

Senior outside hitter Sarah Shearman digs a ball in Wednesday night's 3-0 win against the University of Central Missouri Jennies. On the year Shearman, a reigning first-team All-American, averages a team-leading 3.58 kills per game. **Chris Tharp/Index**

VICTORY | Team wins 15th straight match Wednesday

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Three Bulldogs recorded double-figure digs, led by 14 apiece from sophomore outside hitter Eli Medina and senior setter Christine Wagener.

After cruising in the first two games, the Bulldogs hit a wall in game three, allowing the Bearcats to win a game against Truman for the first time since Oct. 31, 2002.

"Instead of taking care of business and just finishing the job, we got complacent," Skoch said.

The squad took a while to pull away in game four, and despite three lead changes, it was able to hold SBU to a .071 hitting percentage in the final frame to win by eight points.

Any lack of intensity Friday night didn't carry into Saturday against Quincy University (Ill.) in a match that lasted just more than an hour.

The 'Dogs didn't allow the Lady Hawks to amass 20 points in a single game, winning 3-0 (-13, -14, -19).

Senior outside hitter Kelsey Wackerman was three digs shy of a triple-double collecting 10 kills and had 23 assists. She (.471) and seven other Bulldogs hit over .400 for the match, and the team's total hitting percentage of .484 set a new season high.

"When you look at the incredible numbers we put up, it really just means one thing: We finally played as a team," Skoch said.

On the defensive side, the purple and white held the Lady Hawks to a .010 hitting percentage, which was another season-best effort.

"We work on our defense all the time," sophomore defensive specialist Whitney Boehler said. "We don't have many mental lapses, and I feel like the defense looks a lot better right now than at this point last year."

The team (15-1 overall, 4-0 MIAA) heads to Missouri Western State University tomorrow night before hosting No. 20 Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville Tuesday night in Pershing Arena.

| Sept. 15 vs. SBU | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Game Scores | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| SW Baptist | 18 | 21 | 30 | 22 |
| Truman | 30 | 30 | 25 | 30 |

| Team Attack Per Game | | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|----|------|
| SW Baptist | | | | |
| Game | K | E | TA | Pct. |
| 1 | 11 | 9 | 37 | .054 |
| 2 | 14 | 3 | 38 | .289 |
| 3 | 12 | 6 | 53 | .113 |
| 4 | 12 | 9 | 42 | .071 |

| Truman | | | | |
|--------|----|----|----|-------|
| Game | K | E | TA | Pct. |
| 1 | 18 | 5 | 31 | .419 |
| 2 | 24 | 5 | 42 | .452 |
| 3 | 14 | 12 | 53 | -.038 |
| 4 | 17 | 6 | 42 | .262 |

| Sept. 16 vs. Quincy University | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|----|----|--|
| Game Scores | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Quincy | 13 | 14 | 19 | |
| Truman | 30 | 30 | 30 | |

| Team Attack Per Game | | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|----|-------|
| Quincy | | | | |
| Game | K | E | TA | Pct. |
| 1 | 8 | 7 | 35 | .029 |
| 2 | 6 | 9 | 39 | -.077 |
| 3 | 10 | 7 | 26 | .115 |

| Truman | | | | |
|--------|----|---|----|------|
| Game | K | E | TA | Pct. |
| 1 | 20 | 2 | 27 | .667 |
| 2 | 17 | 6 | 35 | .314 |
| 3 | 17 | 2 | 29 | .517 |

| Sept. 15 vs. U. Central Missouri | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|----|----|--|
| Game Scores | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| UCM | 13 | 14 | 19 | |
| Truman | 30 | 30 | 30 | |

| Team Attack Per Game | | | | |
|----------------------|----|----|----|------|
| UCM | | | | |
| Game | K | E | TA | Pct. |
| 1 | 10 | 10 | 34 | .000 |
| 2 | 10 | 8 | 40 | .050 |
| 3 | 9 | 9 | 44 | .000 |

| Truman | | | | |
|--------|----|---|----|------|
| Game | K | E | TA | Pct. |
| 1 | 18 | 4 | 43 | .324 |
| 2 | 18 | 8 | 45 | .222 |
| 3 | 17 | 9 | 47 | .170 |

GREEN | Freshman midfielder has two goals and two assists for the Bulldogs through the team's first eight games, helping the team go 4-2-2

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positive attitude helps keep the team's spirits up.

