensive coach already working for the program.

"[Currier] was the head coach coaching on defense," Vlcko said. "Now I'll be a head coach coaching on offense. So the guy we need to hire is defensive."

Currier compiled a 20-35 record in five seasons as the Bulldogs' head coach, including a 16-17 record from 2006-08. Currier was a part of six recruiting classes. His two largest classes were in 2008, when 32 players signed, and 2009, when 33 players signed.

Before coming to Truman, Currier had a 32-12 record in four seasons as head coach at Concordia University-St. Paul.

"I don't have anything negative to say," Currier said. "I really have been treated really well. I've been supported by the community, the students, the players. It's been a lot of fun. I'm hoping it's not been too fun to make my next experience seem really depressing. I do really think it's been a great place for me for the last five years."

## BASEBALL | 23-20 game sets run records

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"[It was] definitely one of the strangest games I've ever been involved in," freshman catcher Devon Myers said. "Our coaches talk about us scoring six to eight runs as hitters [and] we are going to win the game most of the time. Sunday, that was pretty far from the truth."

Seven Bulldogs recorded at least two hits and five 'Dogs had at least five RBIs. Myers and freshman designated hitter Logan Frame each drove in five.

The Bulldogs also were helped out by five Pitt State errors. During the four-game series, the Gorillas committed nine errors.

"It was just a constant battle for our hitters to try and keep producing runs," freshman shortstop Steven Rose said. "We tried to do the most we could to get our team back in the game, but in a game like that all you can do is try to produce as many runs as possible and hope that pitchers get it done."

Bulldog pitchers took a beating throughout the game. Trimble took the loss, giving up four runs on five hits in 0.2 innings. Sophomore Eric Radel was the only Bulldog to pitch more than two innings. He threw 2.1 innings and allowed six runs on seven hits.

"We've been talking about this all year," Davis said. "They've got to pitch downhill. We keep giving up fly-ball outs. Eventually that's going to catch up with you. One of the things you have to do when the wind is blowing out is you have to pitch in. And No. 2 is you have to pitch at the knees."

In the nightcap Saturday, the Bulldogs got another strong outing from sophomore Michael Stair. The right-hander allowed three runs (two earned) in five innings and picked up his second victory of the season as Truman won its only game of the series 10-5.

Sophomore center fielder Kenny Swanson and Jones had two hits apiece. They were the only Bulldogs to collect multiple hits. The Bulldogs finished with a season-high four errors while garnering 10 hits.

In the first game on Saturday, the Bulldogs lost a pitchers' duel. Sophomore left-hander Kyle Veazey took a one-hitter into the bottom of the seventh and final inning, before Pitt State exploded for three runs and five hits to take the game 3-2.

Truman, which had just four hits, scored single tallies in the second and seventh innings to take a 2-0 lead. Pitt responded

in the bottom half of the seventh with a leadoff single, followed by a home run to center field by Austin Kirkwood. Davis stuck with Veazey and Pitt played small ball to finish the comeback. Right fielder Jason Murphy singled and advanced Murphy to second on a sacrifice bunt. Shortstop Rhett Rigby singled to left, followed by the game-winning single by John Chaisson.

The Bulldogs step out of conference this week and will play Maryville University at 2 p.m. Friday at the Truman Baseball Park. The 'Dogs then will hit the road to play Lincoln University at 1 p.m. Tuesday in Jefferson City.

**"We keep giving up fly-ball outs. Eventually that's going to catch up with you."**

**Dan Davis**  
Head Coach

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