

## CHAMPS | Bulldogs snag title in inaugural MIAA tournament, clinch appearance in NCAA's

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University of Central Missouri before taking home the tournament title.

The Bulldogs were able to prepare for Washburn all week, knowing their semifinal matchup after the conference regular season ended Oct. 28th. The Bulldogs and Lady Blues split the regular-season contests, with each team defending its own pitch.

Cannon said that because each team has played every other team in the conference twice, by this point both teams knew what to expect. Both teams are fairly offensive-minded, so the best defense probably was going to decide the contest.

Truman got the all-important first goal just 16 minutes into the game. Sophomore midfielder Theresa Bauler scored unassisted for her first career goal with the Bulldogs, and the defense took over from that point on.

"Overall, we did a very good job of shutting them down," Cannon said. "I think the girls were well-prepared. The girls also understood the significance of the game and what we needed to do to be successful. A lot of that was just shutting down their attack."

The Lady Blues were frustrated by the Bulldogs' stingy defense all afternoon, and although they came up with a few chances, they couldn't manage a single shot on goal as the 'Dogs held on for a 1-0 victory.

This put them in the finals against Southwest Baptist, which won against the host University of Central Missouri in penalty

kicks after the two teams played scoreless soccer during regulation and overtime.

The championship game was even more suspenseful than the semifinals for the Bulldogs. The previous two meetings between the schools this season were both 1-0 finals, meaning that the first goal in this game could easily be the last.

This proved to be true, as both teams were shut out until the waning minutes of the game.

"It was tough to get really good chances," Cannon said. "We would get some shots, but they'd be a little further out."

But then sophomore forward Isabel Gaeta gave the team a huge boost with her seventh goal of the season.

Sophomore forward Katie Reuck headed the ball toward the net. The Lady Blues' keeper, Jenny Persons, couldn't quite reach it, the ball hit the post and Gaeta fired it. A defender partially whiffed on a clearing attempt, allowing the ball to roll on the goal line. This time, Gaeta made no mistake putting the ball in the back of the net.

The goal would also be her fifth game-winner this year. Cannon said he was relieved to score in regulation.

"If you think that you're the better team, you don't want to get to penalty kicks," Cannon said. "You want to get a goal."

This was especially true with Southwest Baptist already having experienced the penalty kick situation the day before in defeating Central.



Photo submitted  
**Senior fullback Emily Newsham was as an All-MIAA first-team selection on Monday. She joined sophomore midfielder Katie Reuck on the first team.**

Junior keeper Emily Roark had another fine weekend for Truman, earning two more shutouts in the process. Cannon said Roark had been a little tentative for the past couple of weeks but was there when the team needed her.

"We talked about her taking command of her penalty area, and

I think she did a really good job of that this weekend," Cannon said.

The defense served as a backbone in both games, which was very important because the Bulldogs' offense was limited in the tournament.

"Our wins this weekend were because our defense was solid," Gaeta said.

## UNO | Opening round matchup with Mavericks will be a rematch of Sept. 8 meeting

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UNO, head coach Mike Cannon said he isn't focusing on the past or the future other than the immediate future.

"We're not even worried about Winona yet," Cannon said. "A tough task with UNO on Friday, and if we can get past them, another tough task on Sunday."

Klosterman said he isn't worrying about the past, either.

"We haven't seen Truman play since September, so we shouldn't prepare for something that we may not see," Klosterman said. "We've looked at the video tape from our game, but it hasn't adjusted our practice."

Both coaches are looking at one critical point in Friday's game: the first goal.

"Tournament time, getting the first goal's pretty important," Cannon said. "If we can get them playing from behind and get them to open up a little bit, maybe we can get a second goal. But we definitely need to keep their attack in check because they're definitely a potent offensive team."

Cannon said he expects the tournament games to be low-scoring because teams can't afford to take lots of risks in a single-elimination tournament.

"Most teams are going to be less inclined to take a lot of chances early on," Cannon said. "Offensively, we need to keep possession. We don't hold the ball well enough in the attacking third."

Neither coach is excited to play at Winona on an artificial

surface if they can muster a win. Both squads will have to adjust to this condition as well. This will make getting off to a good start even more important for both teams.

Sophomore forward Isabel Gaeta said she is excited to play in her first tournament game but expects a challenge.

"We know it's not going to be an easy game, and from here on out the games aren't going to be easy," Gaeta said. "We're just going to have to come out and play like we did this weekend."

If Truman wins, it'll be taking on Winona in the regional semifinals. Although the teams haven't played since each other 2005, Cannon said he thinks he knows what to expect from the Warriors.

"A little physical, not in a bad way," Cannon said. "They're comparable with some of the schools in our conference, like a Washburn or a Central — pretty attack-minded."

Cannon said he thinks his stronghold of tough defense could help the team get by that game if they make it that far.

"If we play good team defense, if we can keep them in their half a bit, keep possession of the ball and create good scoring opportunities, I like our chances," he said.

The Bulldogs have never made it past the second round of the tournament. But this team was slated to miss its own conference tournament, so exceeding expectations wouldn't be a first for the Bulldogs.

