The 2000-2001 women's swimming team has gone where no other team in the 101-year history of Truman athletics has gone - national champion territory.

The Bulldogs claimed the rights to the NCAA Division II National Championship title March 17, 2001, in Canton, Ohio, at the end of the four-day national meet. The victory was the culmination of a three-year run to the top, as the team already had secured third place in 1999 and second in 2000.

The 'Dogs led the 27 teams at the national competition after day one, but then they lost the top spot to Drury University after day two. By the close of the third day, the 'Dogs had reclaimed first place and were able to hold on to it through the final day of competition.

The 'Dogs tallied a total of 656 points throughout the meet, leaving a considerable margin between them and runner-up Drury, which had 610.5 points. The University of California-San Diego rounded out the top three with 413.5 points.

At the conclusion of the meet, the National Swim Coaches Association of America honored head coach Seth Huston as the women's coach of the year for the third straight year.

Bringing home her own collection of first place medals was Jess Martin, who after winning six national titles was named NCAA Division II women's swimmer of the year, and three months later the Honda NCAA Division II Athlete of the Year. She captured first prize in the 200- (1:50.32), 500-, 1,000- and 1,650-yard freestyles. She set the NCAA Division II record in the 1,000 free (9:55.86) by finishing more than a lap ahead of her nearest competitor. She also set school marks in the 500 free (4:52.72) and in the 1,650 free (16:45.01). Also earning national champion honors in an individual event was Kelli Dudley, who took first in the 100-yard backstroke (57.34) to break the old Truman record.

Truman showed superiority with two relay teams, as well. The 200-yard freestyle relay team, which featured Sara Hatcher, Jess Martin, Katie May and Bryna Busch, won the event and set a new Truman record (1:34.17).

The 800-yard freestyle relay team also finished first and broke a Truman record (7:31.03). Liz Hug, Andrea Newton, Katie May and Jess Martin were the competing members of the relay.
Finishing second were two more Truman relay teams. The 400-yard freestyle relay team of Sara Hatcher, Jess Martin, Katie May and Bryna Busch was the runner-up (3:26.24), while the 200-yard IM relay team of Kelli Dudley, Sara Hatcher, Liz Hug and Meghan Osborn placed second in (1:46.74). The 400-yard IM relay team of Kelli Dudley, Christie Williamsen, Liz Hug and Bryna Busch earned fifth place (3:55.43).

In other individual events, Dudley set Truman records with her second-place finishes in the 200-yard backstroke (2:02.72) and 400-yard IM (4:24.22). She also earned second-place honors in the 200-yard IM (2:04.78).

Katie May earned second in the 1,000-yard freestyle (10:12.36), third in the 100-yard backstroke (58.28), fourth in the 500-yard freestyle (5:01.49) and fifth in the 200-yard backstroke (2:05.09). Also competing in backstroke were Krista Pray and Andrea Newton. Pray finished fourth in the 100-yard backstroke (58.61), 10th in the 200-yard backstroke (2:07.55) and 14th in the 100-yard butterfly (59.31). Newton took sixth in the 200-yard backstroke (2:05.75), eighth in the 100-yard backstroke (59.09), 10th in the 50-yard freestyle (24.53) and 12th in the 200-yard freestyle (1:54.63).

Bryna Busch garnered second place in the 50-yard freestyle (23.67) and the 200-yard freestyle (1:51.42), as well as fourth in the 100-yard freestyle (52.23) and 10th in the 500-yard freestyle (5:04.51). Sara Hatcher took second in the 100-yard freestyle (52.08) and third in the 50-yard freestyle (23.78). In more freestyle events, Bridget Riley finished third in the 1,650-yard freestyle (17:17.85), fourth in the 1,000-yard freestyle (10:21.56) and sixth in the 500-yard freestyle (5:04.22). Liz Hug had a pair of sixth place finishes - in the 200-yard IM (2:06.65) and in the 100-yard butterfly (57.47), which set a new Truman record. She also took seventh in the 200-yard freestyle (1:54.21) and ninth in the 500-yard freestyle (5:03.00).

Also competing at the national meet was Alison Blyth, who brought home ninth-place finishes in the 100-yard butterfly (58.51) and the 200-yard butterfly (2:08.83). Jen Vogt finished 16th in the 200-yard backstroke (2:10.67), while Christie Williamsen took 16th in the 400-yard IM (4:43.29) and set a Truman record (2:24.52) to finish 11th in the 200-yard breaststroke.

Several women earned all-America status, which is awarded to swimmers who finish in the top eight at the national meet. Honorable mention all-Americans were those who finished with ninth through 16th places.

On the men’s side, Matt Pray became Truman’s highest national finisher ever with his second-place finish in the 100-yard butterfly (49.28), also good for a school record. Robby Cooper was the only other Bulldog competitor, earning honorable-mention all-America for the first time at the meet. The men’s team finished 16th out of 26 teams.

Record-setting performances throughout the season decorated the ‘Dogs’ road to the national title. The women registered a 6-2 dual record, losing to Florida State (Tallahassee) in early January by a nine-point spread and to Drury in early February by a minimal one-point margin. The team also won four tournaments, including the Central States Championship, the final regional competition.

Jess Martin was named the Honda NCAA Division II woman athlete of the year after garnering four national individual freestyle titles, and setting an NCAA record in the 1,000-yard freestyle.
The 2001-02 women’s swimming team is returning a roster full of all-Americas after winning Truman’s first national championship. Junior Kelli Dudley, sophomore Katie May, junior Sara Hatcher and junior Liz Hug all claimed national titles, either individually or as part of a relay team last year.

Other returning national qualifiers all-Americas include sophomore Alison Blyth, junior Meghan Osborn, sophomore Krista Pray and senior Bridget Riley.

