

Men's basketball loses fifth straight

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Sports Editor

Men's basketball head coach Jack Schrader said the two-word phrase several times in his office Monday: Don't deflate. Those two words signified Schrader's key that the Bulldogs had to accomplish last night to defeat Washburn University on the road.

But the Bulldogs did deflate. Truman had a 26-19 lead late in the first half, but a 21-5 run by Washburn that spanned 12 minutes at the end of the first half and beginning of the second half sparked the Ichabods' 68-50 victory.

The Bulldogs (6-15, 1-13) have lost five straight. Washburn (13-8, 9-5), meanwhile, is on a three-game winning streak.

"I think they're probably the most athletic team in our conference," senior guard Banks Estridge said before the game. "They aren't necessarily the smartest team, and I think that's why they're not at the top [of the MIAA]. But I think as far as athleticism, they're up there. They have four or five guys that are just really athletic."

Washburn guard DeAndre Eggins, a Div. I transfer from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, scored a game-high 13 points. In two games against Truman this season, Eggins scored 35 total points, and in Washburn's last 14 games, Eggins is averaging 19 points per game.

"Eggins and [Lekheythan] Malone are the two guys that have really stepped up for them," Schrader said before the game.

For the second straight

game, sophomore guard Brandon Griffin led the Bulldogs in scoring. He had nine rebounds to go along with his 10 points, although he shot just 3-for-11 from the floor.

The 'Dogs started the game shooting well and made their first three attempts to stake an 8-2 lead.

But Truman slipped into a shooting drought midway through the contest. After sophomore forward Brian Nwelu sank a long jump shot with 4:46 remaining in the first half, the Bulldogs did not make another field goal until freshman center Vesko Filchev's bucket with 13:26 to play in the second half. It was during this Bulldog shooting slump that Washburn made the 21-5 run that ultimately deflated the Bulldogs.

Super Bowl Sunday did not treat the Bulldogs kindly as Truman lost at Emporia State University 87-63 Sunday.

The Bulldogs were at the mercy of the hot-shooting Hornets, one of Div. II's best three-point shooting teams, throughout the game. Emporia State, which ranks second in the MIAA in three-point percentage, drained 10 of 19 shots from behind the arc. Hornets guard Robert Moores led the way by connecting on five of his six three-point attempts.

Schrader said the Bulldogs did not execute their pregame strategy of defending the three.

Schrader said the Bulldog defenders who were guarding ESU's top shooters provided help defense a few times instead of sticking with their men. He also said the Bulldogs sometimes went over the top of the screens to free up

the shooters, instead of chasing the shooter underneath the screen. Schrader said these miscues provided Emporia with open three-point opportunities.

"We made minor mistakes functioning defensively, and they capitalized every single time, normally with a three," Schrader said. "It was just a breakdown in the execution."

Emporia led 47-35 at halftime, marking the third consecutive game that the Bulldogs trailed by at least 10 points after the first 20 minutes. But unlike the previous two games, the Bulldogs were unable to claw their way back into the game during the second half.

The Hornets used a 17-0 run near the start of the second half to turn the game into a blowout.

"They were just on fire — they just didn't miss shots," Griffin said.

Griffin provided a bright spot for the Bulldogs, scoring a team-high of 16 points on 8-for-11 shooting.

Filchev continued his stretch of strong play. The 6-foot-10 center netted 15 points and added seven rebounds. In a four-game stretch from Jan. 21 to Feb. 1, Filchev averaged 14.5 points per game and 7.25 rebounds per game.

Filchev continues to benefit from Schrader's midseason offensive adjustment that changed the Bulldogs' primary offense from a three-out, two-in setup to a four-out, one-in format.

"I think the thing that most impresses me [about Filchev] is his hands," said Estridge, who had 12 points. "He catches the ball well, and he fin-



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Sophomore forward Ethan Freeman, shown here in a game earlier this season, scored nine points in last night's game against Washburn. Truman lost 68-50.

ishes well around the basket. If you just get him near the basket, it's like an automatic two points if you can get him the ball."

Schrader said that although Filchev cannot necessarily be classified as a go-to scorer be-

cause he can't create his own shot, Filchev does give the Bulldogs a reliable force near the basket.

