

Men shut out Wash U 2-0

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN
Staff Reporter

As the rain beat down on Francis Field in St. Louis, the men's soccer team found motivation in something that was said — not by head coach Duke Cochran or a team member — but rather a rival player.

"As we were lining up to go out before the first half, we heard one of their players say, 'No shots all game,' and it kind of got the team going," sophomore defender Ben Green said.

The Bulldogs came out fired-up and hammered home a goal for a 1-0 lead in just the fourth minute of play. Freshman midfielder Scott Biggerstaff delivered the goal from about five yards out off of senior midfielder Gavin Kempe's assist.

Setting the pace early was key in the 2-0 Bulldog victory against a Washington University team that had not allowed a goal all year.

"We wanted to come at them, and we scored in the first 10 minutes," Cochran said. "So we showed them that we came to play."

After jumping out early, Truman (4-2) continued to pressure the Bears and scored another first-half goal that got called back because of an offside penalty.

"That first goal was huge," Kempe said. "Once we got up 1-0, we just kept going at them."

Kempe was a big reason the Bulldogs won Saturday. He put an unassisted header into the right side of the goal to seal the victory in the eighty-fourth minute. The game was huge for Kempe, whom

Cochran said had been struggling coming into the contest.

"It was a big day for him because I think he has been playing with a little bit of a lack of confidence for whatever reason," Cochran said. "Players come and go in stages, and he's been lacking a little bit of that confidence. I think that should be a good thing for him to get an assist and a goal and maybe get that confidence back to where it was before."

The Bulldogs only outshot Wash. U. 11-10 but took advantage of their opportunities. After three straight shutouts, the team is starting to believe that anything is possible.

"I think everybody just stepped up," Green said. "As coach has been saying, we've been playing really good team defense. It's not our keeper, not our defense, not midfield — everybody is contributing."

And it's not only the defense that is getting production from all angles. The team's offensive help has come from many different Bulldog players. A total of five players have scored the seven goals so far this season. Cochran said this offensive diversity is an advantage for this particular Bulldog team.

"Our two wide players contributed for goals [Saturday]," Cochran said. "... You want your forwards scoring goals, but at the same time, when you have a number of guys that can score, it makes us dangerous. It's not like you can shut one guy down and we don't score."

With a talented freshman goalie in Kyle Talbot, a solid defense



Jackson Groves/Index
Freshman forward Robbie Narrow goes for a header in a Sept. 2 game against Northeastern State University (Okla.).

and a plethora of offensive weapons, the team looks to make a run this year in postseason play. Earlier this season, Truman played No. 3 Northern Kentucky University 0-0 for 83 minutes of the game, proving they can compete with top schools. The Bulldogs lost that game 1-0 on a penalty kick but have won three of four games since the loss.

Still, Cochran said it's too early to tell how the season will play out.

"Well, it's the game of soccer, so the next game will always tell you," Cochran said. "Unfortunately the best team doesn't always win. I think [with] the potential this team

has, ... it could be one of the top teams in the country. ... If we continue to get shutouts and our attack continues to get better then, yeah, I think we are one of the top teams in the country, top 20 for sure."

At just six games into this season, it's hard to determine how this team stacks up right now. But Kempe said the future of Bulldog soccer is looking bright.

"Yeah, we're young," Kempe said. "But we have some amazing talent. ... If we play our game, I don't think anybody can beat us."

The Bulldogs will look to improve on their three-game winning streak Saturday at Upper Iowa University.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Football: Injuries hit 'Dogs in home opener

A few Bulldogs will nurse injuries this week as the football team prepares for its conference opener.

Head coach Shannon Currier said junior defensive back Derek Rodriguez is nursing an MCL strain and is doubtful for Saturday's game at the University of Central Missouri. Sophomore Phil Kenney, the team's No. 2 running back, has a strained hamstring, and Currier said Kenney is questionable for this weekend.

Rodriguez and Kenney suffered their injuries in the Bulldogs' 55-31 victory against Upper Iowa University last Saturday.

