

Swimmers end '15 season

BY EMILY WICHMER
Assistant Sports Editor

Three Truman State athletes stopped the clock on the swim team's 2014-15 season at the NCAA Div. II Swimming Championships March 11-14 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Junior Evyn Spencer, freshman Will Shanel and senior Abby Hempen earned top times in their division this season, garnering a spot at the championships last weekend. The trio made it through to the preliminary rounds, and Shanel and Spencer advanced to the finals. Shanel placed 5th in the final round of the 400 IM with a time of 3:57.20, while Spencer placed 12th in the 100 butterfly during the final round, with a time of 55.85.

Spencer placed 19th in the 100 backstroke and broke her personal record with a time of 56.30. She was awarded All-American status for the third time, and said she is thrilled to receive the award again.

"When I woke up [Friday] morning, I checked to see how the places fell," Spencer said. "I was so happy. It's such a great honor to represent Truman at nationals, and to be named All-American as well. It just means a lot."

Hempen concluded her college swimming career Saturday with the No. 20 spot in the 200 breaststroke at 2:20.94. She earned the 17th place

spot in the 400 IM Thursday morning with a time of 4:30.84.

Hempen said making it to nationals was a perfect way to end her senior year.

"I made it to nationals as a freshman, but then missed out on placing my sophomore and junior year," Hempen said. "That was really disappointing. But this year everyone did so well this season and I'm super proud to be a captain of this team. It's a completely different team than my freshman year in a positive way."

Hempen said one challenge the team faced at nationals was re-tapering to prepare for the large number of events hosted in a small amount of days.

For the regular season, Hempen said the team started out practicing for 20 hours per week, and swam up to 7,000 yards. By the end of conference season, she said the team had tapered the amount of swim time to one practice and 2,000 yards so the swimmers could rest their bodies.

"For nationals, we had to jack up our practice times," Hempen said. "Our bodies had adjusted to the taper, so we worked our way back to about 6,000 yards a week to prepare. Re-tapering is hard, but it helps your body perform at a higher level."

Shanel said tapering affected his performance positively. Shanel was the first male swimmer to represent

National NCAA Times

Abby Hempen	36 th in 200 IM	2:08.60
	17 th in 400 IM	4:30.84
	28 th in 100 Breast	1:05.25
	20 th in 200 Breast	2:20.94

Evyn Spencer	20 th in 200 IM	2:05.61
	12 th in 100 Fly	0:55.85 Final
	19 th in 100 Back	0:56.30
	37 th in 100 Free	0:52.19

William Shanel	32 nd in 200 IM	1:53.21
	5 th in 400 IM	3:57.20 Final
	23 rd in 200 Fly	1:51.28

Truman in an A-final of the NCAA Div. II nationals since 2006. He also became the first Bulldog to notch a top 8 place when he finished 5th in the final round of the 400 IM.

Shanel said though the Bulldogs did not leave nationals with a first place victory, the meet went well. He said the experience of participating

as a freshman was exciting for him.

"I'm generally a relaxed, no-stress person," Shanel said. "Going into nationals though, I was up against guys who were twice my size, who have been here three times before. Still, I swam my best, enjoyed being there and I'm looking forward to hopefully go back in the future."

FOSTER | Head basketball coach Chris Foster ends his first season with a trip to the NCAA Div. II Championships

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message from Sistrunk that said he was looking to play elsewhere. Sistrunk said Foster sent him a text message later that week and eventually gave him a spot on the roster.

"I've got a lot of real respect for him for letting me join the team so late — and he didn't even know me personally," Sistrunk said. "He's a composed kind of coach. My coach at Adams State was very intense."

Sistrunk said he still has a lot to learn about the program and the head coach, as he will be competing for the vacant starting guard position that was occupied by Mells, who will graduate next year.

Along with his players and fellow coaches, Foster said he gives a lot of the credit to his predecessor, Matt Woodley, who he worked under for one season as associate head coach prior to his promotion. Foster said the foundation Woodley laid before leaving for the NBA developmental league made his first year a lot easier, and being on the staff while he was in charge made a big impact.

"It was a great opportunity for me, being a young guy and a head coach at this level," Foster said. "I wasn't pre-

pared a year ago when I came here, and I think [Woodley] did a lot to help prepare me for it."

Foster said his arrival at Truman during 2013 was inspired by an old college friend and teammate. The Ironton, Missouri, native said he played basketball at the University of Northern Iowa with Woodley's younger brother, Andy Woodley, for two seasons. Foster said he has been a friend of the Woodley family for nearly 15 years, a family highly active in coaching basketball and football.

Andy is an assistant basketball coach at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa, where his father was the head coach of the school's football team for seven years, according to the Grand View athletics website. Andy and Matt's brother, Joe Woodley, calls the defense and coaches linebackers for the Grand View Vikings. Andy, Matt and Joe's brother, Brian Woodley, is the head football coach at Johnston High School in Johnston, Iowa.

When Truman's assistant head coaching position opened, Foster said Andy reached out to him to see if he would be interested in coming to Kirksville.

"When I get together with those guys and talk, it's always about coaching," Foster said. "I'm really thankful for not only what I've learned from Matt, but the friendships that I've developed with everybody in his family."

Foster said he still keeps in contact with Andy and Matt, and calls Matt frequently just to thank him for the opportunity.

Foster said his coaching philosophy coming into his first year was to keep it simple. He relied on the system already

in place, whereas many new head coaches will look to introduce a style of play unfamiliar to current players. Foster said the advice he received from fellow respected coaches shared the common theme of simplicity.

Foster said he also has eased his load by trusting others, particularly his players, and not making all the decisions himself.

"As a young ambitious coach, you want to come in and take on the world," Foster said. "You've got to be able to delegate things and trust other people in your program, and that has paid off for us."

As Foster looked back on his inaugural year, he said he takes tremendous pride in the work his team put in, highlighting two games that put the team on the front page of the sports section of the Index. Foster said the upset on the road against a nationally ranked conference opponent and home playoff win to send the team to St. Charles, Missouri, were his two favorite memories from the 2014-15 season.

"I think the Drury game was special for us — that will be a great memory from this year," Foster said. "And then being able to win that Quincy game [Mar. 1]. We got to this point last year and weren't able to finish, so to get back to that same game and to be able to take it a step further."

Foster said he will look to bring in his first recruiting class as head coach this offseason. Based on this year's roster, the 'Dogs will look to replace three senior leaders, and will return six players with starting experience.

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