

'Dogs take over top spot in region

Roller hockey now has won seven straight, sits at 13-3-1

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

Destiny seems to be the calling card of the Bulldog roller hockey team.

The Bulldogs came into what arguably was the most important weekend of their season last weekend. They needed to come up big to claim the highest seed possible as they head into regionals.

And they did just that. The team came back from St. Peters, Mo., with four wins and improved its record to 13-3-1. Truman sits atop the standings of the Great Plains division with a seven-game winning streak.

"If we don't make nationals, it would be the result of a complete and utter breakdown from every single individual on the team," head coach Joe Nedelec said. "Some planets would have to align for this breakdown to occur. So I'm cautiously optimistic in terms of a national appearance."

The Bulldogs took down the previous top team in the division, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, 8-5 in their first game. Then, they played the darkhorse Spartans from the University of Tampa and defeated them 7-2. Truman defeated Kansas State University 10-0 and the Missouri University of Science and Technology 10-2 Sunday.

Truman faced extreme pressure against SIUE. The Bulldogs notoriously are a slow starting team, and they were playing the current No. 1 team in the division. But they came out guns blazing, scoring all eight of their goals in the first period while only allowing the Cougars one goal.

But pressure was on the 'Dogs for the remainder of the game. A mixture of penalties and adjustments to the rink forced the Bulldogs on the defensive for the rest of the game, and the combination of defense and their conditioning allowed the 'Dogs to hold on to win by a three-goal margin.

"All year when we've played Div. II teams, they've been close games, and we've been able to win most of them," senior forward Drew Vandas said. "We really just concentrated on those first two games and just came out hard and set the tone. [We] were proving to ourselves and everybody else that we're contenders, and we're ready to go

prove ourselves in nationals."

Later that day, the Bulldogs squared off against the visiting Spartans from the University of Tampa. This was the first time the Great Plains teams saw the Spartans in regular-season play. Truman handed Tampa its only loss of the weekend. Tampa partially was undone by some of its own members, particularly when one of the Spartans was ejected from the game for an obscene gesture made toward Nedelec and a referee.

The Bulldogs returned Sunday with their toughest games of the weekend behind them. Truman mercifully Kansas State two minutes into the third period.

The Bulldogs made it to the top of standings with one game left to play. Their last match of the regular season is Saturday against Washington University

(7-8-2). All Truman must do to win first place in the division for the regular season is tie Washington. A first-place finish would make the



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The roller hockey team was 4-0 last weekend. They defeated Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville 8-5 in their first game. SIUE previously held the top spot in the region.

Bulldogs the No. 1 seed as they head into the regional tournament, which would give them a bye for the first round.

"I think really going into regionals ... this weekend, being in first is a big help, because once we get there, it will help us avoid teams like SIUE and Missouri State [University]," freshman forward Cody Dependahl said. "We will be able to miss them as we get to the championship game ... that's what you work hard for during the season."

The regional playoffs begin this weekend after all of the teams finish their last regular season games on the first half of Saturday. Then, Saturday night, the teams ranked 8 through 11 in the division will duke it out to see who will claim the eighth and final spot in regionals. The tournament continues Sunday, and if the Bulldogs can hold onto their No. 1 seed, they get a bye into the second round of the playoffs. This will get the team one step closer to the championship game that

Nedelec views as the team's destiny.

"I don't think there's any team ... in the Great Plains that can handle us right now," Nedelec said. "I don't mean to sound arrogant at all, but from what I've seen, I don't think that there's any team that can handle the way the guys are playing right now. ... To be up there in the top spot affirms all the hard work the guys are doing. ... These guys want it, and they're quite serious about that."

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Men's Basketball: Seniors prepare for final game

The men's basketball team's game Saturday against the University of Central Missouri is the final game for three Bulldogs.

Senior guards Banks Estridge and Todd Kulage and senior forward Patrick Fandja will compete in Pershing Arena one last time. Each member of the trio has a different background.

Kulage joined the Bulldogs as a walk-on during his third year at Truman. He already has his bachelor's degree and is attending classes to get his master's in accounting. After playing in 14 games during his first two seasons, Kulage appeared in 16 games this season and averages 1.5 points per contest.

"He has played up to his potential as much as anybody we've had," head coach Jack Schrader said.

Fandja, a native of Cameroon, who came to the United States during high school, has shown steady improvement during his final two seasons at Truman. Fandja is averaging 9.4 points per game and 5.4 rebounds per game.

"[Fandja] is one of those success stories," Schrader said. "He's carved out his life here."

Estridge has 949 career points and ranks seventh all-time for Truman with 313 career assists. He needs seven assists Saturday to tie alumnus Jason Reinberg for sixth on the assist leaderboard. Estridge also has 140 career steals, good for sixth all-time at Truman.

