

## COACH | Team continues normal offseason routines during search for head football coach

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Truman longer than any other football staff member.

"I feel like I've given as much or more to this football program during that time frame than anyone else," Vlcko said. "I care about the kids that are here. I care about the program, and with that in mind I'm going to continue to work hard to move the program forward."

Vlcko guided Truman to a 2-9 season and just one MIAA victory, the team's worst record since 2005, Currier's second season. Truman upset Pittsburg State University 28-21 to close the season Saturday, its first victory against Pitt since 1989.

Vlcko said he met with his staff before the season and decided that the program needed to make changes in the direction it was heading.

"We were going to make tough decisions that we felt were the best decisions for the long term of being part of this program," Vlcko said. "We feel like we can win championships here. ... We really just felt like we needed to change the culture and bring more of a disciplined culture to the program, and that takes time to do."

Wollmering said no search for a permanent coach was conducted in March because he wanted to have a coach in place when the Bulldogs started spring practices.

"It obviously could have been an option, but we felt at the time it was the best interest at that time of the program to name an interim and go through spring ball and obviously continue through the season," Wollmering said.

Wollmering said the athletic department has formed a committee to aid with the search, which he said always happens when Truman conducts a coaching search. The committee includes Associate Athletic Director Linda Anderson, Provost Troy Paino, former Truman tight end Ryan King, history professor Jeff Gall and possibly a member of the community.

A unique situation could be created for the University if a coach from the outside is hired and chooses not to retain the current staff, because the football staff's contracts run through the end of June. Wollmering said there is currently no plan in place to handle two full staffs at one time, and that the situation would be dealt with if it arises.

"In the economic times that we're in, I mean, you know we're not in a position to pay two staffs all at one time for six months of the year," Wollmering said. "So we just have to see how it plays out and what direction we go with the head coach."

Wollmering said Vlcko and the staff will continue to operate normal day-to-day football operations while the search is conducted, including recruiting duties.

Junior quarterback Phil Davis said the team is doing everything it normally does in the offseason and that the search is not affecting its offseason activities.

"Right now we're just going through the workouts," Davis said. "There's not really much of a change, or we haven't really talked about it."

## The New Faces

The women's basketball team has eight new players this season, including three transfers. Here is a look at the transfers:

**Cassie Hunt:** Center, 18 ppg as a sophomore at North Central Missouri College

**Amy Galey:** PG, 13 ppg, 7 rebounds and 4 assists at Highland Community College

**Jenny Dorman:** Guard, 4 ppg, led Missouri S&T in three point percentage

Rose Runser/Index

## BBALL | Women open season at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday night against Hannibal-LaGrange College

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Smith said Truman will not be able to replace Mueller's production with just one player, but with a cast of players that average between six and eight points a game and contribute in other areas.

Truman already has solved one deficiency that hurt them last season by finding a steady hand at point guard. Last season Truman went back-and-forth with seniors Laura Joya and Julie Guinn playing out of position at point guard.

This season, the addition of junior transfer point guard Amy Galey allows Joya and Guinn to move back to their more natural off-guard position.

"It all starts with the quarterback of your program, the point guard position," Smith said. "Obviously, that was a tough struggle last year from us as having a leader on the floor, not necessarily a vocal leader, but just someone who understands what to do at the right time. I really feel like this year we've gotten that."

Galey was a third-team All-American last year at Highland Community College (Kan.) where she averaged 13 points, seven rebounds and four assists as a sophomore. Smith said he expects Galey

to play 30-35 minutes per game this season.

"I definitely appreciated that she's taking the point guard responsibilities," Joya said. "That's what we needed. That's her natural position, and I don't have to worry about bringing up the ball."

Truman expects to get another boost from a new face in a few weeks when freshman forward Megan Sharpe joins the Bulldogs from the volleyball team.

Sharpe was a second-team All-State selection in high school and averaged more than 16 points per game during her senior season. Smith said that because of the time she missed, Sharpe will be behind the rest of the team.

"She's going to be the most athletic kid, so I'm hoping that her athleticism will make up for some of that," Smith said.

Smith said there will be bumps along the way, but the overall progress will show by the end of the season.

"It's a work in progress," Smith said. "We're not going to look very good the first semester, ... but I think second semester and conference play when we need it, I think we will really start to gel as a team."

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Michael Smith  
Head Coach

## SMITH | Last year a thing of the past for Bulldogs

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significant role on the team.

Smith is in his second year as head coach of the program. He has had a full year of getting to know his team and recruiting his own players.

"I think any time a new coach comes in, it's usually a three-to-four year process," Smith said. "I think maybe we're ahead of schedule. I really do. I think this year we'll make a statement as far as what we're about."

But what Smith doesn't have is eight of the 13 players who were on last year's team. Three graduated and the other five are a mixture of players who either quit or were cut in the offseason.