The team is also marked by a large class of freshman. A few highlighted individuals include Sarah Dance, who should have good showings in the butterfly, backstroke and IM events. Newcomer Sue Ellen Thoma will add depth in the middle-distance freestyle, as well as in the IM, and Michaela Osborn is expected to be a big contributor in the breaststroke.

Riley and Beth Joslin will take the reins of senior leadership, serving as team captains.

**FREESTYLE**

Hatcher brings her national experience back to the sprint freestyle races after capturing second place in the 100 freestyle and third in the 50 freestyle. She was also a member of the championship 200 freestyle relay, second-place 400 freestyle relay and second-place 200 medley relay teams. Hatcher will be joined by sophomores Calie Fulmer and Megan Pittman, along with freshman Christina Blose and senior Michelle Seck will add depth.

Thoma will get some experience in the middle-distance events. Huston also has big expectations for freshman Diana Betsworth, who also could swim some distance freestyle races. Hug and May will return to the middle-distance events after being members of the national champion 800 freestyle relay team. Freshman Cassie Roudebush and sophomore Lindsey Ehret will also compete in the middle-distance events.

Junior Ellen Frick and Riley will be big contributors in the distance events, as well as Betsworth and Joslin. Freshmen Meghan Vaughan and Sarah Wells will also get experience in the distance freestyles.

**BUTTERFLY**

Blyth will lead the squad in the butterfly, scoring points in the event for the team last season at the national championship.

Hug will also spend some time with the butterfly races, as will a handful of newcomers. Dance, Blose and Vaughan should all get some experience in the butterfly this season.

**BACKSTROKE**

The backstroke will be a solid part of the women’s team this year, as Dudley, May and Pray all return with national finishes in the event.

Dudley won the national title in the 100 backstroke and placed second in the 200 backstroke. May posted third in the 100 backstroke, while Pray took 10th in the 200 backstroke at the national meet.

Providing considerable depth will be veterans Kacie Rice and Christine Gould, who are seniors, and sophomore Sophie McKay, who was a Canadian Olympic trial qualifier. Fresh faces in the backstroke events will be Dance and Kelly VanDerKar.

**BREASTSTROKE**

Junior Meghan Osborn and Dudley will be the top performers in the breaststroke, coming back from being members of the national runner-up 200 medley relay team. Junior Diana Young, freshman Megan Losee and Michaela Osborn should be solid contributors. Freshman Jessica Kovarik and junior Amanda Shearer will also get some time in the breaststroke events.

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

Dudley and Hug will start this season with lengthy resumes in the IM. Last season Dudley charted second-place finishes at nationals in the 200 IM, 400 IM and 200 medley relay, as well fifth-place in the 400 medley relay. Hug will also be a threat after being part of the second-place 200 medley relay and the fifth-place 400 medley relay squads. Individually, she captured sixth-place in the 200 IM.

Newcomers Wells, Thoma, Dance and Fettig will add depth to the squad, while Shearer will provide some experience to the IM events.
The men's team will look to take a larger contingent of swimmers to the national meet this year after sending two swimmers to the DII championships last season.

The leading force will be junior Matt Pray, whose second-place finish in 2001 marked the highest national finish ever for a Truman men's swimmer. Joining him will be sophomore Robby Cooper, who earned honorable-mention all-America for the first time last year.

Several other veterans who barely missed the national mark last season should be in the hunt to qualify for nationals this year. Senior Kyle Sterup, junior Drew Yemm, and sophomores Brian Teson and Andy Harken look to be strong forces to go all the way.

At the same time, 12 new faces make up the 2001-02 squad, so the young team could have some surprises.

Sterup, Pray and senior Andy Ladrow will take control as team captains.

**FREESTYLE**

Yemm will highlight the sprint freestyle races after improving quite a bit last season. Also looking better after some experience under his belt is sophomore Vince Struble, who is also looking to be an important freestyler in the sprints. Freshmen Kyle Ediger and Nick Joslin give depth to the events.

Junior Jay Westensee and Ladrow will likely be some of the top performers in the middle-distance events. Sophomore Robby Cooper and Sterup could see some time in the middle-distance relays, but they will also be strong contenders in the distance races. Freshman Ashtyn Beek should also get some experience in the middle-distance events.

Cooper, who finished 12th at nationals in the 1,000-yard freestyle and 13th in the 500-yard freestyle, and Sterup, who reached the “B” qualification mark in four freestyle events, will take control of the distance events. Sophomore Ryan Jacobi will also likely be a threat in the distance events after making some solid improvements last season. He qualified with “B” cuts a year ago in both the 1,000- and 1,650-yard freestyle.

**BUTTERFLY**

Pray's second-place finish in the 100-yard butterfly at nationals last season will put him in the front of the pack in this event. The all-America swimmer also finished ninth overall in the 200 butterfly. He will be joined by Teson, who made good strides toward the national meet last season by reaching a “B” cut in the 100-yard butterfly his freshman year.

Sophomore Caleb Hopkins and freshmen Dustin Engels and Ben Buras will add the extra depth for a strong squad of swimmers in butterfly events.

**BACKSTROKE**

Teson and sophomore Bryan Meyer will be contenders in the backstroke events. Cooper could also see some time as a backstroker.

However, this event will have plenty of room for younger team members to step up and contribute to the team.

**BREASTSTROKE**

Much will be expected of Harken this season, as he returns for his second season after making a “B” cut in the 200-yard breaststroke as a freshman. Struble will also bring some experience to the breaststroke events.

Newcomers Justin Brosseau, Matt Peeples and Ryan Blase could also prove to be assets in these events.

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

Harken, who made a “B” cut in the 200 IM last season, and Teson will come out as the strongest individual medley swimmers this season.

Paden, Buras and freshman Phil Brown will also be competitive in the IM events.