"He demands the ball," McCarthy said. "He wants it. He likes to create things, whether it's for himself or for his teammates."

Green has a strong presence on and off the field, where he is slowly adjusting to life in the United States.

Friends point out the slight accent that exposes his Canadian roots, pronouncing words like "about" to sound like "a boat."

"Everyone else has a bit of an accent to me," he said.

Green is far from his hometown of Victoria, a city of about 35,000 on Vancouver Island, west of British Columbia's coastline. Victoria affords a few small pleasures Green doesn't have in Kirksville, like mountaintop conversations and quick jaunts to the beach.

"I definitely miss the oceans, and the trees, the mountains, the scenery more than anything else," he said.

Green talks on the phone with his parents a few times a week. He will not return home for Thanksgiving break, which is not a holiday in Canada.

He will, however, fly home for Christmas, and he hopes to make it back over

Midterm break in the spring, too.

Growing up, Green played soccer along with baseball and basketball before choosing soccer as the main sport he wanted to pursue.

He continued to play throughout middle school and high school, first as a defender and then as a midfielder.

In high school, he joined the British Columbia Provincial Team and spent summers traveling around Europe and playing in soccer tournaments.

He returned to Victoria for

the academic year, studying and saving money for the next summer's traveling expenses.

His father traveled with him the first summer, but for his remaining trips abroad his family helped save money.

Then he left his parents and older brother for the summer to play soccer.

"They always would do everything they could to support me," he said.

Last summer's travels led him to Germany, where he originally intended to spend his senior year.

After a few months, however, a small bout of homesickness prompted him to return to Victoria, where he spent his senior year with a close group of longtime friends.

Green said the homesickness he originally felt at Truman now is more manageable, but being away from home makes him appreciate those who are still there.

"Three years ago, I couldn't wait to get out of Victoria and see the world," he said. "[Leaving] kind of made me realize that maybe it wasn't so bad."

SOCCER | Team goes on the road this weekend

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alignment and personnel that could help gauge the rest of the year.

First, the team is switching back to the 3-5-2 alignment after playing mostly a 4-4-2. The 3-5-2, anchored by Jared Atwood as the sweeper, helped the 2005 squad continually shut out teams and capture critical wins en route to a 10-0-2 finish and a playoff run last fall.

"It's not as fun to watch, but we can't give up goals," Cochran said. "You don't get points for style."

They ran the 3-5-2 with junior Drew Vogt as the sweeper in the 3-0 victory over Newman University on Sunday.

Newman, a NAIA school, didn't put as much pressure on the 'Dogs' defense. This weekend will test Vogt — normally an attacker in the midfield — and the

formation. Friday night also will mark the first appearance of Kevin Livesey, a transfer from England. The left-footed Livesey became eligible Tuesday and could help kickstart an offense that scored just 14 goals in their

first eight games — 10 fewer than they scored at this point last season.

Livesey's role is undetermined entering the weekend, but his impact could prove to

be huge, especially as the team gets deeper into the fall and goals become scarcer.

"He likes to go to goal," McCarthy said. "He is attacking-minded, and he will shoot from anywhere, and he has a great shot. He looks like a pit bull to me. He wants to win and wants to score."

The contests could also halt the inconsistency of the team.

