

FLOOR | New surface completed on schedule, in time for volleyball match and basketball practices.

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with approval by women's basketball head coach Michael Smith, men's basketball head coach Jack Schrader and Skoch.

"[The new color scheme] just sort of fits the arena better," Skoch said. "If we had some new, fancy-dancy, state-of-the-art facility, I just don't think that color scheme would look great. But it's great for Pershing."

Schrader said the floor's color design was modeled after Center Court at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., and "has a definite old-school theme." He said that by replacing the purple border with the stained wood color and staining the lanes, the floor looks nice alongside the wood bleachers, rafters and wood ceiling.

"I think it all fits," Schrader said. "I mean I'm not a big home decorator, but if those are our outstanding qualities, accentuate them. And I think our floor does."

Smith and men's basketball assistant coach Tim Dierdrick re-

moved the tiles that hung below the wood ceiling and above the court. This allows for better viewing of the wood ceiling, and Schrader said he hopes the remaining tiles that hang under the wood ceiling are removed soon.

"One of the high-lights of Pershing Arena is the ceiling," Schrader said. "It's a beautiful wood ceiling. We got some of the ceiling tiles down. I'd like to get the rest of them down because the ceiling is great with the wood rafters and everything."

The Truman logo in the center of the court remained largely unchanged, although the T of the logo is now outlined in black. Thus, the T is purple, trimmed in white and outlined in black. The old logo simply had a purple T trimmed in white.

The new floor design is one of several changes that Pershing Arena will undergo this season. Wollmering said the players' benches and scorer's table soon will be moved from the east to the west side of the floor. He said there are plans to purchase more scorer's tables

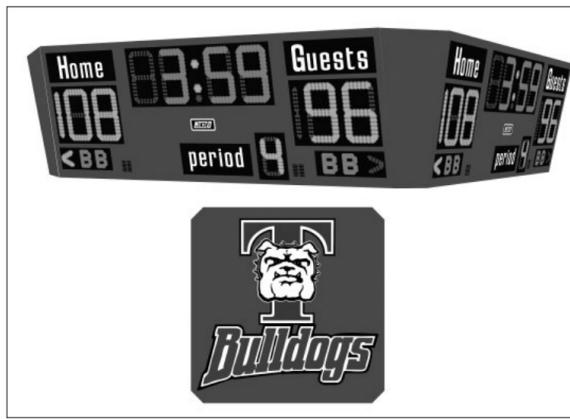


Photo Submitted by Athletics Department via Nevco Scoreboards
This is a photo illustration of the new scoreboard that should be installed in Pershing Arena in time for basketball season.

so both sides of the floor would have them. Wollmering said it would cost \$6,000 to \$7,000 to get scorer's tables for both sides of the floor, and it currently is undecided where that money would come from.

The last major change for the Arena will be a new scoreboard, which will hang above the center of the arena floor. A Truman logo will be on the underside of the scoreboard. The scoreboard and background of the Truman logo will be purple.

Wollmering said the money for the new scoreboard is not coming from the Student Athletic Fee but was raised by the men's basketball team through pri-

vate donations earmarked for the new scoreboard. The two scoreboards at each end of the floor will be used in addition to the four-sided, center-of-the-court scoreboard. This type of scoreboard is prevalent in the NBA, most Div. I schools and some Div. II schools.

While the new floor was being installed, the volleyball team had its practices at the Student Recreation Center and played three matches at Kirksville Primary School. The team will play the remainder of its home games in Pershing and has resumed practicing in Pershing. The basketball teams began official practice on the new court yesterday.

Volleyball might play some matches at KPS in 2009

Volleyball head coach Jason Skoch said playing three September home matches at Kirksville Primary School was "a great success."

Skoch said the team will play the rest of its matches this season on the newly-installed floor at Pershing Arena but that he's interested in playing a couple of matches at KPS next season.

Skoch said the gymnasium at KPS was a good volleyball setting.

"That's the kind of gym — in my opinion — we need," he said. "We could still do our pursuit and chase balls, but the fans are closer. It's loud in there."

As the floor at Pershing Arena underwent repair after July flooding, the Bulldogs were left without a home for their three September home matches. The team worked out with the Kirksville School District to play its three September home matches at the gym at KPS. The gym just recently was fitted for volleyball as this is the first season Kirksville High School has had volleyball.

