

Streak of wrestling national qualifiers stopped at six

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

The sun set over Pershing Arena on Sunday as the Truman wrestling season came to an end.

The Bulldogs failed to place any wrestlers in the top four of their weight class at the NCAA Div. II Super Regional 2. The team will be without a national qualifier for the first time in seven seasons.

"It definitely hurts a lot, not getting a national qualifier," head coach Dave Schutter said. "Without having Blake [Peterson] back, who was ranked No. 1 in the nation and a two-time All-American really hurts, but we'll get past it. We've been past it before, and we'll rebuild and be as strong as before."

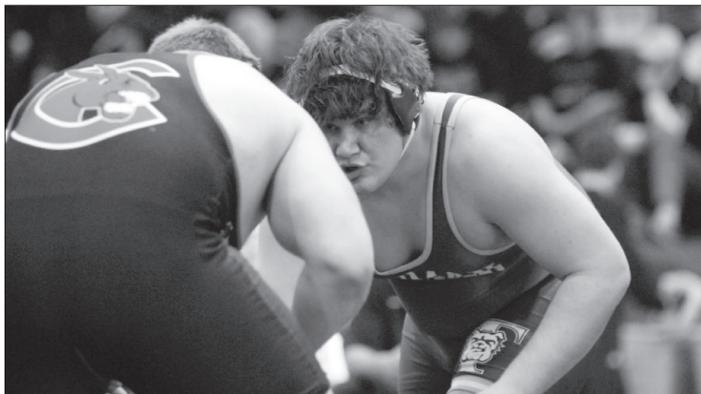
Truman finished eighth out of nine teams Saturday with 16 points. The University of Nebraska-Omaha earned the regional championship with 162.5 points, claiming first place in five weight classes.

"We knew it was going to be a tough regional ... with Omaha coming into the region this year," Schutter said. "It was just a rough day."

With the day dwindling, junior heavyweight Loyde Braidlow became the last Bulldog standing with a chance to reach the top four. Braidlow was 1-1 thus far in the tournament and needed just one more win to secure a spot in the third-place match. Standing in Braidlow's way was returning All-American, No. 4 Travis Clark of Findlay University (Ohio).

Clark defeated Braidlow 6-5 in the fourth overtime period to bring an end to Truman's season. Both wrestlers scored reversals in the second overtime and no points were scored in the first or third overtimes. In the fourth and deciding overtime period, both wrestlers again scored reversals. But Clark earned the win because of accumulated ride time.

"It comes down to seconds and that kid's an All-American before and will probably be



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior heavyweight Loyde Braidlow (right) finished one place away from nationals.

an All-American this year," Schutter said. "Loyde's right there, and we knew going in that it was going to be really tough, really deep."

Braidlow said Clark was more effective in preventing his quick escape attempts in overtime.

"[He] grabbed my leg there when I got my stand-up and that just took time," Braidlow said. "I grabbed his leg, and he was able to get away before I was and that was match pretty much."

Braidlow wrestled another four-overtime match against No. 3 Cody Beck of Central Missouri in the first round. Braidlow and Beck had wrestled in overtime contests twice during the regular season with Beck winning both times.

It was no different at the regional tournament as both men scored an escape in the fourth overtime and Beck did so in less time, forcing Braidlow to try to score quickly and when Braidlow went for a takedown, Beck was able to counter it and take Braidlow down for two points and the win.

"I just didn't ride well on top today," Braidlow said. "I gave up more ride time than the other guy and that was the match in those two matches I lost."

Braidlow defeated Jon Trembl of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in the second round of the tournament, 3-1 in overtime, to ensure that he would place in the top six.

Braidlow rounded out the tournament with a forfeit victory against the University of Indianapolis' Lynn Panko in the fifth-place match.

Braidlow went into the tournament ranked sixth, but said he could have been ranked fourth or fifth just as easily. He said there really wasn't a bad wrestler in the division.

"It was a battle all day between everybody here," Braidlow said. "This is the best Div. II has to offer."

