

Swim team has hopes for nationals

BY ANGIE DANIELSEN
Staff Reporter

This past weekend, Truman State's swim team completed their final meet of the season — the GLVC Conference Competition. Competing against different colleges across the nation, the women's team finished second overall while the men's team finished sixth. The team now awaits the release of the final list of swimmers that qualify for nationals.

With their chance to show off their hard work during their final meet of the season, the team competed Wednesday through Saturday. Many on the team performed with high intensity, such as freshman Neil Girmus, who broke a school record in the 200 breaststroke.

Junior Abby Hempen said the team came out as one united front to prove their worth not only to themselves, but to the entire conference. Hempen said the team pulled through it together and came out closer to the top than they have before by coming in second.

With good times for the relay swims, including a season best time of 1:44.63 in the women's 200 medley, the team awaits confirmation about whether or not those relays will move up to the national meet. With a week left of Confer-

ence meets, the team anticipates sending swimmers to Nationals.

Sophomore Ashley Shanel said she was able to pull through and beat some of her best times during this meet. Not only did her faster time give her a feeling of accomplishment, but she said it set her in the right mood for the rest of the conference.

Before going into this meet, Shanel said she knew that she needed to work on her turns and the smoothness of her strokes. Now that the meet is finished, Shanel said she still thinks she could have done some techniques better, like her butterfly stroke, but overall the meet was a success. Shanel said she had faith in her team and herself and she was not disappointed with either.

Sophomore Timothy Senholtz said he felt the biggest accomplishment for the team was that new members also were successful at their meet.

"I am impressed with how the incoming freshmen were able to step up and compete for their team while still keeping calm under the stressful conditions," Senholtz said.

When it comes to competing and functioning as a team, Senholtz said he could not have asked for better. He said the team has grown and the score they all obtained is proof.

Hempen agreed, and said she has faith in the future progress of the team because of their maturity although the majority of them are underclassmen.

Because the men's team took sixth place at this competition, Senholtz said he thinks the team only can move up from there. He said this is only a temporary place that will help him determine where he needs to focus for the next season.

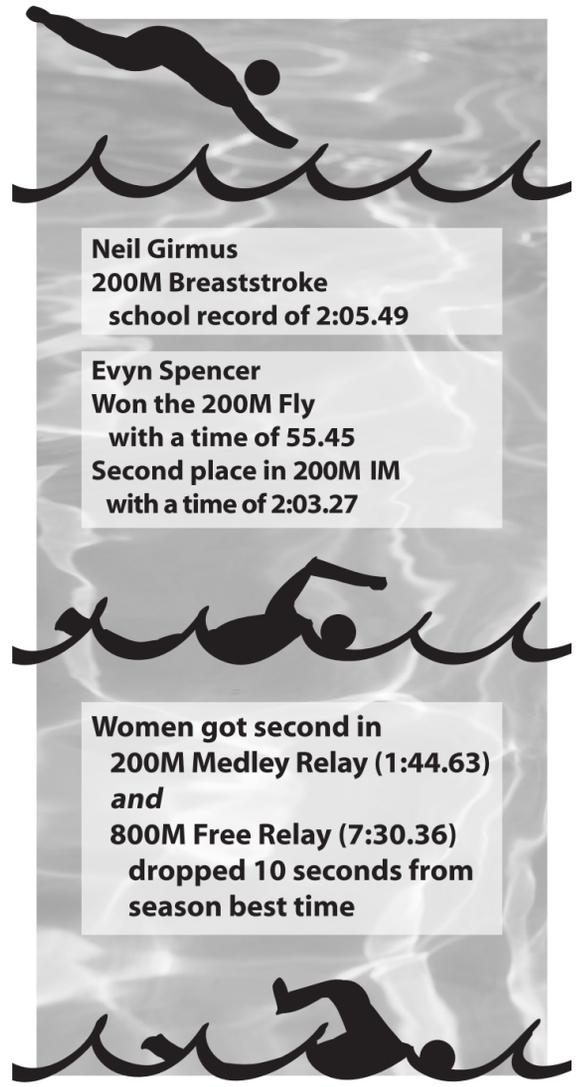
On the other hand, Hempen said there always are areas that improvements can be made. She said she hoped to place in the national rankings again.

"As a junior now, these meets go by way too fast and it's hard for me to remember to just relax and have fun," Hempen said.