Losing three seniors out of 13 players is normal. Not having five out of 10 possible returners is not normal.

In my three years covering Truman athletics, I have never seen this high of a percentage of players not return. Some teams have lost many key members to senior status (see 2007-08 women's swimming, 2008 football, 2009 men's soccer), and a couple have lost more than a few members for other reasons.

But not this. Not fifty percent. The best thing is, it is not a bad thing that the team only returns five players.

When Smith entered as basketball coach a year ago, he said his aim was to turn around the women's basketball team.

"Three or four or five years from now, people are never going to remember that [losing perception] if I do my job," Smith was quoted as saying in an Index article last year.

Well, this move is just one step toward a winning tradition. Instead of keeping players he did not recruit and would not play often, Smith has brought in players that better fit his system.

Any coach can just come out and say he wants to turn around a program. But not all coaches will make the decisions Smith does.

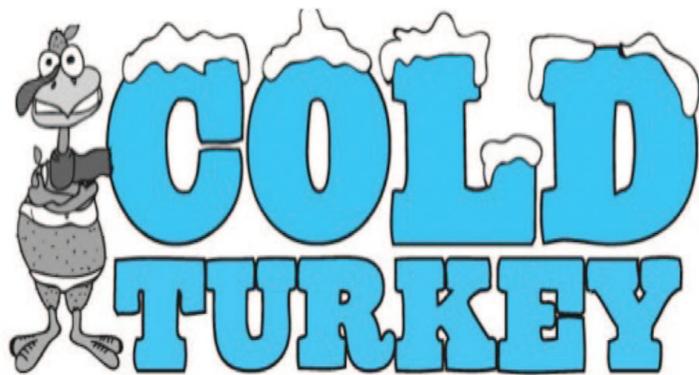
Smith has confidence in the team he has. It remains to be seen exactly where the team will finish, but it won't finish last in the MIAA like the preseason poll said. The pollsters probably looked no further than the 5-15 MIAA record last year and loss of All-MIAA forward Georgia Mueller.

But this year, the team has more than just one main option for opposing teams to focus on.

"I can honestly tell you they can't just key in on one person, because we have so many different opportunities," Smith said. "And a lot of that goes with our system that we put in — our motion offensive system. It doesn't just designate to throw it in for one player and hope she gets 25 for us in one night."

Mueller will be replaced, and the team will forget about the eight lost players.

All the more reason to talk about the present.



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ETA SIGMA GAMMA



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Sophomore Molly Sinclair dives for the ball as junior libero Casey Bruno looks in Saturday's match against Nebraska-Omaha.

## VBALL | Bulldogs have two regular season matches left before NCAA Tournament begins.

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"I thought we came out, I'd like to say, on a mission to really turn around our offense and just have a good win on Senior Day," assistant coach Megan Wargo said. "We had kind of been in a little bit of a funk with our match against Central Missouri and we didn't play very strong. And for a week or two, we hadn't been playing up to our potential."

"We had really good practices on Thursday and Friday, and I think our kids were just focused on having a good performance."

In the first set against UNO, the Bulldogs cruised past the Mavericks 25-18. The Bulldogs had the lead from the beginning of the set and never gave it up. The second set was a much closer affair, with UNO and Truman battling back-and-forth for the lead until Truman won in the end, 28-26. In the third set, things were reversed, as UNO started strong and held the lead against the Bulldogs for a

25-21 victory. In the fourth set, the score was close at the beginning, but the Bulldogs left UNO in the dust with a score of 25-16.

Hathey echoed some of Graybeal's sentiments about the season overall.

"It was a less experienced team as far as playing time on the court, but I don't think we let it slow us down," Hathey said. "We work really hard in practice, and the numbers may not show as little losses as last year, but we're winning the games we won last year and losing some of the same ones. ... I think it's just crunch time, and we need to focus on it."

Crunch time for the Bulldogs begins as soon as the regular season ends. With only two regular season matches left to play and the No. 5 spot in the region likely clinched, the Bulldogs have to prepare for the postseason. Truman might face some of the same top opponents they have played already this season, including Central

Missouri, Emporia State University and No. 4 Washburn University.

Truman has won only one match against those three opponents.

"We're excited [about the postseason]," head coach Ben Briney said. "Obviously, this weekend we have to go in and take care of business. We've got two matches against two tough teams. Their records don't show it, but Northwest Missouri State is always a very athletic team. They have the talent. ... Missouri Western, with their new coach, they're on a hot streak."

Truman will play its final regular season matches at 7 p.m. Friday at Northwest Missouri State University and 2 p.m. Saturday at Missouri Western University.

"We have to go in there, and we win those two matches, we're the No. 5 seed. And it's cut and dry, going into the national tournament. As a team, we're excited for it. This is what we've worked all year for."