

# Trio of wrestlers place at Open

**Isbell, Bader and Braidlow all claim top-six finishes**

BY ARRON HUSTEAD  
Staff Reporter

The wrestling team started the season on a positive note last weekend.

Three Bulldogs placed at the Lindenwood Open in St. Charles, Mo., last weekend, with junior Bryan Isbell finishing second in the 165-pound division. Juniors Andy Bader and Loyde Braidlow placed fifth and sixth respectively.

"Everything was clicking for me for some reason," Isbell said. "I was able to keep them from scoring points. I just felt really good and was able to control my matches to a point where I was able to win some of the ones that were real close."

Isbell competed in the 184-pound weight class last season before dropping down to the 165-pound division this year. He said 165 pounds is a more natural weight for him to wrestle at and that he has more of an advantage in the lighter class.

"Everybody was huge, and I couldn't really do much to those guys," Isbell said. "Now, I'm wrestling guys

more my weight, and I'm able to control them a lot more and do a lot more with it."

Isbell was scheduled to take on No. 1 seed Chris Jones of Oklahoma City University in the first round, but Jones failed to make it to the mats for the match. Jones forfeited his second match of the day also.

Isbell picked up the win in each of his first four matches, including a victory against the University of Oklahoma's Marcus Armato 9-3 in the quarterfinals. Isbell lost 3-2 to Donald Woods of St. Louis Community College in the final round. Isbell said fatigue was the factor that cost him the final match.

"Bryan was solid all day long," head coach Dave Schutter said. "If he'd wrestled [Woods] earlier in the day, Bryan would have beat him. As the day got longer, that kid got more water back in him, more weight on him, and he just looked a little fresher in the finals than Bryan did."

Schutter said he thought all of the Bulldogs who competed wrestled well and that the younger guys looked respectable in their first competition. He said one area the team will need to improve on as the season progresses will be getting the takedown



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Junior Lloyd Braidlow (right) was one of three Truman wrestlers to place in Saturday's Lindenwood Open. He placed sixth and compiled a 3-3 record.

shots.

"You don't get any points for how many times you touch the leg or how many times you get in on a shot," Schutter said. "You get points for the shots you finish. We've got to work on finishing our shots."

Freshman J.C. Housley earned a victory in the first round at 149-pounds against No. 1 seed Brian Graham

of Missouri Valley College. Graham placed second at 149-pounds at the 2008 NAIA National Wrestling Championship. Housley pinned Graham four minutes and 30 seconds into his first match of the season.

"I was definitely intimidated going out there," Housley said. "It makes me a better wrestler to know I've got to

step up my game to achieve what I want to achieve."

Housley said he expected a tough match from Graham in the first round, but he was able to press an advantage in the first period and turned Graham onto his back and into a pin. Housley then lost his next two matches 6-3 and 11-4.

He said the result of his first match could have hurt

him in the later rounds.

"It definitely gave me a confidence boost," Housley said. "I think I got overconfident, thinking that these guys weren't going to be as good, but at this level all the guys are just as good."

Bader won six matches and lost two to take fifth place. He lost in the second round and had to win five matches in the wrestleback bracket to place.

Braidlow won his first three matches of the tournament before getting pinned in the semifinals by eventual first-place finisher Joe Bach of the University of Oklahoma. He then lost two more matches to place sixth.

"I just lost focus as the day went on and had a pretty [bad] last half of the day," Braidlow said. "Mentally I was ready to get out of there and you could tell I just didn't wrestle the same as I did the first half of the day."

Braidlow said the team put up a solid performance, which should bode well for the rest of the season.

"We've got a lot of things to work on, but overall [this was] the best tournament we've had this early in the season since I've been here," he said.

The team competes next on Nov. 16 at the University of Central Missouri Open.



Photo Submitted

Sophomore Anton Bernard slips past a defender during Saturday's game. Bernard rushed for a career-high 122 yards in the 38-7 win.

## Bernard excels at feature role

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER  
Sports Editor

The Bulldogs running game needed an adjustment.

Three games into the season, the football team was averaging less than 1.85 yards per carry.

Insert sophomore running back Anton Bernard.

Bernard carried the ball just two times in those first three games. But after the 'Dogs' Week 3 loss to Northwest Missouri State University, in which Truman rushed for just 50 yards on 25 carries, head coach Shannon Currier made a move to get Bernard more involved in the ground attack.

Bernard slowly started getting more and more handoffs, and the running game started to improve. By the Oct. 18 game against Washburn University, he was Truman's featured back.

Then on Saturday, in the Bulldog's 38-7 win against Missouri Southern State University, Bernard led Truman to a breakthrough performance on the ground. The sophomore rushed for a career-high 122 yards on 16 carries (7.6 yards per carry), and the 'Dogs' totaled a season-high 265 rushing yards.

Bernard said he had success Saturday by taking advantage of Truman's best blocking of the season.

"It was a total offensive effort," Bernard said. "If it wasn't the offensive line doing what they have to do and the wide receivers blocking downfield, I really don't think that would have been possible. It all starts with the front five. I got to give all the credit to them."

Bernard's 122 rushing yards Saturday were the most rushing yards for a Bulldog back since Jake Cunningham rushed for 197 yards Nov. 4, 2006. Saturday also marked the first time a Truman running back gained at least 100 yards since the first week of last season.

Earlier this season, redshirt freshman running back Donald Harvey was Truman's No. 1 running back. But Harvey, who exhibits game-changing

speed, since has moved to a more hybrid position of running back/receiver. The switch has allowed Bernard — a north-south style runner — to receive more handoffs.

By utilizing Harvey's speed and Bernard's power running, the Bulldogs have eclipsed 140 yards rushing in each of the last four weeks.

"Anton brings the wood when he runs the football," Currier said. "He's going to bring the punch to the party. It's nice to have that physical aspect in your running game."

Bernard gained at least five yards on half of his carries Saturday, and he had a 48-yard burst in the second quarter that helped set up a Bulldog field goal.

Although Bernard has gained more playing time at running back as the season has progressed, he hasn't taken any time off from playing on the special teams. Bernard plays on four different special teams units. Currier said the coaching staff has considered resting Bernard on some special teams' plays, but Bernard refuses to take the plays off.

"That's what makes him the player he is — he just gives everything he has," said Currier, who has touted Bernard's work ethic multiple times during the past year.

Bernard has shown his value to the special teams in a couple of games this season. In Week 1 against Southern Arkansas University, he blocked a punt, and the following week against the University of Central Missouri, he scooped up a blocked punt and returned it for a touchdown.

Whether it's through special teams or running the football, Bernard said he just wants to continue to help the team win games.

"The more I can be on the field, the more fun I can have," Bernard said. "I feel like, if I'm on the field, I always have a chance to make a play. I know I can't make a play on the sideline. So whatever allows me to make a play, I'm all for it."

## Athlete of the Week

**Anton Bernard**

Sport: Football

Year: Sophomore

Hometown: Chandler, Ariz.

Bernard rushed for a career-high 122 yards on 16 carries in the 38-7 win against Missouri Southern last Saturday. The Bulldogs rushed for 265 altogether and Bernard's total was the most by a Truman running back since Nov. 4, 2006. He gained at least five yards on more than half his carries and had a long of 48 yards. Bernard had only two carries in the first three games but the team has had more than 140 yards in every game since he became the feature back.



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