

# 'Dogs dominate on Senior Day

Currier calls 38-7 victory against MSSU team's most complete game this season

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Assistant Sports Editor

The football team had no need for change in its strategy during Saturday's game.

On offense, they ran the ball. On defense, they made big plays. And they did both for the entire game.

Everything came together for the 'Dogs, as they defeated Missouri Southern State University 38-7 on Senior Day at Stokes Stadium in Truman's most complete effort this season.

"I just felt this was the most overall complete game we've had all year — offense, defense, special teams," head coach Shannon Currier said. "It was a lot of fun to be able to get a good lead and get a lot of guys in the game and honor our seniors in great fashion."

The Bulldogs (4-5, 3-5 MIAA) started off strong and never looked back against the Lions (4-6, 2-6 MIAA). Senior linebacker Robert Massop intercepted a pass on the second play of the game in what was the first of three interceptions for Truman.

Starting from their own 39 yard line on their opening drive, the 'Dogs began their offensive strategy. They ran the ball nine straight times, and the drive was capped off by a 15-yard touchdown run by senior all-purpose back Phil Kenney.

After the 'Dogs forced a punt, it was back to the same strategy on the next drive. They ran the ball on seven of 10 plays, including a 48-run by sophomore running back Anton Bernard, to set up a 27-yard field by senior kicker Mickey Masucci.

Overall, 51 of Truman's 73 plays — including the first 14 — from scrimmage were runs, for a combined total of 265 yards on the ground. Bernard was the leading rusher

with 122 yards on 16 carries. He was the Bulldogs' first 100-yard rusher this season. Truman's rushing yards were the most for the team since the first game of last season against Missouri S&T.

Currier said Truman had picked up some weaknesses in MSSU's defense by watching film, which helped the running game.

"They're the number one pass defense in the league," Currier said. "So we were thinking that for us to be successful we were going to have to run the football. ... They got tired, their guys were getting hurt, and that opened up some other things that we were doing and all of a sudden Bulldog football was having a lot of success."

On defense, the Bulldogs gave up 380 yards, but they limited the damage by forcing three turnovers and only giving up one score on three trips inside the red zone. Stopping the run was also key — MSSU averaged 2.9 yards a carry for 27 carries.

MSSU converted on only 29 percent of its third downs, and the Lions were 2-for-5 on fourth downs.

"It's really probably the story of the game," defensive coordinator Ryan Nourse said. "Usually if you take the ball away from people, which we did three times, you hold them under 30 percent on third down, which we did, and you keep them out of the end zone in red-zone opportunities — you usually come up ahead on the scoreboard."

Nourse said the plan was to let MSSU quarterback Adam Hinspeter get some passing yards as long as Truman stopped the run. The 'Dogs played a soft zone on defense, which gave up short passes, but punished Hinspeter when he tried to throw long or when he got close to scoring. Two of Truman's interceptions were inside the red zone and the other was on a long pass.

Hinspeter, who is third in career passing yards in the MIAA, was 29 for 48 passing for 303 yards, a touchdown and three interceptions.

"There's a reason why he's thrown for all those yards — he's pretty good," Nourse said. "But that was the game plan. We didn't let him run the ball. He can throw for as many yards as he wants, but he doesn't get to throw touchdowns."

MSSU was without its No. 1 receiver, junior Mark Henderson, who is second in the conference in receiving yards per game, but Nourse said the game plan would have remained the same.

The 'Dogs took a 10-point lead into halftime and at one point they were up 31-0. Senior linebacker Jason Thier, who had an interception and a team-high nine tackles, said the early lead helped Truman get enough momentum that the Lions looked beat.

"I would probably say it was at halftime and they were walking in and we were walking in and you could kind of see it: Their heads were a little lower than they were at the beginning of the game," Thier said. "That's when we really knew that this game was going to be in our hands."

Senior quarterback Matt Ticich was 11 for 21 with 150 yards and three touchdowns. Eight different Bulldog receivers caught at least one pass and no receiver had more than two receptions.

Sophomore backup quarterback Phil Davis saw time late in the game and completed his only pass, a 14-yard touchdown pass to freshman wide receiver Deotis Brown. Brown, senior tight end Ryan King, junior receiver Kendrick Blue and senior receiver Tyler Fenton all recorded their first touchdown catch of the season.

