

Hockey goes unbeaten in first games

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

The bigger rink took three periods longer to get used to than the roller hockey team hoped it would. Fortunately for the team, it did make the necessary adjustments in the next six periods.

The Truman roller hockey club took to the rink for the first time this season last weekend for a slate of three games. The team finished with a 2-0-1 record.

The lone blemish on the record was a 5-5 tie against Missouri State University in the weekend's opening game. Head coach Joe

Nedelec said the team had trouble adapting to its first experience this season on a regulation floor. Previously the team has practiced only in the Student Recreation Center, which has a smaller-than-regulation playing surface.

"We struggled to play our game in the first game," Nedelec said. "But that's to be expected because of the difference in the floor. We go from that little one in the rec center to that huge floor, and so the guys have to adjust. Usually that takes about a period, period and a half, and the adjustment took a little longer."

Even though a tie is better

than a loss, — the Bulldogs still picked up a point in the standings — Nedelec said he thought the team had a chance to have a perfect weekend.

"They tied a team 5-5 that they probably should have beat," he said.

Once the team finally adjusted to the bigger surface and its new roster, it showed why it was a playoff team last season and has a good shot at making a return trip to nationals this year.

In the next two games, the Bulldogs outscored their opposition 21-1. They knocked off Southeast Missouri State Uni-

versity 11-1 and Western Kentucky University 10-0.

Junior goaltender John Pecher said the team came together and played how it was supposed to.

"As a team we just started to gel a lot better," Pecher said. "... It came together a lot better once we started doing what we practiced."

Nedelec said every member of the team scored with the exception of defenseman Neil Bales. Bales is a stay-at-home defenseman whose job is to protect his net and not attack the opposition's.

Nedelec said he is not looking for Bales to chip in on the offensive end of the floor.

"That's not his role," Nedelec said. "He's not there to score goals. He blocks shots and plays good, old-fashioned stand-up defense."

Nedelec said he was happy to see his team display a balanced offense. He said last year's squad relied too much on junior forward Drew Vandas and senior forward Dane Moody.

"I think last year our offense was pocketed too much," Nedelec said. "But with everybody contributing, I can't really ask for anything more."

Nedelec said he liked what he saw on the defensive side of the game. Even with the five-goal

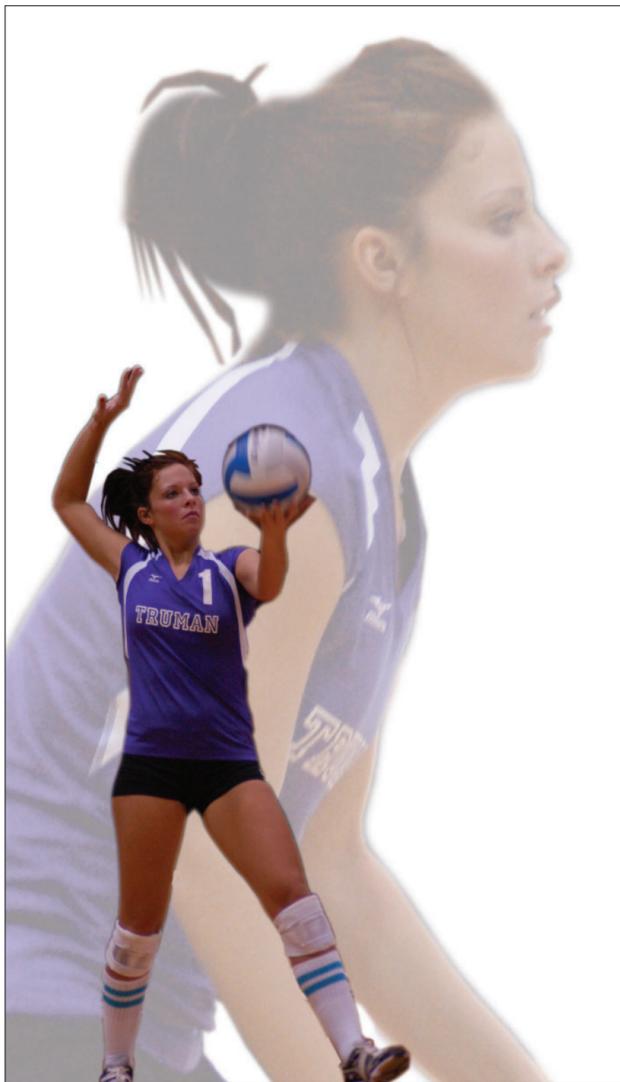
first game, the team allowed just six goals in three games. Nedelec said a big reason for the defense was Pecher's solid play in net.