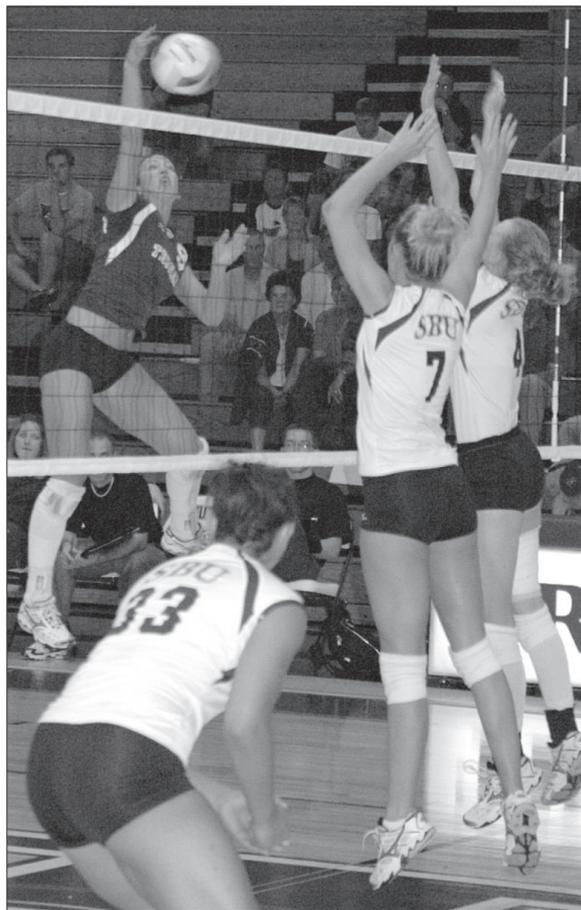
So far, Cochran and the team have played brilliantly in nearly every game and exceeded expectations through the first half of the regular season. These upcoming contests will show how much focus the young squad has for the all-important stretch run against teams also facing must-win games.

"They are getting better and better every game and learning how important each game is," McCarthy said. "There's still definitely a learning curve."

Friday and Sunday will show if this team can consistently score goals and win on the road. The team is 2-0-1 in Kirksville, 2-2-1 on the road.

At Truman Soccer Park, they average three goals a game and put 10 shots on goal per contest. On the road, those numbers drop to one and five.

"We didn't have the killer instinct [in the two road losses]," Cochran said. Keeping a strong focus for 90 minutes could be critical in the Bulldogs' answering key questions and moving either closer or farther away from the playoffs.



Sophomore outside hitter Eli Medina spikes the ball during Friday's game against SBU. The 'Dogs beat the Bearcats 3-1. **Adam Kabins/Index**

LEAVITT | Junior libero saw little playing time a year

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more than half the serves, bumping the ball to the setter and accurately passing the ball after a dig.

"[Erin's] passes are perfect and anytime a team hits a down ball or a free ball, unless it is a blistering hit," Skoch said.

Defensively, they serve as the last line of defense after the blockers and the hitters.

"The libero has more time than anyone to read the hitter and adjust to the ball, so they are important," Skoch said. "They have to pick up the scraps. Anyone can dig a hard hit right to them at this level, they will dig it. You need someone that pick up the balls after chasing it down after three to five steps."

Leavitt doesn't have the depth or the range of Boehler, but she has been able to keep several balls up that easily could have fallen for kills. Against Barry, she delivered back-to-back digs on the same play, resulting in a Bulldog point.

Leavitt's confidence is also starting to improve. Mainly a setter before this year, Leavitt had played just one game at libero in her collegiate career. And that was only because of an emergency when the Bryant libero suffered an injury.

While growing into the position, Leavitt realizes she still needs to improve some aspects of her game.

"My speed could use some work, but I am reading the ball a lot better," Leavitt said. "My serve receive has improved a lot since last year. I am just a lot more confident in myself than I was last year."

And the confidence might be the most important factor for the Bulldogs. Earlier this season, Skoch considered moving sophomore outside hitter Eli Medina to the back row.

Medina, an outstanding defensive player and ball controller, doesn't hit for a high average.

But with Leavitt's play, Medina has provided several strong matches in the front row, helping the Bulldogs maintain a strong offense.

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