Sophomore linebacker Eric Sternberg also is nursing a sore hamstring. Currier said he is probable for Saturday. Sternberg had 41 total tackles in 2006 but has not played in either Bulldog victory this season because of the injury.

Football: Packed house provides motivation

Night football achieved its desired effect.

Last Saturday night, the Bulldog football team competed under the lights at Stokes Stadium for the first time since 1995. 4,300 fans — the most to attend a Bulldog football game since 1997 — were on hand for the home opener and watched the 'Dogs claim a 55-31 victory against Upper Iowa University.

After the game players said that the atmosphere at Stokes gave them extra momentum.

"We were so pumped," senior defensive back Jesse Cooper said. "... It [was] the most exciting it's ever been here at Stokes. It definitely gave us an advantage and confidence."

Volleyball: Schedule loaded with ranked teams

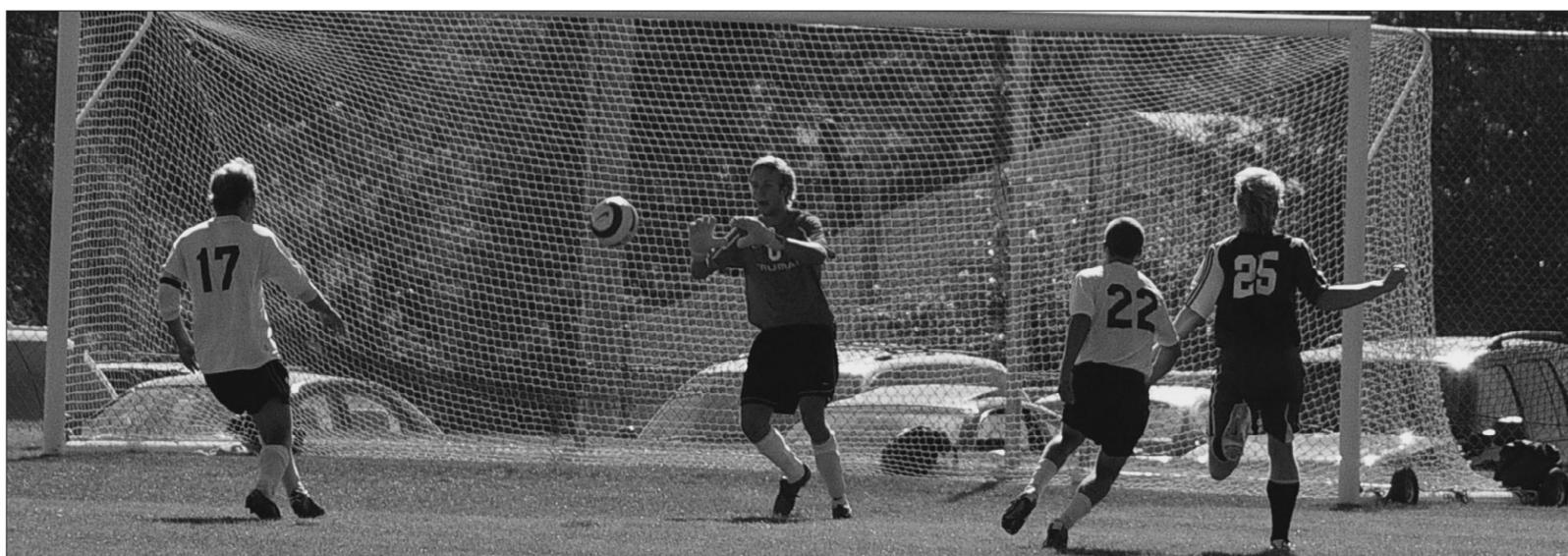
The Bulldog volleyball team will play a brutal schedule with two thirds of their matches coming against ranked teams.

Head coach Jason Skoch said his team does not pay attention to the rankings because of the way Div. II is set up.

"The national rankings truly do not have one bit of effect on how we go to the playoffs," Skoch said. "Because the top eight teams in our region make the playoffs, the rankings do not have an effect on that."