"John Pecher, of course, stood on his head — as usual," Nedelec said.

Bales said that if the team wants to return to nationals, the defense will have to play even better.

"I don't think overall it was the best defense we could have played," Bales said. "As we see more competent teams we're definitely going to have to step it up."

The team has this weekend off before for another three-game set Nov. 17 to 18.



Photos by Mark Hardy design by Jackson Groves/Index

Senior setter posts career high

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN
Staff Reporter

Senior setter Amanda Holliday has been producing for the volleyball team all year. So it comes as no surprise that she has continued to step up late in the season.

Averaging 30.5 assists per match and 10.5 digs per match during the past four contests, Holliday has helped put the Bulldogs in a position to make a deep postseason run.

But it has been a long road for Holliday to get to where she is today. Playing defensive positions her first two seasons, Holliday did not step into her role as a setter until her junior year. Even then, it was tough competition to get on the court.

"Last year there was five setters," Holliday said. "It was different [because] there were so many of us. But I just had to work on getting good reps whenever I had a chance."

Holliday averaged 4.95 assists per game last season — the third highest total on the team. This year, Holliday has increased that average to 6.32.

"Amanda has been incredible," junior right side hitter Melissa Keck said. "She has been great the past three years. She comes to practice, [and] works so hard everyday. ... She was one of five setters last year, and then finally she's stepped up into the role of leader. And she has done an excellent job leading this team."

As the only senior on the team, Holliday is a natural fit for a leadership position. Head coach Jason Skoch said that with leadership and seniority comes added pressure. But Skoch said Holliday is capable of handling the pressure.

With the postseason underway, Skoch said Holliday will be counted on to continue to produce like she did last weekend.

On Friday, in a crucial match against No. 15 Emporia State University, Holliday led the team to a win with a career-high 43 assists. She also contributed 10 digs to the effort. Truman took the match 3-2. They will face the Hornets again Friday, Nov. 9 in the semifinals of the MIAA tournament. She followed Friday's performance with team-high 28 assists in Saturday's Senior Night match against the University of Missouri-Rolla.

"Everybody needs to up their level," Skoch said. "But there's certain people that, come this time, you've got to ride their performance. And [Holliday] is definitely one of them."

But Holliday said she tries not to get too worked up about playoff time. She said she thinks about each game individually, which helps her stay focused.

Holliday has higher aspirations than simply winning the MIAA tournament for what would be Truman's fifth straight year.

As Holliday comes toward the end of her Truman career, she said she has one thing on her mind: a National Championship. As the No. 5 team in the country, it definitely is a possibility.

"We could win the National Championship," Holliday said. "I don't think that's a goal that is set out of our reach. If we all play together and we all play well, I think it is something we can definitely accomplish — no doubt about it. I don't think that I am setting the standards too high."

Athlete of the Week

Amanda Holliday

Sport: Volleyball

Year: Senior

Position: Setter

Hometown: Papillion, Neb.

Amanda Holliday set a career-high with 43 assists Friday night against Emporia State. She also compiled 10 digs for a double-double. On Senior Night against the University of Missouri-Rolla, Holliday recorded a team-high 28 assists. The setter has 18 double-doubles this season and also leads the team in aces.

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