Bulldogs Land 13 On National Signing Day
First Class Signed By New Head Coach Gregg Nesbitt

Truman Head Football Coach Gregg Nesbitt has announced that he has received 13 National Letters of Intent for the upcoming season. “We focused our efforts in our “new” recruiting base in Missouri with particular interest in the Northeast region and St. Louis, Illinois with emphasis in Chicago and Iowa,” said Nesbitt.

“It is a balanced class with six on offense, six on defense a place kicker and a punter. We believe each of our new Bulldogs have a chance to be a legitimate starter in the best Division II conference in the nation, (The MIAA)”

“They will be four or five out of this group who “may” have a chance to provide immediate help and will have a legitimate chance to compete immediately for playing time,” Nesbitt said.

Nesbitt was hired in December to lead the Bulldogs after spending the past three years as co-Defensive Coordinator at the University of Central Missouri, a conference rival.

Nesbitt is a Truman graduate and was an assistant coach at the University in the early 90s before becoming one of the most successful high school coaches in the State of Missouri at Columbia-Hickman.

Nic Abbate – Defensive End - 6-3, 220 lbs
Carol Stream, Ill. (Glennbard North)
Abbate had 75 tackles (39 solo and 18 for loss) with nine sacks, six forced fumbles and an interception while helping the Glennbard North Panthers to the semifinals of the Illinois Class 8A championship bracket. Abbate was a unanimous choice as the DuPage Valley Conference linemen and Defensive Linemen of the year. The Panthers were 11-2 in 2009 with the two losses coming against the Class 7A State Champion (W. Warrensville South) and the Class 8A runner-up (Marist-Chicago).

Jason Baker (Offensive Line) - 6-4, 304 lbs
Bridgeton, Mo. (Pattonville HS)
Baker earned second team all-state honors the past two years as an anchor at left tackle on the Pattonville offensive line. He was named the offensive most valuable player for the Pirates and was the team’s captain as a senior. Baker was a first team all-conference (Suburban North) pick both his junior and senior years. As a sophomore, the Pirates advanced to the Missouri Class 5 semifinals before being defeated by Mehlville 19-13. As a junior, Baker was named honorable mention to the St. Louis all-Metro team. He wrestles at Pattonville and is a swimmer on a club team.

Matthew Bell (Running Back/Linebacker) - 6-2
Marceline, Mo. (Marceline HS)
Bell will leave Marceline as the school’s second all-time leader in rushing yards with over 3900 including 1738 his senior season. He averaged eight yards per carry and scored 29 touchdowns while leading the Tigers to a 12-1 record in 2009. On defense, Bell recorded 113 tackles with three sacks and two fumble recoveries to repeat as an all-state first team linebacker. He has been named first team all-Lewis and Clark Conference as both a running back and linebacker the past three seasons. Bell has been a member of the KRES All-Star Team the past three years and was named to the KMZU Dream Team following his junior and senior seasons. Bell was instrumental in helping Marceline break an eight-year drought in their “Bell Game” with Brookfield his senior season with a 6-0 win. He is also a state qualifier in wrestling and placed sixth as a freshman in the 215-pound weight class and helped his team to a third place finish his junior year. Bell participates in both the pole vault and shot put on the school’s track team.

Dallas Grier (Wide Receiver/Corner Back) - 6-3, 190 lbs
Frisco, Texas (Justin Wakeland HS)
Grier was a unanimous choice first team all-District selection for the Wakeland Wolverines in 2009 and was the #12 receiver in Class 4A in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area. Grier caught nine touchdowns and had 941 receiving yards after helping the Wolverines to a 6-3 record. He was named the team’s...
most valuable wide receiver and most valuable player in the secondary. For his high school career, Grier had 12 receiving touchdowns and 1,444 receiving yards. He was a first team all-County Wide Receiver last season. Grier is also a member of the school’s basketball and track teams.

Taylor Heislen (Kicker/Punter) - 6-3, 190 lbs
Jefferson City, Mo. (Helias)

Heislen earned all-state honors as a punter in 2009 and was an all-state kicker as a junior in 2008. He converted on 92% (145-of-156) point after attempts with all misses being blocked. Heislen was 13 of 20 in field goal attempts with a long of 43 yards that shares the school record. He holds the school record for point after conversions with 145 and made 49 straight during the 2008 season. The past two years, the Crusaders have been runner-ups in the Missouri Class 4A bracket and have a 26-3 record during that span. As a member of the basketball team, Heislen’s team finished third in Missouri as a junior and is a pitcher and first baseman on the school’s baseball team.

Matt Jacobs – Running Back - 5-9, 180 lbs
Marshall, Mo. (Marshall HS)

Jacobs has been the workhorse of the Marshall Owls and Coach Paul Thomas over the past two seasons. Jacobs has over 600 carries and 3000 yards during his junior and senior seasons. He has scored 30 touchdowns to earn unanimous first-team all-North Central Missouri Conference accolades both years. Jacobs is a two-time all-district first team running back and a second-team all-state selection. He has been named to the KMZU Dream Team. In addition to football, Jacobs has been a member of the school’s track team as a sprinter and a wrestler.