"He's been awfully solid lately," Schrader said. "I don't think he's a go-to scorer. And if you don't have a go-to

scorer, the next best thing is throwing it to a guy in the low post. That's what we can do with him."

Truman takes the court again for a 3 p.m. home game Saturday against Southwest Baptist University.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior Loyde Braidlow (left), shown here in practice, picked up Truman's only win at last night's dual loss to Missouri Baptist.

'Dogs fall to Missouri Baptist

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

The streak continues. Truman wrestling traveled to Missouri Baptist College to take on the Spartans last night in dual competition. The home team had been victorious in five of the last six encounters between these two squads, including the previous four seasons, and that streak continued last night.

Missouri Baptist defeated an injury-worn Bulldogs' team that went into the meet with four open spots in the lineup, 36-6.

The Bulldogs only victory came with a pin by junior heavyweight Loyde Braidlow in the final match of the meet.

"I just started out really aggressive," Braidlow said. "I got three early takedowns in the first period and just kind of wore on the guy, grinded on him. I took him down a couple more times in the second period and finally rolled him over and stuck him with 30 seconds left in the second period."

Freshman Alex Maus was defeated 4-3 in the 141-pound division by a Spartan that returned to competition this season after being out of action for six years. Maus came close to picking up the win with a takedown late in the match that would have given him the lead, but the referee ruled he didn't have control and no points were awarded for the takedown.

"[Maus] wrestled great against a two-time All-American — a guy that's close to being 28 to 30 years old," head coach Dave Schutter said. "[Maus] was right there in position to win it and just didn't get the call."

Freshman James Crone was defeated 6-3 in the 125-pound division.

"[Crone] has made a lot of improvement," Schutter said. "Early in the year, this is a kid that would have probably blown the match open on James. James really has closed the distance."

Schutter said the team typically wouldn't have made the trip with such a thin roster, but Missouri Baptist offered them a game guarantee, paying for their trip.

"Anytime you get a game guarantee, you can go out and get some experience where it's not really costing our athletic department," Schutter said. "That's always good."

Schutter said several of the young members of the team are making improvements but still have a ways to go.

"It doesn't all come together at once," Schutter said. "It's all about bits and pieces."

The Bulldogs finished 23rd out of 31 teams with 24 points at last weekend's Wheaton Invitational.

Braidlow once again led the team at Wheaton, where he placed sixth. This marks Braidlow's fifth placing in six tournaments the team has competed in this season.

Braidlow started the tournament with two consecutive victories before eventual first-place finisher Dan Laurent of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse shut out Braidlow, 10-0.

Braidlow quickly rebounded in the wrestleback portion of the tournament to pick up two more victories, something he had struggled with earlier in the year. Braidlow said part of the reason he's better able to rebound after he suffers his first loss in a tournament now comes from hitting his stride as the end of the season approaches.

"I think it's just part of getting back in the swing of the season," Braidlow said. "Now that I've got 40-some matches under my belt, it takes a lot to get me out of a tournament early."

With his placement secure, Braidlow lost a close match to third-seeded Jon Schmidt of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and was then shut out 8-0 by top-seeded Mark Corsello of Elmhurst College (Ill.) in the fifth-place match.

The structure of Wheaton Invitational resembles the format of the NCAA Div. II National Tournament with the first day of competition determining who advances to the placement rounds on the second day. Braidlow said it is more important at this juncture in the season to strive toward placing in a tournament than it was earlier in the year, and in a tournament like this wrestlers need a good first day or they don't make it to the second.

"Now you've got to start getting razor sharp to where you're going to make it through, and you just have to set your goals to where you're going to place at this tournament," Braidlow said. "That's kind of what it boils down to this time of year — you either place or you're done."

Although Braidlow was the only member of the team to place at Wheaton, some of his younger teammates made strides forward. Maus picked up two victories via pin in the wrestleback section of the tournament.

"I think I should have done better," Maus said. "I lost to the kid that took fifth [3-1]. A stupid mistake is the only reason why I lost to him. I feel that I should have gotten a placement, but 2-2 isn't bad."

The Bulldogs next compete Saturday at the Missouri Valley College Open.

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