A trip to the National Semifinals, three all-Americans and a South Central regional title all headlined the 2008 Truman Volleyball season, as the Bulldogs went 33-8 and finished fourth in the final Bison/AVCA Top-25 Coaches Poll.

Six seniors led the squad to its best finish since 2004, which was aided by a 12-match winning streak from Oct. 25 through the National Quarterfinal on Dec. 4. The Bulldogs went a perfect 25-0 against teams ranked outside the top 25 and finished second in the highly-competitive MIAA with a 16-4 conference mark.

Truman surpassed 2,000 kills on the season and hit .248 as a team, all while holding its opponents to a .134 hitting percentage. The squad relied on its trademark defense to baffle opposing attacks, as the purple and white out-dug its foes by nearly two digs per set and put down 2.5 blocks per set as well.

A trio of seniors — Allie Cherven (2.46 kills/set, .300 hitting, 1.15 blocks/set), Eli Medina (2.98 kills/set, .241 hitting, 3.45 digs/set), and Melissa Keck (2.40 kills/set, .307 hitting, 0.70 blocks/set) — all picked up all-American honors after being named to the all-Region squad. Cherven, a second-team selection, was named an all-American for the third consecutive season, while Keck (honorable mention) picked up accolades for the second straight year. Medina, an outside hitter from Kansas City who was named to the third team, was a first-time all-American.

The 2008 senior class — comprised of Cherven, Medina, Keck, Whitney Boehler, Dana Hanselmann and Lisa Weber — combined for nearly 4,600 kills, 4,700 digs and 1,600 blocks throughout their careers. They posted a 137-22 record during the past four seasons, advanced to the National Quarterfinals twice and won three MIAA championships.

The Truman program has now posted six consecutive 30-win seasons and has reached the NCAA Tournament each of the last nine years. The squad is coached by Jason Skoch who just completed his fourth season at Truman.
The 2008 season saw history made for the Truman women’s soccer team, as the Bulldogs reached the Elite Eight for only the third time in their existence and hosted the regional finals and quarterfinals in Kirksville.

After closing out the regular season with a record of 15-3-2, including wins in six out of their last seven games, the Bulldogs received the No. 2 seed in the South Central Region and traveled to Canyon, Texas, to take on fellow MIAA squad Washburn.

Truman knocked out the Lady Blues 1-0 and moved on to host the Sweet Sixteen back in Kirksville the following week.

In the South Central Regional final they battled Texas A&M-Commerce and used two first-half goals and a stifling defensive effort for another victory, 2-1.

Up next, West Region champs Seattle Pacific faced the Bulldogs for the rights to a trip to the Final Four in Tampa, Fla. One goal sealed the deal in the game as Truman gave up a score early on in the second half and lost 1-0, ending the season on a cold November afternoon.

Wins led to awards for several individual players, as juniors Jessica Wiegert and Katie Reuck received spots on the Daktronics South Central region second team, and Wiegert gained a selection to the CoSIDA Academic all-District first team.

Eight Bulldogs garnered conference honors: Kim Wolff, Reuck and Wiegert made the MIAA first team, Katie Buning and freshman Megan Buri made the second, and Theresa Bauler, Kelsey Richters and Riley Mahn gained honorable mentions.

On the offensive front, Wiegert and Mahn tied for the team lead in goals with 10 each, and Reuck slotted eight scores and four assists. In the back, Wolff, Bauler and Richters headed up a line that only allowed 19 goals on the season and shut out eight opponents. Midfielders Buning and Buri rounded out the squad. All but Wolff and Buning will return next season for the Bulldogs.

The last time that Truman made it so far in the tournament was 2001, a team that lost three games and also hosted the tournament in Kirksville. This year’s squad failed to win the conference for only the second time in 10 years, but that didn’t stop their record-setting run in the postseason. With a final record of 17-4-2, the Bulldogs finished second in the NCAA’s rankings of the South Central region.
Kelly Earns All-America Honors

Senior cross country runner Danna Kelly earned all-America honors with a 24th-place finish at the NCAA Division II national race held in Slippery Rock, Pa., on Nov. 22, 2008.

Kelly became the fourth all-American in Bulldog women’s cross country history, joining Jacque Faust (2006), Kerry Knepper (1987-88) and Cindy Springman (1981) by finishing in the top 30 in the race.

She earned her second trip to nationals by placing fourth at the NCAA South Central regional event earlier in the month and was the top runner in all six races for the Bulldogs this year.

Senior Quarterback Makes His Mark

Matt Ticich will graduate from Truman as one of the most prolific players in university history. The senior from Temecula, Calif., ended his Bulldog career second all-time in passing yards with 7,011, total offensive yards with 8,509 and touchdown passes with 58.

