

Women secure 12 B cuts at Invite

BY DEREK FRANKLIN
Staff Reporter

The Truman swimming team wrapped up a solid weekend at the Mizzou Invitational against tough competition last weekend. Sophomore Jerod Simek broke two school records and is the first Bulldog this season to qualify for the Div. II national meet held in March. The women had 12 swimmers earn B cuts.

Simek broke his own record in the 1,000-meter freestyle, swimming it 4:32:68, and then broke his own record again in the 500-meter freestyle. With his record-setting time in the 1,000-meter freestyle, Simek earned an A cut, meaning he automatically has qualified to swim at the Div. II National Championships in this event and any other events he earns a B cut in.

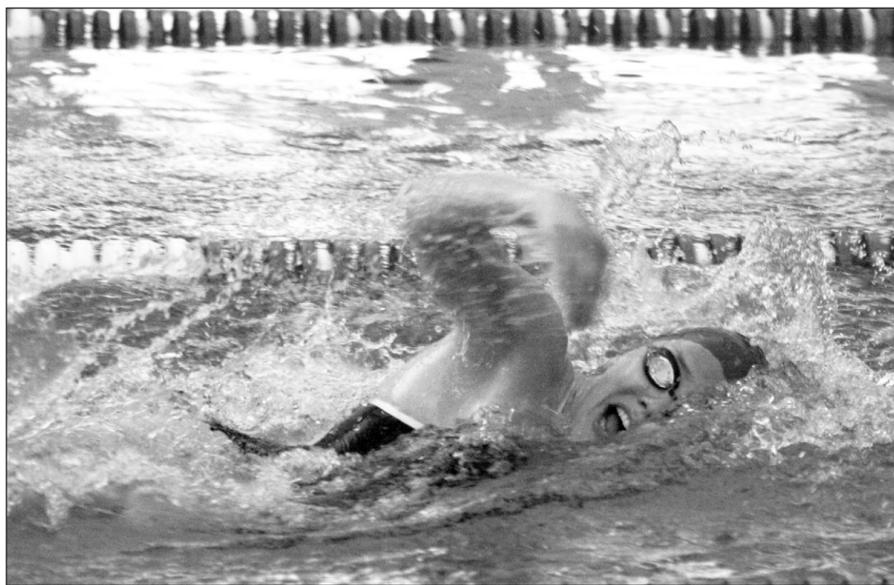
There was no 1,000-meter freestyle race at the invite. Instead, the meet counted the first 1,000 meters of the mile race as the 1,000-meter time.

Simek swam the first 1,000 meters of the mile at a fast pace and finished the last 650 meters of the mile race on a lesser pace but still posted a good enough time to earn a B cut in the 1,650-yard freestyle.

"I was closer in [the 1,000-meter A-] cut than I was to getting an A cut in the mile," Simek said.

The NCAA has set these standard times by awarding A and B cuts based on past national championships, and intends for only three to four swimmers in the nation to actually record A-standard times.

The competition for both the men's and women's teams were



Blaise Hart-Schmidt/Index

The women's swimming team finished in fifth place out of six teams in the Mizzou Invitational. Both the men and women will swim at Missouri State University on Jan. 15.

multiple Div. I schools and nationally ranked opponents.

For the men's meet, the Bulldogs were swimming against the University of Missouri-Columbia, five-time defending Div. II national champion Drury University and the Div. II 2009 national runner-up Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Sophomore Matt Fletcher, junior Brian Tillis and freshman Eric Mikolajczyk also earned B cuts at the meet.

"We were relatively pleased," head coach Mark Gole said. "Our entire

team swam well. Our goal was to swim as fast as we could at this point in time of the season."

The women were swimming against Div. I programs University and Nebraska, Boise State University, the University of Missouri and two-time defending Div. II National Champion Drury University. Gole said it was the most difficult competition his teams have ever faced at a midseason meet.

Overall on the weekend 12 women made B-cut times, and Gole said

that several of them are knocking on the door of A-cut times.

Gole said training was the focus during fall, and the team did not fully rest in preparation for the meet as they normally would for big events. Gole and several swimmers mentioned that the teams at the meet fully tapered their workouts to get more rest weeks in advance for the meet, where as Truman only modified its workouts for the past two weeks.

Senior Tanya Sylvester, sophomores Taylor Birsa and Stacey

Wymer, freshman Margaux Kent and junior Jessica Jenkot earned B cuts in four different events.

"A lot of those teams were fully rested, and for us to do as well as we did was a really big accomplishment," senior captain and eight-time all-American Emily Buss said.

Gole said the invitational was Truman swimmers' last chance to qualify for nationals this semester, and that the next big step for the team is the training trip to San Diego, Calif. The team will shift its focus in preparation for the conference meet in February.

"That's what the next nine weeks and one day are all about," Gole said. "Training as hard as we possibly can."

Gole said that at the invitational they gauged the improvements of the semester, and he was really pleased with all of the dropped times the team recorded.

Buss said everyone had at least one in-season best time, and across the board the team swam well.

"Swimming against tough competition like that can be really intimidating," Buss said. "I think that our team handled it really well and stuck to racing the way they know how."

The Bulldogs will not race until Jan. 15 at Missouri State University. Grinter said the trip to San Diego will help the team get ready for their spring schedule.

"It is the hardest training of the year, to really get our bodies prepared for conference," senior Anna Grinter said. "For the conference and national meets at the end of the year the team will do a full taper of rest, when the distance practiced gets toned down gradually weeks in advance before a meet."

