

Women fall to Washburn in semis

BY JULIE WILLIAMS
For the Index

Sometimes it's the ghost of games past that really ups the ante.

After a commanding 5-1 victory against Emporia State University on Friday, the women's tennis team bowed out in the semifinals of the MIAA Tournament in Kansas City, Mo., last weekend to a Northwest Missouri State University team that came out firing. The 'Dogs beat the Bearcats 5-4 April 14, but Northwest captured all three doubles matches Saturday before ending the match with singles wins in the No. 3 and No. 4 spots.

"I think that Northwest played their best tennis of the year on the weekend, obviously since they won the conference tournament, and they were highly motivated after they lost to us because I'm sure they didn't expect to lose to us when they came over here before," head coach Pete Kendall said.

Against Emporia, Truman gathered steam after doubles wins in the No. 2 and No. 3 spots. Senior Courtney Walther, sophomore Kelsey Kuykendall and freshman Ellen Russell added singles victories to secure the win.

"The thing about that match is that we had not played very well against them the first time, so I think we were pretty motivated," Kendall said.

Truman received the No. 3 seed following a draw by coaches during the pre-tournament meeting. The

University of Nebraska-Omaha drew the No. 4 seed and Northwest received a No. 2 seed. Northwest beat top-seeded Washburn University 5-3 to win the conference championship.

Kendall said the draw did not affect Truman, which only wanted to avoid a No. 4 seed that would pit them against conference favorite Washburn in the semi-finals.

"We beat Emporia badly, they beat [Fort Hays State University], of course, badly," Kendall said. "If it had been reverse it would have been the same thing. We just didn't want to be No. 4."

Official word on selections for the national tournament have not yet been announced, but Kendall said there is almost no chance Truman will receive a bid. Winning conference is an automatic qualifier to the national tournament, so Northwest will replace one of the teams currently ranked in the top eight in the region.

With the likelihood that the season is over, Russell (24-5) has pinpointed areas of her game to work on before next season.

"I think that I kind of struggle with playing the best I can and still losing — that is kind of hard for me to handle," she said.

In her first conference appearance, Russell helped contribute a doubles win off a tiebreaker and also a singles victory against Emporia. Russell and partner sophomore Amy Ochs had won doubles 9-7 against Northwest on April 14 but

lost 8-6 at conference.

"All season coach has been emphasizing that doubles is pretty important to win two doubles or three doubles to get your team prepared for singles," Russell said. "We just couldn't pull it out. They were playing very, very well, and I think we played well. They just had a couple extra lucky hits and a couple points on mistakes that we made."

After amassing a 15-9 record at the No. 1 doubles spot with partner Walther, senior Lindsay Blair also was unable to close out her Northwest opponents in what is likely the final match of her career.

"They came out and took all three doubles," Blair said. "They definitely deserved it [and] played really well."

Despite the loss to Northwest, Blair was pleased with her team's play against Emporia in the first round. Truman took a 2-1 lead going into singles play in the match before shutting the team down by a 5-1 margin.

"I felt like we played really strong against them — a good first round opponent for us," Blair said.

Both of Blair's conference singles matches went unfinished, but she said she already had played both opponents during the season, and that she was just one game away from winning the Northwest match.

"I felt like I played a really good match, so I was just happy about that," she said.

Truman will return with all players except Walther and Blair for next season.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Sophomore Kelsey Kuykendall had two wins at the MIAA Tournament last weekend. The 'Dogs fell to NWSU 5-0 in the semifinal.

Men's tennis defeats ESU, loses to No. 33 Washburn

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

A season-long trend continued for the men's tennis team at the MIAA Tournament last weekend in Kansas City, Mo.

"I think all season we played kind of like we expected," junior Peter Bracha said. "Teams that were better than us — they beat us. The teams that we expected to beat — we beat them. So I don't think there's any real big surprises this season."

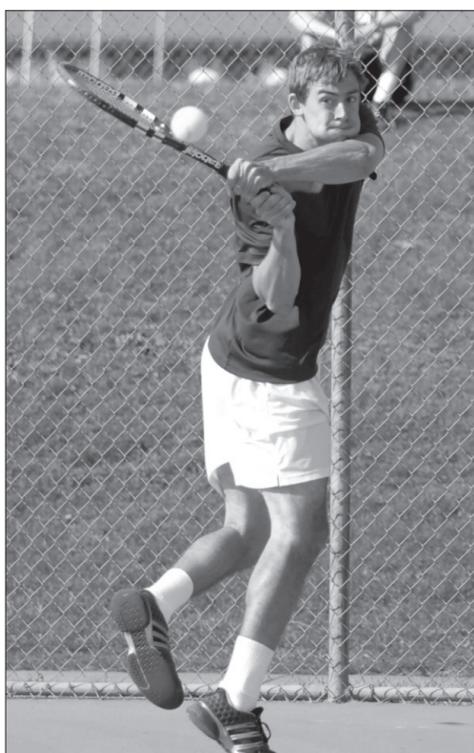
The Bulldogs, who had the No. 4 seed in the tournament, defeated No. 5 Emporia State University 5-3 in the first round before losing 5-1 to No. 1 Washburn University in the semifinal. Washburn, which is ranked No. 33 in the country, went on to win the tournament.

