

'Dogs drop final dual to Drury

BY ROB JONES
Staff Reporter

Truman State's mens and womens swimming programs concluded their regular season last weekend against the Drury Panthers. The Bulldogs dropped their last dual match of the season 78-111 for the women and 71-135 for the men.

Sophomore Casey Jepsen was the top swimmer for the women, winning both the 200-meter freestyle and 500-meter freestyle. Freshman Abby Hempen performed well, taking home nine points in the 200-meter breaststroke. The womens 400-meter relay team also finished first.

For the men, junior Jerod

Simek won the 500-meter freestyle. Junior Tony Hernandez chipped in with a win in the 200-meter backstroke. The mens 400-meter freestyle relay team also took home first to echo their female counterparts.

After a time of turmoil Truman is showing optimism for the future in head coach Ed Pretre's first full year in charge of the program.

Despite having three wins this season between both squads, the team has a positive outlook for the New South Intercollegiate Swimming Conference Championships in February, and the team's focus is fixed solely on that meet.

"Going into conference I think we're going to drop

a lot of time," Jepsen said. "The team's focus is more so on everyone's individual times than anything. They chose not to worry about everyone else or their competition. As long as everyone individually keeps getting better it will in turn help out the team and that's all they can ask for."

Pretre said he slowly will decrease the intensity of the swimmers' workouts as the NSISC Championships approach.

"Each week the intensity and yardage is going to decline and so will practice and weight room time," Pretre said. "They will start off getting up at about 5:30 then 6:30, 7:30 [and] 8:30."

Senior Zac Litzau said the team is most excited about

the future, and their new coach's role in it.

The combination of new, innovative coaching techniques, the minimal loss of four seniors, two returning national qualifiers from the 2010-2011 season, and high expectation for incoming freshmen computes to high chances for much success in the years to come.

"We want all personal best times and to qualify more swimmers for the NCAA championships," Pretre said.

The off-season will be a model for the team to improve in as many areas as possible.

"To get better we're going to lift a lot more in the off-season," Pretre said

Litzau said the team is very close and is often together at least six hours a day, including breakfast and dinner. The team also spent a week and a half together in Puerto Rico, which Litzau said contributed to how close the team is.

"We've been through a lot in the last few months," Jepsen said. "Going through all of that made us closer and a lot stronger afterwards."

The swimmers all said they agree that Pretre has been an effective Truman swimming coach.

"At the level of trying to build a team, individualizing is more imperative," Pretre said. "Being head coach is so much more broad than a coordinator."

Sherman | The Big Game will be all about high-powered offenses

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are only in the Super Bowl because of a missed kick that any high school kicker could've made.

As for the Giants — well, they seem to have a knack for showing up in the postseason. After their 9-7 record barely squeaked them into the wildcard game against the Falcons, they have outscored their playoff opponents 81-39. Similar to their road to the 2007 Super Bowl win against the Pats, no one expected them to even come close to Indianapolis.

It's a timeless matchup, an instant classic waiting to happen, and it's very indicative of this NFL season. Both teams have won their games with offense and offense alone. It seems as if Dave Thorson's "defense wins championships" mantra did not hold true, and for good reason.

We are a few years into the quarterback era, which has led to a huge increase in offensive numbers and a decline in what some would have once called "championship teams." Hard-nosed, bone-breaking players no longer win championships. Championships are now won with elaborate offensive schemes designed to pick apart even the best defenses and a quarterback to run them effectively. The game has become less of a test of will, and more of a test of wit.

That brings us back to the main players of this wonderful plot: Eli Manning and Tom Brady. The Giants' rough variation of the Run 'n' Gun offense led by Manning, Victor Cruz and Hakeem Nicks will match up against the Patriots' spread, which was basically brought to the NFL by Belichick himself. This ensures a shootout, a promising game even for the people who would rather skip through the big game for the commercials.

The offense-driven, high-octane game that will be played a week from Sunday will be a theatrical one. It will be a game filled with high-flying passes and acrobatic catches, but the more important dynamic will be between the quarterbacks.

