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Head coach Jason Skoch stresses a point during a recent practice. Sophomore middle blocker Dana Hanselmann (foreground) and sophomore right side hitter Melissa Keck (background) look on. Skoch and his team finished 4-0 last weekend at the Washburn Tournament in Topeka, Kan. Overall, the squad is 12-1 on the year and has won its last 12 matches. Hanselmann and Keck have both helped the cause. Hanselmann leads the team in blocks/game (1.26), and Keck is first on the team in hitting percentage among Bulldogs with more than 90 attempts (.324).

Volleyball sweeps tournament

Fourth-ranked 'Dogs knock off four teams, including one MIAA foe

Tyler Madsen
Staff Reporter

Three nationally ranked squads and a pesky conference rival awaited the No. 4 volleyball team last weekend at the Washburn Lady Blues Classic.

After four dominating performances by the purple and white in a weekend sweep, the rest of the nation might want to take note.

"We played much more consistently this weekend and the results showed that," head coach Jason Skoch said. "We got contributions up and down the roster, but overall, we were just able to play and have a lot of fun."

The Bulldogs won all four matches and played its best volleyball of the season in the final tune-up for conference play.

In the team's first match Friday, the No. 12 University of Nebraska-Omaha Mavericks posed no threat to the 'Dog spikers. The 'Dogs hit a resounding .276 as a team in the 3-0 (-18, -21, -27) victory and were led by senior outside hitter Sarah Shearman's 15 kills.

Senior outside hitter Kelsey Wackerman and sophomore middle blocker Allie Cherven also tallied double-digit kills, and junior defensive specialist Erin Leavitt set a career high with 21 digs.

"That was a great match to watch," Skoch said. "They'd beaten some quality teams earlier this season, so that was a great [win] to get."

In the nightcap, the 'Dogs played its first conference match of the season against Pittsburg State University. Wackerman again helped the Bulldog attack in the 3-0 (-28, -28, -18) victory, as four 'Dogs registered double-digit kills. The team's hitting percentage soared even higher, as sophomore right side Melissa Keck's 11 kills and zero errors in 19 attacks led the squad to a .311 team percentage.

For the second straight weekend, an early morning wake-up call put the 'Dogs on the court first — this time against the then-No. 13 University of North Alabama in an important regional match. After dropping the first game, the 'Dogs put it on cruise control to a 3-1 (26-30, -16, -23, -18) win.

Wackerman and sophomore outside hitter Eli Medina each registered 15 kills, while Shearman (27 digs) and Cherven (2 solo blocks, 6 block assists) led the charge defensively.

After dropping both matches to UNA last season, Medina knew the team would get past losing the first game of the match this time around.

"We all had the mindset that this time we were going to win," Medina said. "They seemed more intimidating last season, and since we played well in that first game, we still had the confidence that we would be able to come back."

The squad saved its biggest win for last, as the No. 5 University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs fell victim to an effective Truman offense, and the purple and white rolled to a 3-0 (-23, -23, -26) victory.

Keck, Cherven and sophomore middle blocker Dana Hanselmann each hit over .400, while sophomore defensive specialist Whitney Boehler was one of three 'Dogs to record double-digit digs. Boehler played in both matches Saturday after missing the previous six matches due to an injury.

"Erin [Leavitt] played really well, and she got a lot of experience in those matches that Whitney [Boehler] was out," Skoch said. "But when Whitney came back, it really looked like she hadn't missed a beat. Now we know if we get in that situation again, then we have somebody who's ready to step in."

Shearman was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament, while Wackerman also made the all-tournament team. The 'Dogs led all tournament participants in team hitting percentage, blocks and digs — a testament to how strong the squad can be in both aspects of

the game. "We're getting better and better as the season goes along," Leavitt said. "So we just want to keep our spot and continue to improve."

Tuesday night brought a scare for the squad in its first conference road match of the season against Northwest Missouri State University.

After taking the first two games of the match with ease, the 'Dogs allowed the Bearcats to crawl back and send the match to a deciding game five.

With the score knotted at eight in the final game, the 'Dogs rattled off seven of the final nine points to stave off the upset bid, 3-2 (-22, -17, 25-30, 25-30, 15-10).

The Bulldogs led 16-9 in game four before Northwest put together a 16-4 run to gain a five point lead at 25-20.

Medina led the 'Dogs in kills despite hitting only .109 for the match. Wackerman registered another triple-double, her fifth of the season, with 12 kills, 33 assists and 22 digs.

For the sixth time this year, the Bulldog defense held an opponent to an under .100 team hitting percentage. The Bearcats hit a mere .097.

The purple and white have now won 14 straight matches against the Bearcats with the last loss coming Sept. 15, 1999, in Pershing Arena.

The 'Dogs are 13-1 (2-0 MIAA) and will host Southwest Baptist University and Quincy University (Ill.) this weekend in Pershing Arena.

Sept. 12 vs. Northwest Mo. St.					
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.	
1	18	8	44	.227	
2	13	4	34	.265	
3	16	10	51	.118	
4	14	11	64	.047	
5	9	3	30	.200	
Northwest Mo. St.					
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.	
1	12	10	46	.043	
2	8	11	38	-.079	
3	17	2	47	.319	
4	15	9	59	.102	
5	7	3	26	.038	

Sept. 9 vs. No. 13 North Alabama				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	16	5	51	.216
2	20	5	47	.319
3	18	7	55	.200
4	13	4	37	.343

Team Attack Per Game				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	16	5	51	.216
2	20	5	47	.319
3	18	7	55	.200
4	13	4	37	.343

North Alabama				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	21	9	64	.188
2	9	7	47	.043
3	12	10	58	.034
4	13	12	45	-.022

Sept. 9 vs. No. 5 Minn.-Duluth				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	21	9	64	.188
2	13	8	44	.091
3	15	9	49	.122

Team Attack Per Game				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	20	11	50	.180
2	18	4	53	.264
3	17	11	54	.111

Minn.-Duluth				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	14	2	40	.300
2	21	4	41	.415
3	18	4	41	.341

Sept. 8 vs. Nebraska-Omaha				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	18	21	27	
2	18	21	27	
3	30	30	30	

Team Attack Per Game				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	8	8	46	.000
2	13	8	44	.091
3	15	9	49	.122

Truman				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	19	5	47	.298
2	18	4	40	.350
3	17	8	47	.191

Sept. 8 vs. Pittsburg St.				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	18	5	48	.271
2	16	7	50	.180
3	13	5	38	.211

Pittsburg State				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	18	5	48	.271
2	16	7	50	.180
3	13	5	38	.211

Truman				
Game	K	E	TA	Pct.
1	20	7	49	.265
2	20	10	46	.217
3	22	4	37	.486



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Sophomore right side hitter Melissa Keck spikes a ball during a recent practice. The Bulldogs are 12-1 on the year.

Right On Course

On course at the season's one-third pole, this year's team compares favorably to the previous six years.

Year	13 Matches	Finish
2006	12-1	????
2005	12-1	Elite Eight
2004	13-0	National Runner-up
2003	11-2	NCAA Regional Semifinal
2002	9-4	National Runner-up
2001	12-1	Elite Eight
2000	12-1	South Central Regional

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