

# TSUnami eyes national tourney

BY KIRK SCHLUETER

Assistant Sports Editor  
Index.sportseditor@gmail.com

Senior Sarah Warner is like any Truman State athlete. When she talks about her team making it to the national championship, she pauses and her voice rises with emotion. Yet Warner doesn't play an official University sport. Instead, she's one of the captains of TSUnami, Truman State's womens Ultimate Frisbee team.

Unlike official athletic teams, TSUnami has no coaches and no grants from the athletic department. The Funds Allotment Council pays the fee for its tournaments, but the players must cover transportation to a tournament, lodging and food. The team has thus been forced to become creative with how they travel, Warner said, often packing as many people as possible into both cars and the cheapest hotel rooms they can find.

Junior sub-captain Erica Sumner said that for many tournaments, the team will start driving immediately after classes end Friday afternoon. After arriving late Friday, the team will wake early Saturday morning and play three to five games.

Additionally, senior co-captain Betsey York said there often is a party Saturday night with all the teams at the tournament invited as a way to get to know other people in the Ultimate Frisbee community. Then TSUnami will wake Sunday and play three more games before driving back to Kirksville.

"A lot of times, we'll stop to get gas on the ride home, and the people will step out of the car to stretch their legs and they'll just fall over because their legs are so worn down," Sumner said. "It's definitely more sore than I ever was for an all-day volleyball tournament."

York said despite the rush of the weekend, it is worth it because of the fun of playing ultimate.

"I don't think it's that taxing," she said. "It's just very packed."

Although Warner said the lack of official funding often is not a problem, at times TSUnami's budgetary problems have produced heartbreaking results. Last year, the team had beaten Saint Louis University in Universe [sudden-death play] to advance to a regional tournament, only to be unable to afford to make the trip, which would have cost each member about \$100, Warner said.

"We worked really hard for that bid, and we had to give it to SLU," Warner said. "This year we looked at that and said, 'We've got to do better at fundraising.' We started doing dues just to get the tourna-

ment prices down."

Sumner said the challenge of fundraising and traveling to tournaments in less-than-luxurious conditions helps foster a sense of connection among the players.

"The girls get so close," Sumner said. "Those kinds of experiences are bonding experiences unlike any other."

Unlike many other sports, Ultimate Frisbee has no referees. Instead, players call all their own fouls, governed by what York said is called the spirit of the game.

"I've never played against a team that's been horrible [about making bad calls]," she said.

Any team whose name is derived from a natural disaster has a self-given mandate to win, and this year TSUnami is living up to its name. The team is 11-2 after two spring tournaments, and is ranked 10th in the nation. If that trend continues, it will be good enough to qualify TSUnami for Div. III nationals, the national tournament for schools with a student body less than 6,500. From the entire nation, only 16 teams qualify. The tournament started during 2010, and TSUnami took fifth that year. But Sumner said it's been a long road back.

"We lost so many great players [during 2010] that [during 2011] we were just kind of lost," Sumner said. "So to see how the team has been doing this year, it just feels great to be part of a comeback. A lot of times you just get caught up in it."

Warner said she thinks a key element of the team's success this year has been their sustained focus. Before the year, she said, the team had several meetings where they identified what their goals were for this year, and what they wanted to do differently from their rebuilding season last year.

"We haven't been afraid to step in and say, 'Remember what you want?'" Warner said. "We want to go to Div. III nationals and do really well. ... We've made people realize what we want, and we can achieve it and we have the proper attitude."

Div. III nationals is May 19-20 in Appleton, Wis. It's there TSUnami will try and aim for what Warner said is the ultimate goal: a national title.

"[If we win the national title], I might cry," she said. "... I'll have gone from rookie to captain and from barely knowing anything about the sport to teaching the girls the sport. You really put your heart and soul into it. You can't do it any other way. ... I would be so proud of my girls if we get that done."



Blaise Hart-Schmidt/Index  
Senior TSUnami captain Sarah Warner instructs her team members at practice Wednesday afternoon. Above, left to right, senior Betsey York, sophomore Jen May and senior Maxine Brenner catch frisbees as part of a drill during practice. The team is currently ranked 11th in the nation.

## Softball falls in MIAA standings

**Bulldogs are still in the running for the top eight MIAA tournament in April**

BY TYLER SIGRIST  
Staff Reporter

The Bulldogs snapped an eight-game losing streak Tuesday, grabbing two wins against William Jewell College (12-13) at home following two solid pitching performances from junior Kirsten Krause and freshman Kelsea Dorsey.

Krause and Dorsey threw for the Bulldogs during the Jewell series. Krause spread six hits through five of her six innings pitched, while Dorsey gave up three total hits in the seven and two-thirds innings she tossed in the series.

There was no inning during which Krause or Dorsey allowed more than two hits and unlike the previous eight games, neither gave up the big inning.

Truman's defense did not make errors during either game after the top of the first inning during game one. Brown said the 'Dogs overcame the multitude of base runners by playing solid fundamental defense and making timely outs that left Cardinal runners stranded on base during each inning except the top of the sixth, 10 of them total.

