

# 'Dogs drop doubleheader to Quincy



Above: Members of the softball team talk strategy during a game earlier this season. Below: Junior Erica LaCombe swings during a game this season. LaCombe has started 38 games this season.

## Softball loses five of last six, record now stands at 11-29

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

The softball team has come close, but it has not been enough.

The Bulldog dropped two close games yesterday in a doubleheader against Quincy University. They lost the first game 5-3 and the second 1-0. Last Sunday, the Bulldogs lost two games to the University of Nebraska-Omaha, 5-3 and 9-1. The Bulldogs did split a doubleheader with Northwest Missouri State University last Friday, winning the first game 6-2 and losing the last game 12-11. The team's overall record is 11-29 and 3-11 in the MIAA.

In Game 1 against Quincy, the Bulldogs drew first blood when they pushed a run across the plate in the third inning on a sacrifice fly from junior catcher Erica LaCombe. The lead did not last long. Junior Richelle Van Gennip took the mound for the Bulldogs and was solid for the first two innings, giving up only three hits and a hit-by-pitch.

But things started to fall apart in the third inning. A single was quickly followed by a two-run home run, and the Hawks took a lead they did not relinquish. Van Gennip pitched into the fourth inning and gave up three more runs before she was relieved by freshman Ashley Rotkovich.

The second game was more of a pitcher's duel. Senior Stephanie Johnson scattered six hits and one run across the six innings she pitched. The Bulldogs managed five hits and a walk in the game but were unable

to string enough of them together to score a run.

Van Gennip's rocky start was out of line with the starts she has had in recent games. After a rough baptism-by-fire in the early goings of the season, van Gennip has emerged as the staff ace for the Bulldogs.

"[Van Gennip] has really stepped it up quite a bit," head coach Erin Brown said. "She's done a great job hitting her spots, and her pitches are really moving. She is competing with some of the best teams, from nationally-ranked teams to the best teams in our conference. ... She's got some pitches that have been effective against teams in our conference."

Van Gennip tossed a complete-game against Northwest, allowing only two unearned runs. She now leads the team with a 3.46 ERA. Truman is close to the bottom of the conference in ERA (4.07) because of the higher ERAs from the other starters.

The Bulldog offense, on the other hand, has made itself much more potent recently. In their last four games, the Bulldogs scored 21 runs. In the four games before that, Truman managed a total of three runs.

Part of that offensive outburst happened when the Bulldogs played Northwest. Truman hit five home runs in the doubleheader, and several Bulldogs had outstanding performances at the plate. Senior left fielder Lindsey Rock was 5-for-6 during the doubleheader with a home

run. Freshman Mary Manley had one of those home runs.

"I think we were really just tuned into the pitching," Manley said. "We were all really focused on hitting with a positive attitude. We were just ready to play, and it showed with all of the home runs."

Increased production from the leadoff spot has been a positive for the Bulldogs. Senior outfielder Dani Mayer moved to the leadoff spot April 7 from deeper in the order. Before the doubleheader against Northwest, she was 3-for-21 in the leadoff spot, but since those games, Mayer is 9-for-22, including a three-run home run against Northwest.

"I guess the first couple of games [were] a little difficult [batting leadoff], but I used to do that all throughout high school," Mayer said. "I just asked coach [Brown] if I could do it because I figured that it would probably be a better place for me this season. I still have opportunities to hit people

in like I did last year when I was hitting in a three or four spot."

The Bulldogs play a home doubleheader at 1 p.m. tomorrow against Pittsburg State University. The Bulldogs will play another doubleheader at home starting at 1 p.m. Saturday against Missouri Southern State University.

The last game of the regular season will be Tuesday at 2 p.m. at home against Lincoln University.

"[Van Gennip] has really stepped up quite a bit. She's done a great job hitting her spots, and her pitches are really moving."

Erin Brown  
Head coach

# Men's, women's tennis fall to Rockhurst University

BY KRISTA CRIDER  
Staff Reporter

The men's and women's tennis teams faced stiff competition Tuesday against Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Mo. Head coach Pete Kendall said the matches provided the Bulldogs the motivation they can use going into the MIAA Tournament this weekend.

Both the men and women lost their last regular season match of the spring leaving the women with a 9-4 record this spring and the men at 5-5. Rockhurst shut out the men 9-0 and the women lost 6-3.

"It was good to have a tough match for each team before the weekend coming up, so they could have good competition, because that never hurts you," Kendall said. "We would have liked to play a little better, but we can't do much about that now, so we'll just plan on playing better this weekend."

Freshman Eric McCollough missed the match because of sickness, and Kendall said the lineup change affected the team negatively. McCollough has won seven of nine singles matches he has played this spring in either the four or five spot.

"The men played basically as ex-

pected," Kendall said. "Our lineup was a little different, so that obviously affected it, but Rockhurst is a very good team. On the women's side, we didn't play very well in doubles, and there were players that didn't play up to their, what I consider normal, so that was probably the difference in the match."

Sophomore Amy Ochs said the Rockhurst doubles teams were incredibly disciplined in the matches.

"They were really trained in doubles," Ochs said. "They were much more trained than any of us are — you could just tell by their different strategies. And they were really good at the net, which is a big advantage in tennis. They poached a ton and just put shots away, and that really helped their doubles a lot."

The three winning matches for the women came from freshman Ellen Russell (3-6, 3-2) at No. 4 singles when her opponent retired, freshman Dagmar Velez (6-3, 6-2) at No. 5 singles and sophomore Kelsey Kuykendall (6-0, 6-2) at No. 6 singles. No. 4 singles player sophomore Colin Boswell gave the best showing for the men. He lost his first set 6-2 and almost took the second, but fell 7-6.

The men are ranked fourth in the conference going into the April 24

to 25 MIAA Tournament. Junior Peter Bracha, No. 1 singles player, said the team is confident about winning the first round of the tournament but unsure what to expect after that. He said the team would have to play its best tennis and then come to win the tournament.

"To beat the No. 1 seed [Washburn University], everyone is going to have to play their best match, and we are going to have to go out there and play with a lot of energy, a lot of focus," Bracha said. "I think we are hoping for a little bit of a Cinderella story, but I think if we go in there thinking that we can beat them, maybe a miracle will happen."

The women's seed will not be determined until tomorrow night's coaches' meeting. The Bulldogs are in a three-way tie for second place with Northwest Missouri State University and the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The coaches will randomly draw numbers or flip a coin to determine the seeds. Kendall said the MIAA has resorted to this method multiple times because it is the only way to arrive at a fair outcome without conflict.

"It's the normal procedure," Kendall said. "There's no easier way to do it. You can't rule on other records or other meets because maybe you



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Freshman Ellen Russell picked up a victory against Rockhurst on Tuesday. The 6-3 victory against Rockhurst ended the regular season.

haven't played the same people outside the conference."

Washburn University will have the No. 1 seed on the women's side as well. Kendall said the seed the women receive is not going to be a very important factor in how the tournament plays out for them.

"No matter how the draw goes, we have defeated any of the teams we would be playing [the first round]," Kendall said. "Obviously we would be expecting to win that match, and then you get it down to four teams

and go from there."

Kendall said no matter how much some teams predict what is going to happen in the tournament, there is no way to know for sure until it's over.

"It all comes down to who is playing their best on what day, what teams as a whole team have all of the positions playing well," Kendall said. "Every team has good days and some bad days, and you have to plan for having your best days when it all comes down to the tournament, so that's all we can do."

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