Bulldogs look to young leader

Wrestling rallies behind Ryan Maus and his No. 1 regional ranking

BY KIRK SCHLUETER
Staff Reporter

Lindsey Borgna/Index
Two wrestlers grapple at practice last week. The Bulldogs are looking to build on their success from last season, including sophomore Ryan Maus' performance at the national meet.

It's not often the most highly touted athlete on a team is a freshman, but that was the situation head wrestling coach David Schutter had last year. Ryan Maus, last year's Index Freshman of the Year, not only qualified for the national meet, but narrowly missed being an All-American his first season of collegiate wrestling.

Fast forward to the upcoming season, and Maus, now a sophomore, ranked first regionally and eighth nationally in the 149-pound weight class, looks to reprise last year's success and lead the Truman State squad to a successful campaign this year.

"Making it to the national tournament as a freshman is a pretty big deal," Maus said. "Having placed would have been nice, but just getting there as a true freshman, I was proud of that. My goal for this year is to place at the national tournament and get All-American status."

Maus heads a list of notable returners that includes his older brother, Alex, a redshirt junior who enters the season with a 44-44 career record and ranked third in the region in the 141-pound weight class. Also returning is senior Zach Hayes, currently ranked fifth regionally at the 165-pound level.

Senior Ryan Banning, ranked fourth regionally in the 125-pound class, will redshirt the upcoming season, as will fellow junior Colton Schmitz. The two are a combined 86-48 in their careers and both were starters last year. Schutter said the decision to redshirt was the pair's own choice.

Schutter said he viewed last year as a positive one, as the Bulldogs compiled a 4-2 record in dual matches in addition to Maus qualifying for nationals. Schutter said Truman will look to keep improving this year.

"We're not really setting any goals out there," he said. "We know what we want to do. Every year's a new year. Who's good just depends on how hard they train and how hard they work and peaking at the right time. If Ryan wrestles up to his potential, just like a lot of guys on the team, he could be All-American for sure."

Alex Maus said the team's goals include qualifying several wrestlers to nationals, finishing higher in the region than in years past and compiling a winning dual meet record again.

Ryan Maus said he views the preseason rankings as a gauge for his own expectations for the approaching season.

"I think it shows a lot of respect," he said. "But rankings are rankings, they're not set in stone by any means. But it kind of gives me a goal and shows me I'm right in there with [other top wrestlers] and I have the ability to become an All-American if I stay focused and keep my work ethic at the top."

A main challenge for the wrestlers is to continue performing during a season that stretches from early November to March. Schutter said he designs the wrestlers' training to prepare them for the long stretch.

"We try to balance everything so that they have enough time to focus on their academics so they don't get burnt out on wrestling," Schutter said. "Realize it's a long season and you don't win national championships in November, or December or January, you win national championships and become All-American in March. You always have to keep the big picture in mind."

Another focus for the team this year will be reclaiming the academic team championship. During the 18 years of the championships, Truman has won six titles, the most of any Div. II wrestling program, including a four-year streak from 2007-2010. Last year, the Bulldogs finished second, edged out for the title by .013 of a GPA percentage point, and nine wrestlers earned All-Academic recognition.

"[Schutter] looks upon [the academic championships] as being really important to him," Ryan Maus said. "Truman is a very tough school obviously, and being above all the other teams in that shows a lot, I think. It shows that while we're very dedicated to wrestling, we're also very dedicated to school."

Truman wrestling begins its season Nov. 11 in a dual meet against Central Baptist College in Conway, Ark., and the next day will wrestle in the CBC Invitational.

"The first goal is to go in and win that dual match," Alex Maus said. "After that, go to the next day confident and win the tournament."

Jessie Poole/Index
Junior Anna Jovanovic practices her freestyle stroke at practice earlier this season. The women lost 83-134 to Missouri State University this weekend, while the men lost 102-134. The Bulldogs' next meet is Nov. 17.

Swimmers drop two to Bears

BY BROOKE DALY
Staff Reporter

The Bulldogs met the Bears on Saturday in Springfield, Mo., when the Bulldogs competed against Div. I Missouri State University. The women lost 83-134 and the men lost 102-134.

The womens A-team touched the wall 2.31 seconds behind MSU in the 200-yard medley relay to place second. The men also placed second in the 200-yard relays.

The men took first through fourth place in the 100-yard breaststroke with junior Tony Hernandez in the lead.

"I was trying to win that 100 breaststroke," Hernandez said. "In fly, I was trying to get my in-season best time. I got both. I was pretty happy about that."

Hernandez swam the 100-yard breaststroke in 59.61 seconds. He placed first in the 100-yard butterfly, finishing in 54.26 seconds. Senior Zac Litzau was right behind with 57.47 seconds.

On the womens side, sophomore Casey Jepsen placed first in the 200-yard freestyle with 1:58.87.

Head coach Ed Pretre said the team performed well given the conditions.

"Any time you get off the bus after five hours, it's tough to swim," Ed Pretre said. "They're right where they need to be right now. I was pleased."

Pretre said both teams will be working on race pace and kicking for the next meet.

Hernandez said the team is at a tiring point of the season because of morning practices, but that will be changing soon in preparation for the team's next meet.

"Next week we're taking a week off of mornings just to rest up for our next meet," Jepsen said. "It's considered our fall taper meet so it should be exciting. Hopefully people do well."

To compete at nationals during the spring semester, one must qualify to get a B-cut or an A-cut.

Jepsen said one of her goals for the next meet is to qualify for a B-cut. In order to achieve her goal, she said she will be focusing on her race strategy and endurance.

"I'm excited to see what everyone will do at the Chicago meet," Jepsen said.

Hernandez, who has qualified for a B-cut in 100-yard breaststroke, said he will be working on swimming the last 25 yards and finishing the race strong. He said that as the team gets closer to swimming faster, they focus on the little things.

"The team is young," Pretre said. "The team is dropping times. We're on the right path to rebuilding."

On Nov. 17, both teams will head to Chicago to compete in the Phoenix Fall Classic.

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