Kurt Loyd- Athlete - 5-10, 190 lbs
Mexico, Mo. (Mexico HS)

Loyd was a multiple threat for the Mexico Bulldogs during his senior season in which he was named first team all-conference (North Central Missouri). Loyd threw for 784 yards and three touchdowns while rushing for 10 scores and 886 yards. His biggest game on the ground came in a 19-6 victory over Kirksville in which he carried the ball 28 times for 205 yards and three touchdowns. The Bulldogs won their district championship and first round playoff game against Fulton 14-13. On the defensive side of the ball, Loyd had 40 tackles with 19 solo and a fumble recovery.

Connor Nagel (Linebacker) - 5-11, 210 lbs
Lemont, Ill. (Lemont HS)

Nagel has been a three-year varsity and conference in tackles the past two seasons to earn honorable mention all-state honors. He had 105 tackles with 27 solo, seven sacks and three fumble recoveries as a senior and 137 with 54 solo and three sacks as a junior. He was a key member of the Indians squad that finished second in Class 6A in 2007 and 2008 and was 10-2 in 2009. Over the past three years, Lemont has posted a record of 34-6. Nagel is a two-time all-conference (South Suburban) selection and has been named to all-area teams by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun Times and Southtown Star. Nagel is a member and starter of the school’s wrestling team.

Adam Nelson (Defensive Back) - 6-1, 200 lbs
Walford, Iowa (Cedar Rapids Prairie)

Nelson was named first team all-Mississippi Valley Conference and was a first-team all-metro defensive back. He had 154 career tackles including four interceptions at the Iowa Class 4A Cedar Rapids Prairie High School. In addition to defense, Nelson ran the ball 92 times for 431 yards and eight scores and was also the team's punter with a 35.3 yards per punt average. Nelson was named the punter of the year by the MVC and was an all-metro area punter. In 2007, he broke the school’s freshman scoring record with 20 touchdowns. Nelson is a member of three other teams at Prairie High as he plays basketball, baseball and a member of the track team.

Brady Nowak (Quarterback/Punter) - 6-1, 170 lbs
Belleville, Ill. (Althoff Catholic HS)

Nowak threw for 1500 yards and 19 touchdowns while also rushing for over 600 yards and six more scores as he led the Althoff Crusaders to a 6-4 record last season. He was named second team all-conference (South Seven) and was an all-area selection as a senior. Nowak was named the Belleville News Democrat and the Suburban Journal’s player of the week following a 44-0 victory in week one in which he completed 16 of 27 passes for 267 yards and four touchdowns. As a junior, Nowak threw for over 1000 yards and 10 touchdowns to earn honorable mention all-league and all-area accolades. He is a pitcher and outfielder on the school’s baseball team.

Brian Rosser (Place Kicker) - 6-1, 175 lbs
Des Peres, Mo. (Kirkwood HS)

Rosser earned honors on both Kirkwood’s soccer and football teams. Rosser was named first team all-Suburban West Conference after making all 28 point after attempts and going five of six on field goal attempts including two 41-yard makes against Oakville. In kickoffs, 37 of the 41 went for touchbacks. Rosser earned the soccer team’s most valuable player award his senior season and the 110% Hustle award his junior year. Rosser won a state championship in club soccer as a goalkeeper for the Lou Fusz/St. Louis Scott Gallagher Soccer Club in 2009. In addition, Rosser plays center field on the high school baseball team.

Brady Schroeder (Wide Receiver/Defensive Back) - 6-1, 168 lbs
Minor, Ill. (Olympia HS)

Schroeder was named both a first team all-area and all-conference (Corn Belt) defensive back while playing for the Olympia Spartans. He earned second team all-league honors as a kick returner as a senior and was named an academic all-state honoree. The Spartans finished 4-5 last year. Schroeder broke the school record in the 100 meter dash with a time of 10.8 and has lettered in track the past three years.

Paul Taylor (Wide Receiver/Defensive Back) - 5-9, 185 lbs
St. Louis, Mo. (Oakville HS)

Taylor earned second team all-state defensive back honors at Oakville High School in St. Louis. He was also selected first team all-Suburban West Conference as both a wide receiver and defensive back and a second team all-league punt returner after leading the Tigers to the semifinals of the Missouri Class 6 bracket. Taylor scored 14 touchdowns with six receiving and eight rushing while also recording 84 tackles and eight sacks during his senior season and had 22 career touchdowns and 194 total tackles. He holds the school record for longest kickoff return for a touchdown at 92 yards, most sacks in a game with four, most points in a season with 86 and longest touchdown reception of 81 yards among other records broken. Taylor is also a sprinter on the school’s track team and plays centerfield in baseball.

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Truman State University, founded in 1867, is Missouri’s only highly selective public liberal arts and sciences university. Truman has the highest graduation rate among all Missouri public institutions. More than 50 percent of Truman’s graduates pursue an advanced degree immediately upon graduating. Truman was recently recognized as the No. 1 Public University in the Midwest Region–Master’s Category by U.S. News & World Report’s 2010 edition of “America’s Best Colleges.”

The Truman Athletics Department is a proud member of the NCAA Division II and a charter member of the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA). Truman sponsors 21 Intercollegiate Sports, the most of any state school in Missouri.

The Bulldog football program has won a league best 26 conference championships with the last coming in 1988. The Bulldogs also have the best all-time winning percentage (.589) of any NCAA Football playing school in the state of Missouri.