

# SPORTS

PERFECT FALL

Women's tennis finishes fall season 6-0

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## UNO downs 'Dogs

Mavericks score two goals in 24 seconds, women now 8-1 this season and ranked No. 14

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

The 55th minute doomed the Bulldogs. Until 10 minutes into the second half of their game against the University of Nebraska-Omaha on Sunday, the women's soccer team managed to keep the game tied at 0-0. But two quick goals in the 55th minute proved to be enough for UNO to sink the Bulldogs by a 2-0 score, handing Truman its first loss of the season.

On Thursday, the Bulldogs had claimed a 3-1 win against Missouri Southern State University to bring their win streak to eight games. Sunday's loss put an end to that streak as the Bulldogs fell to 8-1 this season. The eight-game win streak was the longest for Truman since 2004, when the team also won eight straight games.

The 2008 streak also was the longest to start off a season. After the loss to UNO, Truman — previously ranked No. 4 in the nation — fell to No. 14 in the NSCAA rankings.

"It was a tough loss since it was the first one of our season," senior defender Kim Wolff said. "We always know [the UNO game] is going to be a tough game going into it. But we just didn't come out as hard as we usually do. It just seemed people weren't all on the exact same page. And

then with getting two goals within a minute of each other, just didn't really help us out at all."

This game marked a continuing lopsided rivalry between these two teams. Since 2003 Truman is 2-4 against UNO during the regular season, and UNO has beat Truman an additional three times in NCAA Tournament play during this time period.

As the 'Dogs began to tire in the second half, they were unable to keep the ball out of their half of the field, and on a cross, UNO forward Casey Bigsby knocked a header into the goal for the first goal of the game. Unfortunately for the Bulldogs, the damage did not stop there.

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Kim Wolff  
Senior Defender

On the ensuing kickoff, UNO took the ball down the middle of the field. After a brief battle with a Truman defender, UNO's Mykala Hanson scored the second goal off a give-in-go, just 24 seconds after the Mavericks' first goal. Truman was unable to recover as UNO goalie Lauren Fox made saves on all five of the 'Dogs' shots on goal.

The score line does not tell the whole story about Truman's first loss of the season, though. The Bulldogs were evenly matched with UNO for the first half. Truman was tied with UNO through the first half with four shots apiece. It was Truman's second half fatigue and the UNO's offensive explosion that doomed the Bulldogs. UNO shot 12 times in the second half, compared to Truman's five. For the game, the Mavericks outshot Truman 16-9.

This marked the first time this season that Truman was shut out and failed to score the first



Junior defender Kelsey Richters battles a UNO defender in Truman's 2-0 loss on Sunday. The loss was the first of the season for the Bulldogs.

goal of a game.

Truman will be looking forward to avenging its loss when UNO comes to town Oct. 20.

"UNO is always a big rival, probably one of our biggest in the conference besides Central

Missouri," junior defender Kelsey Richters said. "They're always a difficult team to beat. Being from Nebraska, I know a lot of the girls on the team. I've played with them since I was six years

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## Bulldogs utilize defense to beat FHSU

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Assistant Sports Editor

Sometimes all it takes is one play.

On its first play from scrimmage Saturday, the Truman offense accumulated as many points as Fort Hays University did in the entire game.

Freshman running back Donald Harvey caught a screen pass, followed his blocks and broke free to give the Bulldogs a touchdown just 21 seconds into the game.

The 68-yard pass was the longest of senior quarterback Matt Tcich's career and led the Bulldogs (2-2, 1-2 MIAA) to a 27-7 victory in front of a Hays' (2-3, 1-3 MIAA) homecoming crowd.

"It takes their crowd out of it a little bit," head coach Shannon Currier said. "Gives us a sense of confidence, some momentum. It's just easier to call plays on all phases when you have a lead."

The offense put up the early points, but it was the defense that shone the rest of the game. They forced five turnovers, did not allow a touchdown until early in the fourth quarter, and were perfect on fourth down stops, the biggest coming with two minutes left in the first half.

On fourth and one at the Bulldog 15 yard line and with the Tigers threatening to make it a 10-point game, senior linebacker Mike Phillips made a tackle in the backfield.

"We were determined to stop them on that play, and we



Senior linebacker Jason Thier makes a tackle earlier this season. The Truman defense forced five turnovers and had seven sacks against Fort Hays on Saturday.

did and we kind of set the tone for the rest of the game how we got after them on defense," Senior defensive end Less Hammers said.