Overall, the team learned what they can improve and where they made improvements from earlier during the season. Because this is their finale, they will take about three weeks off before training starts over again.

"Even though the regular season ends, you don't stop thinking about race strategies and techniques — with post-season, swimming is really year round for us," Shanel said.

With their new titles among the collegiate swimming conference, the team will wait for the final word regarding Nationals and go from there.



Neil Girmus
200M Breaststroke
school record of 2:05.49

Evyn Spencer
Won the 200M Fly
with a time of 55.45
Second place in 200M IM
with a time of 2:03.27

Women got second in
200M Medley Relay (1:44.63)
and
800M Free Relay (7:30.36)
dropped 10 seconds from
season best time

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday, Feb. 20

Women's Basketball 5:30 p.m.
vs. Maryville
Kirksville, Mo.

Men's Basketball 7:30 p.m.
vs. Maryville
Kirksville, Mo.

Friday, Feb. 21

Men's Track and Field TBA
at Missouri Collegiate Challenge
University of Missouri
Columbia, Mo.

Women's Track and Field TBA
at Missouri Collegiate Challenge
University of Missouri
Columbia, Mo.

Saturday, Feb. 22

Women's Swimming 1 p.m.
at Drury Meet
Springfield, Mo.

Women's Basketball 5 p.m.
at Missouri-St. Louis
St. Louis, Mo.

Men's Basketball 7:30 p.m.
at Missouri-St. Louis
St. Louis, Mo.

Softball Friday & Saturday
Union Tournament
Jackson, Tenn.

See all the results of last week's
games online at <http://tmn.truman.edu/>

Michael Sam breaks the glass ceiling



COMMENTARY

BY BLAKE BIXLER
Staff Reporter

In an article a few weeks ago, I wrote about how we might still be far away from seeing an openly gay athlete in a major sport, and even further from that person being accepted.

I was wrong — in the most significant "not Johnny Manziel"

story leading up to the NFL draft, Michael Sam, University of Missouri defensive end, publicly declared his homosexuality. I can say with 100 percent certainty I did not expect an athlete to come out so soon, let alone someone of Sam's caliber.

Arguably the most notable openly gay athlete was NBA free agent Jason Collins, who wasn't that impactful of a player at this point of his career. Sam, who set a Mizzou team record with 11 and a half sacks and won the SEC's Defensive Player of the Year award, is a different story. This year's best defensive player in the best conference in college football admitted he is homosexual. That's a step in the right direction for the gay community and for the sport of football.

In regards to his admission to his homosexuality, Sam claimed it wasn't difficult at

all. Growing up in a dysfunctional household, he's already been through a lot, including losing his oldest brother to gun violence and two others brothers to prison. Sam said the most difficult part of the situation eventually was telling his parents, whom Sam admits he is not close to. After the announcement, Sam's father Michael Sam Sr. was quoted saying a gay NFL player was uncomfortable for him. He does admit he made a mistake by not being closer to his child and has attempted to reach out to his son.

Most surprising to me is his declaration has been widely accepted. From current and former NFL players to Dallas reporters to President Obama, Sam has received praise nationwide for his decision to admit his homosexuality.

Without a doubt the most powerful voice of support came from Michael's imprisoned brother, Josh Sam, who was quoted in Tania Ganguli's ESPN.com article.

"I'm proud of him for not becoming like me," Josh said. "I still love him, whatever his lifestyle is. He's still my brother and I love him."

Of course, there is no bigger support group to Sam than his alma mater, the University of Missouri, who staged a counter-protest this weekend when members of the Westboro Baptist Church traveled to Columbia, Mo., to denounce Sam for his homosexuality.

So what's next for Sam? Even as the reigning SEC defensive player of the year, Sam has been projected to be a third or fourth round draft pick. Sam isn't even the highest-rated University of

Missouri player to be projected this year — that prospect goes to junior defensive end Kony Ealy.

There are rumors Sam's announcement would hurt his draft stock and potentially cost him the draft all together. Several current and former players have refuted this claim, showing fellow players' solidarity.

Former player Donte Stallworth put it best by noting NFL teams care most about winning games and will choose the best people to make that happen. Additionally, the NFL is a for-profit venture that would easily be able to market Sam as a highlight of their league, much like deaf Seattle Seahawks fullback Derrick Coleman. The public has welcomed Sam with open arms, so any team that drafts him will gain extra support and praise from their community.

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