More steps were taken in the right direction for the Bulldogs on offense. Truman tallied 15 combined hits in both games and the balls that didn't fall or get through were hard-hit line drives and ground balls right at Cardinal fielders, much like what had happened for them over the losing streak. Dorsey said the difference was the attitude the team had when it happened against Jewell.

"It was like we had nothing to lose," Dorsey said. "We just needed these wins to build our confidence. We were all just up, cheering each other on."

And there was a lot for the 'Dogs to cheer about Tuesday. In the bottom of the third during game two, Schade drove a liner over the center field fence for a three RBI home run that broke the

game open early.

"We were finally home," Schade said. "We finally got a good night's rest. We were able to come relaxed. I think that shows that we are a very fluid team when we have a lot of rhythm and during those eight games, there were glimpses of that rhythm but we didn't have it. Our bats have shown we can do it. Now, let's do it and let's go on from here."

After digging themselves into a hole during a recent 10-game road trip, the 'Dogs are trying to find a way back to where they were just two weeks ago, which was sitting atop the MIAA in batting average, slugging percentage, on base percentage, runs scored, home runs and total bases.

Truman was swept three times during the streak, twice by Emporia (19-7, 10-0) and once by Missouri Western State University (25-6, 8-2). They averaged roughly three more strikeouts a game more than they had previous to the streak and struggled defensively, giving up 54 runs during the eight game span.

"Every team is going to go through it," senior Bridget Schade said. "You just have to go on, knowing that there is always light at the end of the tunnel and I think now we've gotten to it. We have to keep going and we have to keep pushing. We can only go up from here."

Head coach Erin Brown said that she spoke to her team about focusing on a few key things to help them break out of the losing streak. Headlining the list was only swinging at strikes, playing smart on defense, competing, staying positive and just having fun.

With five more conference opponents, the Bulldogs are still in the hunt to make the top eight cut off for the MIAA tournament in late April. They will need to win the rest of those conference games to secure themselves a spot.

Truman will next square off with Northeastern State on March 31 in Tahlequah, Okla., and Central Oklahoma State on April 1 in Edmond, Okla. before returning home for a string of home conference games.

## Weather hurts track

**Rain and injuries make return to outdoor track season difficult for athletes**

BY JONNY BROWN  
Staff Reporter

The Truman mens and womens track teams thought they would be stepping into the sunshine. However, Mother Nature had other ideas.

Head coach John Cochrane said the weather was not favorable for the 'Dogs when they competed at the Washington University Mini Meet in St. Louis.

"It rained most of the day, which is something you don't have to worry about with indoor [track]," Cochrane said. "It's just a little different being outside."

Senior thrower Derek Atwood said the athletes can't rely on the forecast being right when preparing for a meet.

"It can be rainy and windy and awful like it was this weekend, or it can be 75 degrees, sunny and perfect," Atwood said. "We have to prepare for any sort of weather, because you never know, the conference meet could be one of those rainy and awful days."

Along with the unpredictable weather, Cochrane said the outdoor season has other differences. The runners have a bigger track and the throwers have up to three additional events to prepare for. He said the weather made everything a lot tougher.

"Considering the fact that 70 percent of the people competed in the rain when they were there, it was a little harder to focus than usual," Cochrane said.

Atwood, who won the shot put and placed second for the discus, said he doesn't treat the two seasons differently.

"Mentally, I go into every day just like I did in indoor [track]," Atwood said. "I'm preparing to win every meet and get as many points as I can for the team at the conference meet."

Junior thrower Matt Wisniewski, who placed second for the hammer throw, said the coaches do a great job preparing the throwers for the season change.

"Coach [Leslie] Hardesty does a really good job of helping everyone adjust to it," Wisniewski said. "We have a great workout plan, so we just stuck to that."

Cochrane said the Bulldogs have a few athletes who are struggling with injuries, and with the spring season being so short, if they can't get healthy during the next week or two then the 'Dogs won't be able to count on them to compete



Hanna Billinski/Index  
Freshman B.J. Smith practices hurdling at practice Tuesday. The Bulldogs began their outdoor season last weekend at Washington University.

to the best of their abilities.

Other notable finishes for the Bulldogs include a NCAA provisional mark from senior Jenny Zweifel for the triple jump and junior Karen Grauel for the 5000-meter run. Zweifel also won the long jump. The relay team of freshmen Zachary Thomas and Dalton Preston, sophomore Matt Schaefer and junior Ryan Paterson finished first in the 4x400-meter relay.

Atwood said the team was reasonably pleased with how they did in their first event of the season despite the weather, which it won't use as an excuse, he said.

"Chilly and rainy is not the ideal weather for an outdoor meet, but all of us throwers went and competed," Atwood said. "Some runners had good days too, which is exciting."

Cochrane said Atwood, junior sprinter Ryan Peterson, senior distance runner Joey Walls, junior thrower Rachel McCarroll and senior distance runner Anne Ratermann did well in this meet. Cochrane is looking for the team to continue to improve as the season progresses.

"Hopefully get better," Cochrane said. "Getting some people healthy will make a difference."