



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior guard Laura Joya, shown here in a game from earlier this season, scored 23 points and had seven rebounds in the Bulldogs' 67-66 loss to Northwest Missouri last night.

'Dogs lose to 'Cats in final seconds

Loss eliminates women's basketball's MIAA tourney hope

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

The women's basketball team found a new way to lose last night.

Northwest Missouri State University's Abby Henry hit a free throw with one second left to lift the Bearcats to a 67-66 victory against the Bulldogs (6-19, 3-14 MIAA) in Maryville.

With 11 seconds remaining, junior guard Lora Joya missed a jumper that would have given the 'Dogs a two-point lead. Northwest got the rebound and called a timeout. The game appeared to be headed for overtime, but after the timeout, Henry drove to the basket and was fouled on the shot by sophomore guard Julie Guinn.

Henry made the first free throw. She intentionally missed the second free throw, and Truman was unable to get a shot off.

"Our help-side defense was poor all night," head coach Michael Smith said. "The result of the last play of the game was indicative of the entire game. We have some kids that just don't have the heart to step over and take the charge."

The loss officially eliminated the Bulldogs from a spot in the MIAA Tournament. This is the second time in the last three years the Bulldogs have failed to make the conference tournament.

Truman was in control most of the second half. Northwest did not lead in the second half until Jessica Burton hit two free throws with 2:04 left to give the Bearcats a 66-64 lead. Truman's biggest lead in the second half was seven points.

The Bulldogs missed two opportunities to expand the lead in the second half. With just less than 11 minutes left, Guinn

missed a layup on a breakaway. After a Truman defensive stop, freshman guard Breanna Daniels missed a shot from point-blank range. She rebounded the miss, but had her shot blocked. "[The missed layups] were the dagger in the heart," Smith said.

Truman was unable to contain Burton. She finished with 29 points and four steals. She also went 8-for-8 from the free throw line.

The loss is another in a string of games this season in which the Bulldogs have blown second-half leads. Truman lost eight games this season that it has led in the second half.

Joya finished with 23 points and seven rebounds. Senior forward Georgia Mueller finished with 13 points.

Saturday, for every shot the Bulldogs missed, the University of Nebraska-Omaha made two.

The Mavericks raced out to a 15-point halftime lead and never looked back, defeating the Bulldogs 73-46 at Pershing Arena. Truman finished the game shooting 31 percent from the field, while UNO made half its shots.

The loss snapped the Bulldogs' two-game winning streak.

"[UNO] hadn't been shooting the ball very well the last few games from the perimeter," Smith said. "Their coach told me this is the best they've played."

Truman took an early 4-2 lead, but UNO used an 18-4 run to extend the lead to 12 with just more than 10 minutes left in the half. The Bulldogs never got the UNO lead below double digits during the rest of the game.

Smith said the 'Dogs hoped playing a zone against the bigger, more physical Mavericks would force more jump shots. The defensive scheme did force more UNO jump shots, but Omaha hit six three pointers and shot 50 percent from the floor.

"We did [play zone], and they were knocking down the threes," Smith said. "We knew

it was a long afternoon."

The Bulldogs continued their season-long trend of struggling to score points. Truman finished below 50 points for the fifth time this season and is last in the MIAA in scoring, averaging 60 points per game.

"In that situation, there's not just much you can do," sophomore forward Malorie Kiecker said. "Some days you just have off days, and that just happened to be ours."

With shots not falling, the Bulldogs made a concerted effort in the second half to get to the free throw line, a strong point for the 'Dogs this season. Truman finished 12-for-15 from the line.

"We came out in the second half, and our shots still didn't seem to be falling," Mueller said. "Coach really wanted us to drive and take it to the basket. Just take it up strong and try to get fouled — work a little bit harder for our points."

Truman's inability to keep UNO off the boards compounded the tough shooting night. The Mavericks out-rebounded Truman 39-27, leading to a 34-10 scoring advantage in the paint. UNO also scored 27 points off of 22 Truman turnovers.

Mueller paced the Bulldogs with 16 points and eight rebounds. She was also 8-of-10 from the foul line.

The Bulldogs picked up a 59-54 home victory last Thursday against Fort Hays State University. Mueller had a big game, finishing with 22 points, including 11-of-12 from the free-throw line. The win avenged a 71-46 loss to Fort Hays on Jan. 3, when the Bulldogs played without Mueller, who was serving a one-game suspension.

