



Football: 2 p.m. Saturday vs. Pittsburg State



Soccer: 3 p.m. Wednesday vs. Drury  
No Scheduled Events

SCRUM

Bullets rugby finish second at Rucktober Fest

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# SPORTS

Thursday, October 20, 2005

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## Volleyball needs to fix flaws

Junior outside hitter Kelsey Wackerman sunk to her knees and hit the floor with her hands in frustration.

MIAA co-leader Washburn University had just defeated the No. 1 ranked Bulldogs on Sunday, effectively ending the purple and white's chances at winning conference and hosting any postseason tournaments.

Wackerman's outburst symbolized the squad's week. Last Wednesday, the 'Dogs lost to archrival Central Missouri State University for the first time in 14 matches. The 3-0 blanking was also their first conference defeat since 2003.

Friday night, Emporia State University — a team the women from Kirksville hadn't lost to since 1997 — shocked the hometown crowd (and themselves) and captured a 3-1 victory.

And then came Saturday. The 'Dogs needed to redeem themselves after one of the worst losses in recent memory Friday night. A win would put either squad in the driver's seat for a conference title.

Similar to Friday night, the 'Dogs won the first set and then couldn't produce offensively. The match yielded few bright spots, but it could mark a turning point in the season.

"Coach has been preaching practice," freshman outside hitter Eli Medina said. "We may not have been going at 100 percent in practice, but it didn't matter because we kept on winning."

Those four days helped to expose flaws in the 'Dogs' armor. First, the 'Dogs' offense revolves around junior outside hitter Sarah Shearman. For teams with terrific defenses, the modus operandi is simple: Stop Shearman, and you'll stop the purple and white.

In the first game against Emporia, Shearman collected 10 kills and hit .600 as the 'Dogs won 30-28. In the next three games — all Hornets' victories — No. 14 had seven kills and averaged a miniscule .074.

Saturday yielded a déjà vu moment as the Lady Blues placed two blockers on Shearman at all times and enjoyed spectacular defense from libero Emily Cowhick. Shearman batted .500 with five kills in the opening 30-23 victory but then went into a slumber, hitting .143 with 11 kills in the final three frames. Again, Washburn won all three of those games.

The play isn't all the All-American's fault. Some of the sets were poor and she can't make plays off bad passes. No. 14 also isn't going to contribute if she's double-teamed on every attack.

Some players, most notably senior hitters Melanie Jones and Megan Remley, played very well in Shearman's stead, but it wasn't enough against a top-ranked foe, but few others played consistently this past week.

And that's not comforting, considering all three teams could face the 'Dogs in the MIAA tournament and the South Central Regional. If Shearman gets double-teamed again, more players must step up.

The squad needs to also improve its serves. On Friday and Saturday, the 'Dogs had 21 service errors to the opponents' nine. That's 12 points — 12 points is huge in matches that are decided by only a few points.

Some of them came at the most inopportune times, including while Washburn led 28-27 in the critical third set. A poor serve gave the Lady Blues a match point.

Finally, the 'Dogs need to put top teams away and win close games, including the fourth set against Washburn. The purple and white built a 20-13 advantage, but the Lady Blues won the next eight points to capture the lead.

"We don't have the killer instinct," head coach Jason Skoch said. "Teams are not going to roll over against us. We have to get be consistent from start to finish."

Hopefully, the three straight losses will yield changes. They're still a great team at 20-4, but to win a national title, they need to fix last weekend's problems.

### Commentary



Conor Nicholl

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# Very Superstitious

## Athletes, teams engage in many different rituals

Although endurance, focus and hard work make successful athletes, many place their faith in pregame meals, rally caps and lucky T-shirts

Ross Houston  
Assistant Sports Editor

It's the end of pregame warm ups at a Truman men's basketball game, and senior guard Matt Brock is removing his socks and putting on another pair.

At the end of the first half, he removes his socks again and puts on yet another pair.