In the second half, the Tiger offense had zero first downs on six of its 10 drives, and the 'Dogs had all three of their interceptions in the fourth quarter to help put the game away.

Truman scored twice before the end of the first half to take a 17-0 lead, which Currier said forced the Tigers out of the comfort of their running game, which is averaging 157 yards a game.

"Anytime an offense is one-dimensional it's easier as a defense," Currier said. "And

they kind of abandoned their run early. We got them to do something that they haven't done a lot with. We got them to spread out and throw it — that's not what they're all about."

The passing game didn't work out for Hays, as quarterback Mike Garrison was 20 of 45 for 168 yards. The Tigers had 69 yards of offense in the third quarter and did not threaten to score in the second half apart from their 75-yard touchdown drive.

"Their quarterback kind of telegraphed where he was going to be passing," senior linebacker Eric Sternberg said.

As much as the Hays' passing game struggled, credit can be given to the Truman defense for putting pressure on the quarterback. The Bulldogs had a season-high seven sacks and 10 tackles for a loss.

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After suffering an injury her junior year of high school, head coach Mike Cannon kept on pursuing Kim Wolff, who has become a four year starter on defense.

## 'An ideal defender'

Wolff uses speed, experience to lead Bulldog defense

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

A torn ACL proved to be a blessing in disguise for the Bulldogs.

Kim Wolff had the tools to be a Div. I soccer player. She had the speed a lot of schools look for. She was named a first-team All-Conference player and a St. Louis Post-Dispatch All-Metro player. It

appeared that Wolff, a senior defender for the women's soccer team, would be set to go to a Div. I school.

Misfortune struck, though, when Wolff tore her ACL during her junior year of high school. She missed most of her club soccer season that summer, and the injury was a major deterrent against schools signing her.

"We got a bit fortunate being able to get her to come [to Truman]," head coach Mike Cannon said. "[With the injury] I think she fell off some bigger schools' radar.

As far as recruiting-wise, we were fortunate enough that she was looking at Truman for the academics and also for soccer. ... It worked out well for us ... because she could have been a very good Div. I player."

Wolff kept in contact with Cannon after the injury, and Cannon was more than happy to offer her a spot on the team. Wolff came to Truman in fall 2005 and promptly was placed in the starting line-up as a defender. She has started as a defender for

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## Football needs more success from ground attack

A poster hangs outside of the football offices in Pershing Building that outlines weekly goals for the Bulldogs. At the top of the list is the goal of gaining four or more yards on first down at least 54 percent of the time.

What follows are each week's percent achievement of that goal. The results read: 37 percent, 40 percent, 40 percent and 45 percent. For four straight weeks, the 'Dogs have not come closer than 9 percent of their

goal. And it all starts with the lack of a running game.

COMMENTARY



Blake Toppmeyer

In 60 first-down rushing attempts this season, Truman is averaging just 2.23 yards per carry and has gained four or more yards just 33 percent of the time.

The Bulldogs' poor rushing numbers are not limited to first down attempts, either. After four weeks, Truman is averaging just 2.2 yards per carry. The Bulldogs' run attack ranks last in the MIAA and 134th out

of 148 Div. II football programs.

Head coach Shannon Currier said for his team to improve on the ground, it's going to take improved blocking to open up more holes for the running backs.

"The bottom line is, we got to get more movement up front," Currier said. "For any [running play] to be successful, you got to move their defensive line. We need to keep getting better to where we are creating more seams for our running backs."

The Bulldogs have managed to go 2-2 after four games, but it's unlikely the 'Dogs can maintain success the next two weeks — when Truman

plays nationally-ranked University of Nebraska-Omaha and Pittsburg State University — without some semblance of a ground attack.

Statistically, rushing success is one of the most accurate indicators of a team's success. The 14 Div. II teams that rank behind Truman in rushing offense have a combined record of 12-54. On the flip side, the MIAA's top three rushing teams rank in the top four of overall conference standings.

Poor running teams tend to struggle in other offensive areas, such as third down conversions. Currier said short runs on first downs

limit second downs to a passing-only situation and can lead to long third down plays. Plus, ineffective running teams are often unable to convert in short-yardage third-down situations. Truman is last in the MIAA this season with a third down conversion rate of 24.2 percent.

A poor ground game is nothing new for a Currier-led Bulldog offense. In his four-plus seasons in Kirksville, Currier has had just one team that averaged more than 3.5 yards per carry in a season. That was his 2006 team, which featured three senior offensive linemen.

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