

Men's GLVC West Standings

Truman State	9-4
Quincy	9-4
Drury	9-4
Rockhurst	5-8
Missouri S&T	4-9
Missouri-St. Louis	4-9
Maryville	2-11
William Jewell	2-11



Women's GLVC West Standings

Drury	11-2
Truman State	10-3
Quincy	10-3
Rockhurst	5-8
William Jewell	5-8
Maryville	4-9
Missouri-St. Louis	4-9
Missouri S&T	3-10

Softball preps for the first pitch of 2016

BY CURT WICHMER
TMN Staff Writer

With experienced returners and six new players, the Truman softball team is prepped and ready to begin its 2016 season. The Bulldogs debut in Arkansas this week.

During the fall, when volleyball and football seasons were finishing, the Truman State softball team was preparing for the 2016 season. Now that the recruiting process is complete and preseason practices are done, team members and coaches said they are confident in the new Bulldogs and the team's talent overall.

Heading into the season, the Bulldogs added six freshmen to the roster — outfielder Christa Reisinger, catcher Sydney Scherzinger, outfielder Brooke VanCannon, first baseman Morgan McMahan, pitcher Lauren Dale and utility player Michaela Mooney.

Senior pitcher Kindra Henze said she is looking forward to what the freshmen will bring to the field. Henze said she thinks they could contribute in many ways throughout the team's lineup. Henze said versatility is one of the most important aspects of a softball team, and the freshmen show early promise for the Bulldogs.

"We have a few freshmen joining the team this year, and they all look great," Henze said. "They're quick, confident, and have great arms for hitting and throwing. They all work really hard, and I'm sure they'll really help us this season."

Last season, Henze had an ERA of 3.03 and recorded 130 strikeouts during 34 appearances. Henze, who threw four shutouts during 13 complete games, said she thinks the team's goals during the first few games will be focusing on finding its strengths, work-

ing out kinks and figuring out where the freshmen will fit into the lineup. Henze said the first few games also will serve as preparation for future games against conference opponents.

Head Coach Erin Brown said she is interested in seeing who will step up and seize a spot in the starting lineup.

"With this new talent comes a greater sense of competition within the team itself," Brown said. "With more skill in each position comes more competitiveness, and the players are going to have to fight hard for their spots."

Regardless of who gets which position, Brown said she plans to incorporate all the talent Truman has to offer in the team's game plan. From the leadership of the team's returners to the spark of energy brought by the newcomers, Brown said she intends to use the team's strengths to win. She said during the first few games of the season, every aspect of the team will be tested, and she is not completely certain of the team's lineup.

"We're not sure of the roles just yet," Brown said. "In these first three regular season games or so, we'll utilize their skills in key situations. It could be a pinch hit, it could be a reliever. Small adjustments are often the key to winning, and we need to add together everyone's strengths to do so."

The team will begin its season at the University of Arkansas at the Monticello Division II Classic Tournament. Following the tournament, Brown said she intends to begin testing each player's ability in key situations during regular season games. Brown said the starting positions will come down to who wants them the most and who will put in the extra effort to win.

Mooney, who batted .355 during her senior year of high school, said she is looking forward to playing for Truman. Mooney said

she thinks she and the other new recruits will bring a lot of athleticism, including their combined ability with batting, running and knowledge of the game. With many adjustments in store for the Bulldogs, for the time being the team will be focused on communication and playing as a single unit, Mooney said. She said through the incorporation of versatile players, a good mix of talent and a stellar pitching staff, she expects the 2016 season to go well.

"Small adjustments are often the key to winning, and we need to add together everyone's strengths to do so."

-Head Coach Erin Brown

Mooney said transitioning from her high school team to the college level has been a big adjustment. She said playing on a college team comes with a lot of additional work and effort, and she said it caught her by surprise at first. However, Mooney said she thinks even though the college softball scene is a lot more competitive, her coaching staff and teammates make it that much more enjoyable.

"We just go out there to have fun, and we enjoy playing the game," Mooney said. "We all have fun, and we all love playing softball, and I'm really excited to get this season started this week."

The Bulldogs begin their season in Bentonville, Arkansas, Friday through Sunday. Truman's first opponent is Henderson State University. The 'Dogs will finish the tournament playing the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Northeastern State University, Harding University, Upper Iowa University and Western Iowa Tech Community College. The Bulldogs look to improve on last year's 33-16 record.



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