Brock does not suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder. He does, however, have a superstition.

Many athletes have a unique good-luck charm they either perform or wear before, during, or after an athletic contest.

For example, recent pro baseball Hall-of-Fame inductee Wade Boggs would eat poultry before every game. Former Colorado Avalanche goalie Patrick Roy talked to his posts during the game.

When it comes to superstitions, Truman athletes are no exception. Since his junior year of high school, Brock has worn multiple pairs of socks during the course of a game.

"I like to have a clean pair of socks," he said. "I don't know. It just makes me feel better."

Brock engages in two other practices before the contest begins.

"The guys always give me a hard time for my stretching routine," Brock said. "At the end [of stretching], they say I look like a boxer because I start shaking my body and getting real loose."

Brock also is the only member of the Bulldog basketball squad who does not wear his jersey under his warm-ups.

"I don't wear my jersey until we come in right before tip-off," he said. "All during warm-ups, I just wear my shooting shirt over just a lucky T-shirt from high school."

What makes the T-shirt lucky?

"I think I got it from my junior year," Brock said. "I remember wearing it to school before a game, and I had a career high [in points]."

Similar to Brock, junior pitcher Greg Mundy has a few practices he carries out regularly. However, his number of superstitions plummeted dramatically during the past few years.

Mundy said the cutback could be attributed to not being starting pitcher anymore and becoming a reliever.

"There wasn't one day that I had to prepare heavily for," he said. "As a reliever, when I'm going in, I have to prepare

See SUPERSTITION, Page 21

Buddha Beads  
Ritual bucket of chicken

Rally Cap

Lucky red tube socks

Lucky unwashed T-shirt

Photo by Chris Waller, Designed by Lindsay Koski/Index

## Men's soccer builds upon momentum

Tyler Madsen  
Staff Reporter

half on a feed from senior forward Sean Birrell.

They were a ghost that needed to be overcome.

In the past three seasons, the University of Missouri-St. Louis gave the purple and white all they could handle and more. This time around, the Bulldogs would have none of it.

After defeating the University of Missouri-Rolla 2-0 on the road Friday night, the soccer team returned home to a friendly crowd and produced a friendly score in a 6-0 romp of the Rivermen of Missouri-St. Louis.

On Friday evening, two first-half goals led the team to victory against the Miners. Senior forward Kevin Barry scored his third goal of the season in the 37th minute as a result of a cross by senior midfielder Geoff Brengle. Senior midfielder Martin Claves scored just before the

Junior goalkeeper Nate Gibson broke the school's all-time shutout record with the 29th of his career, making 10 saves against the Miners. The previous record was 28 shutouts held by Stefan Wall, who set the mark during his career from 1988 to 1991.

"We lost the game to Northern Kentucky, and ever since then we've come out every day with the mindset that no one's going to outwork us, no one's going to beat us to any ball and as long as we play our game, that's what's going to happen," senior midfielder Nate Gaudreault said.

The Bulldog offense came to life Sunday as the squad dominated throughout in a 6-0 victory against Missouri-St. Louis. Gaudreault and Birrell each tallied a pair of goals while Claves continued his fantastic season with

"...no one's going to outwork us, no ones going to beat us to any ball."

Nate Gaudreault  
Senior Midfielder



Chris Sharp/Index

Sophomore libero Marti Joyer dives for a dig Friday night against Emporia State at Pershing Arena.

## TRUMAN v. Rockhurst

Sunday's matchup could decide the final playoff spot in the Great Lakes Region. Each team is similar in many categories

	Truman	Rockhurst
Goals	43	45
Goals Against	9	10
Common Opp.	8-2	7-2-1
Overall Record	12-3	11-3-1

Designed by Lindsay Koski/Index

three assists as the team improved to 12-3 with five matches left to play in the regular season.

The 'Dogs got things going early when Gaudreault scored his first goal of the afternoon in the fifth minute. It was set up by senior midfielder Ryan Cravens and junior back Matt McCarthy.

