

SPORTS

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Submitted Photos

Above: Sophomore Scott Halbert winds up for a spike against Baldwin-Wallace University during the Nationals tournament in Kansas City, Missouri last April. Right: Senior George Nelson sets up for an assist to a teammate. The club volleyball team will begin competition Oct. 3 at Saint Louis University.

TSU club volleyball returns

BY SAM STEWART
Staff Reporter

After a long summer break away from practice and tournaments, the Truman State men's club volleyball team is back at it following tryouts last week. With many returning players and some new freshmen, the club team is looking to have an even more successful year than last season.

The team is coming off a very successful year with wins against club teams from schools including the University of Nebraska, Kansas University, Creighton University, Villanova University and the University of Missouri — which finished third nationally in Div. I. Truman's team, which is in the Midwest Plains Conference, finished first in its conference last year and finished in the top 25 nationally with a team composed mostly of underclassmen. During competition, teams are not split up by the division of their school. Instead, matchups change on any given day. An NCAA Div. III school could be matched up against a Div. I school at any tournament it competes in.

Senior George Nelson, sophomore and team vice president Scott Halbert, and alumnus Mike Push coach Truman's team. Push said he takes practices very seriously. He played club volleyball when he was a student, and several players said they appreciate having him coach them.

Halbert said Push's experience can lead to some tough practices. He said the club is fortunate to have Push and play at such a competitive level.

Players also talked about the team's strong group of returners. Sophomore Kyler Thompson said the team has eight people from last season who are playing this year, and five new members.

"The team this year is going to be better than last year," Thompson said. "We have gotten a couple of tall freshmen that know what they're doing, along with graduate student Dan Condra returning for another year, who is one of the best

players in the conference. With two captains and a head coach always willing to work with each player, it's not hard to develop very competitive players."

Thompson said it can be intimidating to try

out and compete against experienced players, but it is ultimately rewarding because it makes players or potential players better.

The men's team typically competes at three or four tournaments each semester, including the National Collegiate Volleyball Federation Tournament during the spring. The team normally competes in weekend-long tournaments at universities within the Midwest, including St. Louis University and the University of Missouri. To prepare for these tournaments, the team practices two times a week with a reserved third day in case players want extra time to improve their skills. The team practices about three hours at a time at the Student Recreation Center, with two squads running drills and practicing plays in preparation for the regular season.

Squad members have joined the team for a number of reasons. Nelson said the players have fun at every practice, but also push each other hard and try to improve one another.

"We don't play it like it's in the backyard — we sweat, and we get bruised up all for the thrill of the game and the perseverance to become a great team," Nelson said.

This season, the club will travel to the University of Missouri, St. Louis University and Iowa State University for tournaments. Players also will head to the national tournament at the University of Louisville during early April. The team will have its first set of games at St. Louis University Oct. 3.

"We don't play it like it's in the backyard — we sweat, and we get bruised up all for the thrill of the game and the perseverance to become a great team."

- Club President George Nelson



By Courtney Strait
Assistant Sports Editor

Universities across the country all have that school. The school name no one says aloud, the team colors banned on campus, the one that is either preceded or followed in conversation by some sort of expletive. Every college has that rival school. Well, every college but Truman State.

Where's that competitive spirit, Truman fans? Where's the hate? Now I'm all for good sportsmanship and playing fair, but I think we need to step up our competitiveness and find our true rival in the GLVC.

Coming from a city 30 minutes from the home of University of Iowa, Iowa City, I know a thing or two about big rivalries. In fact, the Iowa

'Dogs need a GLVC rival

Hawkeyes will play their biggest rival, the Iowa State Cyclones, at a sold-out Jack Trice Stadium in Ames, Iowa, this Saturday. State Week, or "Hate Week" as some Hawkeye fans call it, exists for one purpose — focusing on beating Iowa State. Throughout the week, fans on both sides of the rivalry start building hype for kickoff, where Hawks and 'Clones fans will jeer and yell at one another incessantly while cheering their team on to victory.

This rivalry doesn't just happen during football season. No matter the sport, the players and fans of Iowa and Iowa State do not get along. While I understand the two schools are a lot bigger than Truman, I think we still have the fan base needed to create a big rivalry with a conference foe. With that in mind, I wanted to present a few options for our big rival, and my reason for nominating them.

Quincy University — Only an hour-and-a-half-drive from Kirksville, Quincy has a lot of potential to be our big rival. This type of rivalry is similar to a "Duke University vs. University of North Carolina" compe-

titition. While Quincy and Truman are not seven miles apart from one another, I still think the schools' close proximity could create a competitiveness we need around here.

University of Indianapolis — U-Indy also has a great chance of being the Bulldogs' school to beat. For every team Truman athletics has on campus, the University of Indianapolis has one too. This means every sport here at Truman has the chance to compete against the U-Indy Greyhounds. The more chances we have to play a school, the greater the rivalry will become. Not to mention, UIndy has defeated the Bulldog football team in route to two GLVC championships in a row, and also ended the women's basketball team's 2015 season.

William Jewell College — The Cardinals of William Jewell College are not the front-runners for top rivalry, but they could definitely gain momentum this upcoming season. Truman's football team will look to avenge its loss to WJC last season that cost Truman its chance at the GLVC championship.

Both Bulldog basketball teams play the Cardinals twice this winter — a

very important matchup for seeding going into the GLVC tournament. Truman baseball split its games against Jewell during the regular season. These reasons could lead to a strong rivalry this season.

Drury University — This one's personal. Drury defeated the women's basketball team in overtime during the 2014 NCAA Regional Tournament, and ended up getting to the Elite Eight.

To this day, the women's basketball team has never beaten the Drury Panthers but has one more chance to do so during the regular season this winter. This year, the 'Dogs are looking to defeat DU and finally get a little revenge.

While Truman is still the newbie in the GLVC, it's about time we start picking fights with members in our conference. Although I don't want anyone to actually fight, Bulldog teams and fans need to get mad and pick a team to beat.

There always will be storied rivalries such as Michigan vs. Ohio State, Duke vs. North Carolina, and Army vs. Navy. I think it's about time Truman fans have a rivalry of our own.



Laura Tarantino

Junior Laura Tarantino, cross country runner, took first place at the Dog and Cat Fight Dual against Lindenwood last week. The St. Louis native, who finished with a time of 14:46.31, has now placed first at the event twice during her career as a Bulldog.

PLAYER of the WEEK