Freshman Chad Kurvoski had Truman's second-best finish, placing sixth at 184 pounds with a 1-3 record in the tournament. Kurvoski pinned No. 6 Keith Smith of the University of Indianapolis in the second round to earn his place in the top six.

No. 3 Hiram Smith defeated Kurvoski 9-5 in the fifth-place match. Schutter said Kurvoski was in contention to win the match the whole time.

"That shows Chad's got a lot of potential and can hopefully

be an All-American before he's out of here," Schutter said.

Braidlow and Kurvoski were the only Bulldogs to place at the tournament. Six of the Bulldogs' 10 wrestlers were eliminated in their first two matches.

Junior Dean Schultz recorded a 1-2 record at the tournament at 174 pounds, falling just short of the placing round. Schultz defeated Newman University's Bradan Ewert 5-1 in his second match of the day.

Schultz needed one more win to break into the placing round, but was beaten 6-4 by No. 5 Jeffery Havelka of Findlay in the fourth overtime period.

Like Braidlow, Schultz was behind on ride time and was forced to go for a quick takedown, but he gave up a takedown to Havelka in the effort.

"He knew I was going to come, and he was waiting," Schultz said. "I had to try something. I couldn't just sit there and let the match end."

Schultz suffered a series of injuries during the season and said he wasn't nearly as healthy as he would have liked to be going into the tournament.

This closes a rough year for the young Bulldogs team, but plenty of wrestlers will be returning next season.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Baseball: Barton dismissed from team

Senior right-handed pitcher A.J. Barton has been dismissed from the baseball team for violating team rules. Barton pitched in two games this season but has not pitched since the Feb. 20 loss to Drury University in Springfield, Mo. In his two appearances, he gave up a total of three earned runs in three innings of work.

Head coach Dan Davis had no comment on the matter.

Barton used a medical redshirt last season to rehab his throwing arm, after pitching the previous three seasons. He rehabilitated during the offseason to prepare for this year. Barton said he changed his academic schedule and picked up another major so he could stay at Truman and play baseball this year.

Barton led Truman in wins in 2006 and 2007. As a sophomore in 2006, he finished 3-4 with a 4.80 ERA. In 2007, he started eight games and finished with a 3-2 record and 5.01 ERA.

Softball: Weekend tournament cancelled

The Bulldog softball team was set to play a tournament in Joplin, Mo., last weekend, but the area received more than an inch and a half of snow Friday and Saturday. The temperature was cold enough that the snow would not melt, making field conditions impossible for play. The tournament will not be rescheduled.

To make up for lost playing time, the softball team will play the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside at UMSL on Friday. The team then will take off for Texas, where it will play against St. Edwards University and St. Mary's University.

Women's Basketball: Medina return unlikely

Senior guard Eli Medina was honored during Senior Day Saturday, but she still has the option of playing for the Bulldogs next year if she chooses to.

This season was Medina's only year to compete for the women's basketball team. She also played for Truman's volleyball team four years. Medina will graduate this spring, but she could return to the basketball team next fall if she decides to take graduate courses. Medina has a year of basketball eligibility left.

"We're hoping [she'll come back]," head coach Michael Smith said after Saturday's game. "Obviously we don't want to pressure her into that, but the option is there for her. I'd love to have her another year in my program."

After Saturday's game, Medina said she was leaning toward not returning to Truman next year.

"I've thought about it, I've talked to Coach Smith about it, [but] I'm just kind of ready to graduate I think," she said.

Medina joined the team in December following the end of her volleyball career. She appeared in 21 games and started in eight games this season.

She averaged 2.7 points and 3 rebounds per game and played a key defensive role for Truman, especially down the stretch. In Saturday's win against the University of Central Missouri, Medina scored four points, had four steals and grabbed six rebounds.

Men's Basketball: Estridge high on two lists

Senior guard Banks Estridge ended his four-year basketball career on the Truman leaderboard for all-time steals and assists.

Estridge finished seventh in assists with 319 and sixth in steals with 142. He started every game but one for the last three seasons and saw time in about two-thirds of the games his freshman year.