After the team sent two balls

off the post and another one just above the crossbar, the 'Dogs found pay-dirt again in the 29th minute when senior forward Lars Pottgeisser scored to send the home team to the half with a 2-0 lead. His goal was assisted by Claves and Brengle.

The floodgates opened early  
See SOCCER, Page 21

## NHL sees changes in new season

Rachel Gehner  
for the Index

After more than a year of waiting, pucks are again dropping in arenas around the country.

That's right, hockey fans. The NHL has returned after a yearlong lockout, but it might not be the same game the fans remember.

The first on a long list of changes this year is the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that has established a salary cap for teams.

The salary cap made it difficult for many teams to keep a lot of their top-dollar players and led to an increased amount of player movement in the weeks after the agreement was reached.

Senior Chris Radigan said all the movement in the off-season will make it very hard to determine how well teams will perform this year.

"I have no idea what will happen, the league is so jumbled up right now," Radigan said. "So many of the franchise players just aren't with their franchise anymore."

Radigan plays for Truman's roller hockey team. He and senior teammate Chris LePage said they will watch the NHL carefully this year, as new rules are bound to make the game faster and more exciting.

Some of the new rules this year place restrictions on goalies in an attempt to increase scoring. These restrictions include both limiting the areas where goalies are allowed to play the puck and making goalies' pads smaller.

The goalies' blockers and leg pads have been reduced an inch and the gloves by three inches.

"Smaller pads is basically a good idea," LePage said. "But I think that since they are opening the game up so much more and making it so much faster, that it might be too much, too soon."

Some of the rules that will open up play include allowing the players to tag up on the blue line if they are in the opponent's zone when the puck is brought over the blue line. In previous years, this would result in an offside call and a stop in play.

Also, the league now will allow a double line pass. In previous years a double-line pass would have been called as icing, and play would be stopped.

LePage said college hockey has always allowed the double-line pass, and he is glad the league adopted the rule.

Measures to be taken in the case of a tie are among the many changes. In the past during regular season games, a tie would result in a five-minute overtime period. If neither team scored in the overtime, the game would be recorded as a tie, and each team would receive a point.

If neither team scores during overtime this year, the result will be a shootout in which three players from each team will face the goalie of the opposing team, one-on-one.

Radigan said he dislikes the idea of a shootout deciding the game.

"As a fan it is fun to watch, but when you think about it, they just battled a whole game," Radigan said. "Now, if in 50 minutes you can't prove you're better, it just rests on the individual players. It takes away the team concept."

However, LePage said from a  
See NHL, Page 21

## Volleyball suffers three losses

John Scognamiglio  
Staff Reporter

Don't push that little, red panic button just yet.

Last week, the women's volleyball team dropped three straight conference matches. The last time that happened was in 1998, when the squad lost to Emporia State, Washburn and Central Missouri.

With the consecutive losses, the Bulldogs have fallen to 8-3 in the MIAA and lost their No. 1 ranking in the American Volleyball Coaches' Association poll,

tumbling to No. 9.

Head coach Jason Skoch said the same things doomed the Bulldogs in every match.

"No leadership and that's what it really came down to," he said. "With Wednesday's loss [to Central Missouri], we played poorly but barely lost."

Friday evening, the squad hosted Emporia State University. After opening up the match with a 30-28 victory, the 'Dogs failed to keep the momentum, losing the next three games by scores of 30-24, 30-27, 30-27.

Senior middle hitter Megan Remley led the team in hitting percentage in the match, going 11 for 17 with one attack error for a hitting average of .588. Senior outside hitter Melanie Jones came off the bench to add five kills. As a team, the Bulldogs could only muster a .169 hitting percentage compared to the Hornets' .178 percentage.

Junior opposite hitter Kelsey Wackerman said the main problem with the team is their mindset.

"It's really a mental thing."  
See VOLLEYBALL, Page 21