



Chris Waller/Index

Junior outside hitter Eli Medina returns a serve in a match earlier this fall. Medina led the Bulldogs to a 4-0 finish at the Lady Blues Classic last weekend by averaging 3.86 kills and 3.43 digs a game en route to being named tournament MVP.

'Dogs undefeated at Classic

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

Coming off a tough 3-2 loss to No. 5 Washburn University last week, the volleyball team felt like it had something to prove. A 4-0 weekend might have done that.

The Bulldogs put the disappointment of the Washburn loss behind them with four straight victories during the weekend at the Lady Blues Classic in Topeka, Kan. The victories ran the sixth-ranked Bulldogs record to 21-4 on the season (5-1 MIAA). This marks the 18th consecutive season in which the Bulldogs have had at least 20 wins.

Head coach Jason Skoch said the team responded well after the loss to Washburn.

"It was a very good weekend," Skoch said. "We've been struggling offensively, and our offensive numbers were really good this weekend."

The Bulldogs began their strong play Friday when they finished their streak of games against four straight ranked teams by defeating No. 21 West Texas A&M University 3-1 (23-30, -28, -21, -25). The win ran Truman's record

against teams in the Top 25 to 7-2. The Bulldogs also had victories in the tournament against Oklahoma Panhandle State University 3-0 (-25, -24, -16), Abilene Christian University (Texas) 3-1 (-20, 18-30, -23, 31-29) and Dallas Baptist University 3-1 (-27, -23, 29-31, -24).

The 'Dogs used a strong offensive attack throughout the tournament to outhit all four opponents. Junior outside hitter Eli Medina led the offensive attack with 54 kills throughout the classic. She had 20 kills in the win against Dallas Baptist. Medina also set the pace in the win against Abilene Christian, recording a double-double with her team-high 18 kills and 16 digs.

Medina and junior middle hitter Lisa Weber were named to the all-tournament team, with Medina garnering the MVP for the entire tournament. She averaged 3.86 kills and 3.43 digs per game. Weber had a hitting percentage of greater than .380 for all four matches.

Medina and Weber were not the only Bulldogs who stepped up their offensive game. In the victory against Dallas Baptist, senior setter Amanda Holliday recorded a double-double with 32 assists and 13

digs, and sophomore outside hitter Lauren Graybeal had 19 kills and a hitting percentage of .432.

The Bulldogs needed role players to step up because junior middle hitter Allie Cherven injured herself in Friday's victory against West Texas A&M. Cherven did not compete the rest of the weekend but is expected to play in the 'Dogs' game Thursday.

Because of other injuries, Truman also had to play freshman defensive specialist Casey Bruno, who was supposed to redshirt this season. Bruno saw action in all four Bulldog victories.

Skoch said the team responded well in the face of adversity.

"Allie was hurt and it seems that other players ride her to get the big points," Skoch said. "... In hindsight it was huge because our offensive numbers were the best they've been for a four game stretch and we did not have our No. 1 offensive weapon and our starting libero."

The Bulldogs were near the top in most statistical categories for the 10-team tournament. The 'Dogs hit .280 for the tournament, which was third overall. They also led the tournament in total kills

and kills per game. The Bulldogs were in the top three in blocks, digs and assists. Their 4-0 record was matched only by Washburn.

Overall, the players were happy about the level of play during the weekend.

"As a team we came out strong against West Texas," Weber said. "... We didn't have the best intensity all the time, but we got the job done. We beat all the teams and went 4-0, which was our goal."

Medina said it is important to overcome losses like the one to Washburn last week.

"It's always tough after a loss," Medina said. "Washburn is obviously a great team, but you have to get your confidence back up there and remember what you are capable of doing and what it's like to be back on top." I think that's what last week did for us."

The Bulldogs begin a three-day, three-city road trip tonight when they travel to Joplin to take on Missouri Southern State University. On Friday, Truman will take on Newman College (Kan.) before finishing up the trip with a MIAA match at Fort Hays State University (Kan.).

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Football: Running backs regaining health

The football team had its full repertoire of running backs available in its 55-31 victory against Southwest Baptist University on Saturday.

This marked the first time since the team's Sept. 8 game against Upper Iowa University that all Bulldog running backs were healthy enough to compete.

Sophomore Phil Kenney returned to action for the first time since suffering a hamstring injury against Upper Iowa. Kenney carried the ball six times and caught three passes against Southwest Baptist.

"We're starting to get Kenney close to 100 percent," head coach Shannon Currier said. "Hopefully, this weekend he'll be 100 percent. So it's good to get them all back into the swing of things."

Senior Jake Cunningham also was back on the field Saturday after sustaining an elbow injury in the fourth quarter of the 'Dogs' Sept. 29 win against Fort Hays State University. Cunningham had a season-best 48-yard run Saturday and also caught three passes.

With the injuries to Kenney and Cunningham, sophomore Marvin Bembry, the Bulldogs' No. 3 running back, has seen increased playing time. He has carried the ball 13 times for 83 yards in the Bulldogs' last two games.

Football: Wind affects field position at SBU

A 14-mile-per-hour wind was a factor during the football team's 55-31 victory against Southwest Baptist University on Saturday.

