

Men beat Missouri Western 73-68



Joe Barker/Index
Junior guard Banks Estridge takes the ball up the court Saturday. On Wednesday, Estridge hit a near-full-court shot in a win against Mo. West.

BY BLAKE TOPPMAYER
Assistant Sports Editor

Junior guard Banks Estridge's quarterback skills made the difference in the men's basketball team's 73-68 win at Missouri Western State University on Wednesday night.

Estridge launched a shot football-pass-style from the opponent's free-throw line with less than a second remaining in the first half of last night's contest.

The shot, which traveled about 75 feet in the air, swished through the net to give the Bulldogs (5-19, 4-11) their first lead of the game, 37-36, as they entered the locker room.

"When it left my hand, I knew it was on line, and that's pretty much all you can hope for when you're throwing it from full court," said Estridge, who said he doesn't remember ever before making a half- or full-court shot.

Estridge's dad might have helped Estridge develop the football-throwing motion required to make the basket.

"My dad was a college quarterback so I throw the football around with him quite a bit," said Estridge, who finished with a team-high 18 points.

The improbable shot proved to be points that Truman needed. The Bulldogs and Missouri Western battled back and forth in the second half. Neither team led by more than four points in the last 20 minutes of regulation until senior forward Nick Certa's two free throws sealed the victory with one second remaining.

Certa, who finished with 14 points, previously had made a tip-in to put Truman up 67-64 with just more than a minute to play. After Missouri Western's Gus Moss air-balled a three-point shot on the following possession, the Bulldogs were able to put the game away at the free-throw line.

They made six of seven foul shots in the final minute.

The win keeps Truman's conference tournament hopes alive. The Bulldogs entered the game tied with the Griffons for ninth in the MIAA standings. The top eight teams make the March 7-9 conference tournament.

With the win, the Bulldogs now trail Emporia State University by two games for eighth place in the MIAA standings with three games to play.

Estridge said prior to Wednesday's game against Missouri Western that the 'Dogs couldn't afford to lose another game if they hope to make the conference tournament.

"We know we have to win all four of these games to have a chance at getting in the tournament so we'll just see what we can do," Estridge said.

Truman started the game slow offensively, and the Griffons established a 23-9 lead. But freshman forward Mark Misiewicz and freshman guard Alex Henderson — who finished 5 for 7 behind the arc — provided 14 first-half points off the bench to help the Bulldogs chip away at the lead.

The rest was left to Estridge, who drained three first-half three pointers in addition to his Hail Mary at the end of the half.

"We kind of started off real slow," Estridge said. "With two teams at the bottom of the conference playing, it's tough to find a real spark, and I think that [shot] really helped us, and we had a little momentum going into the second half."

The Bulldogs entered their game against Missouri Western struggling. Truman lost 61-54 to Washburn University on Saturday at Pershing Arena. The loss was the 'Dogs' sixth in a row.

Prior to Saturday, Truman had not trailed by more than three points at half-time since Jan. 23.

But the Bulldogs scored just six points in the final 12 1/2 minutes of the first half against the Ichabods, and Washburn led 32-22 at halftime.

"We were flat," head coach Jack Schrader said. "I think it was the first game that I would say we were flat emotionally. It's tough to play 27 games always being up. I don't think the effort was bad. I just think we were flat emotionally."

Truman didn't fare much better early in the second half. Washburn had established an 18-point lead with 7:40 remaining before the Bulldogs awoke from their offensive slumber. Truman finished the game on a 17-6 run.

"We just waited a little too long to come back, and that's pretty much the story," Estridge said.

Estridge turned up his production in the second half to help the 'Dogs close the gap. He scored 12 of his 16 points in the second half, which marked the sixth time this season that Estridge has scored in double figures in the second half.

Misiewicz added production off the bench. He scored a career-high 14 points on 5-for-10 shooting, including two three-pointers.

"[I] probably wasn't on their scouting reports, and a big guy's not supposed to be able to shoot," Misiewicz said. "When I was sliding out to the three[point] line, they probably aren't respecting my shot enough."

Junior forward Patrick Fandja, who is second in the MIAA in rebounds per game, contributed his fourth double-double of this season. But outside of the trio of Estridge, Misiewicz and Fandja, the 'Dogs received very little offensive production. Truman made just 38 percent of its field goal attempts.

The Bulldogs will be back at Pershing on Saturday to play Fort Hays State University (16-8, 8-7). Truman beat the Tigers earlier this season.

