

## TRACK | Three members of team will compete at national meet March 13 to 14 in Houston, Texas

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accomplished by former Bulldog Beth Lubbering in 2000. Sophomore sprinter Neosha Hayes placed fifth in the 60-meter dash, a finish Cochrane said was surprising.

Atwood also finished with a provisional mark in the shot put with a throw of 15.92 meters. Atwood said he was mentally ready to take on the competition and stayed consistent in his warm up routine to prepare.

"[The level of competition] was really top heavy," Atwood said. "The top four were high up on the national list, and two of them did not do very well, so I had to take advantage of that and move up."

Atwood was ranked sixth in the shot put

and placed fourth overall. Other top performances included freshman jumper Cody Walker and sophomore thrower Alex Van Delft. Walker placed fourth in the long and triple jumps. These finishes made him the only freshman to place in the jumping events. Van Delft threw a personal best of 15.55 meters in the shot put, 0.07 meters from scoring.

Cochrane said that although some of the distance runners on the men's side did not place, they still ran very well. Sophomore distance runner Josh Mantooth placed eighth in the 3,000-meter run with a time of 8:44.03, less than three seconds behind a scoring position.



Photo Submitted by Tim Barcus

Junior Kendra Brunkow is a five-time All-American, including one national champion.

## WOMEN | Improved training and suits should better times

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gained quite a few freshmen and consistently has proven itself as a threat throughout the year. Each of the three top teams are swimming faster than they ever have.

"This meet is going to be the fastest meet in Div. II history," Gole said. "From top to bottom, it already looks that way going in, and what happens at that meet every year [is] it ends up being significantly faster than the times that are coming in."

Reynolds said swimmers of all ages are getting faster, not only because of better training but because of the new suit that was legalized this year and its effect on the performance of every swimmer that wears it.

The three top teams also have to keep in mind the possibility of swimmers from other schools stepping up in one or two races and throwing off the balance of power.

"It could get crazy with a lot of other teams maybe

[having] one or two good swimmers that jump over and push another team down," Gole said. "It could be an extremely wild ride, and it is a meet we're going to have to almost take one session at a time. We have to be able to handle and evaluate what happens after every session and shift towards focusing on the next one really quick."

Junior Kate Aherne said the Bulldogs are going to be very strong in both the individual medleys, the 1,650-yard freestyle and the other distance races, and that the key to performing well will be staying focused and trying not to get overwhelmed at such a huge meet. Aherne said she is expecting to race three relays, which are crucial for the overall team score because they are worth double the points of individual events.

"Relays are definitely going to play a huge part [in determining the champions]," Aherne said.

Reynolds and Gole said everyone on each team would have to contribute points for their teams to come out victorious because the top three projected teams seem to be so closely in line with each other.

"I think that [the championship] is going to come down to the team that performs the best, or swims its best, as far as everyone on their team producing fully," Reynolds said. "You won't be able to have a few kids not perform well if you expect to win."

Gole agreed with Reynolds and said Truman swimmers needed to put up points all across the board, from the first to the last ranked, for the team to have a repeat victory.

"I told the team the other day that if we are going to be successful at this meet, every single swimmer needs to contribute individually," Gole said. "It is going to be a challenge. It has got to be a total team effort."



Photo submitted by Tim Barcus

Senior Erika Anderson (front left) has been a leader and mentor to some of the Bulldogs' younger swimmers, such as sophomore Emily Buss (front right).

## ANDERSON | Senior has two seventh place national finishes

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ranked in the top 30 in all four events, but carries her highest ranking, 10th, in the 200 IM.

Those rankings haven't done anything to change the way Erika views the events, other than to make her gun even harder for a win.

"People will look at those rankings and think, 'OK, this girl — I need to beat this girl,' and so I think, 'I can't let that person beat me,'" she said. "I think that even if I was on the bottom of those rankings I'd still have the same motive to beat as many people as possible."

