

All-Americans Baseball finishes 3-5 during break

The Truman State swim team sent nine qualifiers to the NCAA Division II Swimming & Diving Championship in Indianapolis last week. Of the nine Bulldog qualifiers, seven swimmers returned to Kirksville with All-American honors.

BY RACHEL STEINHOFF
Staff Reporter

While most Truman State students were away, using Midterm Break to relax at home or travel, Bulldog baseball was strictly business in Kirksville.

The 'Dogs made their home debut at Bulldog Baseball Park March 4. After four days of playing, Truman finished with three wins and five losses. Truman now has three games remaining until their debut in GLVC play.

Junior Nick Agliolo, shortstop and second baseman, ended the weekend on a 15-game hitting streak, but Agliolo said individual success isn't what will drive this team. He said he was slightly disappointed in the week's outcome, and the team recognizes there are areas said its game that need work.

"Looking back on it, it wasn't the results we were looking for," Agliolo said. "But that's baseball. Anything can happen. Considering it's still pretty early in the season, we also can't let the signs of improvement go unnoticed."

Friday's series against Bemidji State University displayed Truman's highest batting average, as Truman went .367 at the plate and outthit the Beavers 22-19 during both games. With senior pitcher Mark Roberts on the mound, Truman took a 7-0 win in its 2016 home opener.

Agliolo hit a solo home-run during his first home at-bat and gave Truman an early lead. Sophomore outfielder Adam Gregorich added to the lead by driving in two runs and putting Truman on top 3-0 after the first inning. The Bulldogs did not stop there — junior Jason Priest, catcher and third baseman, and freshman Mason King, outfielder and pitcher, each tallied two hits during their first career games in Kirksville.

The 'Dogs scored all of their 7 runs during the first five innings. Allowing only 2 hits and one walk during six innings of work, Roberts earned the win and landed a spot in Truman baseball history. Roberts now holds the Truman record for career innings pitched, with 222.2 innings pitched as a Bulldog.

Roberts said his career has been a maturing process, and he thinks playing in so many innings over the years has given him confidence and mental toughness on the mound.

"I was fortunate enough to throw a substantial amount of innings my freshman year," Roberts said. "I got hit pretty hard then, but it helped me learn how to overcome adversity. I don't always have my best stuff every start, but I know now how to battle through tough situations."

After Roberts' performance during game one, game two of the home opener told a different story from the mound. The

Beavers recorded 17 hits and scored two home runs, earning an 11-3 win against Truman and splitting the series.

Another split series awaited the 'Dogs as the Southwest Baptist University Bearcats visited Bulldog Baseball Park. The Bearcats swept the 'Dwogs earlier this year, and after Truman took game one in Kirksville 6-4, the Bearcats retaliated, earning the overall series win by taking game two, 8-1.

Roberts said losses such as this are not representative of the potential of this team, and if the team can simply sharpen its play, it will be taking a big step in the right direction.

"We understand that we are a talented group, and we're not at the level we want to be at right now," Roberts said. "The mentality this week is going to be focused on execution — whether pitching offensively or defensively. If we play clean baseball, then we should have a successful week."

Junior pitcher Alex Hoffman was credited with the win in the first game, and sophomore pitcher Peter Young picked up his second save of the season. Following Roberts' milestone earlier during the week, Young became the second Bulldog pitcher to notch a place in the record books. After only two years in the Truman uniform, Young has notched eight career saves, placing him in second place on the Truman all-time saves list. Young is now just one save away from the record.

The week concluded with a four-game non-conference series against fellow GLVC opponent Lewis University. Truman won one of the four games.

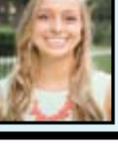
Roberts was credited with the only win, despite giving up 5 runs during his six innings of work. The 'Dogs fell behind early, trailing 5-3 after two innings. Not until the fifth inning were the 'Dogs able to spark a comeback, but the momentum quickly changed.

With two outs, Gregorich delivered a grand slam that gave the Bulldogs the 7-5 lead they held onto for the remainder of the game. In the lefty pitcher vs. lefty batter matchup, Gregorich said he just focused on being patient at the plate despite good pitches.

"I really just wanted to put a good swing on the ball in that situation and put pressure on their defense to make a play," Gregorich said. "I got a mistake fastball over the middle of the plate in the 3-2 count and was able to make solid contact."

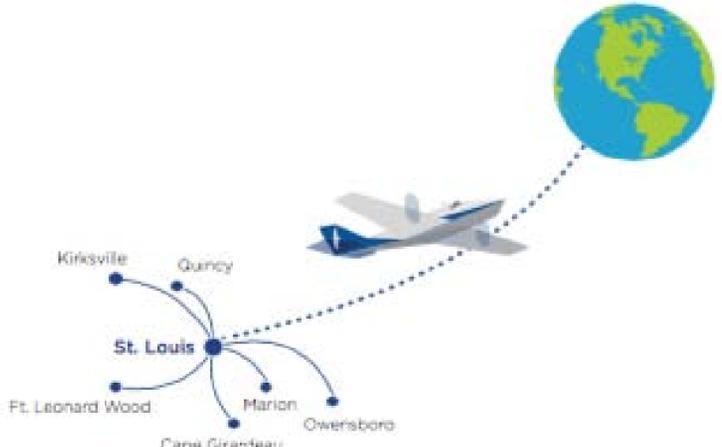
Gregorich said playing together more and syncing each aspect of Truman's game as the season goes on will make Truman a really hard team to beat.

Truman's next games will be on the road when the 'Dogs head to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for two games against Augustana University Saturday and Sunday.

LANE 1	NIKKI SISSON 100 Freestyle 200 Freestyle 50 Freestyle	
LANE 2	HANNAH NICKS 200 Backstroke	
LANE 3	EVYN SPENCER 100 Back Stroke 100 Butterfly 800 Freestyle Relay 200 Freestyle Relay 200 Individual Medley	
LANE 4	ALISON STRICKLER 200 Freestyle Relay	
LANE 5	WILL SHANEL 200 Fly 400 Individual Medley	
LANE 6	JAMIE FITZPATRICK 200 Freestyle Relay	
LANE 7	ALLY NEUMANN 400 Medley Relay	

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