The 'Dogs will be in action again Saturday in St. Joseph, Mo., taking on Missouri Western State University. Tip-off is set for 5:30 p.m.

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Men lose ninth contest in a row

BY JACK NICHOLL
Assistant Sports Editor

The game plan for the men's basketball team going into last night's game at Northwest Missouri State University was simple: get the ball inside and put pressure on Hunter Henry and Elijah Allen.

The plan backfired. Truman (6-19, 1-17) matched the Bearcats point-for-point in the second half but an 11-point first half deficit was too much to overcome in a 62-51 defeat.

Henry and Allen, who are both on the MIAA leaderboard in points per game, had both scored double figures by the end of the first half while combining for only two fouls. Meanwhile, Bulldog forwards senior Patrick Fandja and sophomore Ethan Freeman had a combined 10 points and five fouls.

The first half result was the reverse of what head coach Jack Schrader said earlier this week that he was looking for.

"If we make [Henry and Allen] play defense or maybe get them in foul trouble, I think that would take away a lot of their effectiveness," Schrader said on Monday.

Fandja ended with 14 points and Freeman had a game-high

seven rebounds before fouling out in the last minute. Senior guard Banks Estridge and sophomore guard Stefan Garrison also scored in double figures.

Northwest had four players score more than 10 points and the Bearcats shot 51 percent as a team. Truman shifted between zone and man-to-man defenses for most of the game to try to slow down the Bearcat attack.

The 'Dogs looked like they might come back as they pulled to within three with six minutes left, but the Bearcats responded with a barrage of three pointers to put the game out of reach.

The Bulldogs came out on the wrong end of an offensive battle against the University of Nebraska-Omaha on Saturday in Pershing Arena with an 83-72 loss.

UNO shot 62 percent in the first half to take a 40-27 advantage, and UNO outshot the 'Dogs 55 to 52 percent for the game.

Freeman's 19 points and sophomore guard Alex Henderson's 16 led Truman, but UNO had four players in double digits and shot 10-for-18 from three point range.

"They were scoring so much, we were just trying to keep up,"

Henderson said.

Truman cut the 13-point half-time deficit to two at one point with help from 11 second-half points from both Freeman and Henderson. Freeman was 8-for-9 on the day as Truman utilized its power offense to put pressure on the Mavericks.

"I think our team is building up, and if the team builds up, then I think individually people can build from it too," Freeman said.

But the Mavericks could not be stopped. The trio of Andrew Bridger, Michael Jenkins and Mitch Albers combined for 57 points on 60 percent shooting. They were also a perfect 15-for-15 from the free throw line.

At the 3:30 mark in the second half, Bridger made a play that Schrader said epitomized the game. Bridger took a pass, dribbled down to the left corner and drained a three to give UNO a nine-point advantage.

"It just breaks your back," Schrader said. "To me they are no doubt the best offensive team in the conference."

Truman led by eight early in the first half, but UNO used a 14-point run to take the lead for good. Even so, the 'Dogs were never out of the game. They shot 46 percent from beyond

the arc and had statistics similar to UNO's in rebounds, assists and steals.

The loss to UNO came two days after another home defeat, this time at the hands of Fort Hays State University.

Truman ended the game on a 7-1 run, but it wasn't enough to overcome Fort Hays' attack and the 'Dogs lost 59-56. The Bulldogs had two chances to tie the game in the last 30 seconds, but Estridge missed an off-balance shot and junior guard Matt Taylor's long three pointer rimmed out as time expired.

"A lot of times in that situation you have more time than you think," Schrader said of Estridge's shot. "The adrenaline is rushing, and that was definitely not the plan."

Truman is now 4-7 this season in games decided by 10 points or fewer.

Fandja led the team with 19 points coming off the bench on 6-for-9 shooting, and Freeman tacked on 14 points and six rebounds.

The 'Dogs started the game with their four-out, one-in offense but switched to their power offense to help control the tempo of the game. Taylor played almost the entire second half in an attempt to stop Fort Hays' Terry



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Sophomore forward Ethan Freeman goes up for a layup in Truman's 83-72 loss to UNO on Saturday.

Jeffries, who had 13 points.

"We can control the pace of the game a lot better with that offense than with our ball screen offense," Schrader said.

The Bulldogs' next game is Saturday at Missouri Western before they end the season at home against Central Missouri on Feb. 28.

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