

# PSU skunks Bulldogs

**Women's basketball team commits 18 turnovers in loss on home floor**

**BY BRENT FOSTER**  
Staff Reporter

Pittsburgh State University scored the ball from all over the gym floor last night.

Pitt State hit eight first-half three pointers en route to an 87-62 victory against the women's basketball team at Pershing Arena.

The Gorillas hit a season-high 12 three pointers for the game and shot 46 percent from beyond the arc.

The Pitt State three-point barrage came as somewhat of a surprise. Coming into Wednesday night, Pitt was ranked seventh in the MIAA in three pointers, averaging six three-pointers per game.

The 87 points scored by Pitt State are the most the Bulldogs (4-15, 1-11 MIAA) have allowed this season.

"I felt bad for our fans," head coach Michael Smith said. "We didn't fight like I thought we would, especially at home. We talked about it. This is our home floor. For the most part we've played pretty well at home. I felt like it was Pittsburgh State's home floor tonight."

Senior forward Georgia Mueller led three Bulldogs in double figures with 21 points, but she was just 2-for-8 from the field in the second half. Junior guard Laura Joya continued her steady play at point guard, scoring 16 points and dishing out five assists. Sophomore forward Malorie Kiecker chipped in with 13 points.

Pitt State led 50-34 at halftime, and until late in the game, it appeared the Gorillas might break the Pershing field-goal percentage

record. Midway through the second half the Gorillas were shooting 63 percent from the field, ahead of the record clip of 61 percent set in 1981 by the University of Central Missouri. But a cold streak late in the game prevented the Gorillas from breaking the record. Pitt State finished the game shooting at a 51 percent clip. The Gorillas did not hit a field goal in the final 5:33 of the second half.

Pitt State played a full court press for most of the game, which the Bulldogs broke with relative ease. But once in the half-court set, the Bulldogs continued their season-long turnover problem. The

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Head Coach

'Dogs finished with 18 turnovers, two less than their season average. Pitt State converted the Bulldog turnovers into 29 points. Truman scored just five points off of 14 Pitt State turnovers.

"The press didn't hurt us, it was when we got in the half-court set that we turned the ball over," Smith said. "That makes no sense to me. I was completely worried about the press, and then we break it and then we just come down here and throw it away."

It was more of the same for the women's basketball team Saturday afternoon.

Senior guard Eli Medina had her game-tying shot attempt blocked with two seconds left as the Bulldogs blew a double-digit lead for the second straight game and lost 56-54 at Missouri Southern State University.

Truman used a dominant first half to take a 34-23 lead into half-time, but just like last Wednesday's loss to the University of Central Missouri, the Bulldogs went cold from the floor in the second half. A jumper by Kiecker with 14:54 remaining gave the 'Dogs a 10-point

advantage, but Truman did not score again until freshman guard Breanna Daniels hit a three-pointer with 8:57 left. During the six-minute scoreless stretch, the Lions rattled off 13 unanswered to turn the 10-point deficit into a three-point lead. Truman committed four turnovers and was 0-for-7 from the floor during the drought.

"We just have moments where we go six or seven minutes without scoring, and you just can't do that no matter how big of a lead you have," senior center Sarah Gordon said.

Even with second-half struggles, Truman still had a chance to pull off the upset on the final possession. But Medina's shot never drew iron, and the Bulldogs lost their eighth game this season by single digits.

The game had striking similarities to the loss at Central. In that game, the Bulldogs blew an 11-point second-half lead and suffered a six-minute second-half scoring drought. And just like the loss Saturday, the 'Dogs had a chance to win against UCM, but Kiecker missed a three-pointer in the waning seconds.

"It's just kind of like the Central game," Smith said. "We get up and the opponent turns up the intensity a little bit, and it's like a deer in headlights."

Truman continued its season-long trend of turning the ball over, finishing with 22. Southern turned the ball over 12 times.

Mueller finished with a team-high 17 points and 11 rebounds. She also dished out five assists.

Saturday was the fourth time this season the Bulldogs have lost a game after being tied or leading at halftime.

