

Bulldogs Bama Bound

Truman State Bulldogs are preparing for national competition in Birmingham, Ala.

BY CORY WEEKES, Staff Reporter

With winter weather in full swing, four Truman State athletes will start their midterms with a little more on their agendas than finding sunshine and freedom.

Four athletes from three different sports will represent Truman at this year's festival-style national tournament competitions. Senior swimmer Jerod Simek, senior thrower Rachel McCarroll and junior wrestlers Colton Schmitz and Ryan Maus make up the 2012-13 Bulldog class that will take the trip to Birmingham, Ala., for a weekend of championship competition in their respective sports.

While a trip to National competition is nothing new for Simek and Maus, Schmitz and McCarroll will find themselves in the national title bidding for the first time ever.

Maus will participate in his third-straight national tournament and Simek is competing in his fourth and final national championship. In a festival format, all Div. II sports will compete at the same athletic complex.

Simek, who qualified sixth in the 1000-meter freestyle with a time of 9:18.10, 20th in the 500-meter Freestyle

at 4:31.29 and 12th in the 1650-meter Freestyle at 15:44.69, said he is excited to go to the tournament again. He said he thinks the fact that it is a festival is a change for the better.

"It feels pretty good to have made it all four years," Simek said. "After making it my freshman year, I told myself I would be back again. The fact that this is a festival year adds a little significance as well."

Like Simek, Maus also has been to the national tournament during each of his first three seasons. Competing in the 149-pound weight class, Maus earned his third-straight trip after earning 2nd in the NCAA Div. II Regional Tournament. Despite feel-

ing confident, Maus said he knows he faces a difficult task headed into this weekend's competition because the top three 149-pound wrestlers from last year's national tournament will be present again this year.

"I think in the past, I may have let my nerves get the best of me a little bit," Maus said.

"Hopefully this being my third trip will allow me to be a bit more calm."

For two years, despite missing the national tournament qualification, Schmitz traveled to Birmingham with Maus as a training partner.

This year he will get the chance to compete.

After spending much of the season wrestling at 165-pounds, Schmitz

dropped down to the 157-pound weight class at the end of the year while managing to compile a team-best 30-10 record. Schmitz said his success has been less about strength or endurance and more about the direction he has received from head coach Dave Schutter.

"Schutter is a really great coach," Schmitz said. "He does everything for the program. He has no assistants and yet he still goes out of his way to make us the best we can be."

McCarroll also will be headed to her first national tournament. Unlike, Schmitz however, she has had to wait until her final season to punch her ticket.

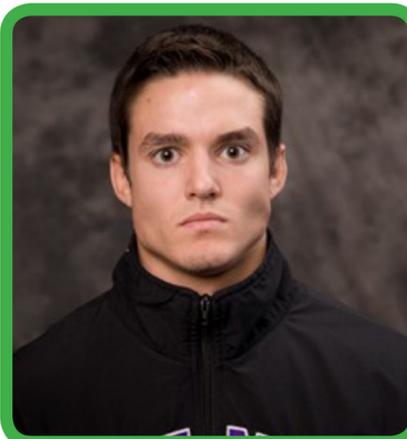
McCarroll qualified seventh in the weight throw with a school and conference record mark of 61-10-25. While she will face difficult competition, McCarroll said she is grateful for the opportunity, and as long as she does her best, she said she will finish her career happy.

"I have just tried to work hard for four years," McCarroll said. "My goal is to get my personal record throw. I'll be happy as long as I know I did my best."

The NCAA Div. II Winter Sports Festival will take place March 6 through 9 in Birmingham, Ala.



Truman State's National Competitors 2012-2013



COLTON SCHMITZ

YEAR: Junior Redshirt
WEIGHT CLASS: 157
SEASON RECORD: 30-10

FIRST OPPONENT
IN BIRMINGHAM:

Daniel Kelly
Adams State University
23-7 for the season

RYAN MAUS

FIRST OPPONENT
IN BIRMINGHAM:

Mitch Voelker
Kutztown University
15-11 for the season

YEAR: Junior
WEIGHT CLASS: 149
SEASON RECORD: 22-10



JEROD SIMEK

YEAR: Senior
1000 FREESTYLE: 9:19.10
500 FREESTYLE: 4:31.29
1650 FREESTYLE: 15:44.69

Number of years
competing at
national competition

FOUR



RACHEL McCARROLL

WEIGHT THROW:
18.85 meters*

YEAR: Senior
SHOTPUT: 11.82 meters
DISCUS: 45.77 meters
HAMMER THROW: 47.26 meters

*national qualifying throw distance, others are season bests