## VOLLEYBALL | Team readies for match with Emporia State in conference tournament

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regular season last weekend by sweeping the University of Missouri-Rolla 3-0 (30-15, 30-28, 30-21) and holding off the No. 17 Emporia State Hornets 3-2 (28-30, 30-25, 30-11, 27-30, 15-11). Truman finished the regular season with a record of 31-5 (12-1 MIAA). It is the fourth straight season that the Bulldogs have won at least 30 games.

On Friday against Emporia, the Bulldogs were able to grind out a win in a back-and-forth match that saw 28 ties and 14 lead changes. Junior outside hitter Eli Medina was one of five Bulldogs to reach double figures in kills with 17. Also reaching double figures in kills were Cherven with 16, Keck with 14, sophomore right side hitter Erin Hattey with 12 and junior outside hitter Susie Leshner with 10.

Truman outthit Emporia .324 to .188 on the match, in large part because of Cherven's .636 hitting percentage.

Truman kept the momentum going Saturday night by sweeping Rolla. The Bulldogs got off to a fast start in game one, and the match was never really in question.

Playing against a 3-31 Rolla team, the Bulldog regulars got some much needed rest, and some of the younger players stepped up to lead the 'Dogs to a sweep of the overmatched Miners, who

finished their first season of volleyball. Every Bulldog except Medina saw playing time.

Freshman right side hitter Courtney Larson had 14 kills. Junior middle hitter Dana Hanselmann also was in double figures with 10 kills. The Bulldogs outthit Rolla .297-.077.

Saturday night was a special night for one Bulldog senior. Truman honored its lone senior, setter Amanda Holliday, with a framed jersey during a pre-game ceremony before its sweep of Rolla. Holliday closed out her Bulldog career with 28 assists and 14 digs. She finishes her career in the top 10 all-time in assists.

Holliday said that even though this was senior night, there still are games left to be played for the 'Dogs.

"It is our last scheduled game at home, but we did well, so we are going to play more," Holliday said. "I'm just excited that we all played well, and people stepped up off the bench and played well."

Head coach Jason Skoch said he wanted to give everybody a chance to get in the last game and get them some game experience.

"A lot of the girls deserved the chance," Skoch said. "I wanted to give them the chance to play. ... It's unfortunate that some of them did not make the most of that opportunity."



Brian O'Shaughnessey/Index  
**Senior setter Amanda Holliday and the rest of the Bulldogs will play in semifinal action Friday.**

## MIAA | Volleyball seeks fifth consecutive MIAA tournament title

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"You can't judge a season by one game [or] one three-game tournament," Keck said. "I think it wouldn't take away from the things that we've done this season."

Keck said teamwork is key, but something else makes this team so good.

"We play with such a passion," Keck said. "Every school in our conference is so good, but I think what sets us apart is we just play with so much heart, and we refuse to lose."

Skoch said he will shorten his bench a bit and call on his top players to step up.

"You've got to go to who's going to help you, and who's going to get you the W," Skoch said. "And the players know it. [All season] we're trying to see who's our producers. ... Once we find out who that is, we ride them."

But Skoch said the team also will need help from some bench players to provide depth.

"We just need those two positions — the second outside hitter and the second right side," Skoch said. "If they step up their game, I think we can win it all."

## PLAYOFFS | Volleyball and women's soccer teams should provide plenty of excitement in playoff contests against rivals this weekend

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The Bulldog volleyball team already is the most entertaining team to watch at the University. The players live and die with each point and show so much emotion - even when dominating the opposition. They play like they care about the final outcome and seem genuinely happy when they win.

Add the fact that the team is playing for its fifth straight MIAA tournament title, and you have the makings for an exciting weekend.

The only thing lacking from the MIAA tournament is that the matches won't be for all the marbles. The four teams involved all have a legitimate shot at making the NCAA Tournament. They don't have to win to get in. It would help, what with the automatic bid involved, but it's not necessary for a team like Washburn, ranked No. 1 in the South Central Regional.

There is not as much urgency involved — unlike the women's soccer game Friday.

It's a shame I don't have piles of money so I can make the trek to Minnesota to watch the women's soccer team take on the University of Nebraska-Omaha in the opening round of the Div. II NCAA Tournament.

That game is like the perfect storm of sporting events. Not only is it a playoff game where the loser's season is over, but there is a rivalry involved. UNO and Truman have a history of meeting in the NCAA Tournament.

The history has been pretty one-sided,

with the Bulldogs getting sent packing in their last three trips to Big Dance.

I don't care if you are a soccer fan or not, the game is going to be exciting. Before the MIAA tournament, the women's head coach Mike Cannon talked about how important the first goal would be. He was right: The women tallied the first goal en route to back-to-back 1-0 wins to claim MIAA supremacy.

It doesn't take Nostradamus — or even Joestradamus — to tell you that the UNO-

Truman tilt will be just as tight. Both teams will be playing air-tight defense and trying to avoid mistakes. The last time the two teams met Sept. 8 on Truman's pitch, the purple and white prevailed 2-1.

I don't think the score will be that high Friday.

And, if I'm wrong, who cares? It's playoff time. Teams are playing for the ultimate prize. Seniors are playing to prolong their careers and leave as champions. Does it get any better than that? Not in my mind.

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