

# SPORTS

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## Softball is ready to reload

BY COURTNEY STRAIT  
Staff Reporter

Truman softball is looking to pick up right where it left off with a record of 43-13 last season, but is doing so with some new faces.

Senior outfielder Ally McReynolds, team captain and outfielder, said one of the team's main objectives during the preseason was to find replacements for the players it lost because of graduation or injury. She said alumna players Corey Niblett, Danielle Lewellen, Jessica Van-Strand and Kelsey Bollman played large roles during the team's success 2013-14 season success, but graduated last year. Senior starting third baseman Cate Simon also decided to take a medical redshirt this season because of a recurring ankle injury.

McReynolds said many talented players have stepped up to fill these positions.

She said the team lost some seniors who had a lot of impact on the team, but also has a lot of players with potential. McReynolds said there are plenty of opportunities to fill the open spots.

McReynolds said the competition for starting positions is much stiffer than it was last year, with players competing for almost every spot.

She said they have found this competition is positively impacting the team. Since there are so many positions up for grabs, the players are even more determined to prove themselves, McReynolds said.

"It's definitely a good thing," McReynolds said. "Since we have so many new players with potential, we [upperclassmen] have to work even harder."

Assistant Coach Cathy Monroe said even though Truman graduated a lot of talent, the 'Dogs still have a very cohesive team.

"Our team chemistry is pretty much the same," Monroe said. "We have a lot more new kids on the team, and I'm looking forward to seeing how the young players mesh with the returners."

Having eight new faces this season is not always easy, Monroe said. She said the coaching staff leans heavily



on the upperclassmen and captains to help the freshmen and transfer students along and teach them the ropes.

"We really rely on our captains to hold the team accountable," Monroe said. "Coach Brown and I just teach our girls the game, and we need all of our upperclassmen to lead on and off the field."

This season, Monroe said she emphasized the importance of filling the shortstop position. Considered one of the most dynamic positions on the field, being a shortstop requires a high amount of communication and leadership, Monroe said.

Senior outfielder Hannah Wehar said the returning players know the importance of having high expectations for one another. To help build motivation during preseason, the team made the goal to go even further into the regional tournament than it did last year, Wehar said.

"It is very important that we keep our standards high," Wehar said. "Even though we lost some seniors, I know that we can do really well. We just need to keep putting in the work."

Junior infielder Whitney Richardson said she agrees with Wehar. She said if the team keeps working toward its goals, she thinks it will continue its success into this season.

To prepare for regular season play, the 'Dogs have been working hard in the weight room, on the field and in the gym, Richardson said. On top of practicing six days a week in Pershing Arena or on the softball field, the squad lifts weights and has conditioning workouts twice a week, she said. Each practice usually lasts around three hours. Along with preseason work, the players must stay in shape during the offseason, Richardson said.

"The coaches give us weight sheets and conditioning sheets in the offseason," Richardson said. "We are expect-



McKenna Palazza/Index

Top, softball players practice on Stokes Stadium field. Above, senior Kelsey Dorsey warms up during softball practice Feb. 10. The team gained several new players this season.

ed to lift and run."

Richardson said coaches perform fitness tests at the start of the school year and when the players return from winter break.

"Everybody plays differently," Richardson said. "We have new girls in important positions. Together, we are learning how coach wants us to play."

## Ultimate teams "chase plastic"

BY SARAH HICKS  
Staff Reporter

With the arrival of spring, birds and kites can be seen flying through the air. This season, however, those enjoying the season might also glimpse several frisbees flying through the sky as well.

While the Ultimate Frisbee teams JujiTSU, the men's team, and TSUnami, the women's team, practice year-round, spring is the sport's main tournament season. During the fall, the teams train rookies, while during the spring, practices are more demanding to allow the team to get ready for competitive tournaments.

Just like varsity college athletic teams, JujiTSU and TSUnami travel to different states to face competitors. Last weekend, TSUnami traveled to Denton, Texas for the Big D, Little d Tournament, and both teams will travel to St. Louis for the Midwest Throwdown March 7 to 8.

TSUnami captain senior Jessica Derry said Ultimate has played a key role in her life. At first, Ultimate was simply a way for her to express her competitive side, Derry said. Now, she says, Ultimate is a way of life.

Derry said Ultimate players differ from other athletes, and this is why it is so important to her personally. She said there is a concept among players called "spirit of the game."

"To an outsider, spirit of the game simply means play fair," Derry said. "To an Ultimate player, it means so much more. It not only dictates how you play on the field but how you act off. It is all about respecting each other. At the end of the day, the Ultimate community is a family that thrives off of spirit of the game, having the time of their lives and chasing plastic."

Sophomore Gwendolyn Beckemeier, the sub-captain for the women's TSUnami team, said Ultimate is the most significant aspect of her college career and has helped her grow as a person.

"When I look back in 15 years, I already know what I will remember most and what I'll smile about are the ridiculous escapades I got myself into with my friends because of our sport," Beckemeier said. "[Ultimate] is something I will carry over into my young adult life wherever I end up."

Sophomore Joe Williamson-Link, a co-captain for JujiTSU, said the men have pride for their team. He said Ultimate is a valuable part of his life. Link said playing Ultimate makes his college experience more enjoyable.

