



Photo submitted by Truman Athletics

Senior outfielder Dave Gambino stares down a pitch as it makes way into the strike zone during last season. Gambino was named a preseason all-region selection by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association prior to the start of the 2017 season and is currently tied with sophomore first baseman Charlie Kreh for a team-leading 13 RBIs.

BASEBALL | A Truman State University baseball team that has been struggling to limit strikeouts so-far this season got hot at the right time Monday night. The ‘Dogs tallied 20 hits and 13 runs to defeat Lewis University.

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Now, Davis said the offense is going through its own rough patch mostly because of the tough non-conference schedule and the quality pitchers it has faced.

Davis said the team discussed being mentally tough in the batter’s box when a battle is waged against one of these high-quality hurlers. He said a batter should typically look for a pitch to crush early in the count. When this doesn’t happen and the batter falls behind, he should look to foul off

itches near the corners of the strike zone. Staying alive with foul tips raises the pitch count, a contribution even if the at-bat ends in a strike out.

Davis said there are productive strikeouts that last around seven or eight pitches, and he wants his team to avoid the unproductive ones that last only three or four pitches. Forcing the pitcher to work harder for outs, even if hitters strike out, wears down the pitcher to a point where his high pitch count forces his early exit. He said he thinks the team will cut down on the strikeouts using this

mentality, which will allow the team to become more balanced.

“We’ve always been a tough team to strike out,” Davis said. “I don’t think it’s any different with these guys.”

Strikeouts aside, Davis said a few hitters have made the offense potent this year and are evidence that it will improve. Senior catcher and third baseman Jason Priest leads the team in batting average with .380 and with 20 RBIs and sophomore first baseman Charlie Kreh is tied for second on the team in RBIs with senior outfielder and first baseman Dave Gambino at 13. Davis said senior third baseman Chris Iliopoulos had a great weekend in the four games against Lewis, hitting four home runs.

Iliopoulos leads the team in home runs with seven and slugging percentage with .661. Iliopoulos said he typically doesn’t show that much power as he usually hits balls in the gaps, but he said he has been elevating more balls and they have just been finding their way over the wall. He said he wants to cut down on his strikeouts because he currently leads the team in that category as well with 18.

“Striking out is the worst thing you could do,” Iliopoulos said.

Iliopoulos said strikeouts stagnate the offense by bailing out the opposing defense. He said the offense needs to put more pressure on the defense by forcing them to make plays, which would increase the probability of mistakes. He said the games against Lewis were examples of the lineup not applying enough pressure.

Iliopoulos said the opposing pitching staffs have been stingy with the amount of hittable pitches and said they need to lock in and sustain the battles against these talented staffs. He said Augustana’s staff was strong and the lineup was able to hang tough in the box, which explains how the team was able to come out of the four-game series with two wins.

While the ‘Dogs have to be more disciplined against the offspeed pitches, Iliopoulos said the offense is capable of doing that. He said this is one of the best lineups he’s ever seen because everyone in the order can hit for power but also spray balls all over the field — which was shown in the team’s first eight games.

“I’m 100 percent confident we’re going to get back to that,” Iliopoulos said.



Photo submitted by Truman Athletics

Senior right-handed pitcher Alex Hoffman delivers a pitch in a starting performance last season. Hoffman, accompanied by left-handers redshirt freshman Bryan Clark and Rian Markes have been steady in the rotation for the ‘Dogs.

UPCOMING EVENTS	BASEBALL	SOFTBALL	TENNIS	
	3/25: 12pm vs. Quincy University Quincy, IL 3pm vs. Quincy University Quincy, IL	3/26: 12pm vs. Quincy University Quincy, IL 3pm vs. Quincy University Quincy, IL	3/25: 12pm vs. McKendree University Lebanon, IL 3pm vs. McKendree University Lebanon, IL	3/26: 12pm vs. University of Illinois-Springfield Springfield, IL 3pm vs. University of Illinois-Springfield Springfield, IL
			GOLF	
		3/26: TBA at Perry Park Spring Fling Perry Park, KY		

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