

ZWEIFEL | Walk on becomes one of top ten triple jumpers in the nation

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Possibly the most surprising fact about Zweifel is that she not only went unrecruited but completely unnoticed by the university in her hometown, MIAA athletic powerhouse and Truman's arch rival Northwest Missouri State University.

"I had already decided that I wanted to go to Truman for the academics," Zweifel said. "It was my dream school. It was affordable. It was far enough away from home. I just did not want to stay in Maryville. Maryville is a great city, and Northwest is a great school, but I live two blocks from campus, and both my parents work at the university. Eighty-five percent of the kids who went to my high school that go to college go to Northwest, and I just needed to get away."

Getting to Truman was an early step in becoming a triple jump All-American. Zweifel currently competes in the long and triple jump but she never had competed as a triple jumper until the second semester of her freshman year. After watching Zweifel in practice, assistant track and field coach Tim Schwieger told Cochrane he thought Zweifel might have what it took to be a good triple jumper. He said the learning process would prove difficult at first.

"She was confused with the world when she was a freshman," Cochrane said. "It was just a different thing than she had gone through in high school. She was like a deer in the headlights. But the

thing about her is that she tries very hard to do well. She pays attention to you. It has taken a long time for her to learn things, to learn things right."

By the spring of her sophomore year all the work had started to pay off. Zweifel qualified for the national meet but ended up jumping an inch and a half short of earning All-American honors as an underclassman. The one and a half inch barrier fed Zweifel's competitive side. It was an opportunity out of which she said she failed to get what she wanted. What she deemed failure last spring drove her to prepare harder than ever in the hope that she could achieve what she had lost in her first attempt.

The following summer, posted on the ceiling above her bed was a paper with "All-American" written on it. Zweifel has been motivating herself by posting goals on her ceiling since she was a young girl. She said competing never gets old.

"I get so hyped up when I get to compete against people of real caliber," Zweifel said.

Someone of real caliber Zweifel competed with the first two years of her career is alumna Katrina Biermann, who graduated in 2010. Biermann has the Truman pole vault record and had the triple jump record until Zweifel broke it, jumping 40-08.25 April 9 at the Central Methodist Open in Fayette, Mo.

Biermann mentored Zweifel for the better part of two years as she learned

how to be an effective triple jumper. Zweifel said setting a school record was bittersweet because she loves doing well but knew the woman she was dethroning had played a great role in her success.

Zweifel said senior teammate Shaina Dotcherman and former teammate alumna Amber Clayton influenced her during her first two years at Truman.

"I'm a hurdler so I don't really get to see Jenny [Zweifel] much," Dotcherman said. "But just being a teammate and really encouraging her and always being there as support when she is competing and stuff and really just pushing her to keep on trying and do all the workouts to her full potential has really, I guess, helped her to keep it going."

Zweifel has a final year of eligibility left at Truman. Cochrane said he thinks placing better at nationals would be extremely difficult, but not impossible.

The goals Zweifel have set are more immediate.

"Now people are like, 'Oh, what's next?'" Zweifel said. "Forty-one feet in triple jump. That is the next mark. ... I just keep pushing the limits. I set these goals for myself, and as soon as I reach that one I set another one, and each time the goal seems so far out of reach, but bit by bit we get a little closer. Suddenly I have to set a new goal, and it is just the greatest feeling in the world."

LABELED | Most Bulldog teams achieve

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know what they're doing.

Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering said football has become a lot more competitive.

"Going down to our last two games we could have been potentially 6-5 and a winning season, which, after going 2-9 [the year] before would have been one of the biggest turn arounds in the country," he said.

Just because football and men's basketball are sub-par right now people make the assumption that all Truman sports are bad.

Let's be clear. I am not suggesting all Truman programs are good. Just because some sports have had below average records the last few years does not mean the entire athletic program is terrible.

Take baseball for instance. They traditionally are the worst program on campus. Since the program's inception in 1967 there have been few winning seasons. The last winning season was 1982, 29 years ago. It hasn't been good at Truman Baseball Park but this year things have been looking up.

Junior Ryan Trimble and sophomore Jarrett Eiskina have a combined ERA of 2.31. The offense has had timely hits at many times as well and the pitching has shown some serious potential when it performs to its ability. All that has added up to 11 conference wins this year, tying the highest total in program history. While the program has some goals it has yet to reach this year, they have been heading the right direction.

A sport that doesn't receive a lot of attention but performs well is women's golf. Senior Jen Lawson has won four tournaments this year, including a sting of three straight in the fall. She was named MIAA Female Golfer of the Week three times. It has been a marquee year for Lawson. She is one of the best female golfers in Div. II and, it could be argued, in the country. The team has placed in the top five in five of their eight tournaments. That is the definition of competitive.

Women's basketball was one of the top eight teams in the MIAA this season. They made the conference tournament. Sophomore forward Jennifer Conway stands 6 feet tall, but she handled much taller women on opposing teams with ease this season, averaging 8.8 points per game. Freshman Nicole Gloor averaged 9.1 points per game and junior Breanna Daniels led the team with 12.9 per game. Notice the years for those players. Two of three are underclassmen, which means two more years of these three scoring more than a combined 30 points per night. Three players combining for 30 per game makes the women contenders in the MIAA.

