

Shutout streak ends for women

Sadye Scott-Hainchek
Staff Reporter

Entering Sunday's game against Washburn University, the Bulldogs had shut out four straight opponents.

After senior forward Lauren Hawks scored to put the Bulldogs up by a goal, it looked like the win streak at least would continue through the first two games of conference play.

But Washburn scored twice in 10 minutes, and when the 'Dogs thought freshman midfielder Isabel Gaeta had scored on a pass from junior forward Katie Ruefer, one of the referees called a foul on Gaeta, negating the goal.

"I guess they said she bumped the [Washburn] girl, but there really was very little contact, and so we were all pretty upset about the call," junior midfielder Emily Newsham said "But it's kind of the way it goes."

Washburn went on to win 2-1 after the revoked goal and a couple missed Bulldog shots that deflected off the goal posts. Hawks, who scored the 'Dogs' only goal for her team-high sixth of the season, said the team didn't take advantage of its opportunities against Washburn.

"We all walked away knowing we should've won the game, so that was pretty rough," Hawks said.

Hawks said the referees failed to call Washburn on some dirty plays and instead called nit-picky fouls on Truman, which weakened the 'Dogs' concentration.

"[Washburn] just kind of got into our heads, and we made some stupid fouls because we were kind of playing down to their level," she said.

The loss to Washburn wasn't a complete downer, though. Hawks said the team kept its intensity and motivation, creating chances despite the bad breaks.

"It was good to see that the team didn't let down even though we were down a goal," she said.

Despite beginning conference play at 1-1 instead of 2-0, Newsham said the team hasn't let the loss affect their confidence.

"We're going to get to play [Washburn] again, so we'll definitely be ready next time, and we'll remember the feeling that we had at the end of the game," Newsham said.

Sunday also marked senior goalie Lauren Davis' second complete game since returning from a concussion. Head coach Mike Cannon said the two goals Davis permitted weren't really her fault and that she's back to her pre-injury ability.

"She was snagging balls out of the air and really relieving some pressure on our defense," he said.

The loss followed Saturday's 2-0 win, which came not only against Emporia State University but also against the less-than-ideal conditions.

"It was ridiculously windy, and it was extremely warm too, which we haven't been much used to that lately here, and we played on a pretty bad field," Cannon said.

Continuing a trend of early scoring, the Bulldogs took the lead only three minutes into the game when Hawks scored on a penalty kick. She said the quick goals result from a different mindset this year.

"I just think we have a lot more players that are offensively minded, and it's not just like we're out there for defense and to play for the tie," she said. "When we get the ball, we transition to offense and try to score, and I think that's helped out a lot."

In the 64th minute, Hawks scored her second goal giving the 'Dogs a 2-0 lead. Davis had to make only one save throughout the game.

As the team begins conference play, the members need to focus on targeted weaknesses, Cannon said. He said he isn't sure what's hindering the defense — using the right players or the right formations — but improving the defense is one of the most pressing issues.

"We've been kind of getting by and playing well at times, but it hasn't been consistent, and it kind of cost us [Sunday] as far as the goals we gave up," he said.

The 'Dogs also have to focus on reducing the lulls in the game and keeping a high level of intensity, a recurring theme this season. Newsham said the periods of lower-quality play have important ramifications for the games' results.

"We have some lows throughout the game that we need to shorten, like, minimize as much as we can because that's like the only time we get scored on," Newsham said.

Cannon said addressing these issues is essential to winning a constantly improving conference.

"If we want to be a great team or a very good team, that's better than all the other very good teams in our conference, we need to be a little bit better on the smaller, intangible stuff," he said.

The Bulldogs open a four-game homestand against Southwest Baptist University at 12 p.m. Saturday, and they play Missouri Southern University at 1 p.m. Sunday.

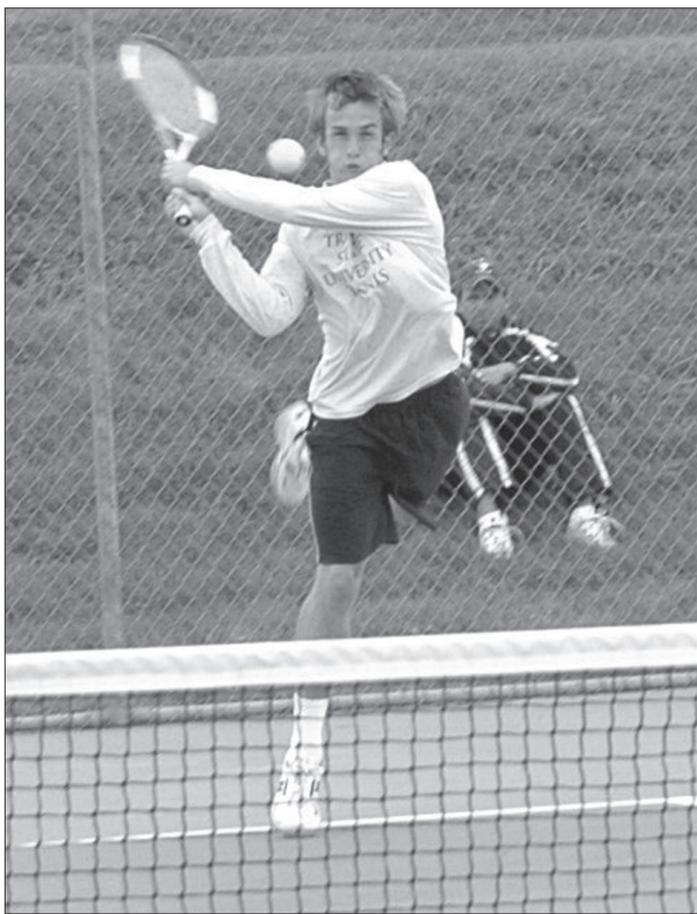
"We all walked away knowing we should have won that game, so that was pretty rough."

