

Women drop pair of road duals

Buss is the only individual winner during back-to-back losses

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

For the third straight year, the women's swimming team will not head into its final dual coming off a season-sweep of Missouri State University.

The Bulldogs were swept in two duals last weekend in Springfield: 89-22 against the Bears and 59-52 against Southern Illinois University.

Truman defeated MSU 69-53 Nov. 7 in Kirksville, but this meet was a different story throughout. For much of the meet, Truman had slower times than in November while MSU was faster than before.

"I've never seen them swim that fast in-season, which makes me wonder if they rested and backed off against us," head coach Mark Gole said.

Truman and Missouri State have split their dual meets each of the last three years. The home team has won every time.

By the time they entered the water, the Bulldogs already were behind 16 points to each team because of diving events. The dual was scored 5-3-1 for individual and 7-0 for relay events.

Truman earned its only victory, in the second to last event of the day, from junior Emily Buss in the 200-yard breaststroke. Buss swam a 2:23.24 to edge SIU's Kristin Geppert by .04 seconds. After going out faster than usual, Buss still was nearly a second behind after the first 50 yards. However, she pulled ahead in the final length.

"It was just ballsy," Gole said. "She went out — those two girls were right next to her — and she died the least."

The Bulldogs would have pulled out a one-point victory against SIU had Grinter and freshman Taylor Birsa finished 1-2 in the breaststroke. But Birsa, who lost her goggles when she jumped in, finished sixth. She would have had to match her fall taper time for a top-two finish.

After the breaststroke, Truman continued its improvement with a second place in the 400-yard freestyle relay in 3:32.49. It was one of the few events in which Truman swam better than the November meet.

"The four of us were all really excited for that race, and I think we all just fed off adrenaline and the energy of it," said freshman Jessica Jenkot, who swam the first leg for the 'Dogs.

Gole said other quality swims included junior Julia Jones in the 1,000-yard freestyle and senior Kendra Brunkow in the 200-yard freestyle. Also, senior Kate Aherne would have won the 50-yard freestyle if not for a recent transfer at MSU.

Overall, Gole said it was a subpar meet until the last two races.

"It was a very, very rough meet to watch because I thought they were capable of so much more than that," Gole said. "And then when I saw Buss do the time and the last relay do the time, that told me they were capable of it the whole meet."

Truman did not earn any new A or B cuts at the meet, which Gole said likely won't happen until the conference meet starting Feb. 10.

One reason for the team's early decline in Springfield could have been that the bus driver took a

wrong turn, which caused Truman to have less warm-up time than usual. The 'Dogs had to wait for the diving events, which were running late, to finish before sharing warm-up time with the other teams.

There were only two lanes available when the 'Dogs finally did get to warm up. However, Buss said it's typical for Truman to start slowly at Missouri State because of the way the pool is set up.

"I think as the meet went on people started to get more warmed up, and there was 15-minute breaks throughout the meet, and by then the whole pool was open, so there was more room to get warmed up,"

Buss said. "And I feel like that probably played a pretty large role in it."

The 'Dogs again travel to Springfield this weekend, but this time for their annual dual against defending national champion and rival Drury University. The Panthers lost to both Missouri State and Southern Illinois earlier this season.

Unlike past years, Truman will not drop-taper anyone against Drury. The team will start tapering Monday for conference.

In three of the last four years, the losing team at the Truman-Drury dual has finished higher at nationals. Drury will have an advantage because of diving, and Gole said he will be pleased if Truman wins the swimming portion of the meet.

"We have to throw our A-line-up against Drury," Gole said. "It's going to come down to every single finish from one to five. Every point is going to matter."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Freshman Lexi Hauser prepares for a meet earlier this season. Hauser finished fourth in the 400-yard freestyle and 400-yard freestyle relay during Saturday's dual with Missouri State and Southern Illinois.

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Mark Gole
Head Coach,
on Emily Buss's victory in the 200-yard breaststroke

Men come up short on the road

Bulldogs drop pair to Missouri State and Southern Illinois

BY BRENDAN O'BRIEN
Staff Reporter

Between a disorganized warm-up and the update of the final scores, the men's swim team might rather just forget its meet against Div. I schools Missouri State University and Southern Illinois University. But head coach Mark Gole said Saturday's 102-9 loss to MSU and 98-13 loss to SIU do not reflect the team's progress throughout the season.

"I will say that the majority of the races on Saturday were disappointing based on how well we've been training,"

Gole said two weightlifting practices during the week most likely had an impact on the times. It was the first time the swimmers had lifted weights since before

Winter Break, and the use of new muscles might have taken its toll.

The Bulldogs did not earn any A or B cuts during the weekend.

That was not the only challenge the team confronted. The Bulldogs planned to arrive at the pool at 11:45 a.m. for the 2 p.m. meet, but their bus driver took a wrong route, and the team was not on deck until 12:15 p.m. The diving competition, although scheduled for 12:45 p.m., went a half-hour late, which left the team with just three lanes for warmups

In addition, many swimmers were out of their elements in events they had not swum since high school.

Freshman Matt Fletcher competed in the 200-yard butterfly, and freshman Jerod Simek raced in the 200-yard backstroke to give Fletcher and freshman



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Junior Krish Singhal placed in three events during the two duals Saturday. Truman lost to Div. I schools Missouri State University and Southern Illinois University.

Greg Taplin a rest. "We do always preach smart racing, because the smartest possible strategy is going to get you the best overall possible time," Gole

said. "If you over-expend yourself in the beginning, you're done. ... But then at the same time, you don't want them to be so tentative that ... they are finish-

ing the race so strong that they could've gone that much harder in the beginning. It's a fine line."

Freshman Taylor Frymire, who swam his best unshaved 50-yard freestyle in a 22.50, said race strategy has been important in his improvement.

"I find there's actually logical ways to swim, as funny as that sounds," Frymire said. "I feel like I'm starting to understand how to swim my races, and I know that's going to help me next year with more training."

Frymire's 50-yard freestyle came with sophomore Nathan Hardy's best unshaved times in the 50- and 100-yard freestyles that Gole said served as "kind of a silver lining" for the team.

"It was a rough three hours to experience on Saturday," Gole said. "A lot of stuff went into this meet. In talking with the captains, they were really fired up. They were ready to go. They were ready to swim fast, it's just [that] it didn't happen."

Gole said the meet was a letdown but it does not signify things to come. Sophomore Brian Tillis swam his fastest-ever 300 yards in practice on Monday. Gole said Tillis' and others' times will only continue to improve as they get out of the weight room and begin to taper as they move toward the conference meet starting Feb. 10.

"I love where the team is at, and I think we can build on this big-time for the future," Gole said. The Bulldogs compete Friday at Missouri University of Science and Technology and Saturday at Drury University.

"We're all really excited about conference, and we want to have a good conference so that momentum carries over till next year," Frymire said. Although Frymire sees it mostly as the conclusion of his first season and wants to use it as a springboard into the next, McCall said at the onset of the season that he knew he did not have a next year for swimming to which he can look ahead.

"This is my last shot at everything," McCall said. "It's not as important for me to prove anything anymore and now I'm just going to do what I can with the time I have left, and most of that's for the people who are young right now. They need something to chase after."

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