Eli Manning and Tom Brady will go head-to-head in this chess match, battling each other's wits and poor defenses to see who will be the 2012 NFL Champion. Brady's pedigree certainly points to him being the favorite, but Eli has beat the odds before against the Patriots, and the circumstances are more in his favor than last time.

In the end, it doesn't matter which team wins the Super Bowl because this game promises to be a good one. However, if the study of sports films is any indication, we all know how it's going to end.



Jessie Poole/Index

Head football coach Gregg Nesbitt directs a football practice last fall. Nesbitt said he was unsure how the proposed budget cuts would affect his program.

Budget | With Gov. Jay Nixons' proposed budget cuts on the table, the Bulldogs athletic programs are uncertain where they stand

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other schools to compete. Head football coach Gregg Nesbitt said he was unsure of how cuts would affect the football program, but he said the Bulldogs currently rank lower than a majority of the MIAA in football spending.

"I think it'd be safe to say [we're] well in the bottom half, probably in the bottom third of the league in terms of budget," Nesbitt said. "Overall, I've been doing this for 32 years. This is

real life — this is difficult. Athletics is a small part of the puzzle. ... It's not a large expense compared to the rest of the budget."

Nesbitt said that while the football program isn't as well funded as others, the money the football team does get is sufficient enough for the team to compete.

"I don't think we have any excuses, and we're very confident," he said. "I think we're close to hopefully getting this thing back in the right direction. ... [There

are] so many variables that go into success and I certainly think we have enough [money] right now to be competitive."

While there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding the proposed budget cuts' effect on Athletics, Wollmering said University President Troy Paino is leading an all-University meeting next Tuesday about the proposed budget cuts, and he would know a lot more about the future of the athletic program after the meeting.

Nortons | Siblings excel on the court for Truman State and remain supportive of each other in college

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a game, or my little brother or my dad will have a game, and my mom has to choose between four games to go to, but she makes it as much as she can."

Womens head coach Michael Smith said there is no trace of a sibling rivalry between Tom and Allie.

"It's not a jealousy thing between those two at all," Smith said. "It's not how they've been raised. They're very supportive of one another. So they're going to do everything they can to help each other out and be better ballplayers."

Fitzpatrick agreed and said he thought a large reason why Allie — who had Div. I offers coming out of high school — ended up at Truman State was because of her desire to remain close to her family in Co-

lumbia, Mo., and the fact that Tom already was a Bulldog.

Mens head coach Matt Woodley, who also played under Randy and is the son of a coach himself, said basketball can help tie families involved in it together. He said he thinks the Nortons have benefitted positively from their close proximity to the game.

"When you grow up around [basketball], that's what you do," Woodley said. "It's what you talk about at the dinner table, you go to the games as a kid. ... You can just tell [the Norton family] share[s] a bond about basketball, and you can tell they care a lot about each other."

For the Norton siblings, they said the greatest pleasure they have experienced playing together at Truman is being able

to see each other play with a frequency they haven't in years. While Tom went to school in Kirksville and the family lived in Bloomington, Ill., because Randy Norton was the assistant womens basketball coach at Illinois State University, viewing opportunities rarely presented themselves.

"I've seen [Tom] play more this year than I did his freshman and sophomore year," Allie said. "He's been through everything so he knows how hard it can be."

Tom said his father has continued to be an influence on him, as he hopes to coach basketball one day at the collegiate level.

"He's an influence just because I've gotten to see him do it and see how much he loves it and how much I love it," Tom

said. "He always says he's never worked a day in his life, and that's how I feel about it. That's something I'd like to do for the rest of my life."

Throughout the course of their Truman careers, both Norton siblings have been forces on the court. Tom has been a presence for the 'Dogs for almost three years and scored a career-high 29 points Saturday against Missouri Southern State University. Yet Allie is excelling as well in her freshman year. Earlier this season, Smith said, she led the nation in three-point percentage, and currently is ranked 21st. So, which Norton is better?

"She is," Tom Norton said.

"He is," Allie Norton said.

For the Norton siblings, it's a rare disagreement.

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