The Bulldogs end the season with an 8-6 record overall and 3-4 in the MIAA. They will not qualify for the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2003.

The results from last weekend were only slightly different than the matchups earlier in the year, when the 'Dogs beat ESU 5-3 and lost to Washburn 5-0.

Truman benefited from the return of junior Steven Hipkiss at No. 2 singles and doubles against Emporia last weekend. But freshman Eric McCullough was out because of illness, and ESU had a different No. 5 singles player from the match earlier in the season.

"We knew we had a good chance, but we also knew we



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Junior John Rothfusz returns a backhand earlier this season. Rothfusz had a doubles win at the MIAA tournament.

had to play well to still win," sophomore Colin Boswell said of the match with ESU.

The 'Dogs picked up wins at No. 1 and No. 2 singles and doubles and No. 5 singles. None of the matches went to three sets or had tiebreakers, unlike the first matchup.

In the Washburn match, the Ichabods made quick work of Truman with wins at No. 1 and No. 3 doubles and Nos. 2, 3 and 4 singles, but none of the matches were blowouts. Washburn had a bye in the first round, but Bracha was indifferent about

Washburn receiving the extra rest because Truman had the extra warm-up with the Emporia match.

"I guess we didn't have much to lose obviously," Boswell said. "I think it was potentially our last match of the year, and it ended up being, and I think everybody was really focused. I think everybody played pretty well."

Bracha highlighted the weekend with a 3-0 overall record, including 2-0 at No. 2 doubles with Hipkiss. Bracha also was up a break in the first set in his unfinished singles match against Washburn. He ended the spring season with four wins in his last six singles matches while playing No. 1.

"He's as good as anybody else in the conference," head coach Pete Kendall said.

Against Washburn, Bracha and Hipkiss avenged an 8-0 loss earlier in the season to claim the only victory for the 'Dogs. The 8-0 defeat was one of only three for the doubles duo all season.

"[Hipkiss] and I went with a little bit more intensity than we had the entire semester, and I think that helped us out," Bracha said.

The Bulldogs are scheduled to return their entire roster for next season, including six juniors.

"I felt like there was a really good team chemistry this year, and hopefully that will carry over to next year," Bracha said. "Every team is losing a little bit, and we're not. So just by that fact it's better for us."

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Baseball: Team close to breaking records

The baseball team has broken or is close to breaking several records near the end of the season. Despite an ERA of 8.61, the Bulldog pitching staff has set the Truman record for the most strikeouts in a season. Bulldog pitchers have 253 strikeouts. The old record was set in 1971 when the team had 242 strikeouts. The Bulldogs still have four more games to add to the record. Even with the team playing more games than in 1971, the Bulldogs are still on pace to break the strikeouts per game record.

Sophomore centerfielder Kenny Swanson tied the record for most games played in a season. He now maintains the record for most at-bats in a season and is nine short of the single season hits record. He currently has 54 hits.

Junior outfielder Keaton Jones continues to ascend the Truman record book. Jones is sixth in at-bats with 507, seventh in hits with 153 and fourth in doubles with 29.

Men's tennis: McCullough out with sickness

Freshman men's tennis player Eric McCullough not competed in a tennis match since April 15 because of sickness, head coach Pete Kendall said Monday.

McCullough was a regular at either No. 4 or No. 5 singles and No. 3 doubles until he became sick. Kendall said McCullough tried to practice twice recently, and he did not last 15 minutes on the court.

Kendall said having McCullough out of the lineup for the MIAA tournament last weekend had little effect on the rest of the team, except that it gave a couple other people a chance to play. McCullough compiled a 10-5 singles record and 8-7 doubles record in his first season.

Athletics: Mizzou broadcaster visits Truman

Mike Kelly, radio broadcaster for the University of Missouri-Columbia basketball and football teams, is visiting Truman.

Kelly will be presenting today from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Baldwin Little Theatre (BH 176). The event is sponsored by the national broadcasting society.

Softball: Team will lose five seniors

The Bulldog softball team is losing five seniors as they enter the offseason.

This will be a significant blow to the team, as the Bulldogs will lose their starting left and center fielders, third base, and a member of the starting rotation. Those graduating are: Dani Mayer, Lindsey Rock, Rebekah Shea, Kali Holleran, and Stephanie Johnson.

Mayer led the team with in average (.273), hits (39), RBI (17), stolen bases (12), sacrifice flies (2) and started all 45 of the team's games.

The team finished 11-34 overall and 3-9 in the MIAA.

Cinco de Mayo Party!

May 5th, 8:00 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.

Join us anytime for these scheduled events:

- **Wednesday's:** Karaoke and Late night pitcher specials
- **Thursday's:** Bottomless glass specials
- **Friday's:** Karaoke/DJ
- **Saturday's:** Late Night Happy Hour



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Sound off about what's on your mind. E-mail your rants to trurants@gmail.com

See page 5 for this week's rants!

The only rules are:

- Keep it under 40 words
- No personal attacks or profanity allowed