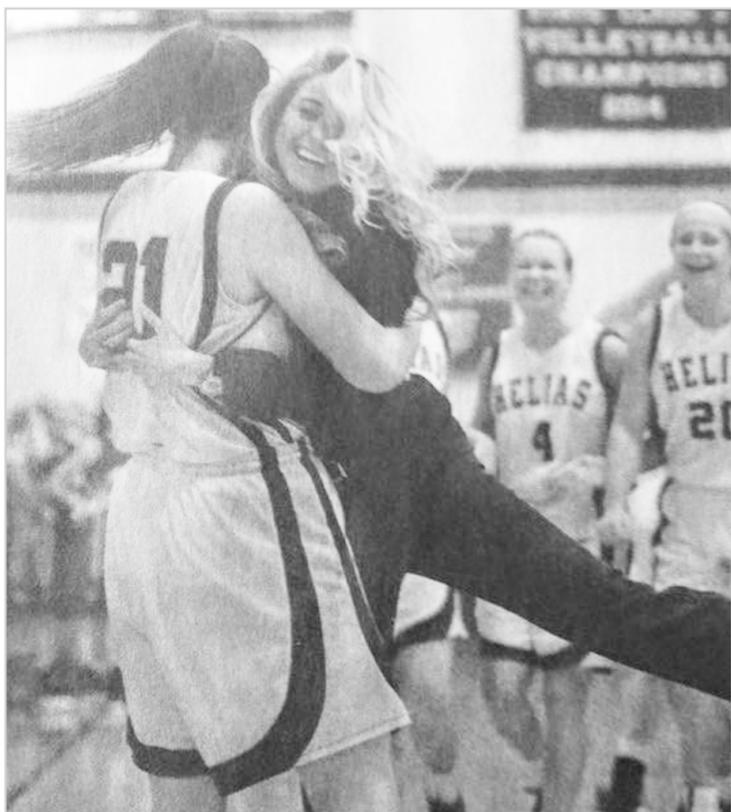


GRADUATE ASSISTANTS | A number of former Truman State graduate assistants have gone on to pursue coaching careers.



Submitted Photo

Sarah Eagan, Helias High School girl's basketball head coach, embraces a player following the 2016 district championship.

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Alumnus Wade Pelc was a linebacker for the Bulldog football team from 2008-2012 before joining his coaches on the sidelines as a graduate assistant linebacker coach.

Upon receiving his master's in leadership, Pelc joined Athletes in Action, a Christian program that combines religious devotion and competition. Pelc said he used coaching knowledge with the group by assisting football programs in Turkey and Italy. In 2015, Pelc came back to Kirksville and currently is the defensive coordinator for Kirksville High School. He continues to serve with Athletes in Action, and he spent the last several months recruiting and developing the program's first U.S. national team, which will compete in the International University Sports Federation World Championships this summer.

Pelc said opportunities like this, as well as his knowledge as a coach, are largely possible because of the six years he spent at Truman. Pelc said the graduate experience came with a flexibility that enabled him to coach the football team in an almost full-time capacity. He said this experience often is overlooked by young people who want to immediately jump into the coaching world.

"In coaching I've heard you want to be poor for as long as possible," Pelc said. "[The GA role] doesn't pay much, but I can't explain how important it is to take the opportunity to learn from people smarter than you ... I think a lot of college kids want to get out and conquer the world and make money as fast as they possibly can, but you definitely don't want to take for granted the times you get to sit at the feet of someone who has more wisdom and years than you."

Pelc said learning all he could from professional coaches was one of the most impactful parts of his time as a graduate assistant. He said any time you can be in a room with people that are smarter than you, it's good as long as you have a heart to learn what the coaches are doing and why they're doing it. Pelc said he always prided himself on being smarter than the average football player, but when he came to the coaching side, he said

he realized he had only scratched the surface.

Pelc said he has failed a lot in his first few years of coaching, but he takes each failure as a chance to grow as a coach.

Since leaving Truman, Pelc said he has found passion in spreading his faith and molding young men through sport. Pelc said he aims to use coaching as a way to be a positive role model in the same way Truman Head Coach Gregg Nesbitt and the defensive staff were for him.

Graduate Assistant Louie Ramirez currently also is growing through coaching Truman football. After a student assistantship at Arizona State University and two seasons as an assistant high school coach, Ramirez said he came to Truman looking to complete his master's in leadership and get a more hands-on experience at the college level.

In addition to his first-hand experience as the running back coach, Ramirez said he is responsible for assisting special teams, breaking down film and a lot of the behind-the-scenes data entry work for the 'Dogs.

All of this, in addition to classes, poses a challenge to any student, but Ramirez said he knows the worth of this experience and has embraced the busy lifestyle that comes with it.

"It's not for everybody," Ramirez said. "It's really not. You have to be some sort of crazy to move across the country for little-to-no pay. But you're getting a master's paid for and you have to be willing to know that in the long run this really is going to pay off."

Ramirez said the payoff is simply the experience. He said being a graduate assistant at the Div. II level is special in that he is entrusted with the responsibility of leading a position group, rather than strictly staying on the sidelines the way many GAs do at larger schools.

