

Late FG leads to 33-32 loss

BY JACK NICHOLL
Assistant Sports Editor

The football team will not have a winning record in 2008.

After losing at Missouri Western State University 33-32 last Saturday, the Bulldogs have a 4-6 record with one non-conference game left in the season. They finished seventh in the conference with a 3-6 record in the MIAA.

"We're disappointed, but I think everyone knows that you're never given anything, in this conference especially," senior quarterback Matt Ticich said. "You have to find ways to win."

A Missouri Western 22-yard field goal with three seconds left gave the Griffons the win in what was a back-and-forth game. Mo. West was helped by a blocked field goal and a failed two-point conversion by the 'Dogs.

The Bulldogs had negative eight yards of total offense in their first three offensive drives, and the Griffons capitalized on the early struggles and good field position. Mo. West scored 17 unanswered points to start the game, including a 46-yard

touchdown run by Thomas Hodges on the Griffons' first play from scrimmage.

"It was a combination of not moving the ball, the wind not allowing us to pin them back, and not playing good defense as well led to the start of the game," head coach Shannon Currier said.

Truman scored touchdowns on their next four possessions to take a 27-23 lead at the half. A failed two-point conversion after the fourth Bulldog touchdown proved to be the difference in the game.

The 'Dogs offense in the third quarter was much like the beginning of the game. Truman gained two yards in a span of three possessions, but an improved defense helped hold the Griffons to seven points.

"We just killed ourselves that third quarter moving the ball," Currier said. "... And then at the start of the fourth quarter we got rolling again. The wind wasn't a factor as much in the second half — it had kind of died down."

Senior defensive end Les Hammers recorded a safety near the beginning of the fourth



Mayank Dhungana/Index
Donald Harvey runs earlier this season. The Truman offense scored 27 points in the second quarter against MWSU, but they were shut down otherwise, primarily in the redzone.

quarter, but the Bulldogs could not come through when it mattered most. Twice in the fourth quarter the 'Dogs drove the ball inside the Griffons' 10-yard line, but they were only able to come away with three points.

Senior kicker Mickey Masucci had a short field goal blocked on the first trip inside the red zone and the 'Dogs had to settle for a field goal on their last possession. They had second-and-goal from the one, but two consecutive quarterback runs went for no gain.

"It's just the red zone, and coming down to four or five plays and if they would have

gone the other way we would have won, but you just have to find a way to make those plays," Ticich said.

The 'Dogs' last game of the season is at 1 p.m. Saturday against Missouri University of Science & Technology. Junior defensive back Derek Rodriguez, who had two interceptions against Mo. West, said the team is working to bounce back from the loss and finish the season on a high note.

Truman has defeated the Miners 22 consecutive times, but the S&T has scored more than 60 points in each of their last two games.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Football: 10 receive All-Conference honors

Ten football players were selected to the MIAA All-Conference teams Monday.

Senior defensive end Les Hammers was the only first-team selection. Hammers, a four-time selection, currently is third in the MIAA in sacks and second in tackles for a loss per game. He is fifth on the team in tackles.

Senior offensive tackle Jon Frantz was a second-team pick and senior linebacker Jason Thier and junior defensive back Demetrius Lavant joined him on the defensive side of the ball. Thier leads the team in tackles per game and is third in the MIAA.

Junior wide receiver Albert Coker, senior tight end Ryan King, linebackers senior Mike Phillips and junior Eric Sternberg, senior nose tackle Andy Swedenhjelm and senior quarterback Matt Ticich all were selected as honorable mention.

Volleyball: Cherven nears 1,000 kills

Senior middle blocker Allie Cherven continues to make her mark in the Bulldog record book. Cherven needs just three kills to become the 13th Bulldog to reach 1,000 career kills. She will have reached that mark in just three seasons after transferring here from the University of Pittsburgh (Penn.) before her sophomore season. Senior right side hitter Melissa Keck and senior outside hitter Eli Medina reached 1,000 kills for their careers earlier this season.