Truman next takes the field Saturday at Missouri Western State University as the Bulldogs continue their quest for a third-consecutive winning season.



Senior linebackers Robert Massop (left) and Jason Thier celebrate after an interception by Massop on Saturday against MSSU. The defense forced three turnovers in the win. Mayank Dhungana/Index

## Brawl taints 1-1-1 weekend for roller hockey

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

Hard body checks, punches thrown, an all-out fight. This is a scene associated with ice hockey, — but it didn't take place during an ice hockey game.

It happened in the middle of Truman's roller hockey game.

The Truman roller hockey team traveled to St. Peters, Mo., for its opening weekend games last weekend. The 'Dogs finished the weekend 1-1-1. Truman capped its weekend with an 11-1 loss Sunday against the reigning Div. I national champions, Lindenwood University. On Saturday, Truman won its first game 9-1 against Illinois State University and tied its game against rival Missouri State University, 2-2.

Truman lost by the mercy rule early in the third period to Lindenwood. A fight that broke out in the second period contributed to the lopsided score because several players were ejected from the game, in-

cluding seniors goalie John Pecher and defenseman Jon Watson.

Head coach Joe Nedelec was not present during the actual fight but said he was disappointed it happened nonetheless.

"This is something that I am very embarrassed to have seen happen," Nedelec said. "I am quite upset it would get to that at that level of hockey. ... I'm only going on secondary information from Watson and others that the game progressively got out of hand. The level of body checking that was allowed was close to ice hockey level, which is a lot and illegal. ... We are not at a level where that sort of competitive fighting should be happening at all."

The first period of the game belonged to Lindenwood. The Lions scored five unanswered goals during the first period. Four of those goals were scored by Lindenwood forward Jeff Hill.

The second period, during which the brawl occurred, sealed the Bulldogs' fate. After the ejection of

Pecher, the Bulldogs were unable to defend the net, and Lindenwood scored another five times. Lindenwood scored its 11th, and final goal, in the 10th minute of the third period, bringing an end to the game.

The results of this game remain in doubt in the eyes of the Bulldogs. Officiating and calls were questioned by several members of the team.

"I've noticed for a long time that the officiating for a Lindenwood game is very different than the officiating for anybody else," Nedelec said. "Lindenwood is allowed to do things which other teams aren't, in terms of taking the body, extra hooks, extra hacks, etc. That sounds like a whiny little baby crying because they got beat up on, but the fact of the matter is there is a definite difference in the way the games are officiated."

Pecher said he thought that even if some of the plays were questionable, it still would be a challenge beating Lindenwood on the rink.

"I'm not one to complain about

officials because they're obviously going to do what they're going to do and you just got to play through it," Pecher said. "We obviously got a little frustrated with a few calls that went their way, but hands down Lindenwood was a much better team. They really showed us where we need to improve."

Team captains seniors Drew Vandas, Watson and Jim Dougherty agreed after this weekend that the team still was very out of shape — a fear Nedelec had going into the weekend. The captains decided to institute mandatory dry-land training. Team members hope their fitness level will be significantly improved going into next weekend.

In Saturday's game against Missouri State University, freshman forward Cody Dependahl scored the first goal in the first period off of a power play, and junior defenseman Nick Blechle scored the second goal of the game early in the second period to put the Bulldogs up 2-0. The Bulldogs could not hold on, how-

ever, and MSU scored a goal late in the second period and a goal in the third period to earn a tie.

"Our second game was against probably our biggest rival, Missouri State," sophomore forward Zach Rohne said. "We took a 2-0 lead in that game, and ended up letting them back in the game. ... Both of us had very good chances in the last minute to score, but no one did."

The Bulldogs controlled the rink during much of the first game and scored four goals before Illinois State scored its only goal of the game. The Bulldogs went on to score another five goals after that, securing their first victory of the season, 9-1.

Looking forward to next weekend, the Bulldogs square off against St. Louis University in their first game Saturday at 9 a.m. Later that day, Truman takes on St. Louis Community College at 6 p.m. On Sunday, the 'Dogs take on Southeast Missouri State University at 7 a.m. and Missouri University at 3 p.m.



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