

FREEMAN | Senior has set career-highs in points, rebounds and assists this season — currently eighth all-time at Truman in rebounding

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talking to us before we even played. Teams thinking we're just a bunch of academic dorks. Enough was enough at some point ... We really never got, this year, embarrassed ... Things aren't always so perfect and I don't want them to sound like they're perfect because we're going through just what any other losing team goes through, frustrations and making sure that everyone is staying forward and not giving up. But this year compared to these last three years have definitely been a huge improvement."

There have been good times as well. Freeman was nine double-doubles so far this season and leads the conference in rebounding with 9.7 per game. He is eighth all-time in the Truman record books in rebounding with 751. He also is tenth in assists with 262 and made free throws with a career total of 267.

"He is one of those guys who gives us presence," said head coach Jack Schrader. "He's on the floor. We're OK. That just shows consistency. It shows you're getting fouled, blue collar. You're getting rebounds, blue collar. Hard-hat, lunch-bucket type things that aren't glamorous really but you do them. And why do you do them? You do them to help the team. Assists,

all that stuff is for others, not for yourself. So I think that demonstrates just where he has gotten to as a player."

Coming to Truman was an adjustment for Freeman, whose team placed fourth in the state of Iowa during his senior year of high school. The team also won its conference three out of his four years and found themselves ranked No. 2 in the state during his junior year. Urbandale High School games drew as many as 3,000 fans. During Freeman's sophomore year the team took a bus to a home game because tailgating fans prevented the players from parking at the school. Bjorkgren said Freeman was ready for the intensity of the MIAA because of the atmosphere he grew up playing in and that it might have taken Freeman time to adjust to the atmosphere at Truman, which rarely has drawn 1,000 fans at any game since Freeman arrived at Kirksville in 2007.

Freeman handles the ball away from the basket and inbounds the ball after made baskets in addition to rebounding and working the paint like most forwards. He started developing his skills as a basketball player when he was 14 years old during the summer before he started high school by working out against the high school varsity

team. These workouts made Freeman utilize his physicality. But it was perfected throughout his high school career.

"He was a guy that kind of played the power forward position for us his sophomore, junior and senior season," Bjorkgren said. "His senior year we had an inexperienced point guard and the ball always seemed to go back to him. He took the ball out of bounds, and I see he takes the ball out of bounds for Truman, and the [high school] point guard sometimes struggled against the pressure he was receiving. Ethan was fine bringing the ball up and starting the offense for us."

Truman has been a place where Freeman finally received the opportunity to explore his full potential as a basketball player. He said he hopes to be remembered as an inside-outside all around player who encouraged others to be better.

One thing Freeman provides the Bulldogs that cannot be quantified on a stat sheet is an intense desire to win. Freeman said he discovered how to control his emotions pregame. He learned how to focus before games and not exert too much energy while getting himself ready to play. Schrader said Freeman would fit comfortably on any team he has ever coached and he hopes to recruit players like him in the future.

"I think when that maturity becomes genuine is when you've arrived and I think that is where he has gotten to," Schrader said. "It's a genuine thing as opposed to freshmen coming in here. Everyone knows how to answer questions and act mature but with him it has become genuine."

Many things have mandated Freeman adjust during his college career on and off the floor but one thing that remained constant is the presence of his family. Both his parents make the trip down from the Des Moines area to attend Truman home games. Freeman said family being there to support him has been helpful to him. His dad drives him to get better and has encouraged him to learn his role on the floor. Family is the one thing Freeman knows will remain constant after his life is shaken up once again by graduation in May.

"If I told you I hadn't thought about basketball ending I'd be lying because I do," Freeman said. "I don't know how to prepare for it and I don't know what to think of it. I try not to think about it but I do. It's going to come quick and I'm going to have to go with it and I really don't know what to expect."

Freeman will leave Truman with his name cemented in the



Laura Tyler/Index
Senior forward Ethan Freeman goes up for two last week against Fort Hays State.

record books and forever will appear alongside some of the greatest names in Bulldog history even if his career spanned some of the losingest years in program history.