Cherven also could move up the career blocks list the last week of the season. She already is the school's all-time leader in blocks during the rally-scoring era with 483. She could reach the top 10 in the MIAA with just three more blocks.

Women's Soccer: Wiegart, Reuck win awards

Juniors forward Jessica Wiegart (10 goals and three assists) and junior midfielder Katie Reuck (eight goals four assists) have earned postseason awards. Wiegart and Reuck both were named to the Daktronics South Central region second team. Wiegart already had been named to the CoSIDA Academic All-District first team last week. Both players are waiting to find out this week whether they each earned All-MIAA status for the second year in a row.

Safety Burel proves to be versatile leader

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

Position changes don't always work out, but when they do, the dividends are well worth it.

Senior safety Matt Burel knows this from experience. Burel started his Truman career as a quarterback before moving to outside linebacker his redshirt freshman season.

However, that would not be the last stop for Burel.

He suffered a broken ankle during his sophomore season, and when he returned from that injury he was moved to defensive back. This was the final move for Burel, who became the starting free safety part-way through his junior season.

"It's been a tough process at times, coming in and changing positions, but the coaches have been supportive and my teammates have been supportive," Burel said.

Burel led the team with 12 tackles against Missouri Western State Uni-

versity on Saturday. He has started every game this season at safety and serves as one of the team captains. He ranks second on the team in tackles with 82, including 34 solo tackles.

Burel said he was forced to make so many tackles this week because more Missouri Western plays got through to the secondary and he was in position to make stops.

Burel said he enjoys his current role with the team and wouldn't want to go back to the offensive side of the ball.

"I don't regret the changes," he said. "This is something I love — playing on defense and playing with those 11 guys I play with every week. I wouldn't go back to quarterback."

This marks Burel's second season as a team captain. He said being a captain adds pressure to be his best and keep the rest of the team motivated.

"It's an honor for me to be a captain, elected from my teammates," Burel said.

Defensive backs coach Thomas Kearney has been at Truman for two

seasons. He said Burel is an unselfish teammate who strives to improve every week.

"He's gotten better every practice," Kearney said. "He just keeps getting better, and he's always somebody who wants to do what's best for the team."

In Truman's pass defense scheme, the safeties are responsible for communicating the coverages to their fellow defensive backs and for reading any motions made by the offense.

"That safety has got to be a guy that, like the quarterback of the defense, can get everybody going in the right direction," Kearney said.

Kearney said Truman doesn't make a distinction between safeties who are primarily responsible for run

coverage or pass coverage like other teams.

"It'd be easy if we tell them that you're pass first so the only thing you've got to do is backpedal and cover," he said. "We don't do that. Against the run we ask them to play like a linebacker, but against the pass we ask you to cover, so it's pretty challenging."

Head coach Shannon Currier said he can rely on Burel to go all-out every play and set the example for other players to follow.

"We know we're going to get Matt Burel's best effort every single week," Currier said. "He's got a tremendous work ethic and just a fantastic attitude and he's going to do real well after Truman."

Currier said it takes a special player to do the things Burel does for the program. He said changing positions wasn't necessarily something that Burel wanted to do, but he was willing to make that sacrifice for the good of the team.

"Matt takes everything that we ask him to do to another level," Currier said. "He's one of the most team-oriented players I've ever been around."

Currier said Burel exhibits many qualities needed in a good captain, such as being able to hold other players accountable and caring about his teammates. Currier called Burel one of the best leaders the team has had and one of his favorite players he has ever coached because of his team-first attitude and his ability to motivate other players to improve.

"I hope that younger players can look at him as an example of what they want to become," Currier said. "What makes you special in a team sport is when you're actually part of somebody else's growth."

"I hope that younger players can look at him as an example of what they want to become."

Shannon Currier
Head Football Coach

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