

Women move into MIAA tie with UCM

BY RYAN TURNER
Staff Reporter

The Bulldogs left Missouri this weekend in second place. They returned home in first.

Truman (10-4-1) earned a split in Kansas to move the team to the top spot in the MIAA. On Friday night, the 'Dogs disposed of the Emporia State University Hornets for the second time this season, this time by a score of 3-0. The Bulldogs fell Saturday night to Washburn University. After earning a lead, they failed to keep it, losing 2-1.

The Bulldogs were in control for the majority of the game at Emporia.

"We had the ball for a good portion of the time," head coach Mike Cannon said.

Cannon said the team came out strong immediately Friday night, seeming very fired up about playing.

"It was a beautiful night to play soccer, so sometimes that gets you going a bit," Cannon said.

The Bulldogs' defense was the key again, even though Emporia is a weaker team still looking for its first win of the season. The Hornets only had two shots during the first half, neither of which were on goal.

"We talked a lot, and every 50-50 ball that came out, we

were going to win," junior full-back Kim Wolff said.

Cannon also said the communication on defense was of great importance, especially in the backfield.

"I think defensively that it's super important back there, because one mistake can cost you a goal," Cannon said.

After a few offensive opportunities, primarily Truman's, the Bulldogs got the all-important first goal. In the 33rd minute, senior midfielder Rachael Schmidt carried the ball up the field while sophomore forward Isabel Gaeta took off ahead of her. Schmidt's pass split the defenders and left Gaeta to beat just the keeper. She fired it inside the right post to make it 1-0 Truman.

"It was a great ball," Gaeta said of Schmidt's pass. "It was perfect."

Truman took the 1-0 lead into halftime but padded the lead when it returned to the pitch. Less than nine minutes into the second half, the Bulldogs registered their second tally. The ball bounced out of Emporia's box, coming right to Wolff. She one-timed it from about 30 yards out and put it in the back of the net for a 2-0 lead.

Twenty minutes later, the Bulldogs added one last insurance goal from a familiar source. Sophomore midfielder Kristin

Haluszczak beat a defender on the outside left and was able to get the ball to the far post. Gaeta was in perfect position and tapped it in. The goal placed Gaeta in a tie for the team's goal scoring lead, and gave the 'Dogs a 3-0 lead with just 15 minutes left to play.

Less than a minute later, Cannon removed starting goalkeeper junior Emily Roark and replaced her with the backup, sophomore Denise Childress. With the game well in hand, Cannon decided to rest his keeper for the tougher opponent, Washburn, that Truman would face the following evening.

Emporia was outshot 29-4 and placed just one shot on net in the 3-0 loss to the Bulldogs.

Truman had managed to earn a sweep of its two Kansas opponents at home, but the 'Dogs would not be so lucky against Washburn away from Kirksville.

The Bulldogs jumped to an early lead with sophomore midfielder Katie Reuck putting the team on the board in the 28th minute. Reuck received a pass from sophomore forward and team points leader Jessica Wiegert and fired a shot from 15 yards out to make it 1-0.

The lead would be short-lived, though. The Lady Blues tied it up just five minutes



Jackson Groves/Index
Freshman defender Erin Buning blocks a kick by a Missouri Western forward during a game last month. The women moved into a tie with Central Missouri for first in the MIAA.

later on a corner kick. Cannon said it was an easy header that shouldn't have been allowed but that occasionally those goals happen.

"I think [we needed] a little bit better communication and marking," Wolff said. "We just need to stick with our marks a little bit better."

The Bulldogs were outshot in the first half 7-3, but the score remained tied. The momentum from the tying goal carried into the second half, when the Lady Blues struck again less than three minutes into the half. Another defensive breakdown was the culprit.

Roark made an initial save,

but she couldn't push the ball far enough to the side to prevent a quick pass and tap-in by Washburn, which allowed the team to take the lead 2-1. The Lady Blues held onto the lead and managed to take three points from the Bulldogs. This pulled Washburn to within four points in the MIAA standings of Truman.



Jackson Groves/Index
Freshman forward Danielle Hill shields the ball from a Missouri Western defender during a game last month. The 'Dogs currently are sixth in the NCAA regional rankings largely because of their 7-2-1 MIAA record.

Key conference games await team

BY RYAN TURNER
Staff Reporter

The Bulldogs will try to do something Friday they have not done since Oct. 1, 2005: score a goal against Southwest Baptist University.

The last four times the teams met, the Bulldogs took two scoreless ties and two shutout losses against Bearcats.

"When we played them last time, I thought we had a really good chance of beating them," sophomore midfielder Katie Reuck said. "So I think it would be really great if we can get a goal or two early and get up at halftime."

Head coach Mike Cannon said the Bulldogs controlled the play in the first meeting of the season but that they just couldn't score. For now, the team is focusing just on SBU for Friday and not concentrating on its game Saturday against Missouri Southern State University.

"We can't look beyond that game," Cannon said. "If we get the first goal, that would be really big because they're really good defensively. Keeping them off the board is important."

The team has been preparing more for defense this week. Two defensive lapses cost them a pair of goals and the game at Washburn University on Saturday.

"We need to make sure that we mark up and get behind the ball," Reuck said. "We have to follow the mark all the way through."

Reuck said the team is primarily focusing on stepping up on defense, and allowing easy scoring opportunities.

"Defensively, we really worked on closing in on the play a lot quicker, and getting more than one person on the ball," Reuck said.

In order to win, the Bulldogs need to control the match like they did against the Bearcats the first time around. Cannon said they easily could've won the first meeting had the first goal not snuck through.

"We need to keep the ball in our possession most of the time," Reuck said. "When we have corners and set pieces, we need to be much more aggressive in the box."

The Bulldogs need to win this weekend in order to keep pace with the University of Central Missouri's squad. The Jennies will take on Emporia State University and Washburn (7-5-4). Washburn could be a tough game, but Emporia hasn't won yet this season.

Southwest Baptist might present a challenge for the Bulldogs with their high-paced defense, but junior fullback Kim Wolff said she thinks they can win if they take care of business.

"I think we know what needs to be done," Wolff said. "[Southwest Baptist is] a pretty quick team so we just need to be strong and limit their opportunities of scoring."

Wolff said the team needs to not allow scoring chances to slip away.

"I think we just need to take advantage of the opportunities when we do have shots and just put them away when we have the chance," Wolff said.

The Bulldogs will challenge Missouri Southern on Saturday. The Bulldogs won the first meeting of the year 2-1 in Joplin, but the 'Dogs trailed for most of the game before winning it late.

Cannon said he would prefer to score an early goal against Southern and not have to worry about coming from behind again. The Lions also are tough defensively so a score early could prove vital.

With only four conference games remaining and this weekend being the last two at home for the Bulldogs, wins are crucial. The 'Dogs face off in their final conference game at Central Missouri, a team they managed to tie at home. The game could decide the conference title, and the Bulldogs would help their conference chances with two wins this weekend.

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