

SPORTS



Men and women fall to Pitt State

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The Norton siblings

Growing up basketball



For siblings Tom and Allie Norton, basketball is more than a game — it's a family affair

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As children, brothers and sisters can spend hours in their driveway under the basketball hoop simulating last-second buzzer beaters and practicing their shooting technique. What most children don't have is a full-size court.

Then again, junior Tom and freshman Allie Norton aren't most brothers and sisters. They both star for Truman State's respective basketball teams. Basketball was a

crucial part of their upbringing and it continues to be an influential force in their lives.

Their father, Randy Norton, played basketball for the University of Iowa and currently is the assistant women's basketball coach at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He was the one who cemented the court in the family backyard and started the Nortons on their path to basketball success.

"I don't remember this, but stories are told that he had us doing

[shooting drills] at the age of 18 months," Tom said. "We've been shooting the ball for a long time."

Assistant mens coach Matt Fitzpatrick, who played under Randy Norton in high school, said the Nortons are a basketball family through and through.

"Basketball's everything to them," Fitzpatrick said. "When I was in high school, [Tom] was our ball-boy. At halftime he'd be out [on the court] and could barely pick up the ball, but he was shooting threes and

he was only 7 or 8 years old. It was unbelievable."

Sports history is replete with stories of parents who pulled their protesting children kicking and screaming into the world of competitive sports. Tom said the Nortons' experience couldn't have been more different.

"Basketball was never forced on us," he said. "It was always we who asked [dad] for help. I just think in today's world, parents force sports upon their kids when they might

not really want to do it, and I just like that I had the freedom where if I didn't want to [play basketball], it wasn't frowned upon."

Instead, Allie said, both of the Nortons still use the skills their father taught them on that backyard court, and their family has been nothing but supportive.

"[Our family comes to games] all the time," she said. "Sometimes my sister [sophomore Carly Norton at St. Ambrose University] will have
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Athletics prepares for future cuts

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Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon proposed a 12.5 percent cut to state schools last Tuesday during his State of the State Address. Truman Budget Director Dave Rector said these proposed cuts would be spread throughout Truman State's budget, including Athletics.

After a 5 percent cut last year, the mens golf program was dissolved entirely, and the University also cut future scholarships for wrestling, baseball, mens tennis and mens swimming. This time around, Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering said he does not know how big of an effect the reduced budget will have on Bulldog athletics, but he said the athletic programs do not represent a large amount of the University budget despite the amount of press they garner.

"I would say we're a small fish in a big pond when it comes to the budget," Wollmering said. "Even when we went through the cuts last year, the cuts that were made in Athletics weren't the biggest in dollar amounts, but they were the biggest [in] attention. When you drop a program, it gets a lot of attention, and that's just the nature of our society."

Rector said the future of the Athletics

budget is uncertain, but the athletic department will give administrators a recommendation regarding how to allocate funds within the department and which programs to reduce funding to.

"[Department heads] make recommendations," Rector said. "You try to get a consensus. I realize everything we do around here has a special interest group. ... Everything we do, there's a reason we do it."

Wollmering said none of the athletic programs at Truman generate revenue for the university. While there are revenue sports, there aren't any self-sufficient athletic programs on campus. He said the reason the University spends money on Athletics is the pride and attention it generates for the school.

"Athletics is very important on this campus," Wollmering said. "It brings diversity to our campus, serves as a source of University pride, we go out and represent the University all across the Midwest. ... [Athletics] may not be the most important thing that happens on our campus but many times [we are] the most visible. So, obviously it's important that we present in a good way."

Wollmering said a cut in Athletics at Truman most likely would result in many athletes who are paying tuition heading to
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Super Bowl will prove dramatic

Anyone who is a fan of sports films is familiar with the typical plot lines. There are always the underdogs, rising above adversity during trials that don't seem surmountable and reaching the championship game against a team with a superstar quarterback, a genius coach and the wind seemingly at their back.

Who would have guessed that this NFL season would result in this exact same situation?

On the Giants side, we have protagonist Eli Manning at the helm. The soft-spoken kid brother of Peyton, who's been a second-mention since he was born, now is in a position to surpass his superstar brother in Super Bowl wins, something no one would have guessed when the Chargers drafted him. The sidekick to Eli is Victor Cruz, who has developed from being a one-star recruit in high school and an undrafted free agent to becoming an elite NFL wide receiver.

On the Patriots side, they seem to fit the antagonist role well. We have the glamorous Tom Brady, the golden-boy quarterback of the Patriots who, when not picking apart defenses, enjoys spending time with his supermodel wife and gracing the cover of GQ Magazine. With

a high-powered offense at his disposal, the only thing holding the team back from their fourth Super Bowl in 12 years is their complete lack of defense. Standing next to Brady is Bill Belichick, a guy who certainly will go down as one of the best coaches in NFL history despite his shady past involving video cameras and opponents' closed practices.

The Patriots are a team you love to hate, because there is no way they should be in this game. Throughout the NFL season, the

Pats managed to beat only one team with a winning record, and that was the Ravens. Despite their 13-3 record, the Patriots ranked 31st in total defense, and
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Commentary



SAM SHERMAN