

# Bulls lose two amid Oklahoma heat

BY ARRON HUSTEAD  
Staff Reporter

It was a rough weekend for Bulls rugby as players battled the heat as well as their opponents.

The team played two games during the weekend, falling 17-7 to Oklahoma State University on Saturday and 59-10 to the University of Oklahoma on Sunday.

The Bulls made a larger number of substitutions than normal because of temperatures in the high 80s and the quality and size of the opposing teams. Also, the fact that they were playing two games in one weekend increased the use of substitutes.

"The heat was a pretty big factor this weekend," senior captain Justin Lacy said. "It was probably the hottest weekend we've played in a long time."

The Bulls went into halftime of the first game tied with Oklahoma State

7-7, and the teams played closely in the second half until the Cowboys picked up two late scores to get the win.

Lacy said the Cowboys were able to capitalize on some Bulls mistakes.

"We dominated the game, and honestly we should have come away with the win," Lacy said. "We controlled the game play almost the entire game. We just made stupid mistakes inside the red zones and made some stupid penalties and costly errors that cost us the game."

Head coach Bill Sexton said the team will have to improve on several things in coming weeks to avoid making the same mistakes again.

"We were basically our own worst enemy in that game, just constantly creating turnover situations," Sexton said. "Just silly things — knock-ons, not straightening line-outs, silly penalties in critical phases. People tried to do too much."

The Bulls were unable to move the

ball when it mattered most, falling just shy of scoring on multiple occasions.

"We had at least three tries that should have scored, but we just came up short on [the tries] which in some respects is the margin of a game," Sexton said.

The University of Oklahoma scored early in the first half to take a 7-0 lead in the second game, and the Bulls answered with a try of their own to close the gap to 7-5. The Bulls were then outplayed in the rest of the first half as the Sooners scored five more tries and carried a 38-5 lead into halftime.

"We played really well for about 25 minutes and then just went kind of flat," Sexton said.

Sexton said Oklahoma was able to spread the field well and capitalize on their speed while the Bulls became fatigued and were unable to keep up as the game wore on.

"It was morally draining, I think," Sexton said. "It was hot, they were still probably feeling the effects of the previous day's effort. I think that psychologically they realized the game was over."

Lacy said something was off for the team in the second game and that led to several things going in Oklahoma's favor.

"For some reason, the team's head just wasn't in the game," Lacy said. "We just didn't play the kind of rugby that we expect to play at Truman."

Lacy acknowledged the possibility that the outcome of the first game might have had a negative effect on the team's mindset for the second game. He said that if that played a factor, the team will have some larger issues to deal with.

"If that's the case, something's gone wrong anyway because what you expect is for a team to respond when a game like that happens," Lacy said.

"Whenever you realize that you've cost yourself an opportunity to win, you expect them to bounce back."

This was the first double-header weekend for senior Dylan Rohr. Rohr joined the team last spring.

"It wears on you definitely after 80-minute games nonstop running the whole time," Rohr said. "On Sunday I tried to get the best sleep that I could, then wake up the next day and do the same thing over again."

Rohr said he enjoys playing against larger schools like Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

"I prefer it over the smaller schools just because it gives us a better chance to see more real rugby," Rohr said. "I think it prepares us more for actual rugby than playing a smaller school."

The team will host an alumni game Saturday for Homecoming Week before returning to league play Oct. 12 against Kansas State University.



Senior outside hitter Eli Medina elevates for a kill during a match earlier this season. Medina has missed just one match in her four-year career.

## Medina steps up against MIAA foes

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Assistant Sports Editor

In two matches last weekend, senior outside hitter Eli Medina racked up 27 kills, 14 digs and a .442 hitting percentage.

For Medina, it's nothing out of the ordinary.

"At the end of the day when the players are playing in any sport, you know who you trust," head coach Jason Skoch said. "In volleyball — even more so than basketball — because there's a lot of broken plays where kids have to ad-lib, they know who they can trust — and Eli's one of them."

Medina combined a 13-kill, five-dig performance in a 3-0 sweep of Missouri Southern State University on Friday with a 14-kill, nine-dig match in a 3-1 loss against No. 17 Pittsburgh State University.

She put up the numbers despite a recent injury to starting right side hitter senior Melissa Keck, who is hitting .323 on the season and is third in kills with 125. However, junior right side hitters Lauren Graybeal and Erin Hathey filled in just fine, combining to hit .313.

"When we play other teams I guess they'll have one, two main hitters who we can just camp out on them, commit to them every time," Medina said. "And our team, when we're on, we're really well balanced, so teams can't just over commit."

In both matches, Medina led Truman in kills and points, and she had

only four errors during the span. The Bulldogs hit .317 and .244 as a team, respectively.

Medina has been a staple on the team since her freshman year, playing in all but one match in her career at Truman. The consistency has led her to approach top Truman career marks in total attempts, kills and digs, and she is the team leader in all three categories.

Medina is hitting .241 this season, higher than her career mark of .183 and her season career high of .203 set in 2007.

"I want my team to know they can look to me for energy, encouragement," Medina said. "I want to be a really stable player."

Medina is seventh in total attempts, ninth in kills, and ranks in the top 10 in career double-doubles and 20-dig games. She is approaching alumna Sarah Shearman's mark of 1,714 for second all-time in career digs.

"Defense is my favorite part of the game, so I'm always happy when we can have a good showing," Medina said.

Skoch said he has been working on Medina's patience for the past two weeks, which helped contribute to her having a stellar weekend.

"She's one of the few people where patience can go a long way to help her play," he said. "She gets excited and jittery and overruns a lot of stuff, but she sees everything. So I've just been telling her to just relax, and patience. And I think that's the difference."

## Athlete of the Week

Eli Medina

Sport: Volleyball

Year: Senior

Position: Outside hitter

Hometown: Kansas City, Mo.

Medina put up big numbers in two matches this weekend. The senior had 27 kills, 14 digs and .442 hitting percentage. In her four-year career, Medina has missed just one match. Known for her defensive play, Medina stands alone in third place in the Truman record books for career digs.

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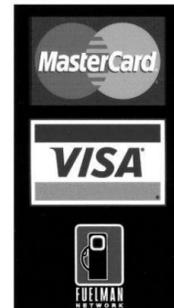
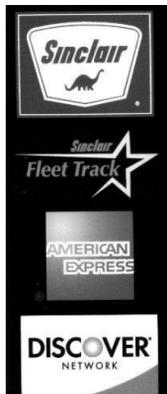
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