In three trips to the national meet, Erika never has finished higher than seventh place, which she accomplished in both the 100- and 200-meter breaststroke last year.

As the end of her Truman career approaches, Erika said she views it as her responsibility to remind younger teammates what it means to be a Bulldog, to prepare them for what they'll experience at nationals and keep a positive atmosphere.

"I just like to keep relaying that message and trying to stay positive, especially in practice," she said.

Sophomore Emily Buss has heard that message before and not just in the pool. As a fellow breaststroker and Erika's weightlifting partner, Buss said Erika always has known exactly what to do and say to make Buss push herself.

"She loves the sport of swimming and she is so passionate about the sport of swimming, and she is so passionate about the team," Buss said.

Buss said Erika's influence on her college swimming career stems back to her initial recruiting trip to Truman. When Buss returned home, she found a two-page typed Facebook message detailing why Buss should come to Truman. Erika was the author.

"She actually sought me out and sent me this message and showed me how much she cared," Buss said. "[That was] a good indication of her character and how much she cares about the team."

Head coach Mark Gole said Erika is a positive role model for the rest of the team just because of what she does on a daily basis.

"I think this year is finally the year that she's gone 100 percent right from the get-go," he said. "She's been probably one of our consistent top trainers in anything from free to IM stroke. I think this year, too, my expectations for her have risen, and she's stepped up to them."

Now that Erika is the sole Anderson on Truman's team, Gole said she has moved out of her sister's shadow and come into her own, and she still can provide some rivalry to her teammates.

"I think the one thing about her is that you can't tell her that she can't do something or you don't think she can do something, because once she thinks that somebody thinks that way about her she'll do everything she can to prove you wrong," Gole said. "I like that about her as a competitor."

**"I think this year, too, my expectations for her have risen, and she's stepped up to them."**

**Mark Gole**  
Head Coach

## MEN | Four of seven qualifiers will be making first career trip to nationals

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my last opportunity to perform well before I retire. I'm excited to go, and if we do well, I'll be stoked."

Freshman Eric Kaestner looks to end his strong rookie season with a solid national meet. This year, he earned A cuts in four different events. The 100-yard butterfly is one of his best events, and he currently has the ninth-fastest time in Div. II.

Kaestner also will team up with Stokes and the McCall brothers for the 200-yard freestyle relay. This relay will be one of the top events for the Bulldogs. The relay qualified for nationals during the Indiana Hoo-

sierland meet and has been solid ever since. Peter McCall and Stokes said the team has been working on starts, turns and handoffs in preparation for the relay.

**"I'm excited to go, and if we do well, I'll be stoked."**

**Peter McCall**  
Junior

Senior Andrew Berdine is making his first trip to the national meet after four years with the Bulldogs. He earned three A cuts, and his strongest event is the 400-yard individual medley. He has the eighth-fastest time in Div. II in this event.

Freshman Brian Tillis and sophomore Paul Wanamaker also qualified for the national meet. Wanamaker earned his A cut while swimming with the 200-yard

medley relay. Tillis received his A cut in the 1650-yard freestyle during the Last Chance Meet, becoming the only swimmer in Truman history to qualify for nationals during the Last Chance Meet.

Head coach Mark Gole said he is excited to have more depth at nationals this year. He also said Truman's relays always have been strong, but adding some individual qualifiers into the mix will allow them to score more points.

"Based on seeds alone, Jason Stokes, Eric Kaestner, Andrew Berdine and Brian Tillis have the best opportunities to score individual points," Gole said. "If we get any [points] out of anybody else, I will do cartwheels on the pool deck. I'm kidding about the cartwheels, but it will be a huge bonus."

## National Bound



The men's swimming team will send seven swimmers to nationals this year:

**Jason Stokes**  
**Peter McCall**  
**Andrew McCall**  
**Eric Kaestner**  
**Andrew Berdine**  
**Paul Wanamaker**  
**Brian Tillis**

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