Ticich earned all-conference honors in each of his three years as Bulldog signal caller and was also a member of the academic all-MIAA team. Ticich was voted on the ESPN the Magazine/College Sports Information Directors Academic all-district team the past two seasons.

Ticich started the past 33 games for Truman and holds the school’s single-game passing mark with 493 yards against Upper Iowa University and the single-game total offensive mark with 516 yards in the same game against the Peacocks.

Spring Championships to Converge in Houston

The first NCAA Division II Winter Sports Festival will take place March 11-15 in the Houston, Texas, metropolitan area. During this Olympic-type event, more than 800 student-athletes will battle for NCAA titles in men’s and women’s track and field, men’s and women’s swimming, and wrestling.

The Bulldogs should be well-represented at the sports festival, and the women’s swim team will attempt to win their eighth national championship in seven years.

The festival will be held over a five-day period with the primary goal to enhance the student-athlete collegiate experience and at the same time create awareness and exposure for Division II sports by hosting multiple championships in a specified time period at one specific location.

If you are in the Houston area and want to cheer on the Bulldogs, follow along at GoBulldogs.Truman.edu for a schedule of events.
Highs and Lows for Bulldog Football

The Truman football team had an up and down year in 2008. Despite finishing the season with a 4-7 record, the Bulldogs upset nationally-ranked Nebraska-Omaha in double-overtime for Homecoming and had the lead in three other games. In addition, Stokes Stadium had a new artificial playing surface installed.

The new turf project resulted in the first two games being moved to a different location. The Bulldogs scheduled opener against Missouri University of Science and Technology (formerly Missouri-Rolla) was moved to Fayette, Mo., but was later postponed when severe weather rolled into the area.

The next week, Truman played Southern Arkansas University in Liberty, Mo., and raced out to a 34-7 lead before defeating the Muleriders 34-21.

Stokes Stadium was ready for play as the Bulldogs hosted the University of Central Missouri for the conference opener. Truman was down three late in the game but a Mule interception returned for a touchdown and gave the Bulldogs their first loss of the season.

After a loss to Northwest Missouri in the Hickory Stick game and a victory over Fort Hays State, Truman hosted Nebraska-Omaha for Homecoming. The ’Dogs tied the game on a 42-yard field goal by Mickey Masucci with one second left in regulation and then won the game when Demetrius Lavant picked off a pass and returned it 57 yards for the winning score. It was the first time in MIAA history that a game ended in overtime on a defensive score.

Truman couldn’t keep the momentum going as they lost their next three games before returning home to defeat Missouri Southern 38-9 on Senior Day.

The Bulldogs were the victims of a heartbreaking loss in the conference finale as Missouri Western kicked a 22-yard field goal on the game’s final play to down Truman 33-32 in St. Joseph.

The scheduled home opener against Missouri S&T turned out to be the regular season finale.

The Bulldogs fell behind the Miners by 21 points but rallied to take a 31-28 lead with 2:18 left to play. The Miners tied the game on a late field goal that sent the game into overtime. After both teams failed to score in the first overtime, Truman’s Albert Coker caught a 23-yard pass to put the Bulldogs on top. The Miners, aided by a pass interference call, scored a touchdown on their next possession and won the game after going for a two-point conversion, 39-38.

Truman had 10 players selected to the MIAA all-conference team with senior Les Hammers earning first-team defense. Senior offensive lineman Jon Frantz was a second-team offensive choice and junior Demetrius Lavant and senior Jason Thier were second-team defensive selections.

Seniors Ryan King, Mike Phillips, Andy Swedenhjelm and Matt Ticich along with juniors Albert Coker and Eric Sternberg were honorable-mention all-league picks.

In addition, King and Ticich both earned academic all-region honors by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Free Webcast of Bulldog Basketball Games

This basketball season catch the Bulldogs both home and away by clicking on the free webcast link on Truman’s athletics Web site (Gobulldogs.truman.edu).

The free webcast, produced by Penn Atlantic, will give alumni and fans a chance to watch the games from their home computers free of charge. Games from Pershing Arena will have the audio broadcast provided by KRES 104.7 FM, the voice of the Bulldogs, while away games will have the audio feed of the home team.

KC Alumni Get Ready for Basketball Action

Once again the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association will be playing their conference postseason basketball tournament at the historic Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City.

Bulldog fans can join in the fun by purchasing tickets and cheering on the Bulldogs in the tournament that will run from March 5-8.

Former Athletic Training Student Honored

Jeremy Clipperton (’99) was named the 2008 Southern League of Professional Baseball Clubs Athletic Trainer of the Year. Clipperton works for the West Tennessee Diamond Jaxx which are a double-A Affiliate of the Seattle Mariners.

This is the second honor in two years for Clipperton as he was also named the Midwest League’s Trainer of the Year in 2006.