

SPORTS

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Stand up for spring sports



By Menaie Barton
Staff Writer

With football season ending, it's the time of year so many Americans get excited for — baseball season. Spring training has started for Major League Baseball, but closer to home, the Truman State baseball and softball seasons are coming closer and closer. Because this is my first year at Truman, I'm excited to attend many awesome games for the very first time.

From April to September, Cardinals baseball is the topic of discussion. The St. Louis baseball obsession I grew up around sparked a passion in my heart. I began playing tee-ball at four years old, and it stuck with me. I regret not trying out for college sports, but I'm still just as excited to see the Bulldogs play as I am for the Cardinals.

With baseball season nearing, I find myself getting more and more hyped for games to start. After all, college athletics are the last step for most sports before reaching the professional level. Many MLB players are recruited during their college career. Keeping that in mind makes every college game more exciting. Maybe one of our very own Bulldogs could be scouted by a professional team and begin playing for an MLB team next season.

Not only is college one of the last steps for baseball, but it might be the end of competitive careers for softball players as well. Personally, I loved spending my fall nights out at the ball fields watching my classmates play softball. It was a great way to finish my evenings. It's an adjustment for me to see softball during the spring because my high school had its softball season during the fall, but I still look forward to spending time cheering on the softball team.

Fans can find themselves bonding over baseball and softball. For example, after the Kansas City Royals won the World Series last year, the Royals and Kansas City, Missouri, hosted a giant parade through the heart of the city to celebrate the victory. The city had 2.3 miles of downtown road shut down for the parade, with about 800,000 fans crowding the barriers to celebrate their hometown heroes, according to the Kansas City Royals website. An event that massive because a team won some rings is rather surreal and melodramatic to those who are not very passionate about sports, but for those who love the game, no party is big enough to celebrate their team winning the World Series.

Softball fans might not have as large of a professional league, but college athletics can gain a pretty intense following. College finals are televised nationwide as seasons come to a close, and there's no lack of team pride visible in the stands during those games. College sports obviously don't reach the high viewing numbers, grand celebrations and followings of professional sports teams, but their fans are just as dedicated. True fans will find themselves standing in the bitter cold and sweltering heat. They'll brave any weather to see their team play. This season, expect to see me in the stands with those dedicated fans to cheer on our Bulldogs baseball and softball.

New 'Dogs join on Signing Day

BY RACHEL STEINHOFF/STAFF WRITER

Truman State athletics will welcome more than 40 student athletes to campus this fall after players signed their national letters of intent Feb. 3

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Baseball preps for 2016

BY COURTNEY STRAIT
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For the Truman State baseball team, this spring is about more than defending last season's College World Series berth. The Bulldogs are focused on creating a new identity, exceeding expectations and improving in all facets of the game. With the first game of the season Saturday, the team has its first opportunity to show the improvements they have made.

Head Coach Dan Davis said this season's team is the best he has seen under his lead at Truman. Davis said he attributes part of the team's talent to his players' hard work during pre-season workouts and the right mindset going into opening day. Practicing six days a week — five of those at 5:30 a.m. — Davis said the team strives to put in its maximum effort each day and to play the game the way it's supposed to be played. He said during the preseason, the team placed special emphasis on the fact that this season's team is different than last year's team. He said this idea needs

to be the focal point of how the players approach this season.

"We can't sit back and think that because we did something special last year that that's going to carry over to this year," Davis said. "Should it give us confidence? 100 percent. But if we throw our hat on the field and think people are going to lay down because we did something pretty cool last year, then it's not going to happen."

Davis said during the preseason, his players competed for multiple starting positions. Because key starters in the field, on the pitching mound and on the plate have graduated, returning players, junior college transfers and freshmen all have the chance to earn a spot in the starting lineup. He said despite battling for starting spots, the players are in great spirits and are being great teammates to one another, meeting the expectations Davis said he has of each of his players.

Last summer, Davis hired Assistant Coach Zak Larkin, a four-year starter for the Bulldog baseball team who graduated last spring. Larkin said he is looking forward to helping the team progress and learning the ropes as a coach.

"I tell the guys every day, my goal as a coach is to keep them level-headed," Larkin said. "Having the success that we did last year, hopefully the returners and myself can steer the team in the same direction."

Coaches across the conference selected Truman to finish in third place in the GLVC West, according to the GLVC preseason poll. Larkin said the selection, behind No.1 pick Quincy University and No. 2 choice Drury University, was not as favorable as he would have liked.

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- Assistant Coach Zak Larkin



Christa Reisinger

Freshman outfielder Christa Reisinger recorded six hits in four games last weekend for the Bulldog softball team. Reisinger hit her first home run during her first collegiate at-bat against Henderson State University. She currently has a .429 batting average thus far this season.

PLAYER of the WEEK