



New assistant volleyball coach Megan Wargo observes practice earlier this week. Wargo joins the volleyball program after four seasons in North Carolina.

Volleyball adds new assistant

Megan Wargo joins team after four years at Lee-McRae College

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Truman volleyball assistant coach Megan Wargo knows exactly what she expects out of her first season as a Bulldog coach.

"I expect nothing less than winning a conference championship, returning to regionals and hopefully returning to the Elite Eight," Wargo said.

Although this is Wargo's first season with the Bulldogs, it is far from the first coaching job on her resumé. Wargo spent the last four years as the assistant coach at Lee-McRae College, a Div. II school in North Carolina. While there, Wargo helped lead

the women to three consecutive Conference Carolinas tournament championships. Wargo also helped get the new men's volleyball program off the ground with winning seasons in 2006 and 2009.

Wargo also has coached several high school and

club teams. One of her high school teams advanced to the state championship game and her club team seized the No. 1 regional ranking, as well as a top-50 national spot. She also played a large role in a program called "Gold Medal Squared," which provides a variety of volleyball camps and clinics throughout the United States and Canada. Wargo also led her team to three conference titles and three NCAA Div. III tournaments while at Gettysburg College, where she played as an outside setter.

It was this resumé of knowledge and success that inspired head coach Ben Briney to hire Wargo.

"When reviewing applications, [Wargo's] quickly rose to the top," Briney said, according to Truman's athletic web site. "She understands

what it takes to compete for championships, as evidenced by Lees-McRae winning three of four conference championships while she was there."

Wargo's experience and success in many areas of volleyball made her the ideal choice to fill the vacancy

after Briney took over the head coaching job that former head coach Jason Skoch vacated last March. The team hopes Briney and Wargo's records of success and wide arrays of experience will be able to lead Truman back to the top in what will likely prove to be a tough season for the team.

"I really think [Briney] does a good job making sure we're all on the same page, like we're going for the same goal," junior setter Ashley Petak said. "Being competitive is one of [Briney's] strong suits."

As far as Briney and Wargo are concerned, it's all about getting the team ready for the season. With a lot of young players the coaches have a lot of teaching to do, as well as making sure the older players are in line with new coaching philosophies. Wargo is still making the transition from North Carolina to Kirksville.

"I think the overall level of volleyball in the [MIAA] is going to be stronger [than conference Carolinas]," Wargo said. "Top to bottom, you have teams ranked nationally every year. The girls in general are certainly more athletic and they jump a little higher. They're just more competitive overall. But I had a lot of experience working with the men's team there, so in terms of athletically, it's similar there."

Defense aims to continue dominance

Women search for fourth defender to replace Wolff

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

It's hard to find holes on a team that returns six all-MIAA players from an Elite Eight finish last season.

The women's soccer team outsourced opponents by an average of more than a goal per game, held opponents to 19 goals in 21 games and returns nearly all of its starters.

But if there's somewhere the women's soccer team is lacking, it's at the fourth defender position.

Head coach Mike Cannon likes to use a 3-5-2 formation when the opposition has two forwards and a 4-4-2 against three forwards. In 2008, he was set for every position in either formation.

Then-senior Kim Wolff and then-juniors Theresa

Bauler and Kelsey Richters combined to start every game but two, and then-sophomore Amy Schnoes filled in the fourth spot. Schnoes started just seven games last year, but that was because she split time with fifth-midfielder sophomore Jaclyn Schumann.

"We're still trying to figure out who goes in the back because Amy goes in the back, but she might be starting," Cannon said. "So then it's like, 'Who's that other back that comes in and then who's the midfielder that comes out?'"

When it comes to experience, the remaining options on defense are few.

Five of the seven defenders left are freshmen and the two upperclassmen have combined for one start in their careers.

Part of the problem with inexperience is that Wolff, a four-time all-MIAA selection, started all but two games in her career. With Wolff, Bauler and Richters as the three starters in 2008 and 2007, the defense had a 0.83 and .082 goals against average, respectively.

Bauler, Richters and Schnoes will anchor the defense this year, along with sophomore goalkeeper Jayne Grisham, who started in the playoffs last season.

Bauler and Richters each earned honorable mention all-MIAA in 2008 in their second year as full-time starters and fourth year on the team. Both of them have taken on a leadership role this season.

"When you have fifth-year kids who have a lot of experience and know what they're doing and are vocal and are excellent players too, it's obviously a huge benefit for us," Cannon said.

Even with the loss of Wolff, Cannon expects the defense to be just as good as last year, if the hard-playing Schnoes can stay in good shape.

"If Amy is healthy, she's not the exact same type of player as [Wolff], but she can be equally as effective," Cannon said. "She's a little bit more of a stay-at-home defender. Kim was somewhat, but she started getting a little bit better at getting forward and getting in the attack sometimes."

With Wolff out, Cannon

A look at the defense

The women's soccer team returns three of their four starting defenders from last year's team. Here is a look at some defensive statistics from 2008:

0.83 GAA
.088 opponents shot percentage
Opponents averaged **9.4 shots a game**



Design by Rose Runser/Index

said Schnoes could replace Richters as the center back in the 3-5-2 because of her playing tendencies. Of the three starters this season, Bauler attacks the most, followed by Richters and then Schnoes. Richters and Schoes were the two middle backs in the 4-4-2 in 2008.

The defense also will get a boost from the strength of the midfielders and forwards, as Richters said the "defense starts from the forwards in." The team returns most of its offensive attack and midfielders.

"I would say they always help us out a lot [on defense]," Bauler said. "Our forwards will come back

and help us out, our midfield helps us out — it's kind of just a team effort starting from the front and working in."

With the strength of the offense and midfield and the three returning starters on defense, once the season starts it might turn out that the team has no holes to fill at all.

"I think we'll be pretty similar defensively as far as our level. I think our offense — same kind of thing," Cannon said. "If we can average a goal in a half, maybe even two goals a game and still stay around that one or below goals against, we should do really well."

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