

SPORTS

Thursday, February 11, 2010

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Bulldog Breakdown

Index Online

Index Sports Show:

Members of the sports staff preview the baseball and softball seasons

www.trumanindex.com

On the blog:

Breakdown of Peyton Manning's interception

indexsports.wordpress.com

On campus

Men's on campus:

Basketball: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday vs. Northwest

Women's on campus:

Basketball: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday vs. Northwest

M. Basketball

	MIAA	OVR
1. UCM	14-1	21-1
2. FHSU	12-2	18-3
3. SBU	10-5	19-6
4. UNO	9-6	16-6
5. MWSU	9-7	14-9
6. MSSU	8-7	14-8
7. MWMSU	6-9	11-11
8. WU	6-10	12-11
9. ESU	6-10	10-13
10. Truman	2-13	4-18
11. PSU	2-14	8-15

W. Basketball

	MIAA	OVR
1. ESU	14-2	21-2
2. WU	13-3	19-3
3. FHSU	8-6	15-6
4. PSU	9-7	11-12
5. UCM	8-7	12-10
6. MSSU	7-8	13-9
7. UNO	7-8	12-10
8. NWMSU	7-8	11-11
9. MWSU	5-11	7-16
10. SBU	4-11	6-16
11. Truman	2-13	7-15

Quotable

“You can be the best jockey in the world, but if you're riding a donkey, you aren't going to win many races.”

— Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering, making an analogy about recruiting

Baseball Preview: Team looks to change losing image



Many members of pitching staff, lineup return from 2009 season

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

The baseball team will depend on its experience to propel them higher in the MIAA standings this season.

Truman finished 11-45 last season. The Bulldogs were 7-33 in conference games, last in the MIAA, but posted a better overall record than 10th-place Southwest Baptist University.

The Bulldogs open the season at noon Sunday at Harding University (Ark.).

Since 1966, the Bulldogs have had only four winning seasons. The Bulldogs haven't had a winning season since 1982.

The Bulldogs were unanimously picked last in the conference coach's poll. Senior outfielder Keaton Jones said the team can't use inexperience as an excuse this season.

“This year is more about having that mentality where we expect to win games,” Jones said. “We expect to be competitive with teams. Before, we were hoping and wishing that we could hang in there with the good teams in the conference. This

year, we have to expect to be able to play with anybody.”

The Bulldogs have three seniors and 11 juniors to go along with 17 underclassmen.

Jones is one of those seniors. He has 157 hits in his Truman career, just 34 short of tying the Bulldog all-time hit record. He is also 11 doubles short of tying the record for doubles in a career. Last year, Jones had his best offensive season and earned honorable mention all-MIAA.

“He's a great hitter,” head coach Dan Davis said. “He's been close to leading our team in batting average every year since 2007. I think the guys look up to him. He's been in the second or third hole every year he's played.”

The Bulldogs also will look to improve their pitching statistics from last year. The team had an MIAA-high 8.73 ERA and gave up 485 runs in 56 games.

This season, the Bulldogs will use several of the same starters as last year. Sophomore Tyler Stefan and junior Kyle Veazey will start in the Bulldogs' first games Saturday, followed by sophomore Ryan Trimble and junior Jordan

McLaughlin on Sunday. Stefan, Veazey and Trimble combined to go 2-15 last year, while McLaughlin redshirted.

Truman's best starter from last year will move to the bullpen. Junior Michael Stahr won three games last year as a starter. He was second on the team in innings (53.2) and had the lowest ERA, 5.87, of any Bulldog who threw more than five innings.

“It really helps out the bullpen because one of our best starters from last year goes to the bullpen,” Davis said. “When you take one of your top starters and throw him in the bullpen, that solidifies the pen.”

Offensively, the Bulldogs return seven players that had more than 100 at-bats, including sophomore catcher Devon Myers, who tied for the lead in batting average and earned all-MIAA honorable mention honors.

Junior infielder Drew Garwood will move across the diamond, from third base to first base. The move solves two problems for the Bulldogs.

“We need an experienced guy
Please see PREVIEW, Page 19

MIXED RESULTS
Wrestling defeats Newman, loses to Lindenwood

Page 16

Commentary



BRENT FOSTER

Bulldogs have long road ahead

You wouldn't know it by the fresh snowfall that blankets Kirksville, but the beginning of the baseball season is right around the corner.

During the next week, Major League pitchers and catchers report to their respective camps in Arizona and Florida.

Ballparks across the country soon will be filled with fans. Knee-buckling curveballs, diving catches and late-inning heroics will fill the air. The pop of the glove, the crack of the bat and the flight of the ball bring joy to the hearts of baseball fans everywhere.

But if you are a true baseball junkie and can't wait a week for pitchers and catchers to start playing catch for an hour a day, then you only have to wait three days for an actual game to be played.

The Truman baseball team opens the season Sunday with a doubleheader against Harding College (Ark.).

It certainly hasn't been pretty for Truman baseball. The team has been the school's most stagnant program for the last four decades. The squad has had just four winning seasons in the 43-year history of the program, with the last coming in 1982. The 'Dogs set the school record for losses the last two seasons, although they continue to play more games each season. It's these reasons why the Bulldogs were a unanimous pick to finish last in the MIAA.

Despite the struggles from the program in the past, there are some interesting story lines to begin the season.

Junior pitcher Michael Stahr returns after working his way into the rotation early last season. His 5.87 ERA led the team, and he came within one out of a perfect game against the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Senior outfielder Keaton
Please see BASEBALL, Page 19

Brown needs to improve win-loss record

Before the start of the 2007 softball season, Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering had this to say of new Bulldog softball head coach Erin Brown: “I know she will continue the great tradition we have in our softball program.”

The quote wasn't earth-shattering. Honestly, it's often the cushy quote you get from athletic directors when a new coach is hired.

Still, I think Wollmering anticipated Brown would maintain the quality of Truman's softball program that had strung together eight straight 30-win seasons prior to 2007. After all, Brown had been an integral component as a player for Truman from 1999 to 2001, a three-year stretch when the Bulldogs won 133 games.

But fast forward three seasons later, and the tradition of Truman softball has faded. After mediocre seasons in 2007 and 2008, the Bulldogs sank to last place in the MIAA last season and finished

Please see BROWN, Page 19

Commentary



BLAKE TOPPMEYER

Softball preview: 'Dogs look to rebound

Softball tries to improve its 11-34 record from 2009

BY BRENDAN O'BRIEN
Staff Reporter

Coming off last year's 11-34 record, the softball team is thankful for the dawn of a new season. With nine newcomers, different points of emphasis and fresh approaches to issues that previously plagued the team, the Bulldogs could find different results.

Despite the team's inexperience, head coach Erin Brown said she sees the youth movement as a positive thing as the team looks ahead to games.

“Well, our team has changed a lot,” Brown said. “We lost a lot of kids last year and we have a huge freshman class — we have eight kids [and one transfer]. So the dynamics are a little bit different. I think that we're young, but I also think that there's kind of a fresh energy and there's more competi-



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Senior Richelle van Gennip (right) and juniors Erica LaCombe (left) and Ashley Rotkvich (17) are key returners from a 11-45 team.

tion for each spot this year.”

The 'Dogs will have to wait to see how far they have progressed. Because of inclement weather, the Northeastern Oklahoma State Tournament originally scheduled for Saturday and Sunday was

canceled. The Bulldogs will use the extra week to prepare for the Alabama-Huntsville Tournament, which begins Feb. 19.

Despite various differences in the roster from 2009, the team is
Please see SOFTBALL, Page 19