

SLU hands hockey team first loss 7-5

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

The Truman roller hockey club is no longer unbeaten.

In the opening game of the team's three-game set last weekend, the Bulldogs fell to St. Louis University 7-5. The loss was the team's first of the season.

The team rebounded from the loss to post back-to-back 10-0 blankings against Kansas State University and Western Illinois University. After the three games, the 'Dogs now are in second place behind Missouri State University in the Great Plains Collegiate Inline Hockey League Div. II standings with a 10-1-2 mark.

"It's a heartbreak because you hate losing," head coach Joe Nedelec said. "All the guys on the team hate losing, especially to a team that we shouldn't be losing to."

SLU came out ready to play the Bulldogs and took a 3-0 lead into the locker room after the first period. Thirty seconds into the second period, senior forward and team captain Dane Moody put the 'Dogs on the board with his first goal of the game.

Moody's goal sparked the Bulldogs' offense to tie up the game at the 6:07 mark of the second period. Junior forward Ronnie Gentile broke the tie two minutes later to give the Bulldogs a 4-3 lead.

Junior defenseman Neil Bales, who scored the tying goal, said the comeback was draining on the team.

"In coming back and trying so hard to come back, we might have worn ourselves out," Bales said.

SLU eventually tied things up, and the teams headed into the third period knotted up at 4-4.

Moody again started the scor-

ing in the third, notching his second goal of the game. SLU tied the game four minutes later on a goal by Shaun O'Rourke. O'Rourke then added two more goals in the period to give the Billkens a 7-5 win.

"SLU played a very good game," Nedelec said. "They came out flying and ready to play us. They knew what they had to do to beat us. ... SLU played a great game, but we didn't play our game."

The last time the two squads hooked up, the Bulldogs prevailed 9-4. O'Rourke wasn't on the Billkens' roster at the time.

"They got a new guy, and he was really slick," Nedelec said. "He had good speed and could really move with the puck."

The seven goals were the most allowed all season by junior goaltender John Pecher. His previous high was five in the first game of the season. Pecher said he had been battling flu-like symptoms leading up to the game and wasn't at 100 percent during the SLU contest.

"My body was weak, and I was just a half step off all day," Pecher said. "I couldn't really recover. It's really hard to recover

and keep your head up when you're sick, and you're struggling. It was pretty tough."

The loss to SLU illustrated once again the troubles the Bulldogs have been having in their first game of the weekend session. The Bulldogs are 1-1-2 in weekend openers, a problem that partially can be blamed on making the transition from their smaller practice rink to a regulation-size floor.

Nedelec said positive aspects can come from the loss.

"This is an opportunity to gain a little perspective — to gain a little humility," Nedelec said. "I told the guys that



The Truman roller hockey team entered its games last weekend without a loss on their record. They left with one. St. Louis University handed the Bulldogs their first loss of the season and their first loss since the national tournament last year. The loss dropped the 'Dogs out of first place in the Great Plains Collegiate Inline Hockey League standings behind Missouri State University. The Bulldogs and SLU have squared off twice this season with very different results.

	Game 1 (Jan. 20)	Game 2 (Feb. 9)
Goals allowed by Truman's John Pecher	4	7
Goals scored by SLU's Shaun O'Rourke	0*	3
Shots by the Bulldogs	51	21
Third period goals by the Bulldogs	4	1

* O'Rourke didn't play in Game One.

we can learn from this and then come back and rebound. And they rebounded really well the next game. I was really happy that the guys didn't let the SLU loss get them down."

In the next two games, the Bulldogs found their groove. Both games had the 10-goal mercy rule put into effect. It was the sixth and seventh time this season the Bulldogs have beaten an opponent by 10 goals, and the fifth and sixth time the win came via shutout.

"They are teams that we ought to mercy," Nedelec said. "I think what it does is that when a team is very suc-

cessful a lot of times and there a few instances where they suffer some adversity, they get down on themselves and each other, and they start not having fun. I think with the two games they played, the rest of the weekend allowed them to get back out there and have fun."

The dominating wins also helped the team regain some confidence.

"It said to us we haven't really lost our footing," Bales said. "Other teams are stepping up, so we need to take the next step. Those two victories showed we didn't really lose any of our ability."

The Bulldogs have games again

this weekend, and Nedelec said he doesn't expect any of them to be easy. The team squares off against its old rival the University of Missouri-St. Louis and new rival SLU. The 'Dogs also play Div. I Lindenwood University (Mo.) and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

"We kind of faltered this past weekend, and we dropped a game that we shouldn't have," Pecher said. "It's really a chance for us to prove ourselves, not only to ourselves, but to our division and to other divisions as well as far as rankings go."



Sophomore guard Laura Joya handles the ball in traffic during a game last week. In her first start, Joya had career highs in points and rebounds.

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Sophomore guard has career game

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

Starting seems to suit Laura Joya.

The sophomore guard for the women's basketball team made her first career start Saturday against Southwest Baptist University and had a career day. She set career highs in points (19), rebounds (nine) and minutes played (37).

"She did a really good job against a team that likes to press," head coach John Sloop said. "She was able to take advantage of what she had [and] knocked down some open shots. I thought she played really well."

Joya (pronounced HOY-a) who said no one has ever pronounced her name right on the first try, said she didn't feel particularly nervous before her start.

"I felt the same way I do before every game," she said.

Joya was thrust into the starting lineup because regular starting guard senior Carmen McGee was dealing with an injury and missed the game. Sloop said he didn't have to think long to name McGee's replacement in the starting five.

"We had a starter out, a guard, and [Joya's] basically the first option off the bench in terms of perimeter guard," Sloop said. "So, we put her in there, and she did a heck of a job."

Taking over for McGee presented a challenge for Joya, at least on the defensive side of the ball.

"I felt some pressure to play well but not offensively," Joya said. "Carmen is a really good defensive player and an awesome rebounder. ... I just tried to play hard and play like a starter would do."

Sloop said Joya's 19-point, nine-re-

bound performance Saturday is directly linked to her summer workouts. After playing sparingly as a freshman, Joya came to Truman this fall ready to make an impact for the Bulldogs.

"It started with her work in the off-season," Sloop said. "She was one of three kids we had that came back in the best shape they've been since they've been here. She worked awful hard over the summer, and that really helped her improve in all areas of her game."

Joya was the youngest member of the starting five, but she didn't let her youth slow down her game. Southwest Baptist plays a full-court-press style of defense that has a tendency to leave a player wide open. On Saturday, that player happened to be Joya.

"When the opportunities came, I just decided to go for it," she said. "Some way, somehow, I want to help out my team."

The Bulldogs came up short and lost 87-82 to the Bearcats, one of three teams fighting for the top spot in the MIAA.

Joya said that during the game she had no idea how many points or rebounds she had. She said she was focused on trying to find a way to help the team get a victory.

"I definitely did not know," Joya said. "I didn't know until way after the game."

Joya has seen her minutes steadily increase in recent games. Along with an increase in minutes has come an increase in points. Last Wednesday against the University of Central Missouri, Joya scored a then-career-high 13 points.

"I just try to take advantage of any minute I'm given," Joya said. "I just want to work hard out there."

Athlete of the Week

Laura Joya

Sport: Basketball

Year: Sophomore

Position: Guard

Hometown: Wheeling, Ill.

Joya made the most of her first career start as a Bulldogs. The sophomore guard set career highs in minutes, points and rebounds Saturday against Southwest Baptist University. She scored 19 points and pulled down nine rebounds in 37 minutes of action.

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