In addition to the gym being a good setting for volleyball, Skoch said playing at KPS gave the team a chance to attract a bigger following from KHS volleyball players and local residents.

Reporting by Blake Toppmeyer

Graduation rates increase

The NCAA released this week its latest federal graduation rate report for student-athletes, and the numbers show Bulldog athletes are graduating at an increasing rate. The 2008 report shows a 77 percent graduation rate for Truman student-athletes. This compares to a 70 percent graduation rate for all Truman students.

The report considers freshmen who entered Truman in 2001-02 and allows six years for graduation. Only student-athletes who receive scholarship money are considered in the report and athletes who transfer — even if they are in good academic standing — count against the school's graduation rate.

Truman's 77 percent student-athlete graduation rate, which is 22 percentage points above the national average for Div. II schools,

largely can be attributed to the academic success off Truman's female athletes. Female Bulldog athletes included in the report had a 97-percent graduation rate, and males had a 62-percent graduation rate.

Truman's average student-athlete graduation rate for the last four years is 73 percent. The 77-percent graduation mark released in this year's report was Truman's highest rate since 2005.

Examples of student-athlete graduation rates released in the 2008 report of other Div. II state schools in Missouri include Northwest Missouri State University — 61 percent, University of Central Missouri — 60 percent, Missouri Western State University — 43 percent, Missouri Southern State University — 40 percent.

Reporting by Blake Toppmeyer

CHERVEN | Senior is second on team in kills, sets and hitting percentage

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sweeps in the classic. Cherven and fellow Bulldog, senior outside hitter Eli Medina, were named to the all-tournament team.

One match in particular stood out to Skoch in the Washburn Classic as the turning point. Skoch said that in the finale of the Classic against No. 20 Midwestern State University (Texas), Cherven approached him and indicated her desire to carry the load for the team during the remainder of the match.

"Against Midwestern it was neck-and-neck and our setters weren't setting the middles," Skoch said. "So she comes up to me and leans over and says, 'Coach I'm not getting set much, will you tell the setters to set me? I think some good stuff can happen.'"

After that talk, Cherven went on a tear and finished the match with a season-high 15 kills, helping lead the Bulldogs to a fourth consecutive sweep.

"She doesn't mind taking the load," Skoch said. "She's doing good. She's a senior, and all the se-

niors are stepping up right now."

Cherven has also been aided by strong play from senior right side hitter Melissa Keck. Keck hit above .300 in five of the six matches during the winning streak, including two matches in the Washburn Classic in which she hit above .600.

With the help of Keck, Cherven's consistent play on both sides of the ball is one reason Truman continues to find success this season. Cherven is second on the team in sets played (82), kills (200) and hitting percentage (.311). But her strong play does not end on the offensive side. Cherven leads the MIAA with 99 total blocks and with 1.21 blocks per set. She and senior middle blocker Lisa Weber have helped Truman to nearly 30 blocks more than any other MIAA team.

"I've been getting good sets and we've been working really hard in practice on our defense," Cherven said. "They are in the back row digging them out and making it easier so I'll have a good set."

Besides Cherven's strong play on the court, her durability has been

a big key for the Bulldogs. She has started all 24 matches this season. Her ability to play every match is important because senior Keck has been slowed down during the last few weeks with a right knee injury, and junior outside hitter Jenna Novelli has been out since Oct. 4 with a knee injury and could be out even longer.

Cherven's importance to the team can be seen through her statistics in losses, compared to victories. In both of Truman's MIAA losses this season, Cherven hit below .200 and committed 12 attack errors. However, in the Bulldogs' six conference victories, Cherven averaged nine kills per match and hit above .300 in four of the six matches. She also averaged just more than two attack errors per match in conference victories.

"She's one of our team leaders," Weber said. "Everyone looks up to her. We always know she'll come out and play great. She always wants the ball. If she's not getting set, she wants to get set more."

WINS | Team defeats No. 14 UCM in four sets

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forced three Central attack errors during the next eight points to take the first set.

The trend continued in the second set as the Bulldogs took a 23-15 lead, but immediately saw it cut in half with four straight Central points. Truman scored the next two points and hung on to win the set.

