

Bullets drop final two games

Michelle Fortner
for the Index

Two tough games brought the Bullets' season to a close.

The Bullets finished the season at 5-8, including a second-place finish at the Ruck-toberfest tournament in October.

The first game matched the team up against the Kansas City Jazz, a noncollegiate club team that includes some Truman State University alumnae. The Jazz won 60-0.

Bullets coach and eight man junior Natalie Gerhart said she was not upset with a loss to a good team like the Jazz.

"Whenever we play them, it's just a chance to play against a team that is good," Gerhart said. "We can learn a lot just from playing against them."

Gerhart said the main problems with playing a team like the Jazz are the size matchups. She said it was difficult for her team to tackle well.

Sophomore prop Deborah Miller said games against tough teams like the Jazz help with the team's learning process.

"We picked up a lot of valuable information," she said.

Gerhart said she still was pleased with the team's defense.

"Everyone was impressed with how long we held them from scoring," she said.

The Bullets' hold on the Jazz kept the score at 29-0 at the half. Gerhart said she was also impressed with the team's good attitude during the game.

The first contest ended early when bad weather moved in with the score 60-0. The second game started 15 minutes late when the teams decided to try to get the game in before more bad weather struck.

The second game brought the Bullets a 24-5 loss to the University of Missouri-Columbia. Senior flyhalf Stephanie Dettmer scored for the Bullets.

"Stephanie is a solid layer and leader for our team," backs coach and senior wing Krista Kastler said.

The two teams met just last weekend, with the Bullets losing 19-5. Saturday's game came at the last minute after Mizzou contacted the Bullets, wanting to play against



Chris Waller/Index

The Bullets (left) prepare to scrum against Kansas State University earlier this season. The squad recently completed its season with a 5-8 record.

them again.

Gerhart said the team had problems tackling again, but this time fatigue caused the problems.

"As a whole, it was a fun game, and that's all we really wanted from it," Gerhart said.

Sophomore inside and outside center Angela Rippe said she was excited about the game because they would match up better against Mizzou than against the Jazz.

"We realized it would be hard after going up against a tough team," Rippe said. "We

knew we'd be worn out."

Rippe said that despite the circumstances, it was a good way to end the season.

"It was kind of weird losing both games and having such bad weather but still having it be such a fun game," Rippe said. "It was interesting."

Saturday's games brought the Bullets' season to a close. Gerhart said this season brought many good things for the team.

"This season as a whole, there were a lot

of people individually improving along with rookies stepping up," Gerhart said.

She said the team proved itself last weekend in the 19-5 loss to Missouri and a 60-0 win over Washington University (Mo.).

But Gerhart said the team accomplished its main goal.

"I think the way our rugby team works is that everyone wants to have fun," she said.

Miller said this season helped the team improve its skills.

"We did pretty well this season," Miller

said. "We learned a lot this season and put it to good use."

Rippe said the season was average as far as wins and losses go, but she enjoyed this fall season and had more fun than in the past.

Rippe also said she is looking optimistically at the spring season. She said the coaches are hopeful about the spring and want the team to be more competitive. The team has lots of potential, she said, but she is not sure how serious everyone on the team is about winning.

Athlete of the Week

Micaela Walter

Sport: Volleyball
Year: Senior
Position: Middle Hitter
Hometown: Topeka, Kan.

Walter had 18 kills and seven digs in the finals of the MIAA tournament against Washburn University. She also led the team with a .361 hitting percentage in the match

Walter leads squad not by words, but by actions

Senior steps up for Bulldogs in finals of the MIAA tourney

Billy Drazen
Staff Reporter

In sports, there are two types of leaders. There are the leaders who lead their team through words, and then there are those who dominate a game and lead by example.

Senior Micaela Walter led by example as she took charge of the Bulldogs with 21 points in a victory against seventh-ranked Washburn in the finals of the MIAA tournament.

"I've figured out that she doesn't always bring it," head coach Jason Skoch said. "But when she's ready to play, she's pretty impressive."

Considering it was the finals of the conference tournament,

Walter "brought it" at an opportune time with 18 kills, 7 digs, and a team-leading .361 hitting percentage.

Senior middle hitter/outside hitter Tiffany Graham said she remembers a long rally in which everyone was getting noticeably tired, and then Washburn put a three ball over, and on the return Walter put a ball down hard that silenced the crowd.

"She's the type of player who consistently performs under pressure," Graham said. "It was a big game, and she responded to the situation."

Skoch said Walter is a very smart player when it comes to her choices of attack, and on the court she is the team's best hitter at seeing the block and hitting around it consistently.

Against Washburn, Graham said Walter took advantage of the fact it was focusing its defensive

attention on the Bulldogs' outside hitters.

"Vision on the court is what separates her from other players," Skoch said. "Usually you don't get that vision until your last year or two. That is probably why she is able to hit around the block like she can. Most people just jump and swing. Most people don't make choices in the air as to where to hit, but she does that. She can look one way and go the other. Not many other people can do that."

Graham said Walter is not a leader by words, but more so by example.

She is a rock for the team and is someone to whom the team can turn when it is in trouble.

Skoch described her as a polite, sincere and kind person off the court and said that if someone did not know it already, he or she would have no idea she played a college sport.

If this senior from Topeka, Kan., continues to bring it and continues to be a rock for this team, she could help lead the 'Dogs deep into the national tournament.

"Most people don't make choices in the air as to where to hit, but [Walter] does that."