Soccer is another sport that thrives at Truman. Both the men and women made the NCAA tournament this year. The men claimed the No. 13 slot in attendance in all of NCAA Div. II, averaging 352 fans per game. For the men, seniors Bobby Larkin and Matt Kimball led an evenly balanced team attack. On the women's side sophomore Olivia Hayes

had 19 points to lead her squad. For a few weeks Hayes was unstoppable. It was as if she could score on command. Truman soccer earned fan support and a pair of playoff berths this season. When people give their opinion about Truman athletics those accomplishments never seem to come up but are the facts.

Then there is the most successful of all Truman sports, swimming. Granted, not a crowd pleaser. Watching people swim back and forth does not entertain most. Can't say I blame you. Neither do most of the swimmers, so don't sweat it. You still have to admit that swimming takes athleticism, so while events might not be exciting to watch, the accomplishments achieved at meets mean just as much as the results of other team sports.

Although this year was a down year for the Bulldog swimming program, featuring a midseason coaching change and the cancelation of a yearly training trip, the women won their 11th straight conference title. The men placed fourth at conference.

Sophomore Jerod Simek and senior Anna Grinter made a trip to the NCAA Div. II national meet as well. It was Simek's second straight trip to the nation's biggest meet. Again, most people agree that for the Bulldogs it was a below average year. That should tell you all you need to know about the Truman swimming program.

If you walk past the second floor trophy case in Pershing Arena, you'll see seven women's swimming national championship trophies. The women were the best team in America every year from 2001 to 2006 and once again in 2008. Last decade, no university in the country was better in women's swimming than Truman. Seven national titles in eight years. In the sports world we refer to that as a dynasty.

There are a lot of other Bulldog athletes and teams who achieved at a high level this past year. Freshman Ryan Maus went to the NCAA Div. II national meet in wrestling as an individual. He was the MIAA freshman of the year. In track and field, junior Jennifer Zweifel took fourth in the country in triple jump at the indoor track national championships. Softball freshman Kelsey Bollman tore the cover off the ball this year, leading the team with a .414 batting average.

By the way, while football and men's basketball are down on their luck at the moment, they feature great histories that include NBA hall of famers, NFL alumni, Harlon Hill Award winners, final four teams, year-after-year of MIAA titles and days that saw full stands of fans. Truman's athletic history is strong and this year was no exception, even if you weren't aware of everything Truman athletes and teams were doing.

So despite what you heard before you arrived at Truman, not all Bulldog sports teams are terrible. In fact, they are pretty good and have performed well this year. Don't let people tell you what to think. The statistics don't lie. That is a rule not just for analyzing the box-score, but for life.

Cannon | Coach has been at Truman since undergraduate years

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shutout percentage. Not including the three matches against Central, Truman allowed less than one goal every two games.

The defense helped make up for an offense that scored just 1.2 goals per game, the lowest of any of Cannon's teams, although the Bulldogs were shut out four times.

"It's crazy to think that we only scored 24 goals and we finished second in the conference and to the second round of the national playoffs," Cannon said. "We're always a good defensive team, but I think this year we relied on it even more. It wasn't just our goalkeeper or our backs — we really worked hard as a team."

Collins, whose Washburn team scored one goal in two matches against Truman this season, said Cannon doesn't do anything special defensively.

"I think in keeping it simple and breaking down the game into its simplest components is one of the biggest things," Collins said. "And getting his players to understand, 'This is what we need to do in order to have success,' and then getting them to execute that. ... I like to think that every time I play him, I learn something or try to learn something."

Eighteen seasons after he started, Cannon has a career record of 245-84-35 (.720) and is top-10 all-time in Div. II soccer wins.

Unlike other coaches at Truman who have been successful recently, Cannon has no plans of leaving. Cannon graduated from Truman, has never coached elsewhere and lives close to his family.

"It would be tough to leave," Cannon said. "It would have to be a real ideal situation. I like to finish what I started, and we're having a lot of success and I think we can have more.



File Photo
Women's head soccer coach Mike Cannon makes a point in practice last fall. Cannon played at Truman as a college student.

And like I said, it's the kids we get too."

Cannon said winning a national championship would be the ultimate goal, but he also wants to make the Final Four for the first time.

He can always fall back on the winning tradition he has created: nine MIAA

championships, nine NCAA postseason appearances and three NCAA Tournament quarterfinals.

"He makes you want to win for the program," senior midfielder Beth Bystrom said. "And defend what we've had in the past."

MAUS | Freshman enters with modest expectation and became national qualifier

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lot to do with his brother.

"One of the reasons he's had so much success so quickly is because his older brother is here," Schutter said. "They were always workout partners, and they'd talk between each other. Especially right in the middle of the season, Ryan was struggling a little bit with it getting tough.

Weight was getting tougher to make, and I'm sure Alex lent a shoulder and helped him through some of those rough stretches."

Alex Maus said he was unsure of how well his brother would do.

"I didn't know what to expect, but I thought he'd do really well in college," Maus said. "It's such a different level in college, but I hon-

estly had no idea what was going to happen."

Besides qualifying for nationals and being close to All-American status, he was named MIAA Duals Freshman of the Year and had an immediate impact on the Bulldogs. Schutter said there is a lot more to come from Maus.

"We'll move him up a weight and eventually we'll

redshirt him for one year, but we'd like to have two years out of both Maus," Schutter said. "I expect Ryan to be maybe the best wrestler ever at Truman. Truman has never had a three-time All-American, and he has three more years. He's been right there to the edge, and he's going to go back and work hard and hopefully get it done the next shot he gets."



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