

Men's soccer dreams big

BY DEVIN GILLESPIE
Staff Reporter

The Truman State men's soccer team has great outlooks for the upcoming season, with the personnel and depth to take the Great Lakes Valley Conference by storm.

Men's soccer returns eight starters from last year's team. Coming off of a 7-8-3 finish during their first year of being a part of the GLVC, the men plan to rise up to the challenge this fall.

Head coach Duke Cochran is beginning his 10th year as head of the men's soccer program. Equipped with a talented group of upperclassmen, Cochran said he is excited to see this year's juniors and seniors perform.

"We're trying to get the guys to not get out of here without an opportunity to do something big together," Cochran said. "We should be able to do something."

With high expectations of being in the top quarter of the GLVC and a conference title, members of the team realize the road to a champion win will not be an easy one.

"Every team in the GLVC is a good team," senior Brandon Visonnavong said. "There's not a bad team in the conference. You have to mentally prepare yourself for every game. There's no games off. I like that."

Another upperclassman looking to make an impact is senior Austin Hayden. Hayden was the third leading scorer for the Bulldogs last year. Despite his individual success, he said he is more concerned with wins than statistics.

"Goals and assists are cool, but as a team I just really want to go out with a bang," Hayden said. "We've got a lot of good competition off the bench, especially coming

from the younger guys, and a lot of good talent in the freshman class as well."

The Bulldogs were in a number of close games and went into overtime six times last fall, five of those games resulting in a loss or tie. After falling just short of making the GLVC tournament a year ago, Hayden said he thinks it is time to put it all together.

"Six overtime games can really change the complexion of our season in just a couple minutes," Hayden said. "We know we can get it done. We really have to hold each other accountable, starting with the upperclassmen."

Hayden and Visonnavong have had plenty of experience playing together well before they arrived at Truman. Coming from playing on the same high school squad and club team, the two have established a great rapport during their nearly 10 years as teammates.

"I wouldn't say that we directly made the decision to come here together, but it definitely helped out," Visonnavong said. "Just knowing someone that I got along with and I knew I could play with was huge."

Visonnavong said the team's ultimate goal is a national tournament berth, and that this group has the tools to do it.

The men's team had an opportunity to compete overseas this summer. Their trip to Barcelona, Spain, gave them a chance to see a different style of play than in the U.S. and bond as a team for eight days. The Bulldogs came out with the win in two of their three games.

"There were a lot of young Spanish players, like 17 or 18 years old, trying to break into the pro ranks," Cochran said. "They were very talented and technical."



Devin Gillespie/Index

Senior forward Austin Hayden wipes sweat from his face at a humid practice during August. Hayden was the third leading scorer for the Bulldogs last season.

Cochran said he thinks the trip to Spain will be beneficial to the team. The last time the team traveled abroad was during 2008, and were followed by nationally

ranked teams during 2009 and 2010.

"That group of juniors and seniors [from 2008] felt like the unity and chemistry really came together because

they have that trip under their belt together," Cochran said. "It's not going to hurt."

Men's soccer is set to open their season at home Sept. 6 against Graceland University.

Mo'ne Davis Effect



Hannah Kacerovskis
Assistant Sports Editor

Mo'ne Davis has caught the world's attention. If that didn't include your attention, Davis is a 13-year-old right-hander and the first female pitcher to throw a shutout during a Little League World Series game. Davis became the youngest athlete ever to make the cover of Sports Illustrated this week, according to NPR. Davis played during the most watched Little League game throughout history and was featured in the Saturday editions of The New York Times, The Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times.

That's impressive for any 13-year-old baseball player and even more impressive considering Davis is a girl. Davis already is throwing pitches at 70 miles per hour, which is just as good — if not better than — the majority of her male counterparts.

Now think about the fact that 40 years ago, girls were not even allowed to play Little League baseball. We've come a long way. Without trailblazers such as Janine Cinsneruli or Jenny Fulle, Davis wouldn't have had the opportunity to play baseball.

Fulle, along with the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Organization for Women, challenged the rule that forbid girls from playing in Little League, saying that it violated Title IX's definition of sexual discrimination. During April 1974, the Supreme Court ruled in Fulle's favor and she became the first girl to "legally" play Little League.

Another step forward for girls everywhere is that Davis was not the only female baseball player in the race to the Little League World Series. Kayla Roncin is a 12-year-old, 5-foot-9, 120-pound baseball player from Toms River, New Jersey. Roncin's team traveled to Connecticut to compete. Roncin had to face a group of hecklers booing her when she took the mound during the state championship game.

That is appalling. It's horrifying that people out there are so cruel and stuck in the past. Boys and girls should be treated the same when they walk onto a baseball field. Davis and Roncin have shown they have the skills to play in Little League and they should be able to command the same respect as the boys.

However, genetics are stacked against Davis and Roncin. Sports science expert David Epstein said, according to NPR's Morning Edition broadcast on August 21, that long before puberty, boys go on a natural steroid cycle, making them bigger and their bones denser to support more muscle, which means they actually gain an advantage specific to pitching. In this case, the phrase "throw like a girl" might actually apply.

This doesn't mean this is the end of the line for Davis. If she spends extra time in the weight room and practices and trains as hard as possible, she has a chance.

Davis' physical talents are not limited to a baseball diamond. According to New York Times story, "Cashing in Could Compromise Eligibility", Davis' dream is to play point guard on the University of Connecticut's basketball team. This fall, Davis will play varsity women's soccer and basketball as a high school freshman.

I want to thank Sports Illustrated for putting Davis on their cover. If anyone deserves the attention, it is her. She's an amazing athlete and has a story that should be heard. Davis is paving the way for girls after her to follow their dreams wherever they might lead. I deeply admire Davis, for her talent and for her courage to go where few women have dared to go. We should all strive to be more like Davis and to step outside the box. Maybe someday we'll have a female baseball player here at Truman State.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday, Sept. 4

Women's Golf 1 p.m.
at William Jewell
Liberty, Mo.

Men's Cross Country
4 p.m.
vs. Lindenwood
Kirksville, Mo.

Women's Cross Country

4 p.m.
vs. Lindenwood
Kirksville, Mo.

Friday, Sept. 5

Women's Soccer 3:30
p.m.
vs. Ferris State
Allendale, Mich.

Saturday, Sept. 6

Men's Soccer 2 p.m.
vs. Graceland
Kirksville, Mo.

Football 6 p.m.
at Drake
Des Moines, Iowa

Friday, Sept. 5 & Saturday, Sept. 6

Women's Volleyball
West Texas A&M
Invitational
Canyon, Texas

Men's Tennis
at Western Illinois
Invitational
Macomb, Ill.

Women's Tennis
at Quincy Invitational
Quincy, Ill.

YEARS GONE BY

4 years ago

Coach Nesbitt gets his first Truman win

Coach Gregg Nesbitt won his first game as the head coach of Truman State against St. Joseph's College 23-13 on the road. Freshman Dallas Grier led the team in receiving with 106 yards. Junior running back Harnish Ayora scored two rushing touchdowns during the first 16 minutes.

22 years ago

Athletes send aid to hurricane victims

During the 1992 season, the Truman women's soccer team took time during their trip to Barry College in Miami to help victims of Hurricane Andrew. The team collected items such as food, clothes, lamps and electrical appliances from the Truman campus before the trip.