Women's Soccer: Roark earns recognition

Junior goalkeeper Emily Roark was the key to the game during the women's soccer team's win against the University of Nebraska-Omaha on Saturday. She picked up the win while making four saves, all of which came in the second half. Roark was aggressive, coming out to cut off angles, and it paid off for her. Roark was named defender of the week for the MIAA. She will look to pick up her fourth win this Friday at Missouri Southern University.



Jackson Groves/Index
Freshman goalie Kyle Talbot prepares to make a save during the August 31 game against Northeastern State University (Okla.). Talbot won the starting job during summer practice, beating out junior Chris Kirkweg, who started 12 contests for the Bulldogs last fall. Talbot is 4-2-0 this season for the purple and white.

Freshman goalkeeper playing crucial role

Talbot earns third straight shutout in Bulldogs 2-0 win against Wash. University

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN
Staff Reporter

Make no mistake about it — freshman goalie Kyle Talbot earned his starting role on the Bulldog soccer team.

Talbot took on fellow freshman Taylor Hyndman and last year's starter, junior Chris Kirkweg, in competition for the starting spot. Head coach Duke Cochran said he brought in the two freshman goalies to create competition in training. He said he thinks competition brings the best out of players. Talbot agrees.

"I'm playing now better than I was before because Taylor Hyndman was pushing me so hard," Talbot said. "He's a great keeper."

Cochran said it was never a tough decision to bench Kirkweg in favor of the younger, more gifted freshman. Kirkweg eventually quit the team.

"It's talent that goes first," Cochran said. "And whoever has earned the spot [will play]. ... If we are going to be a top program, you've got to have the best players on the field."

After a shaky start, giving up six goals in the first three games, Talbot has turned things around.

He has a 1.06 goals against average and a 4-2 record in net this year. Many Bulldog players are starting to take note of the athletic ability the freshman from Ames, Iowa, displays.

"I think our defense is one of the best defenses I've ever played with," senior midfielder Gavin Kempe said. "But he's a phenomenal keeper, especially as a freshman talent. I've played with some great goalies, ... but he has the potential

to be amazing, an All-American."

With a lanky, 6-foot-1 frame, Talbot has the build to go along with his talent, something Kirkweg did not possess at 5-foot-10. But Talbot has proven to have much more than just natural gifts.

The resiliency he showed after the game against Rockhurst University may be the biggest indication to Talbot's mentality. He gave up four goals in a 5-1 rout before being pulled in the second half. Instead of feeling defeated, Talbot performed better. In three games since the Rockhurst thrashing, he has not allowed a goal.

As well as Talbot has performed, Cochran is reluctant to sing his praises just yet.

"A goalkeeper should be vocal," Cochran said. "He's still playing like a freshman. ... He's still a little quiet."

An 18-year-old usually isn't expected to lead a Div. II team toward playoff success. But for Talbot, there has been little

time to adjust. Team expectations and a high-pressure position will force Talbot to become a leader now.

Sophomore defender Ben Green said Talbot might be well on his way to becoming the leader the team needs.

"It doesn't really matter about [his age]," Green said. "When you're out on the field, everybody is equal. ... He's still looking to people for guidance, and upperclassmen are helping him out as much as they can, but he's doing great back there for us. We just try to give him confidence as we go."

Talbot's confidence should continue to grow from an already high level, and even after three straight shutouts, he is far from satisfied.

Talbot set a preseason target to achieve a goals against average of 0.5, a mark that would approach the single season record of 0.44 set by alumnus Nate Gibson in 2003. "The 0.5 goal average, I'm still

shooting for," Talbot said. "It's going to be tough, but I think I can bounce back and get it."

The true test may be yet to come for the young goalie, as the Bulldogs will face some very stiff competition toward the end of the season. Excluding a 1-5 Iowa Wesleyan College team, Truman's October opponents are a combined 24-7-2 this season.

Thus, if the team is to continue their recent success, Talbot has to keep on improving. But the freshman who set an all-time shutout record at Ames High School is becoming more and more comfortable with his role on the team.

"At first, I thought it'd be difficult stepping in and trying to lead from the back because it's kind of an important spot," Talbot said. "And if you make a mistake, it's magnified. But [the guys] have been really good, and they're great defenders, so it has been pretty easy to make the adjustment."

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