

Truman alumnus joins HoF

BY STEPHANIE HULETT
Staff Writer

Truman State University alumnus Hank Janssen was inducted into the Truman Athletics Hall of Fame Homecoming weekend for his contribution to Bulldog athletics with his broadcasting partner and fellow Hall of Fame inductee Brad Boyer.

Since attending Truman, Janssen said he enjoyed the quiet little college town of Kirksville and never planned on staying here as long as he has, but his love and passion for Bulldog sports kept him around. He said he has been a part of the community since the mid-70s. He was sports editor for the Index and went on to serve as sports editor at the Kirksville Daily Express. He said he started with news, photos and copy. When a spot opened up in the mid-80s for a sports editor, he served in that position for the next 5-6 years.

Janssen said he has always been a sports guy. He started some teams here in Kirksville, which was another reason he stuck around after college.

"I played a lot — I played in high school and heavily played intramurals," Janssen said. "We had local teams, and that's kind of why I stayed around, because we were cultivating some local softball and basketball teams, and we were just getting going but ended up playing for a long time."

Originally, Janssen said he never thought of himself as a communication person. He said he enjoyed English and social sciences, but shifted gears in the mid-70s when he knew some of the athletes playing. In the 80s, he said he worked with Bob Carlson at the Kirksville Daily Express, broadcasting Truman football and basketball.

"When he [Bob Carlson] had conflicts, me and another guy would go do the other one Bob couldn't do," Janssen said. "Then it evolved into helping Bob here and there, and then around 1983 is when I stepped in on a full-time basis. We did Truman football and basketball pretty much full time in the fall of '83."

During Janssen's time, Truman games moved from KIRX to KTUF then to KRES in 1995 when he started working with Boyer, who is still his broadcasting partner and fellow inductee.

Janssen said the roles he has taken during his coverage of Truman athletics have changed occasionally throughout the years, but the people have largely stayed the same.

"They would do football and basketball, and a man named Ken Kujawa and Brad did it all," Janssen said. "Ken was play-by-play, Brad was color and I was on the sideline, and then Brad and I did basketball together and Ken actually did the junior college basketball."

Janssen and Boyer also travel to just about every away game for Truman football and basketball. He said football is easier to attend away games because it is one game every Saturday, and for basketball they still attend most away games, but with a few exceptions here and there because of overlapping games of the men's and women's programs and occasional winter weather.

A typical game day looks a little different for Janssen than Boyer. Janssen said because Boyer is the full-time guy, he's in charge of pre-articles, prep work and post-game material, and all this becomes more involved. The only time Janssen did this was during his time at the Daily Express back in the mid-80s. Janssen can show up and go and not worry about any prep work except for the occasional statistical research before a game.

Janssen said after all those years with Carlson in the press box, he was glad to be on the sideline.

"I like to be right here where I can feel it, and hear it and smell it — the whole deal," Janssen said. "You might not get as good as a view as being in the press box, but I like the sidelines. It's been fun. At home games I'll be standing right here on the visitor side and see them making the changes on their chalkboards and you can hear it all, and hear the officials interacting with the players. I enjoy that."



Photo by Rachel Steinhoff/TMN
Hank Janssen speaks from the sidelines while the Bulldogs play at home. Janssen has been a full time broadcaster for Truman sports since 1983.

Janssen said he has been directly involved with the Kirksville Baseball and Softball Association for about 20 years now and is currently the president. Janssen said he enjoys providing a summer baseball and softball program for the kids. It has about 600-700 local kids and even more from surrounding areas, resulting in a total of about 1,000 kids. This is another way he has made connections with some of the players here, because quite a few of the football players have umpired for him during the summers.

Janssen said another reason he's stayed in Kirksville so long is because of the people he has been able to meet along the way.

"I probably wouldn't have stuck around so long, but these guys have all been my friends," Janssen said. "I got to know some of these football players back in the day and play softball and basketball

together, and then all of a sudden they turn into coaches, and so all of a sudden my good friends that are players turn into my good friends that are coaches."

Janssen said one example is head football coach Gregg Nesbitt.

Nesbitt said they go way back, and he played softball over the summer here with Janssen. Nesbitt said Janssen was involved in intramurals and ran the basketball team that won the all-university championship all four years.