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Jerod Simek

Sport	Events	Year	Hometown
Swimming	IM/FS/BR	Sophomore	O'Fallon, Mo.

Simek earns A cut at Mizzou

BY JOHN MOENSTER
Staff Reporter

Sophomore swimmer Jerod Simek said he felt like he had swam in Columbia a million times. Last weekend, at the Mizzou Invitational, his actions spoke much louder than his words.

Simek broke two school records, recorded an NCAA automatic qualifying time and had three NCAA B cut times in Columbia. Simek shattered his own school record in the 1,000-meter freestyle by swimming 9:21.29 during the first part of the 1,650 freestyle event. That 1,000 meter time qualified him for an NCAA A cut and his 1,650 yard time was good for a B cut. Simek also set a new school record in the 500-meter freestyle (4:32.68) and had a sixth place finish in the event.

"Overall at the meet I'd say we at least had every single person go best times from guys and girls teams in at least one event," Simek said. "So it was a very successful meet overall."

Simek said he had been feeling strange in the pool in the week leading up to the event, so he made it a point to get used to his surroundings once the team arrived in Columbia. Simek

said that while he prepared to swim the 1,650 free on Sunday, head coach Mark Gole approached him with the idea of going for a 1,000 free A cut during the race.

"Since I was three seconds away from that A cut compared to around 10 in the mile, I thought it was a great idea," Simek said.

Simek said the team devised a way to indicate if he was on pace by not putting up the 21st lap marker once he reached the halfway point. Gole said in longer races it is very beneficial to have even or negative splits. This means one swims the second half of the race as fast or faster than the first. Gole said Simek swam his first 500 in 4:42, which was only one second behind the pace he needed. Simek then turned up the intensity in the second half and finished in only 4:39, securing his place at NCAA nationals later this season.

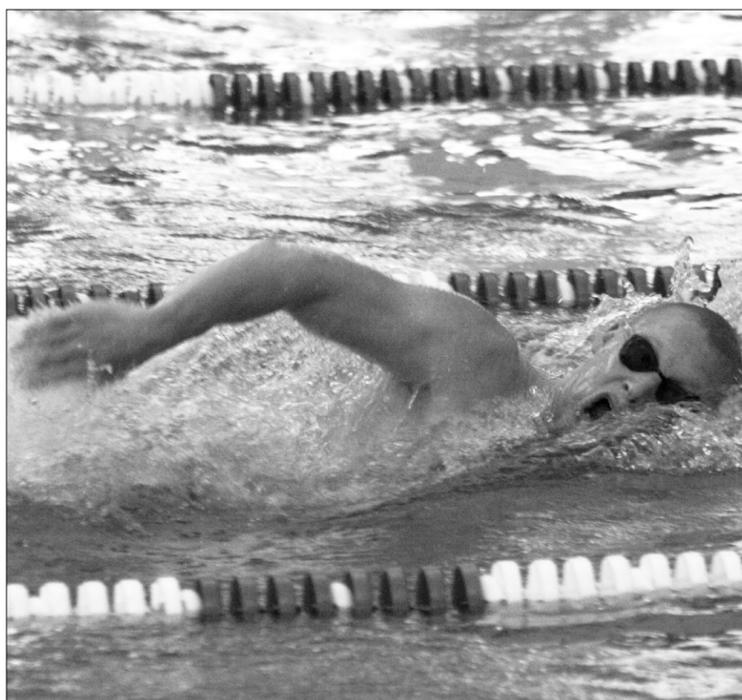
"Jerod really got the job done," Gole said. "He actually exceeded our expecta-

tions in some areas, which was great to see."

Simek is the current Truman record holder in the 500, 1,000 and 1,650 yard freestyle. At the Mizzou Invitational, Simek broke his own school records in the 500 free, 1,000 free and gave a career best 200 free in the 800 free relay, Gole said. However, Gole said he doesn't expect Simek to compete in any relays at the national meet.

Gole said he is really excited to see Simek performing at the level he is, but they already have met to discuss how to take it to the next level come nationals. Gole said Simek leads by example in the pool and is becoming a more vocal leader on the team.

"He came into this fall a little more ready to go than when he was a freshman," Gole said. "He didn't always know what to expect but after he got a year under his belt, he did what he could over the summer to prepare and when he got here on day one, he was ready to go."



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Sophomore Jerod Simek races earlier this season against Missouri State University. Simek earned three All-American awards last season, his first for the Bulldogs.

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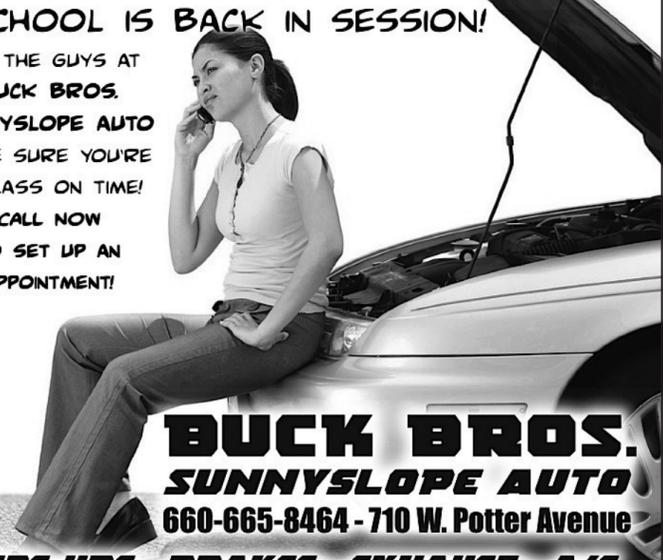
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