

SPORTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2016

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Bulldog softball heats up in Sunshine State

BY STEPHANIE HULETT
Staff Writer

Truman State University softball headed south for a Spring Break trip, playing a total of eight games over four days. The Bulldogs went 7-1 in Florida, leaving the Sunshine State with crucial wins over regional opponents. At the end of this trip the team had won 11 of its last 12 games, making its overall record 17-9 before coming home to start conference play.

"We've been talking a lot about having good defense, good pitching, good hitting all at the same time, and we figured out how to piece it all together," Assistant Coach Bailey Wittenauer said. "We didn't have a lot of time to sit and dwell. We had another game right away, so the girls did a great job of staying focused."

One close win was against University of Sioux Falls. The final score was 11-10, but the Bulldogs had a 9-3 lead at one point until the Sioux Falls bats heated up and tied the game 10-10. Wittenauer said that was a huge win for the 'Dogs because they remained focused and battled to come through with the close win.

Wittenauer said everyone on the team stepped up and filled their roles, which is why the team is having so much success right now. Three players who were very solid in Florida include seniors Valerie Schmidt and Lex Van Nostrand and sophomore Christa Reisinger.

"It's hard to pick just one [impact player] because everyone did so well, but Valerie Schmidt has really stepped up this year and is now a starter who has been doing really well hitting for us too, and bats close to a .377," Wittenauer said. "We also have Christa Reisinger who is batting .550 or something outstanding like that. Lex [Van Nostrand], our catcher, too, is just so steady every game. They all just get the job done."

Junior Ashley Murphy said everyone on the team is contributing to its success. Murphy said there were a couple games where the team had to come from behind. They relied on each other and trusted the process, no matter how early a team was able to put up runs against them.

"On any given day, any one of our players will step up and get a key hit

or make a big time play," Murphy said. "Each one of our players plays a very important role and the depth on our team is incredible. Each win is a complete team effort."

Murphy said the weather was great for the women, but they also were able to relax on their day off. Murphy said the 'Dogs got a break from Midwest winter conditions to play in 70-80 degree weather and enjoy some free time outdoors. Murphy said the team was able to visit the beach or catch a spring training game on their day off.

The Bulldogs came right back to Kirksville to start conference play against the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. They won the double header 5-2 and 7-3, but fell to Lewis University the next day in both games of the double header. Truman softball now sits at 19-11 overall and travels to McKendree University and University of Illinois-Springfield this weekend for double headers.

DOMINATING THE GLVC SOPHOMORE OUTFIELDER, Christa Reisinger

1ST IN THE CONFERENCE IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

BATTING AVERAGE: **.545**
AT-BATS: **99**
RUNS SCORED: **37**
HITS: **54**
STOLEN BASES: **20**
WALKS: **15**



Photo submitted by Truman Athletics

Sophomore outfielder Christa Reisinger takes a swing during an at-bat earlier this season. Reisinger and the Bulldogs went 7-1 on their Spring Break trip to Clermont, Florida to improve their overall record to 17-9.

"On any given day, any one of our players will step up and get a key hit or make a big time play."

Junior Infielder Ashley Murphy

Hot bats carry 'Dogs into conference play

BY JEREMY JACOB
Staff Writer

While most students were resting during Spring Break, the Truman State University baseball team played eight games against Augustana University and Lewis University, going 3-5 for the week.

Now heading into its conference schedule, the team has scored 106 runs through 20 games. However, the team scored most of the 106 runs during the first eight games when they averaged 7.3 runs per game, juxtaposed with only four runs per game

during their last 12 games. Head Coach Dan Davis said he has noticed the team making less contact, especially during the last couple weeks.

The Bulldogs rank No. 4 in the conference with strikeouts at 131 through 20 games. At this time last year, the team had 102 strikeouts through 21 games.

Davis said they would have a better chance to reach their goals if they reduced the strikeouts. He said the rotation has pitched better as of late especially the left-handed redshirt freshman Bryan Clark and freshman Rian Markes, and right-hander senior Alex Hoffman. See **BASEBALL**, page 9



Chris Iliopoulos

Bulldog third baseman senior Chris Iliopoulos made noise at the plate last weekend against Lewis University, blasting four home runs in four games. Iliopoulos knocked out three home runs on Sunday alone, tallying seven long shots on the season thus far. Iliopoulos leads the team in home runs and slugging percentage at .661.

ATHLETE of the WEEK