

Women extend streak with 1-0 win

Soccer improves regional ranking with win vs MSSU

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

The women's soccer team reeled off another win Saturday in its continuing quest for a postseason berth.

Truman squeaked out a win against Missouri Southern State University with the Bulldogs winning the contest 1-0. Freshman midfielder Megan Buri netted the only goal for either side in the 18th minute as Truman and MSSU played rock-solid defense the rest of the game.

The win improved the Bulldogs' record to 13-3-1, with a 9-3-1 record in the MIAA. Truman remains second in the conference behind the University of Central Missouri.

"[MSSU] wasn't the toughest team we've had to play," freshman midfielder Jaclyn Schumann said. "It was one of our poorer showings. The game, it wasn't our greatest performance, but we still came out with a win."

The win comes as the fourth in Truman's current win streak and was a close contest by all accounts. Both teams attempted several shots, with neither finding success.

The MSSU defense paid for stealing the ball from Truman's forward junior Jessica



Mayank Dhungana/Index
Midfielder Megan Buri had the game's only goal in the 18th minute off of a steal.

Wiegert, however. Buri stole the ball right back from the Lions and scored her second goal of the season to put Truman up 1-0.

Buri's goal marked the only

scoring in the game, but it was not the last opportunity of the game. The Truman offense shot 12 more times in the first half, for a grand total of 15 shots for the half. Minus the goal, the offense put only one

more of those shots on goal. The Truman offense continued its offensive efforts in the second half, but again to no avail. After shooting another eight times, the offense put only two more on goal. Out of the

23 total shots taken by the Truman offense, only four of them were on goal.

Head coach Mike Cannon said he thought it was because his team lacked the proper focus to capitalize on the 23 shots.

"[The team] was a little off on their passing, their communication was a little off, kind of our intensity [was off]," Cannon said. "I kind of told the girls that they were a little bit lethargic, a little sloppy. Not majorly, but we have pretty high standards. It wasn't our worst performance ever, or anything like that, but it wasn't up to the standards we normally play at."

MSSU's offense was not totally quiet either. MSSU shot eight times in both halves for a total of 16 shots. The Truman defense kept pressure off the goal, as Truman junior goalie Denise Childress had to save only shots in the first-half. Second half replacement, freshman Jayne Grisham, only had to save one shot. Grisham's save, however, was a big one. She made a diving stop on a MSSU free kick.

The win probably won't influence rankings much, as MSSU is not ranked in the top 10 in the region and is ranked seventh in the nine-team MIAA conference. It does preserve Truman's undefeated streak (5-0) at home this year.

What is probably more important to the Bulldogs is the upcoming schedule.

Washburn comes into the week ranked No. 3 in the South Central Region, one slot behind No. 2 Truman. A win against Washburn University would help secure a playoff spot for Truman.

Even bigger than Washburn is the game against University of Central Missouri. The Jennies currently are ranked No. 6 in Div. II, and they occupy the top spot in the regional rankings. One more conference win for UCM will make them conference champions for 2008 and the Jennies will garner an automatic playoff berth. A win against UCM could vault Truman up the regional rankings and would more than likely put them back into the national spotlight after falling out of the NSCAA top 25 two weeks ago.

"The games we're going to play this weekend are huge," senior midfielder Katie Buning said. "They're both really big games and we need to come up with wins in both of them if we want to make it to the NCAA Tournament at the end of the season."

The Bulldogs square off against Washburn today at 2 p.m., hoping to keep their win streak alive. They will play UCM at noon Saturday.

Athlete of the Week

Allie Cherven

Sport: Volleyball

Year: Senior

Position: Middle Blocker

Hometown: St. Charles, Mo.

Senior Allie Cherven hit a combined .500 in two games last weekend. She was the only player with at least seven attacks to hit above .233 against Washburn on Friday. Cherven leads the Bulldogs with a .324 hitting percentage, and she has hit above .300 in more than half of the matches this season. Cherven also leads the MIAA in blocks per set with 1.17, and she is fourth all-time for Truman in total blocks.

Cherven leads in senior season

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Sports Editor

Many words can be used to describe the play of Allie Cherven — powerful, consistent and solid all are words that accurately describe Cherven's performance for the volleyball team.

But for Cherven, there is one simple way to describe her play on the court.

"I just do my job," Cherven said Monday, after she led the team with a combined .500 hitting percentage in the team's two weekend matches.

Later that day, head coach Jason Skoch used the same words to describe his senior middle blocker.

"She's been doing her job," he said.

Playing on a team that has had its ups and downs, Cherven's job this season has been providing a reliable force for the Bulldogs.

On Friday against No. 7 Washburn University, Cherven registered eight kills. A day later against Fort Hays State University, she picked up 10 kills and hit .571.

Cherven leads the team with a .324 hitting percentage, and she has hit .300 or better in 17 of 30 matches this season.

And as the season wears on, Cherven just keeps getting better. In the 'Dogs' last 12 matches, Cherven has hit .363.

"I've just been thinking about more that, 'This is my senior season,' and I'm trying to play the best that I can because I don't know if I'll ever get to play again," Cherven said. "I've just been trying to focus on every single ball, trying to do the best that I can to put it away."

Cherven's performance against Washburn was especially noteworthy. Cherven hit .429. No other Bulldog with at least seven attacks hit above .233 against the 26-2 Lady Blues.

"A lot of people say it, but she really does thrive on competition," Skoch said. "Most people's numbers go down when you play a better team. ... Other people just get timid. She doesn't. She truly wants to win, and she likes competition." Cherven has put up big offensive

numbers despite often hitting against double-teams from opponents' blockers. Skoch said some opponents use a strategy called tracking, in which two players will track Cherven's movements in an effort to contain her.

"Teams, in my mind, fear Allie," Skoch said.

Cherven's contributions don't stop on the offensive end, however. Defensively, Cherven ranks fourth all-time in total blocks for Truman, and her 1.17 blocks per set this season lead the MIAA.

Although Skoch said Truman has had other good middle blockers pass through the program — such as alumna Micaela Walter, who played for the Bulldogs from 2002-05 — Skoch said he thinks Cherven is the best middle blocker ever to wear the Bulldog purple and white.

"There's been some good middles, but none of them have the presence like Allie," Skoch said.

Cherven's power helps give her this presence. In a match last week against Emporia State University, Cherven drilled an opponent in the face with a kill and later rocketed a ball off an opponent's chest for another point. Neither ESU player had time to get her hands in a position to defend herself.

Skoch said that although Cherven always has possessed the strength for such power-kills, she gained even more power after making adjustments in her technique. When Cherven transferred to Truman before her sophomore season, Skoch said she jumped from underneath the ball when going up for a kill. Now, Cherven jumps from behind the ball. Not only does this improve her vision, it allows her to use her entire body to generate more power.

But no matter how many kills Cherven racks up this season, for her, she's just doing her job.

"My position, I think, is to put the ball away," Cherven said. "That's what they count on me for so that's what I try to do."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Senior middle blocker Allie Cherven leads the Bulldogs with a .324 hitting percentage this year. She uses her power to generate many kills.



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