

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL MIAA CAPSULES

Washburn

2009-10 record: 27-4 (17-3)
Advanced to NCAA tourney

The Lady Blues rode a stellar defense — as evidenced by their two games against Truman — to an MIAA tournament championship and NCAA tournament berth.

Truman scored 56 and 38 points in its two games against Washburn. The 38 points was Truman's second lowest score all season, an the Ichabods were in the top three in most MIAA defensive categories.

Emporia State

2009-10 record: 30-5 (16-4)
Won National Championship

Emporia State reeled off six straight wins en route to the national title last season. The Hornets survived a double-overtime game in the semifinal before defeating Fort Lewis, 65-53, for the title.

The Hornets, who led the MIAA in total offense, will have to defend their title without the help of leading scorer Cassandra Boston (19.3 pts/game). They return senior forward Alli Volkens, who led the team in points and rebounds in the title game.

Central Missouri

2009-10 record: 19-12 (13-7)
Advanced to NCAA tourney

The Jennies return leading scorer senior Rebecca Roberts from a junior-laden team that finished in the top of the conference last season. However, the team lost the MIAA's third-leading rebounder Danielle Shows.

Central ended its season strong with nine wins in its last 12 games. All three losses were against Washburn. The Jennies also were the last team to defeat Emporia before Emporia made its run to the national title.

Pittsburg State

2009-10 record: 14-14 (12-8)

Statistics do not tell the whole story when it comes to the Gorillas.

The reason: Pitt State can win the close ones. The Gorillas were 2-0 in overtime games — both against two of the top teams in the conference, Central and Washburn.

Pittsburg State was ninth in total defense and eighth in scoring margin last season. Yet the team finished fourth in the conference with a 12-8 record and enters this season in the top five in both polls.

Missouri Southern

2009-10 record: 15-13 (9-11)

Missouri Southern is one of the teams Truman could compete against for one of the last spots in the conference tournament. The Lions are sixth in the coaches' poll and fifth in the media poll.

Southern split against the Bulldogs last season — both teams won at their home court. The Lions return leading scorer senior Jasmine Lovejoy, who put up 14.4 points and seven rebounds per game. Southern was fourth in the conference in total defense.

Northwest Missouri

2009-10 record: 14-15 (9-11)

Northwest Missouri split with Truman last season, with a three-point differential in the first game and overtime in the second. The history of close games suggests that Northwest could be a team vying for one of the last playoff spots against Truman this season.

Northwest returns second-team All-MIAA guard Abby Henry, who averaged 17.1 points last season. Also in the mix are the Bearcat's second-, third- and fourth-leading scorers. Gentry Dietz, Gabby Curtis and Shelly Martin all put up more than 10 points per game last season.

Fort Hays State

2009-10 record: 15-13 (8-12)

The Tigers played two different seasons last year. In their first 20 games, they were 15-5. In their last eight, they were 0-8. They still made the conference tournament as the No. 7 seed before being eliminated. Six of their last eight losses were by less than 10 points.

The Tigers will attempt to repeat their early-season success without leading scorer Naomi Bancroft, who was third in the conference with 17 points per game. Hays will be one of Truman's top rivals for a spot in the postseason.

Southwest Baptist

2009-10 record: 10-18 (8-12)

Similar to the Bulldogs, the Bearcats gained ground in the latter half of MIAA play last season, winning seven of their last nine regular season games. Unlike Truman, SBU squeezed into the MIAA tournament before losing to Washburn, 80-60, in the first round.

This season, the Bearcats will have to rely on a young roster to get them back into postseason play. The team features eight freshmen and only one senior.

Nebraska-Omaha

2009-10 record: 12-15 (7-13)

If the UNO athletic department ever decides to apply for Div. I status, the women's basketball team will not be a selling point. The team finished ninth in the conference, one game out of a playoff spot.

It seemed the Mavericks never could get anything going in the MIAA as six of their wins were by less than 10 points. They split in the two matchups against Truman.

Missouri Western

2009-10 record: 7-20 (5-15)

Missouri Western, more than any other returning team in the MIAA, has nowhere to go but up. The team finished with the conference's worst record and ended the season on a 1-9 slide.