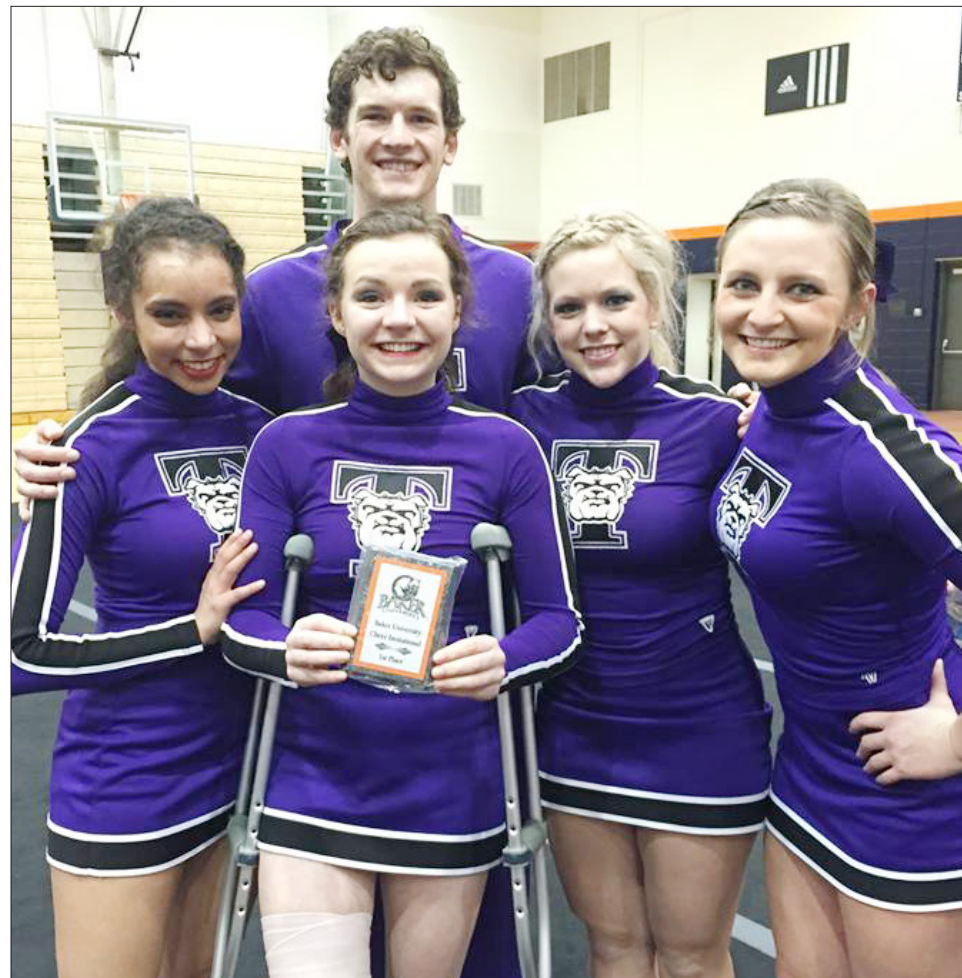
On the field, the team brings a ton of energy and humor, Williamson-Link said. And off the field the team is like a family to him, he said. He said his teammates are people that he counts on and the feeling is mutual for the team.

Freshman Brandon Heisserer, a rookie on the team, says he feels he has already transitioned well into JujiTSU's style.

"Ultimate provides me the opportunity to challenge myself physically in an environment that is also entertaining," Heisserer said. "I've found that the individuals I play with have helped me transition into college and have strongly influenced how much I have enjoyed Truman thus far."

Heisserer said JujiTSU is filled with personality, and while the team members have a good time together when they are not focusing on Ultimate, the team is competitive and disciplined at practice.

Link said the team has been working on the fluidity of its offense and honing the



Submitted Photo

The Truman State cheer team poses with its trophy at the Baker University Cheer competition. The group won first place despite the injury of its teammate senior Rachel Foster moments before their performance.

## Cheer finishes first at Baker

BY EMILY WICHMER  
Assistant Sports Editor

Five minutes before performing in front of the judges in Kansas City, Missouri, senior Rachel Foster was unable to compete after she fractured her tibia during a practice stunt. Though her injury meant she could not perform, her Truman State cheer teammates still won first place.

The cheer team had been practicing for the Jan. 31 Baker University Cheer Competition for weeks, Foster said, and the injury shocked everyone. She said with only minutes to go before the performance in front of the judges, the rest of the team adapted quickly. Foster said the team had prepared stunts and choreographed dances for the competition, all of which had to be changed after her injury.

"It happened so fast," Foster said. "I was on the floor in so much pain, and the entire team had to scramble to cover for me. They talked out the changes they would have to make to the routine on their way to the floor. There was no time to mark it or rehearse it or anything."

Foster said the Truman team members felt extra pressure to perform well in the

competition because when they participated last year, they came in third place. She said while even participating was a proud moment last year because it was the first time in nearly a decade a cheer team from Truman had taken part in any competition, the team wanted to do better this year.

When the judges announced Truman had won, Foster said everyone rushed to celebrate with her on the sidelines where she had been resting and watching.

"They brought over the trophy and said, 'We did this for you,'" Foster said. "Everyone was sobbing and there was so much happiness. It was amazing."

Assistant coach Kyle Baum said when Foster's injury occurred, the entire team's main concern was for her health, not the competition. He said though everyone considered withdrawing to make sure Foster was okay, she urged them to perform.

Baum said he was proud of the way the team pulled together and performed its best in honor of its injured teammate.

"The whole group really earned a sense of accomplishment," Baum said. "This was a