Ramirez's work recently was honored when he was selected to attend the NCAA Emerging Leaders Seminar in Indianapolis. With more than 1,000 applicants, Ramirez was chosen as one of about 200 people to attend the seminar and network with others who strive to pursue a career in the coaching business.

STEALS | Truman State's baseball and softball teams are leading the GLVC in stolen bases this season.

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The Truman State baseball and softball teams have displayed their speed this season, as baseball leads the GLVC in stolen bases while softball is tied for second-most stolen bases in the conference.

The baseball team has stolen 55 bases this season out of 75 attempts — a 73 percent success rate. The Bulldogs are ahead of the Missouri University of Science and Technology in this category by two. Senior outfielder T.J. Wood leads the team and the league with 18 stolen bases. The team also received contributions from freshman outfielder Mason King, who is tied for the fourth-most stolen bases in the league with 12. Junior infielder Nick Agliolo comes in third on the team and is tied for 11th in the GLVC, with a perfect record of nine steals out of nine attempts.

of 72 attempts so far, tying them with the University of Illinois-Springfield's 58 steals and putting them one behind McKendree University's 59. Freshman outfielder Christa Reisinger stole 32 bases thus far this season, accounting for more than half of the team's total stolen bases and 13 more than the league's second-best baserunner. The Bulldogs also found stealing prowess in sophomore outfielder Riley Cook, who has stolen eight bases, and junior catcher Lex Van Nostrand, who has six steals.

Reisinger said stealing bases is important because it allows the team to advance runners into scoring position, turning a single into a better chance to score. Reisinger said the team uses a mix of the coach calling for a steal and player's discretion to decide when to try stealing a base. As the team's lead-off hitter, Reisinger said getting on base and creating opportunities is important to her.

"That's always my goal, to just try to get on base so that we can move people over, steal or whatever, and get people in scoring position from the beginning of the game," Reisinger said.

Baseball Head Coach Dan Davis said the players who are leading in steals have begun to buy into the team's base running approach and are learning how to be more effective on the base paths. Davis said the team has been more aggressive in stealing third base recently, creating even more opportunities to score runs. Davis said he thinks the coaches do a great job of teaching base running, as it is one of the big focuses for the coaching staff. Davis said this has given members of the baseball team a reputation for being prolific baserunners and consistently being one of the top base-stealing teams in the league.

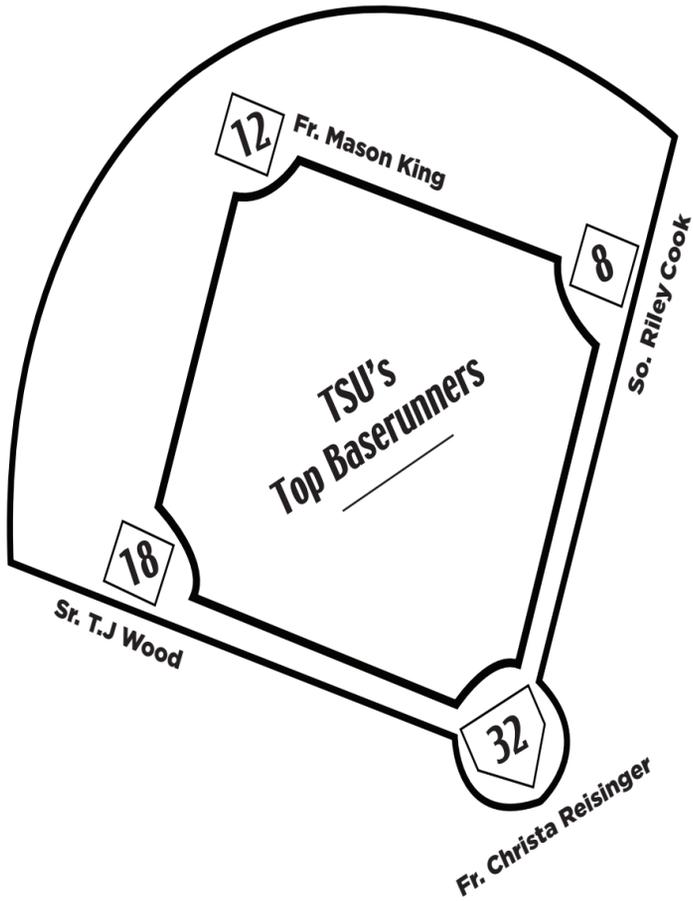
"We work on it every day," Davis said. "We work on our jumps, our reads and our footwork, trying to get to top speed as fast as possible."

"We work on it every day. We work on our jumps, our reads and our footwork, trying to get to top speed as fast as possible."

- Baseball Head Coach Dan Davis

Wood said he has started to steal more for the baseball team this season after the team's previous lead base stealer, alumnus Zak Larkin, graduated and became an assistant coach at Truman. Wood said he has gotten more opportunities to steal as the team tries to use the threat of base stealing to pressure its opponents. Wood said the team lately has had more success stealing bases and said the 'Dogs are on a streak of 18 stolen bases.

The softball team led the league in stolen bases earlier this season but currently is tied for second place in steal percentage. The 'Dogs have stolen 58 bases out



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