The Griffons were last in the conference in total offense and scoring margin. They finished in the bottom half of every major statistical category.

One positive for the Griffons is the return of junior forward Jessica Koch. Koch was eighth in the conference in scoring and earned honorable mention All-MIAA honors. She had 15 points and 10 rebounds in the team's first game this season.

Coaches' poll

1. Washburn
2. Emporia State
3. Central Missouri
4. Northwest Missouri
5. Pittsburg State
6. Missouri Southern
7. Fort Hays State
8. Nebraska-Omaha
9. Southwest Baptist
10. Truman
11. Missouri Western
12. Lincoln

Where they finished

	MIAA	OVR
1. WU	17-3	27-4
2. ESU	16-4	30-5
3. UCM	13-7	19-12
4. PSU	12-8	14-14
5. MSSU	9-11	15-13
6. NWMSU	9-11	14-15
7. FHSU	8-12	15-13
8. SBU	8-12	10-18
9. UNO	7-13	12-15
10. Truman	6-14	11-16
11. MWSU	5-15	7-20



File Photo

Central's Rebecca Roberts (left) returns after a first-team All-MIAA selection.

WOMEN | Truman will look to its depth to advance to the MIAA Tournament for the first time since the 2007-08 season

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tempo. Smith said he wants to push the ball up and down the court this season. He said the depth on the bench keeps everyone fresh by allowing him to substitute players more frequently.

Although the team has a lot of players who will be rotated in, there is not a firm starting lineup yet. Smith said he still is evaluating how players are doing and who plays well together.

"It's hard to say," Smith said. "I really don't have a starting five. I don't think we can necessarily put it all on one team. I think our rota-

tions could change up a little bit night in and night out, depending on who we're playing."

Another addition for the Bulldogs comes at assistant coach. Lora Westling begins her coaching career with Truman this season. She won a national championship in 2005 as a player with Washburn University.

"Coach Westling has definitely stepped in, and it's been an easy transition," senior forward Malorie Kiecker said. "She gives us a lot of knowledge on basketball."

The Bulldogs have a total of 13 players for

this season, the same as last year. However, one player has yet to practice with the team. Sophomore forward Megan Sharpe will make her transition to basketball when the volleyball season concludes.

Last season, Sharpe played in 19 of the 27 total games and started 10 of them. Despite her shortened season, she still finished third on the team in blocks and eighth in points scored.

"She'll be way behind, as far as conditioning is concerned," Smith said. "But last year, towards the end of the year, she was starting for us as

well. So it gives us another athlete on the floor."

Sharpe will add to the overall depth of the team, which Daniels said is the best she has been a part of here at Truman. She said the team expectations are high this year because players continue to make each other better.

"We're really excited about this season," Daniels said. "Just looking at this season compared to other seasons, the overall talent we have is a lot stronger. Practices are going a lot harder because people are pushing at every position."

EXPERIENCE | Bulldogs will rely on senior leadership, team depth and improvements in rebounding to carry them this season

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said, we're all hungry."

This year offers the Bulldog seniors a chance at their first winning season ever as a class.

"I think, as a senior, I definitely know what is expected," senior forward Ethan Freeman said. "I think the

seniors got to grab these other guys that are younger, and we all need to want it the same now. Personally, out of my four years, this is the best group of guys [that] I think makes others better. There is some freshmen that work hard, and they're making these veterans work

a lot harder."

To earn respect, the Bulldogs will have to contend in an MIAA conference that has a new look after many of its teams brought in junior college transfers and high school prospects to replace graduated players.

Despite losing Alex

Moosmann and Sanijay Watts — two of the team's leading scorers last year — the University of Central Missouri was ranked second in the coaches' poll and picked by the media to finish first.

Hard work could make the difference for Truman

this season as the Bulldogs try to tighten up their game.

The 'Dogs were contenders in most of their conference games last season but could not finish with a win. Coach Jack Schrader said that whoever competes in the MIAA is capable of mak-

ing a postseason run.

"You're your toughest opponent," Schrader said. "I don't want to limit ourselves by saying a win total. I do think if you play in our league, you can win a national championship. It's as simple as that."



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