"We couldn't put it together," junior guard Laura Joya said. "Turnovers were definitely killers."

The Bulldogs hit the road for a rare Sunday afternoon game against No. 5 Emporia State University. Tip off is set for 1:30 p.m. Truman lost to the Hornets 83-72 in Kirksville Dec. 29.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Junior guard Julie Guinn played 27 minutes in last night's game. She dished out four assists but also had four of her team's 18 turnovers.

## CHASING JARRARD

### POINT LEADERBOARD

1. CAROL JARRARD: 2,006
2. GEORGIA MUELLER: 1,748
3. FELICIA SUTTON: 1,578
4. AMY EAGAN: 1,527



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Junior guard Laura Joya shifted to point guard earlier this season and has helped Truman in the assist-to-turnover statistic.

# Joya provides stability to point guard position

**BY BRENT FOSTER**  
Staff Reporter

There have been many low points and few high points for the women's basketball team this season, but one of the high points has been the consistent play of junior guard Laura Joya.

With the team mired in the middle of a 4-14 season, Joya's play has been key in giving the Bulldogs chances to win several close games this season.

Joya ranks in the top seven in the MIAA in rebounds, assists and steals.

Joya's play is even more impressive because she is not a natural point guard. She was thrust into the position late last season and inserted in the spot again earlier this season when head coach Michael Smith was searching for a point guard. She has stayed there ever since.

"[Adjusting to point guard is] definitely harder than I thought," Joya said. "Controlling the ball I guess, and just looking for people to pass it to and breaking presses. I guess it's just different."

For most of last season, Joya played her natural two guard position, until a barrage of injuries forced her to spend some time at point guard. Joya said that before the end of last season, her only experience at point guard was bringing the ball up the floor in high school.

"It was nothing compared to now," Joya said.

Joya's leadership at point guard was evident during the Bulldogs' lone conference win Jan. 10 against Northwest Missouri State University. Joya quietly helped lead the 'Dogs to victory. She hit a big three-pointer in overtime and finished with 12 points, 11 rebounds, five assists and four steals.

The Bulldogs rank last in the MIAA in turnovers and turnover margin by a substantial amount, but Joya has helped the team deal with the problem by steadily passing the basketball. Entering last night's game, she ranked 10th in the conference with a 1.11 assist-to-turnover ratio, and she was sixth in the MIAA with 3.78 assists per contest.

As porous as the 'Dogs have been at taking care of the basketball this season, they statistically are worse at forcing turnovers. Entering Wednesday's game, the Bulldogs had forced just 266 turnovers this season, 50 fewer than the closest MIAA team. Truman ranks 261 out of 271 teams in Div. II in turnover margin.

Although Joya has contributed her share to the turnover barrage, committing a team-high 61, including nine in the last two games, she has been one of the few Bulldogs to compensate that with assists. She has 73 assists this season. The next closest Bulldog is senior forward Georgia Mueller, who has 48 assists. Joya is the only Bulldog who has played significant time this season and has a positive assist-to-turnover ratio. This is a vast

improvement compared to last season when she committed twice as many turnovers as assists.

"Except for the last two or three games, she's been real smart with the basketball," Smith said. "She's run the offense, she's done what we need to do. She's gotten eight to 10 points. ... And it's quiet. She's just going out and playing."

Joya's improvements this season have not all directly been related to her move to point guard. Although her assist-to-turnover ratio dramatically has improved, she also is second on the team in rebounds, second in the MIAA in rebounds for a guard and leads the team in minutes per game. She is the only Bulldog to start every game this season. Joya also is third on the team in scoring, averaging just less than 10 points per game.

"Joya's been amazing this year," senior center Sarah Gordon said. "I remember her freshman year, she came in and she played pretty well, but she's just gotten so much better every year she's been back. This year she really has taken on the leadership role, especially being the point guard. She's pretty much our little quarterback out there."

Although Joya said the transition to point guard has been difficult, she said she continues to do what's best for the team.

"I just try to bring up the ball and try my best to take care of it and just run what coach wants me to run for the team," Joya said.

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