After losing a back-and-forth third set 25-23, Truman once again jumped out to a big lead in set four, but this time the Bulldogs won the final five points of the set for a 25-14 victory.

The Bulldogs' inability to finish sets strongly concerned Skoch.

"In stats, it looked like we handled them pretty good," Skoch said. "In phases we played good, but I don't think we played technically that great of volleyball. It's tough for me to explain that to the team. ... It shouldn't have gone to four sets. We should have won it in three."

Three upperclassmen paved the way offensively for Truman. Senior middle blocker Allie Cherven hit .550 with 12 kills. Keck totaled 12 kills and hit .355 for the match. Junior middle blocker Lauren Graybeal had 11 kills and hit .400 for the match.

The Bulldogs out-blocked the Jennies 20-6, including four solo blocks by senior middle blocker Lisa Weber. This season the Bulldogs have out-blocked their opponents 207-131 and

lead the MIAA in blocks, blocks per set and solo blocks. Weber said the team handled playing in a tough environment in Warrensburg very well.

"We just came out strong," Weber said. "We just know there is always a history between us. It's always good competition. Whenever we go there, their fans are loud and crazy."

The victory against Central was the Bulldogs 20th victory in the last 21 matches against the perennial MIAA-power Jennies.

"It's a great team and a well-coached program," Skoch said. "But the way we focus against them, and that's what I'm trying to get the team to do with every opponent. If we were that focused, even with our mistakes, we would not have five losses right now."

Cherven said the Bulldogs step it up a notch when they play Central.

"We just come out and play really confident against them," Cherven said. "As long as I can remember we have always played as a team and have been unselfish and ready to play against Central."

The Bulldogs continue the season this weekend with a two-day MIAA road trip. Friday the Bulldogs take on Northwest Missouri State University at 7 p.m. in Maryville, Mo. On Saturday Truman will travel to St. Joseph, Mo., to play Missouri Western State University at 7 p.m.

RUNNERS | Men improve their average times at the Border War by a minute and a half compared to 2007 and women improve by nearly 50 seconds

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finished within one minute of each other. Gorman said the Bulldogs could move up if they continue to pack-run efficiently.

"We ran together as a pack pretty well," Gorman said. "I think it was better than we had been doing. We definitely need to work on staying together more because conference is in two weeks. Running together really pulled us through the race. We don't have a clear front runner, so pack running really helps us in a race."

Senior Danna Kelly and freshman Michelle Gronemeyer led the way for the women's team. They finished third and 10th, respectively. Freshman Anne Ratermann and sophomores Kylie Raithe and Amanda Brown completed the top five for the Bulldogs.

The women also showed improvements from last year's Border War race. Like the men's meet, the women's meet didn't have as many

teams participating this year. Still, Truman moved up five places from last year and improved the overall times. As a team, the 'Dogs improved by nearly four minutes. Individually, the average running time improved by almost 50 seconds for the first five runners.

Kelly, Raithe and Brown all competed in this race last year. The three of them improved their times by at least 15 seconds, with Brown improving her time by a full minute.

Kelly continues to improve from her outstanding season a year ago, in which she finished sixth in the South Central Regional and 80th in the NCAA Tournament. Head coach John Cochrane said the improvement came from Kelly getting in better shape. He said the coming month will be a time for her to really work hard before the Nov. 8 South Central Regional.

"Part of it is fitness," Cochrane said. "I think she's fitter now than she was last year. Even though she had a good year last year, I think she's

training better and better. We have a month now. We'll have a tough week then an easy week. We'll have another tough week after conference and then another easy week. We're just keeping our fingers crossed that no one gets hurt."

Pack running wasn't as prevalent in the women's meet. Their first four runners finished within a minute and a half of each other. However, Cochrane said this wasn't anything to worry about.

"We're kind of trying to put people where they need to be," Cochrane said. "Dani [Dell'Orco] didn't feel very well, and that affected things because she's usually our fourth runner. We're trying to have the first three people do what they should do. We're trying to get a little pack out of the next four. It wasn't perfect, but we ran well."

Both teams will take a week off then compete in the MIAA Conference Championship meet on Oct. 25 in Warrensburg, Mo.

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