

Women's soccer claims two conference victories

BY RYAN TURNER
Staff Reporter

The Bulldogs' slumbering offense woke up this weekend, and just in time.

Truman women's soccer (6-3) played host to defending MIAA champs No. 15 Washburn University last Friday afternoon. Plagued for most of the season by slow starts, especially recently, the Bulldogs settled in quickly against the Lady Blues.

The Bulldogs took control of the important contest early on Friday, and maintained it throughout the entire weekend. They swept the two conference games, winning with a 2-0 decision over Washburn and picked up a lopsided win by beating Emporia State 7-0 on Saturday.

The Bulldog's offense was the key focus heading into the season. But even with a new attack-minded strategy in place, the 'Dogs have had their struggles. They only scored 10 goals in their first seven games. Head coach Mike Cannon said coming into this weeks games that this number needed to be closer to two goals per game.

"[We worked on] taking players on and getting our shots off," Cannon said. "That whole mindset was what we worked on all last week."

Cannon kept the teams formation and lineups primar-

ily the same, because they had shown flashes of success earlier in the season.

"I guess we had to play our same game that we've been playing the last couple of weeks. It was kind of the same as beating [the University of Nebraska-Omaha] because they play the same formation," said sophomore forward Jessica Wiegert.

This paid dividends Friday against the Lady Blues. Cannon said the game was pretty even for the first 10 or 15 minutes, but that after that, the Bulldogs really started to possess the ball well.

This trend continued until the 36th minute when freshman forward Danielle Hill received a pass from sophomore midfielder Isabel Gaeta and fired a close range shot for her first goal of the season and her career.

The Bulldogs didn't let up on the pressure after the goal. A few minutes later, senior fullback Emily Newsham showed off the mindset that her coach wanted her to have. She dribbled the ball up field, and let a rip on a long shot, which surprised the keeper and in turn gave the Bulldogs a surprising 2-0 lead over the high-ranked Lady Blues.

"Having the drive to play for each other helped us beat Washburn," Gaeta said.

The Bulldogs would have

to withstand some second-half pressure from Washburn. Luckily, the fullbacks and junior goalkeeper Emily Roark were up to the challenge.

"She's been very consistent, which is great," said Cannon, about Roark.

The Bulldogs defense had a difficult task in keeping the Washburn attack at bay, but overall, the Lady Blues couldn't break through.

"Our defense did a really good job of staying with their forwards because we only had three defenders for three forwards," Wiegert said.

The Bulldog's offensive success would carry over to their next game against Emporia State University. The 'Dogs needed far less time to make a statement in the weekend's second contest.

Truman took control, possessing the ball early, and just over seven minutes into the match, sophomore midfielder Katie Reuck notched her third goal of the year to give the Bulldogs a 1-0 lead.

This would be the only tally that Truman would need to secure the victory, but they poured it on to put the game out of reach. Wiegert scored a pair of unassisted goals within four minutes of each other to give the Bulldogs a healthy lead of 3-0 in just the 13th minute.

"We scored three goals in

maybe the first twelve or thirteen minutes, so it was over pretty quickly," Cannon said. "That was something we talked about last week was getting off to a better start, not giving up a goal in the first half, and maybe creating one for ourselves."

The Bulldogs would get a late first half tally from sophomore forward Lisa Nadeau to really secure the game before the second half even began. Cannon pulled starting keeper Roark, and replaced her with backup keeper, sophomore Denise Childress.

The main purpose of this move was to give Roark a rest in a game that she had not been tested much, but it also served as a good chance to get Childress some playing time.

"Denise has been working really hard, and she had yet to play in a varsity game. So I think she had the right to get in there," Cannon said.

Childress did have to make one challenging save after entering the game. She punched a high shot over the cross bar late in the second half to maintain the shutout.

Although had it gone in, it wouldn't have factored much in the decision. However, Cannon said he stressed the importance of goal differential as a tiebreaker and that a goal in September could mean the difference between playing or not in November.



Jason Williams/Index
Junior midfielder Brigitte Pohren dribbles the ball in a game last weekend. The women are 6-3-0 on the season.

'Dogs offense comes alive during weekend stretch

BY RYAN TURNER
Staff Reporter

The Bulldog women's soccer team scored 10 goals in its first seven games.

It nearly equaled that in just two matches this weekend with nine goals.

Some of the scoring came from expected sources like sophomore forward Jessica Wiegert (two goals and one assist) and junior forward Katelyn Talcott (one goal and one assist).

The Bulldogs got a boost from their bench and less-experienced players. Freshman forward Danielle Hill opened the weekend's scoring against No.

15 Washburn University.

"I couldn't believe that the ball went to the back of the net," Hill said. "It felt good once I realized it — it took me to the end of the game — that I had scored my first college goal."

Hill became the first freshman to score a goal for the Bulldogs this season, but they would get another less than 24 hours later when freshman fullback Erin Buning scored the first goal of her career as well.

Buning's goal would be the second in two days from a defender. Senior back Emily Newsham had scored the previous day against Washburn.

"I've never played on a team

where the defenders were so active in the offense," Hill said. "So I think that our best defense this weekend was our defenders being so offensive."

Truman also did a good job maintaining its style of play against Emporia. The Bulldogs dictated the action early, which helped guide them to a large lead late in the first half.

"Just playing our game and not going down to their level," Wiegert said. "And just keeping up the intensity and keep scoring."

Head coach Mike Cannon said he doesn't want to run up the score on anyone, but at the same time, he wasn't going to tell his

players not to try to score goals.

"Some people will leave their starters in longer so they can get stats and just pound the other team," Cannon said. "But our kids coming off the bench are very good players as well. Some of those kids could be starting for us."

Cannon used all 23 players who dressed for the Emporia game. With back-to-back games, he said it was good to rest some of the starters. He also wanted to take advantage of the big lead and get some playing time for his reserves.

"It gets them confidence, and it gives [the coaches] confidence as well," Cannon said.

The Bulldogs' offensive surge will need to continue this weekend as they host conference leader No. 8 University of Central Missouri (No. 1 in the central region) Friday afternoon. The Jennies have outscored conference opponents 11-1 so far this season and 17-6 overall.

Cannon said part of the appeal of resting starters was playing to the team's schedule. Once the Bulldogs knew that the Emporia State game was in hand, they could focus on the upcoming game while still maintaining intensity on the field with their reserves, he said.

Part of the ball control success was corner kicks. Truman won

nearly every corner in the air that it took against Emporia. This was not the case earlier in the year.

"Any corners we want to take advantage of as much as possible," Wiegert said.

Wiegert said the Bulldogs are beginning to gel. Reserves and other freshmen like Hill are finding their roles. A scoring surge from junior forward Katelyn Talcott should continue into next weekend as she gains more comfort at the position with every game.

If the Bulldogs can continue their recent success, they should be able to avoid being shut out at home by the Jennies, as in last year's 1-0 defeat.

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