

SOFTBALL | Women improve to 16-6 after sweeping Missouri Southern Friday and splitting games Saturday against Pittsburg State



Anna Grace/Index

Senior outfielder Laura Miller picks up a hit Saturday against the Pittsburg State Gorillas. After the weekend, the Bulldogs are ranked third in the MIAA conference and are averaging 6.4 runs a game and 4.6 runs against this season.

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inning grand slam by Simon, the first of her career. The Bulldogs continued the offensive attack with seven runs during the third inning. After a two-RBI single from freshman infielder Whitney Richardson, junior outfielder Kelsey Bollman contributed a three-run home run. Later during the inning, Leath singled up the middle, allowing Klipsch to score. Although the Gorillas were able to score two runs during the fifth inning, the 11 run lead the Bulldogs had was too big to overcome, and Truman ended the game ahead 11-2 for a three-year winning streak. With few field errors and the help of junior pitcher Hannah Washburn who allowed just six hits, the Bulldogs were able to end the first game of this series after five innings.

The second game started off well for the Bulldogs, taking an early 1-0 lead. During the third inning though, the Gorillas capitalized on an overruled call that put the lead off hitter on base to score five runs of their own. Neither team scored during the fourth or fifth innings but Pittsburg State opened the sixth with three runs and added one more during the seventh. Although Bollman was able to score during the bottom of the seventh off of Leath's hit, the Bulldogs fell 9-2.

Brown said errors in the field were a major factor during the loss to the Gorillas, as well as a lack of scoring the runners who were on base.

"We had more control throughout the first game," Brown said.

The Bulldogs' record now stands 16-6 and 4-2 for MIAA play. They continue play this Friday and Saturday with two home double headers against Fort Hays State university and University of Nebraska-Kearney.

DIVISION II PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

TSU Graduation Rate: National Average:

92% **72%**

Number of MIAA schools winning this award: 1

Number of GLVC Schools winning this award: 4

*according to the Div. II Academic Requirements Committee

'DOGS | Truman student athletes finish at the top of national Div. II graduation rates as the only MIAA school to be recognized academically by report

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athlete on Truman's campus as opposed to only those receiving athletic aid, making the ASR a more accurate reflection of graduation rates.

Women's soccer coach Michael Cannon said academic success is such an essential part of the athletic culture at Truman that he can't fathom what it would be like coaching at a school where the student athletes struggle in the classroom. He said one of the reasons he's still at Truman, the only school he's coached for during his 20-year coaching career, is because of the combination of athletics and academic excellence.

"[Earning a degree] is the main reason [students] come here," Cannon said. "They're not going to be professional athletes, so it's important that they graduate.

The last comparison of the GPA of non-athlete Truman stu-

dents and that of student athletes, taken during fall 2011, showed the two groups' GPAs are essentially identical. Senior swimmer Jerod Simek said he thinks swimming has helped his time management skills, since he's been forced to manage his time wisely to complete his academic projects and compete.

"I think as long as you can maintain good time management skills and know what time you have practice, when your deadlines are, the schedule of 'I want to get this much done by then for my one project by this date,' then [balancing athletics and academics] becomes a lot more manageable," he said.

Simek, a multiple time All-American at Truman who has been to four NCAA Championships, said he views his academic accomplishments as being just as important as his

athletic success.

"Although my athletic achievements look good and are nice now and will be down the road a little bit, it's my academic achievements that will get me into grad schools and jobs," he said.

Wollmering said because four GLVC schools earned the award and Truman was the only school in the MIAA, the award helps to drive home why Truman is changing conferences to compete with schools whose interests are similar to the University's.

"I always tell parents and kids, 'We would love for you to come here and be all-conference, maybe All-American, and if you do that that's great, but that award isn't going to mean a lot if you don't have the degree to go with it,'" Wollmering said. "Obviously the kids are driven and want to earn that degree and the numbers reflect that."

GOLF | Bulldogs' first tournament of the spring season cancelled due to winter weather

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than the physical game, but her teammates are confident they can compete for the conference title this season. Despite the conditions, Barmettler said she is ready and excited to get back into the swing of things this season.

Lesseig said while his goal is to make postseason play this year, his main concern right now is to

get solid play from the team this weekend. With the conference tournament only four weeks away, Lesseig said he is frustrated his team won't be able to play more rounds before they are thrust into the conference tournament.

Lesseig said women's golf teams actually could have their conference a week after the men's, but due to scheduling that isn't the case.

KLIPSCH | Sophomore second baseman has seen vast improvements in performance at the plate

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to good leadership and a high level of confidence.

"We have been on a tear at the plate," Klipsch said. "Everything has kind of just come together, and I think that we all have gelled so well."

During the last four games, in which the Bulldogs have won three out of four, Klipsch has batted .500 with five runs and four RBIs. Senior outfielder Kelsey Bollman said she thinks it is Klipsch's mental approach that has allowed her to be one of the team's strongest hitters.

"I think Andrea just has a really great ability to keep her head up," Bollman said. "Most of the game is mental and Andrea does a really good job staying focused and not getting down."

Klipsch said she enjoyed fielding more than batting when she first arrived at Truman to compete at the intercollegiate level. She said she thinks her lack of confidence got in the way of her offensive production as a freshman. Through 100 total plate appearances during 2012, Klipsch batted .250 with two homeruns, one fewer than she already has this season.

"Last year, I don't think I had a multi-hit game all season,"

Klipsch said. "This year, I have really focused on taking a much simpler approach at the plate — just get on base."

While simple, Klipsch's new approach has paid dividends for her game. Not only is she putting the bat on the ball at a higher rate this season, but she has managed to double her walk total from last season, all during 40 fewer plate appearances.

"We have set a lot of goals this year as a team," Klipsch said. "It just comes down to us playing like we know we can, and I think we all just want to help the team win."

With the second half of their season left to play, the Bulldogs are in a good position and Bollman said she foresees more success for the team. However, with top-ranked Fort Hays State University representing their next opponent Friday, Klipsch said the team will need to focus and take advantage of their home field.

"As a team, I know we're feeling confident," Klipsch said. "Fort Hays is a good team, but we should have a great chance to win the series."

The two games against Fort Hays will occur 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Friday at Bulldog Softball Park.

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