Field position varied by about 20 yards when a team played a quarter with the wind at its back as opposed to heading into the wind.

"Where the [wind] factor came into play was the special teams — the punts and the kicks," head coach Shannon Currier said. "Because when we were on the field, the wind wasn't a big factor. But once the ball got up in the air, the wind made a difference at that point."

A turning point in the game came in the third quarter, when the Bulldogs outscored the Bearcats 14-0 despite Southwest Baptist's having better starting field position by an average of 24 yards per possession.

"They had the wind in the third quarter, and we shut them out that quarter," sophomore linebacker Eric Sternberg said. "That was a really big [key] on that game. The wind was a factor, but I think the defense stepped up there and stopped them when they had the wind."

Volleyball: Team aspires to host regional

Despite last week's loss to No. 5 Washburn, the volleyball team still has hopes of hosting postseason play. For the Bulldogs to host an NCAA tournament regional game, the 'Dogs would need to finish at the top of the region.

The loss to Washburn likely will place the Bulldogs second in the region behind the Lady Blues. Truman probably will need a couple of losses from Washburn to take control of the top spot in the region.

The Bulldogs finished first in the South Central Region last year and hosted the three-day regional event with the University of Northern Alabama winning the event and advancing to the Elite Eight.

Women's Soccer: Bench provides offense

The Bulldogs' bench has continued to be a great offensive resource. Sophomore forward Jessica Wiegert did not start for the first time this season against Northwest Missouri State on Sunday. But she still managed to score her team-high 5th goal of the season, which also proved to be the game winner.

Reserve players have contributed at least one goal in all 5 Bulldog victories in the current 6-game unbeaten streak.

"By-committee works too," head coach Mike Cannon said. "It's harder for the other team to defend and scout."

Men take fourth at season-ending tournament



Jackson Groves/Index

Junior Scott Danielsen punches out of the rough during the Bulldog Invitational in September.

BY JOE BARKER
Sports Editor

The men's golf team saved its best for last this fall.

For the third and final time this fall, the men's golf team hit the links for tournament action. The men ended up posting their best finish of the fall, placing fourth out of 12 teams at the Fort Hays State Tournament that concluded Tuesday.

Chris Kovach was the low scorer for the Bulldogs. The freshman carded a 4-over, two-day score of 146.

The last time the men teed up was at the Bulldog Invitational on Sept. 17 and 18. The men finished eighth out of 15 teams at the tournament. Co-coach Jim Berrey said he decided to change his coaching strategy.

"My philosophy with these college guys has always been to not really tinker with their swings and tinker with how they putt and chip," Berrey said. "After this last tournament, I formed a new philosophy. We're just working a lot harder on fundamentals."

The golfers responded to the new

training style and posted their best two-day score of the fall. Berrey said that as a result of the new training, the team had better ball striking, better putting and lower scores.

"I was excited to see them take a step forward from where they finished in the last tournament," Berrey said. "We changed things we were doing practice-wise, and to be honest, it showed up a little quicker than I expected to."

For the second time in three tournaments, Kovach was the top 'Dog scorer. After finishing in a tie for 10th at the Bulldog Invitational, Kovach knocked a stroke off his two-day score and finished in a tie for eighth place.

"He is doing what we recruited him for," Berrey said. "... I could not even begin to tell you I am disappointed in him because he's really grabbing a hold of this pretty quickly for a freshman."

Kovach was the individual leader after Day 1 of the tournament. The freshman shot a 2-under 69 on the first day, giving him a one-

stroke lead over the University of Central Missouri's Justin Yoder.

Kovach said everything just seemed to click for him on the first day.

"I hit 16 out of 18 greens so that helps a lot," he said. "Plus, I made all my putts from inside 8 feet."

On the second day Kovach wasn't as lucky. The putts that had fallen the day before were not going in. He shot a second-day 77 to finish the tournament in a tie for eighth place.

"I think there was a lot of pressure for him leading the tournament and that showed up a little bit the second day," Berrey said.

Still, Kovach said he was pleased with the finish.

Junior Scott Danielsen narrowly missed finishing in the top 10 with a 6-over 148 to put in a tie for 11th place. Danielsen shot a 73 on the first day and followed that up with a team-best 75 on Day 2.

Sophomore Andy Herington had his best finish of the fall with an 8-over 150. Herington knocked four shots off

his score from the last tournament and earned his highest finish of the season with a tie for 16th place.

"I made some changes in my grip, and it helped me hit the ball straighter and keep me out of trouble more," Herington said.

The fall season came to a close when the team walked off the course Tuesday. Now the team will have time to gear up for the important spring season and attempt to qualify for regionals.

Berrey said he is more excited about the team's chances in the spring after the team's play at Fort Hays.

In the time off, the team will work on fixing flaws in swings, putting and getting stronger. Berrey said it will take a lot of work to get better, but he said he knows the team is not afraid of breaking a sweat.

"I don't have to tell these guys to work hard because they want to work hard at this point," Berrey said. "That's definitely exciting as a coach to see them want it as much as I do."



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