"All in all I think I've developed a lot at this school," Freeman said. "[I've] made my mistakes and learned from them definitely. I've learned from a lot. I've learned from school. I've learned from basketball. I've

learned from my mistakes. Leaving a place like that beyond basketball, beyond my grades, beyond anything, as long as I can develop and learn from that, that's what makes me think I picked the right place, picked the right place for me, for my family, seeing my success. I have like a family here that can't be taken away from me now. A group of guys I'll support and hope for the best for."

SWIMMING | Both Bulldog teams earn more than 13 B cuts during the conference meet, men finish in fourth

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University, and the 'Dogs overtook the Panthers for fourth place in the last event of the meet.

For the women, someone from every class finished in one of the top two places in at least one event. The Bulldogs had multiple swimmers in the top three spots in several events while earning first place spots in four events.

Grinter broke the NSISC conference record in her preliminary event in the 200-yard butterfly and went on to finish second in the finals. Fellow senior Tanya Sylvester finished third in the event.

Grinter's preliminary time of 2:02.77 is an A-cut time as classified by the NCAA, automatically qualifying Grinter for the NCAA Championships in March.

Freshman Margaux Kent and senior Emily Buss claimed first and second respectively in the 100-yard breaststroke.

Sophomore Stacey Wymer took

first and freshman Beth Eyanson took second in the 100-yard backstroke. Sophomore Taylor Birsas and Kent continued the tag-team Bulldog success by earning first and second place respectively in the 200-yard breaststroke. Wymer also had a solid 200-yard backstroke event and finished second, while Eyanson finished third in the 100-yard butterfly. Birsas also took first in the 400-yard individual medley.

Senior Julia Jones and sophomore Allison Harding both earned B cuts in the 1,000-yard freestyle and finished second and third respectively.

Freshman Casey Jepsen had a strong NSISC debut and made the podium in three individual events in her bid for a national meet invitation. In addition to a first-place finish in the 500-yard backstroke, Jepsen swam to second and third place finishes in the 200-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle.

Head coach Jennifer Godlewski

said the team had 67 personal best times.

"That's the number one thing we want to get out of the conference meet," Godlewski said. "Improving and placing, ranking as high as we can. Winning the meet was just bonus on top of it."

Truman's women also fared well in relay events. In the 400-yard medley, 800-yard freestyle and 200-yard freestyle, all women finished in second place.

The men's team finished in fourth place overall, with underclassmen enjoying a lot of success, particularly the sophomore class.

Sophomore Tony Hernandez finished third overall in the 100-yard breaststroke. By swimming the event in 56.55 seconds during the preliminary race, he broke the school record by nearly one second, set in 2004 by Andy Harken.

Hernandez also broke the oldest school swimming record in

the 200-yard breaststroke with a sixth place finish timed at 2:05.99, breaking the 13-year record set by Michael Morris in 1998.

Hernandez said he was pleased with his performance at the meet as well as the rest of the team's.

"Everyone was excited to just get to race after a full taper," Hernandez said.

Truman had swam all of its regular season meets with hardly a trace of a taper, except for the Mizzou Invitational.

"Considering that we didn't go on the training trip, which is a pretty big deal, and all of the new changes, everyone was pretty happy about how they swam," Hernandez said.

Hernandez made B cuts for both the 100- and 200-yard breaststrokes and said at least 15 members of the team achieved B cuts.

These swimmers now play the waiting game as the NCAA does not send out invitations until Feb. 22. Grinter said the changes in the

qualifications for the national meet are due to too many swimmers qualifying for nationals. Because of this, the standards for both A cuts and B cuts were made more difficult to achieve.

According to the new NCAA Div. II swimming rules, there will be a limit of 160 men and 205 women at nationals. Participants will be selected based on how close a swimmer or relay's times are to the A-cut standard.

"Last year there weren't quite as many, but the year before that, when they had the high tech suits, the Blue-70, I think the meet got up to 500 people," Godlewski said. "They want to make it an elite meet."

This is part of an overall NCAA overhaul of changes of the championship formats in multiple sports because budgets decreased across the board. At the start of the 2010 season, the number of games each team was allowed to have on its schedule decreased by two for numerous sports.

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