

Rugby rolls past K-State in shutout

Bulls improve to 2-2 in spring season with 36-0 win at home

BY KRISTA CRIDER
Staff Reporter

The men's rugby team soundly handled Kansas State University in Truman's first home game of the spring season with a 36-0 shutout win Saturday.

"It was the best we had played all season to date," head coach Bill Sexton said.

Sexton changed the lineup going into the match because of a few player injuries and a lack of numbers. He added forwards sophomore Jason Ralph and senior Justin Lacy, to the backline and gave the job of hooker to senior Scott Boswell. Because of the lack of experience on Boswell's part as a hooker and a relatively even scrum for both sides, the team lost a few scrums, but Sexton said the game was won via defense, and the Bulls surged ahead because of their skill in that critical area.

"They did a very good job defensively, as well as attacking with ball-in-hand," Sexton said. "Defense wins games more often than not, and in this case, our defense all across the field — all 15 guys — did a great job."

Sexton said the team's success had a lot to do with using the experience they've gained throughout the year to avoid recurring mistakes. Last fall, Truman lost to K-State 27-24 in a close game in which Truman out-played the opposition but made crucial, game-changing errors. Sexton said those errors were almost totally eliminated for the shutout victory this time around, and that revenge was the driving force for the team.

"We should have won the game [last semester] but made a mistake in the closing minutes of the game," Sexton said. "[The game Saturday] was a good opportunity to sort of get some retribution for some early season mistakes."

Team president junior Phil Powell said that the difference between Saturday's game and last semester's was all in the defense.

"There were a lot of things that changed between this semester and



Junior Jordan Buchheit rumbles over an opponent during the Bulls' game last Saturday against Kansas State. Truman won via shutout, 36-0, and is 2-2 in the spring season.

Mayank Dhungana/Index

last semester, but especially last week and this week I saw a great difference in our defense, our second- and third-phase defense, re-setting in transition and making

tackles." Powell said. "That was probably the biggest part [of how we improved]."

Sexton said that another positive from the game was that the team

came out ready to play right from the start.

"We actually started pretty solid," Sexton said. "They are a very good team, and it looked like they

were going to score at one point in the first couple of minutes of the game, but, you know, credit to the guys, they stood tough in the goal line and really defended well. It takes a lot of mental and physical commitment to stand in at the goal line, with your back against the goal line and tackle down and come up hard and not miss that critical tackle, and they did that."

A few minutes after the stand-off at K-State's goal line, Truman managed to pick up its first try of the game and didn't look back. The team's next try came soon after from sophomore Aaron Loida with a well-read pick off of a pass. Sexton said the first two response-tries were a great beginning-of-the-game boost.

After half time, K-State came out with an extreme amount of tenacity and pressure, but it wasn't quite enough to stop Truman from continuing their success.

"We bent, but we didn't break," Sexton said. "We withstood some pretty significant pressure from the K-State team bashing it up and really taking it to us inside of our red-zone, and we were consistently able to clear, defend and tackle-down, and that was vital."

Near the end of the game when it became apparent there wasn't enough time for a K-State comeback, the Bulls managed to score two more tries off of good pressure and breakaways to solidify and finalize their victory.

"I told the team after the game that I was very proud of the way they played, that I thought it was the best overall performance they'd had of the season, and that we need to seal that and know how that feels to play that way, you know, finding that game that is our game and establishing it early rather than relying on late application," Sexton said.

The men's next game will be Saturday against Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan. Junior Paul Ederley said they will not take Benedictine lightly.

"I don't think there is such a thing as an easy game," Ederley said. "We went in last year calling them an easy game and they ended up beating us, so we are just going to go in there and play as hard as we can."

Freshman duo makes immediate impact on lineup

Rose, Myers among baseball team hitting leaders

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

Mired in the middle of a 5-23 season and well on the way to its 27th consecutive losing season, it would be easy for the baseball team to pack it in and call it a season. But a pair of Bulldog freshmen are doing their part to make sure losing records become a thing of the past.

Freshman shortstop Steven Rose and freshman catcher Devon Myers have both stepped into big roles offensively and defensively.

Myers and Rose could have rejected Truman and gone to larger, more successful schools. Rose said he had offers from the University of Notre Dame and Miami University (Ohio), both Div. I schools. Myers said he looked into playing at Missouri State University

and Saint Louis University but signed early with Truman. Rose said he saw the potential that the Bulldogs had to grow, and the chance to contribute right away enticed him.

"I talked to [head coach Dan] Davis and I really liked the direction he was trying to take the team and turn it around in a winning program," Rose said. "I really wanted to be a part of that."

So far the two have made good on their commitments. Rose is fourth on the team in batting with a .304 average and is tied for the team lead with two home runs.

Myers is second on the team with 13 RBIs and is hitting .272. Besides at the plate, Myers has handled the Bulldog pitching staff as the team's main catcher.

"He's done an awesome job with our pitching staff," Davis said. "If they put it anywhere in the dirt circle, he's going to block it. Or he's going to put a glove on it and keep it from going to the backstop."

Rose has had some hiccups

in the field this season with eight errors in 93 chances. He said his struggles in the field haven't been part of adjusting to the college game, but just tough breaks that he has to overcome.

"Everybody's going to make mistakes in the field or you're going to have bad at-bats, but you just have to move on from those and try and do your best job the next time," Rose said. "You can't really think about it or let it bother you."

Myers and Rose have picked up where last year's freshman class left off. Last season, then-freshman second baseman Luke Crader led the team with a .352 batting average and fellow then-freshman right-handed pitcher Michael Stairh led the team with a 5.74 ERA. This season Stairh has become the anchor of a pitching staff that has a team ERA of more than 8.00. Stairh is 2-0 in two starts with a team-leading 2.25 ERA. The production from underclassmen has been key for a team with two seniors and 25 freshmen and sopho-

mores on the roster.

With production from several of the team's underclassmen, the Bulldogs appear to be taking the steps toward building the winning program that Rose and Myers banked on when they signed with Truman. The Bulldogs took their lumps early in the season against some of the top teams in Div. II but have bounced back in conference play, winning four of their last eight MIAA games.

Two weeks ago, the 'Dogs won three of four against Southwest Baptist University. It was the team's first series win since 2006 and the first in the Davis era. The Bulldogs were close to splitting the series last weekend with Pittsburgh State University, but lost the opener of the series in the last at-bat. Sophomore left-handed pitcher Kyle Veazey became another in a long line of underclassmen to shine this season Saturday against Pitt State. He was working on a complete game shutout heading into the seventh and final

First-year phenoms

Freshman shortstop Steven Rose and freshman catcher Devon Myers have been a big part of Truman's offense this season. They rank in the top six on the team in batting average and RBIs.

Rose:	Myers:
.304 AVG	.271 AVG
.364 OBP	.371 OBP
13 RBIs	14 RBIs
2 HR	1 HR

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inning. But Pitt rallied for three runs off of Veazey in the bottom of the seventh to take the game 3-2, another sign that although improving, the team is still young.

"I think you've got to

recognize that we're kind of building and that we're eventually going to have some good stuff going on here, even though it may not look like it to people outside the program," Myers said.



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