Missouri Western topples 'Dogs 93-78, losing skid at 7

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

Jill Johnson made sure Missouri Western State University's losing streak ended at seven games.

The Griffons' senior forward finished Wednesday's game with a career-high 39 points, one shy of the school record, and 16 rebounds as the Griffons downed the Bulldogs 93-78.

The Griffon's losing streak ended at seven, but the Bulldogs have lost seven in a row and remain winless on the road in the MIAA. Truman's record stands at 13-11 (5-10 MIAA) with only three regular season games remaining.

Missouri Western also got a big game from Yanique Javois. The senior poured in 32 points. The duo of Johnson and Javois finished with a combined 71 points and nearly outscored the entire Bulldog team.

Missouri Western led nearly the entire game. The lead grew to 25 midway through the second half.

Junior forward Georgia Mueller had another big game for the Bulldogs, pouring in a team-high 33 points and grabbing five rebounds.

Senior guard Katie Fowler also was in double figures for the Bulldogs with 15 points.

Missouri Western had a 49-32 advantage on the glass and shot 47 percent from the floor.

The loss also drops Truman into a seventh-place tie in the MIAA with Mo. West and Fort Hays State University. The top eight teams in the conference advance to the MIAA tournament in Kansas City.

Head coach John Sloop said before the game that Johnson and Javois would be difficult to stop.

"They are a really talented offensive team," Sloop said. "Johnson and Ya-

nique are two talented offensive players. They are really difficult in terms of matching up with."

The Bulldogs were back at nearly at full strength for the game. Senior guard Julia Montebello and sophomore guard Laura Joya returned for the Bulldogs. Both missed the last two games. Joya has been battling an ankle injury and Montebello has been suffering from an illness.

In Saturday's game the final score didn't tell the whole story.

The women's basketball team battled and persevered through 40 tough minutes of play before ultimately coming up a few points short in a 80-75 loss to No. 18 Washburn on Saturday.

The defeat was Truman's sixth in a row.

The Bulldogs, playing with a depleted roster yet again, overcame an early onslaught by the Lady Blues. But Truman never was able to catch the high-powered Washburn squad.

Washburn hit nearly everything it threw up in the first 12 minutes to gallop to a 36-20 lead. The Bulldogs answered with a 16-5 run to close the gap to five at the half.

Truman hung around for the entire second half but never got closer than four. Every time the Bulldogs would put a run together, the Lady Blues had an answer.

"We dug ourselves a big hole early," Sloop said. "They really did a great job of trapping the post and cutting at the basket and got some layups early. ... They're as good as anyone we play in terms of that."

Freshman forward Malorie Kiecker said Washburn was able to keep pressure on the Bulldogs.

"Washburn is one of the top teams not even in our conference, like in the nation," Kiecker said. "They obviously knew how to deal with that.

We kept trying to get something going. But yeah, they had an answer."

After Washburn jumped out to the early lead, the Bulldogs made defensive changes that slowed down the Lady Blues' attack.

"We made a couple of adjustments in trapping the post," Mueller said. "That really helped. We were a little more aggressive and made them shoot over our hands."

Mueller had her 13th double-double of the season with 25 points and 10 rebounds. Senior guard Candace McGee added 13 points.

The Bulldogs also received strong efforts from freshman guard Malorie Kiecker and freshman guard Mindy Hutchcroft. The two combined for 16 points off the bench and provided needed rest for Bulldog starters.

Truman played without three of its top guards for the second straight game. Sophomore guard Julie Guinn will miss the remainder of the season because of a knee injury. Joya and Montebello both missed the game because of undisclosed sickness or injury.

Despite the missing players, Sloop said he did not think depth was a huge factor.

"We played seven kids, I think, double-digit minutes," Sloop said. "It's more the fact that we are trying to play freshmen at a ball-handling position that aren't point guards. And they're doing a heck of a job. Because of that, they're able to put more pressure on the ball as opposed to us flying by them and us putting pressure on the other team. I thought those freshmen played really well. You can't ask them to do more than they did."

The Bulldogs will continue their quest to clinch a spot in the MIAA tournament Saturday against Fort Hays State at Pershing Arena.



Joe Barker/Index
Junior forward Georgia Mueller attempts a layup against Washburn in Saturday's game. Mueller scored 33 points in the 'Dogs' loss to Mo. West.

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