Women's Basketball: Mueller to end stellar career

Saturday will mark the end of an era for Truman women's basketball. Senior forward Georgia Mueller will play her final game as a member of the women's basketball team. During Mueller's four seasons as a Bulldog, she has re-written the record book.

Last season she set the single season scoring record with 636 points. Mueller also is the school's all-time leader in blocked shots. She needs six blocks Saturday to reach 200 for her career. Assuming Mueller plays against Central, she will have played in 103 games, tying her for third most all time in Bulldog history. But Mueller will miss out on one record and finish second on the all-time Bulldog scoring list. Heading into Saturday's game Mueller has 1874 career points. Carol Jarrard, who played from 1978-82, scored 2,006 points from 1978-82.

Softball: Return from weekend tourney delayed

The softball team's return from last weekend's tournament was delayed until 4 a.m. Monday morning because of a set of severe traffic accidents. Two accidents within four hours of each other shut portions of the team's travel route between Alabama and Missouri. The team sat in traffic for approximately two and a half hours. One of the crashes involved an overturned semi-truck containing hazardous materials.

'Dogs suffer first home shutout in 18 years

Wrestling falls 50-0 to No. 4 Minnesota State University on Saturday

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

For the first time in 18 seasons, Bulldog wrestling was shut out at home.

In their final dual of the season, the Bulldogs failed to score a single victory against No. 4 Minnesota State University-Mankato.

The Mavericks' two-time All-American and current No. 2 heavyweight in the nation Brady Wilson defeated Braidlow by decision in the final contest of the afternoon.

"It was pretty much a match of missed opportunities," Braidlow said. "I had two good shots and just didn't finish them. I didn't get in, didn't finish them [and I] should've. He capitalized on his one opportunity to finish a shot and that was the match."

Wilson scored with a takedown late in the second period to take a 3-0 lead. He then secured a point from ride time in the third period. Braidlow eventually scored with an escape with just more than a minute to go, but it wasn't

enough for him to mount a comeback.

"With two good heavyweights, it's going to be low scoring, and it's going to come down to one or two moments in a match," Braidlow said. "He won the moment and I didn't get my moment in that match."

Braidlow said he needed to take one more step on his shots to be able to take down Wilson.

Braidlow has won just one of his last four dual matches to close out the season, which could be a concern with the NCAA Div. II Midwest Regional looming this Sunday.

"I've worked as hard as I could, I think, and I'm right there with the top eight in the nation," he said. "We'll see if that's enough or if I didn't work hard enough this year."

Freshman Chadd Griesemer lost by pinfall against the sixth-ranked wrestler in the nation at 157 pounds, the Mavericks' Travis Griesemer took the lead with a takedown just 10 seconds into the match for a 2-0 advantage.

"I was just tying up, just trying to feel out what he was going to do and he tried to throw me and I kind of ducked under it," he said.

Griesemer held Elg on the mat for 27 seconds before Elg fought back to his feet and scored with a takedown of his own. Elg then scored again with a near fall before he scored the pin with 32 seconds remaining in the first period.

"He just out-muscled me," Griesemer said. "I just need to get a lot stronger."

Griesemer certified to wrestle at 141 and 149 pounds at the beginning of the season, but he said he hopes to compete in the 157-pound division at the regional tournament.

"It's definitely tough," he said. "I'm definitely not as big as those guys. I just need to start lifting a whole lot more."

Three other Bulldogs faced the daunting task of competing against nationally-ranked individuals Saturday.

Freshman Alex Maus trailed the entire match against No. 2 John Putman at 141-pounds. Putman scored a takedown midway through the first period and another late in the first to lead 4-1. He continued to pull away from there, defeating Maus 12-4.

No. 2 Tommy Abbot defeated sophomore Steve Kueny (149 pounds) by pin 39 seconds into the first period.

No. 7 Pat Mahan defeated sophomore Thomas Redmon (197 pounds) by technical fall in the first period after a takedown and five near falls.

Freshmen Chad Kurvoski, Jeff Graber, J.C. Housley, James Crone and Jeremy Minter all saw action against Mankato as well.

"I thought we battled tough," head coach Dave Schutter said. "They're No. 4 in the nation and they're No. 4 for a reason. They've got a lot of older, experienced kids, a lot of ranked kids. I thought our kids hung in there quite well."

Schutter said that with the regional tournament drawing closer, last weekend doesn't show where the team stands.

"That dual is just an indicator of how funded one program is versus how another program is funded," Schutter said.

With the regular season at an end, the Bulldogs will host the NCAA Div. II Midwest Regional Tournament Sunday in Pershing Arena.

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