Lauren Hawks
Senior Forward



Chris Tharp/Index

Junior midfielder Rachael Schmidt knocks the ball down during a game earlier this season. Schmidt is one of nine players who have scored for the 6-2 and 22-ranked Bulldogs.



Ross Houston/Index

Freshman Peter Bracha returns a serve against Quincy University last week. Bracha was 3-3 for the Bulldogs during the Truman Invitational.

Tennis struggles at Invitational

Blake Topmeyer
Staff Reporter

Riding a hot streak entering last weekend's Truman Invitational, the men's tennis team hit a roadblock against some tough competition.

While the team did show a few flashes of brilliance, it finished with an overall record of 19-25 and struggled in its matches against Northwest Missouri State University and Johnson County Community College (Kan.).

During the two-day tournament, the Bulldogs were just 7-25 against JCCC and Northwest, including a 4-12 mark against Northwest, a team which the Bulldogs will face in two weeks at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Regional Tournament and also later in the year in the spring season. The 'Dogs also faced Quincy University and swept all six of their contests.

"With Northwest being in our conference, we'd like to play as well as we can against them, of course," head coach Pete Kendall said. "With Johnson County not in our conference, it's not a big issue. That's why we schedule the tournament this way with [tough competition]. It helps get us ready for the next couple weeks and the ITA."

Play opened up Friday for the purple and white against JCCC, a match up that did not favor the Bulldogs. The 'Dogs lost seven first-round matches against the Cavaliers with the lone win coming from freshman Steve Hipkiss.

A few of the Bulldogs, including freshman Peter Bracha, picked up their game in the second set of matches against opponents from Northwest. Bracha performed exceptionally well

in his competition with Pablo Acebedo, one of Northwest's top players.

The lead changed hands a few times before Acebedo seemingly took control by breaking Bracha's serve with the score 7-7.

This put Bracha in a difficult position, needing a service break to force a tiebreaker.

"I was just taking it point by point, not really thinking about the situation," Bracha said. "I almost didn't even realize that I needed a break there."

Bracha responded to the challenge, winning the game and then cruising through the tiebreaker en route to winning the match 9-8.

"You have to get off to a solid start in a tiebreak or else it's over," Bracha said. "Every point further on has more pressure, so you basically need to get off to a good start."

Bracha's victory against Acebedo was not the only notable victory against an opponent from Northwest. Senior No. 1 Ryan Cope defeated Daniel Usieto 8-6 in a match that was close the entire way. Cope stepped up his play near the end, becoming much more comfortable and fluid on the court than his opponent.

"I just tried to keep the ball on the court and put the pressure on [Usieto] to make shots," Cope said. "He was going for a lot more risky shots than me. I just tried to play a little more conservative."

The Bulldogs wrapped up their Friday matches with a sweep of all six contests against opponents from Quincy University.

"Those were matches that we expected to win," Kendall said.

The success against Quincy did not come as a surprise after the 'Dogs re-

cently defeated Quincy 9-0 in a dual match.

Saturday's matches were similar to those Friday with the 'Dogs dominating Quincy, but struggling against JCCC and Northwest for the second straight day.

A bright spot for the Bulldogs on Saturday came from freshman No. 5 Kyle Schlotz, who went a perfect 3-0 on day two and finished 5-1 for the tournament, earning second place for his fight.

"With my position in the lineup, I expect to win all my matches," Schlotz said. "I think my game matches up pretty well with the fives and sixes of other teams."

While Schlotz dropped his opening match, he did show signs of success. Down 7-2 to JCCC Ross Gelina, Schlotz turned up the intensity and narrowed the gap to 7-6 before bowing out 8-6.

In the following match, Schlotz squared off against Northwest's Cody Pflugrad, winning a close match 9-8 in a tiebreaker. This win would begin a streak of five straight wins for Schlotz, who was very successful with his aggressive style of play.

"My main game this weekend was coming to the net whenever I got short balls," Schlotz said. "That was really working for me."

The performance of Schlotz and other players proved what the Bulldogs are capable of when on top of their game.

"I'm confident that we're going to do very well," Kendall said. "We have a bunch of good freshman players and it's not unusual for freshman players to go up and down a bit."

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