"He's one of the most highly intelligent human beings that I've encountered in my 58 years — he really is a sharp, deep guy, and he's put a lot of his passion into sports and Bulldog athletics," Nesbitt said. "He's a walking encyclopedia of Bulldog football and men's and women's basketball. He's got a pretty good grasp on the history here from the athletic standpoint."

Men's soccer falls short of postseason berth for fourth consecutive season

BY JEREMY JACOB
Staff writer

The Truman State University men's soccer team's fourth year in the GLVC officially ended Wednesday at Quincy University where it lost 2-0. The Bulldog's time in the GLVC coincides with a postseason drought. The team has missed the conference tournament each of the past four years.

The team ended the year with a winning percentage of 47 percent and a road record of 2-4-2 — both improvements from last year. This progress didn't prevent the team from a school record-tying fourth consecutive losing season, as it has finished the 2016 schedule with an all-around record of 6-7-4. The only other time the team has had four straight losing seasons was during its first four years of existence, 1979-1982.

However, the Bulldogs also tied the school record for ties this season with four, originally set in 1985. The Bulldogs, including redshirt senior captain Tyler Luebbert, believe the increase in ties is a good sign for future growth. Luebbert said while a tie can be frustrating, it is not the worst outcome.

It is true the 2016 Bulldogs didn't reach their win total of last year, but it's also true they avoided losses this year because of second-half performances. In back-to-back games earlier in October, they tied the score against the University of Indianapolis and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Last week, Lueppert scored the game-tying goal against Maryville University.

Luebbert said these draws kept the Bulldogs in contention longer this year because the winning percentage, not the number of ties, is the factor that determines whether a team qualifies for the conference tournament. Ties prevented losses from staining the Bulldogs' record in what Luebbert said is one of the best Div. II conferences in the nation.

Lueppert stressed that every game is important — however, the games against certain GLVC opponents like Rockhurst University, Drury University, Quincy University and the University of Missouri-St. Louis always get a little extra attention from the Bulldogs.

"Pushing for a result, never giving up and never getting lackadaisical," Lueppert said. "That was a big factor of our team this year. We tried to be a possession team all year, instead of kick-and-run. We tried to get our brand of soccer into those games."

Head Coach Duke Cochran said he thinks this team should be more consistent and can't make mistakes like a giveaway in the midfield or committing

unnecessary fouls against the conference's more physical teams. Decreasing the number of opposing free kicks will be key, and playing more to the Bulldog brand of possession soccer will help Truman in the future. Still, Cochran said the Bulldogs showed more fight this year.

"Our group found out how to fight for points, which is a good thing," Cochran said. "We were willing to work harder for even longer."

Cochran said ties make the Bulldogs feel like they can "live another day" and, in some cases, reward the team for a full 90 minutes of effort.

Cochran said games played on the road are instances where a tie doesn't feel so bad, as three of Truman's four ties this year happened while away. However, he said it still feels like the team hasn't put it all together just yet.

"It's going to take special years and special teams to take some of these [GLVC] teams down," Cochran said.

Cochran said special years will happen if the team puts its astounding 7-2 home record of last year together with its improvements on the road this year. Being able to bring back three redshirt freshmen and seven true freshmen will also help, especially for a team that stayed in contention until the last game of the year.

If the freshmen stay hungry and are more consistent, Cochran said he feels like this team can become more complete and then compete with the upper echelon in the GLVC.

"In our best game that we played, we're as good as anyone," Cochran said. One of the freshmen Cochran saw grow this year was forward Matt Yankowitz. Yankowitz, who shared the team's leading scorer title with redshirt junior midfielder Craig McLaurine with each player scoring four goals.

"Coming in as a freshman, I can't ask for a better group of guys," Yankowitz said. "Even if we went down a goal, it was likely that we would come back and score."

Yankowitz also shares the high regard held by his coach for the GLVC after his first year in competition. He said he has a better grasp of what it will take to be a championship team, and he sees other underclassmen understanding the same things.

Yankowitz said setting long-term goals, not just scoring goals, should help this team ascend up the conference standings and unlock the team's potential.

"The best word to sum the season up is potential," Yankowitz said. "It just takes us going out there and unlocking the potential. In upcoming years, we'll definitely be right up there with the best."

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