Jason Skoch
Volleyball Head Coach



Photos by Chris Tharp, design by Chris Waller/Index

Reporter reflects on football games from past three years

In the past three football seasons, players and coaches have come and gone. The team's had some exciting moments and even more devastating ones.

There has been one constant, though, during Truman's last 33 football games. Yours truly has written about each and every one of them.

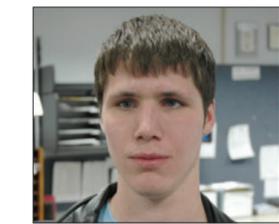
I don't bring this up as a way to pat myself on the back or anything. In fact, more of the opposite, actually. I have discovered a somewhat disturbing trend, which leads me to a theory. It's kind of out there, but perhaps it is plausible.

Before I get on with the negative stuff, however, I do have some fond memories from the last three seasons that are worth revisiting. Considering the team has gone 8-25 since I took over the football beat, this might come as a surprise, but there have been some good moments.

Week four of the 2003 season stands out to me for a couple reasons. Running back Jerard Levenson, then a sophomore, toled the rock 48 times for 204 yards that day against Washburn, lifting his team to its first win of the season, 12-6.

As everyone knows, the 2003 season was the final year in Kirksville for late head coach John Ware. I thought the hard-fought win that day in Topeka, Kan., was reflective of Ware's personality - a big, strong running back grinding out a bunch of yards behind a big strong offensive line to seal the victory for a big, strong coach.

Shannon Currier took the helm in 2004, and the 'Dogs had a rough go that year, finishing 2-9. But week nine brought one of the most amazing football games I've ever witnessed. The winless 'Dogs welcomed undefeated Northwest Missouri State Uni-



Josh Sisson

versity to Stokes Stadium for what figured to be a Homecoming massacre, but it ended up a classic. Truman traded blows with the Bearcats all day. Then, wide receiver Justin Bodenhausen, who hadn't played college football in nearly two years, made the biggest catch of his life, hauling in the go-ahead touchdown pass from then-senior quarterback Jake Czeschin late in the fourth quarter.

Senior kicker Mark Kamphoefner was proud of his friend's gutsy performance.

"Before the Northwest game [Bodenhausen] said he was going to play no matter what ..." Kamphoefner said. "His shoulder was still hurt a little bit. I was just hoping he'd play a little and not re-injure it, but he produced big for us that day."

The lead was short-lived. Northwest scored a touchdown on its next drive to win it 45-42, but it might as well have been a win for the 'Dogs.

The 2005 'Dogs showed improvement in some areas, but the overall record stayed the same. They provided fans with a thrill in week one, upsetting then-No. 13 Winona

State 21-16. Truman's young new-look defense stifled Winona State, who had outscored the 'Dogs 105-41 in their previous two meetings.

With this season came the tragic loss of Ware, who left after the 2003 campaign to take over Missouri Southern's football program. Ironically, Ware's passing came only a few days before Truman and Southern took to the gridiron against each other. The chilling on-field tribute Southern paid to the fallen coach is something I will never forget.

On a first-and-goal from the Truman four-yard line, the Lions lined up 11 of their biggest men, including putting a 6-foot 4-inch 300-pound offensive lineman in the shotgun. He took the direct snap and plowed into the end zone for the score. It was the perfect way to honor Ware, who was a big old lineman himself and who always had a soft spot for the unsung heroes up front.

Senior linebacker Marcus Yokeley said he knew as soon as he saw the formation it would be a play Ware would appreciate.

"Coach Ware's one of the greatest men I've met my whole life," Yokeley said. "Now that the season's over, it's OK to say that it's fitting they scored on that play."

Now that my stroll down memory lane is complete, let's get back to my theory. The 'Dogs haven't come close to having a winning season in the three years I've written about them, but they posted better than .500 records in each of the three seasons prior to my arrival on the scene.

What's more, Truman put together winning seasons in 10 of the 11 seasons leading up to my reporting stint, including a pair of national playoff appearances.

Coincidence? Perhaps, but I'm not going

Season Rewind

8 players earned all-conference standing, including two freshmen in offensive lineman Jon Frantz and defensive lineman Andy Swedenhjel. Two players, junior lineman Pat Murray and senior defensive back Jason Douglas were named second team

18.7 points per game by the 'Dogs this year, the second-worst showing by the purple and white in the last 10 years

1,546 yards passing by true freshman Michael Long. His numbers don't seem great, but he was the youngest starter in the MIAA and could become a fixture under center for years to come

34 catches by junior Jeff Amundson this year. Amundson had 76 catches last season but was noticeably absent in multiple games this year, a problem that could have led to reduced scoring and a ...

30 percent third-down conversion rate, the worst of any season in the past 10 years

0 number of MIAA games won by the Bulldogs, the first time in 40 years this has happened

4-18 the record for Shannon Currier in his first two years. He lost 12 games in his first three years at Concordia St. Paul. Will next fall yield a turnaround?

Design by Lindsay Koski/Index

to rule out a possible Josh jinx.

All kidding aside, Currier says this program is headed in the right direction, and I believe him.

"We have a plan in place, and we're going to stick to that plan," Currier said. "We're going to win this conference cham-

pionship. Hopefully it happens sooner than later."

When Truman gets back to its winning ways, it probably will have nothing to do with my departure and everything to do with the hard work and dedication of Currier, his staff and players.