Estridge needed a stellar performance last Saturday against the University of Central Missouri to move up the lists. He recorded six assists, but he needed three more to tie alumnus Chip Sodemann for fifth all-time. Sodemann was the starting point guard for four years before Estridge.

For steals, Estridge finishes five shy of Brian Basich for fifth all-time. Basich played from 1992-96.

'Dogs lose 7-4 but still qualify for nationals

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Shattered glass was the perfect metaphor for the Bulldogs' roller hockey team last weekend.

After advancing with ease through the first three rounds of the regional tournament last weekend, the Bulldogs lost 7-4 in the championship to Missouri State University on Sunday.

During the second period against MSU, senior defender Neil Bales took an MSU player into the glass boards that surround the rink.

"This kid that [Bales] pushed into the boards must've just hit with his shoulder at the right angle, and the glass just exploded," senior goalie John Pecher said. "It didn't just kind of break and fall out. It shattered."

The damage to the rink was severe enough that the game had to be stopped and moved to another rink so that repairs could be made. The teams had to wait five to 10 minutes before they could resume play on another rink and Bales received a penalty once play had resumed.

All this occurred as the Bulldogs were mounting a comeback. After a rough start, the team narrowed the

lead to one goal. Senior Drew Vandas described Bales' hit as a turning point in the game.

"It was kind of weird," Vandas said. "It was the first time, probably, for most of the guys on the team that they've ever had to stop in the middle of a game. ... The flow of the game changed right there. I thought we had built up some momentum, and when that happened everything was kind of stopped."

Despite the loss to MSU, the Bulldogs received a bid late Monday night and will be heading to the National Tournament in early April.

The game against MSU was the culmination of what was otherwise another strong weekend for the Bulldogs. Although everything had gone well for them before their final game, at the end, everything broke.

The Bulldogs capped off their regular season last Saturday with a close 4-3 victory against Washington University. The team also dominated in its first two tournament games. The Bulldogs received a bye to the second round of the tournament after they captured the top spot in the regional standings. The team flew past Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

11-1. Truman also broke out in the third period and won against St. Louis University, 10-2.

But each game took its toll on the Bulldogs. During the preceding week, many of the members of the team became ill. This prevented many of them from practicing and preparing for the upcoming tournament. By the time the Bulldogs reached the championship game, their style of play was much different from usual.

"No matter how much preparation you make beforehand, if your baseline is so low in terms of health, it's hard to do something in the game," head coach Joe Nedelec said. "Having said that, they performed exceedingly well despite a lot of them being sick. You don't want to chalk up excuses, but these are variables which impacted upon that score."

Nedelec said many members of the team were tired by the time the game came around and were unable to out-skate MSU as they had other teams during the season. The team was unable to pull off many of the other fundamentals. The Bulldogs were not able to execute many clean passes, run the breakout or run plays, among other things.

"We did not play very disciplined," Pecher said. "... I was guilty of kind of psyching myself out for it, as much as I tried to play it like it was any other game. It was a pretty emotional game being my last one as a senior."

Penalties also hobbled the Bulldogs against MSU. Truman had 24 minutes of penalties in the 36-minute game. This allowed MSU to score five power-play goals on the 'Dogs, a large factor in

Truman's defeat. The 24 minutes of penalties were the most the Bulldogs have incurred since their fight-ridden third game of the season against Lindenwood University.

Regardless of their performance in the final game of the regional tournament, the Bulldogs will bring their otherwise dominant résumé into the national tournament. Their offense features three of the top five goal scorers in the Great Plains region. Vandas, senior Truman Patterson and freshman Cody Dependahl tied for second in the region with 19 goals each. Senior Jim Dougherty leads in assists (31), and Dependahl ranks third (26).

Pecher is a top-notch goalie, ranking among the top five in four defensive categories. He ranked first in wins (15), second in goals against average (2.82), fourth in saves (269) and third in save percentage (.838).

The team has time to prepare for the April 2 to 5 National Tournament, which takes place in Feasterville, Penn. The Bulldogs plan to arrive early to the tournament and get some playing time on a larger rink so they won't have to adjust once they start actual play.

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Drew Vandas

On play being stopped because of a glass board getting shattered



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