

SPORTS

STRONG DEFENSE

Football wins season opener 34-21
Page 16



Thursday, September 11, 2008

www.trumanindex.com

15



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Senior Whitney Boehler has been the starting since the end of her freshman season. She ranks 10th all-time in career digs and her 4.84 digs per set in 2007 is first at Truman.

Boehler 'thrives in the background'

Senior libero helps team with defense, passing, leadership

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

As another Bulldog practice winds down, most of the attention from onlookers scattered about the Student Recreation Center has been focused on senior All-Americans Melissa Keck and Allie Cherven, who send kill after kill soaring over the net.

But in the background, behind Keck and Cherven, senior libero Whitney Boehler is busy diving on the floor digging out everything that comes her way, quietly paving the way for the All-Americans up front.

"We can always count on Whitney back there as someone that is going to be stable and even keeled the whole time," assistant coach Ben Briney said.

The libero is a unique position in volleyball. Liberos wear a different color jersey and can enter the game at any time. They do not count against the 12 substitutions al-

lowed per set.

There also are strict rules on what the libero can and cannot do. The libero can only play in the back row and cannot block or attempt to block the ball, according to NCAA rules. The libero also cannot attack the ball if contact is made while the ball is completely above the height of the net.

Because liberos are restricted on offense, their main duties become ball control, defense and passing. This sometimes can make liberos unsung heroes, as the only official NCAA stat for liberos is digs per game.

So although Boehler continues to dive after balls and work as hard as anyone on the team, she doesn't always get the recognition that comes with the territory. However, Boehler is not bothered by the lack of headlines.

"It's not a big deal because I can take pride in somebody

else having a great game, great sets, great kills because I know that all starts with me," Boehler said. "I don't need my name all over the place."

"We can always count on Whitney back there as someone that is going to be stable and even-keeled the whole time."

Ben Briney
Assistant Coach

The senior is off to her usual solid start for the 7-1 'Dogs. She has started every match this season, leads the team with 117 digs and ranks third in the MIAA in digs per set. She was named the MIAA Specialist of the Week for her play during the season-opening Middle of Everywhere Classic at Rolla.

Coach Briney said the libero goes unnoticed a lot of the time but is always making an impact.

"I would compare the [libero position] to an offensive line in football," Briney said. "They are doing the dirty things, the things no one ever really notices. But then in volleyball there is always that great dig. ... You won't see those in the box Please see BOEHLER, Page 19



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Senior Lisa Weber goes up for a kill during practice on Tuesday. Weber is hitting a team-best .338 on the year.

'Dogs lose 3-1 to Nebraska-Kearney

Volleyball recovers with two sweeps, now 7-1 this season

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

The team that makes fewer mistakes generally wins.

That certainly held true Friday as the No. 5 Bulldogs committed a season-high 23 attack errors and suffered their first loss of the season 3-1 to No. 14 University of Nebraska-Kearney in the UNK Fall Classic.

"We choked," head coach Jason Skoch said. "Players just didn't make plays — that simple. We relied too much on Allie [Cherven], Eli [Medina] and Melissa [Keck] to save us. Other players didn't step up."

Truman — who went 3-1 in this weekend's classic and are 7-1 on the season — fell behind 2-0 right away to UNK. The 'Dogs committed 14 errors in the first two sets, compared to five for UNK. The Bulldogs used a 10-0 run to win set three and close the gap. They appeared to be ready to force a fifth set, but miscues in the fourth set ended their run.

The 'Dogs took a 19-13 lead late in the fourth set, but UNK went on an 8-0 run, which included six Truman

attack errors, to take a 21-19 lead. Truman battled back and cut the lead to 24-23 on a kill by Cherven. But UNK was able to score the final point on the next play to wrap up the victory.

"We just made the errors at the wrong time and wrong place during the game," Cherven said.

The 'Dogs lost despite outperforming UNK in nearly every statistical category. Truman outhit the Loopers by nearly .05 percent and tallied eight more points for the match. The Bulldogs also had more sets, digs and assists than UNK.

Senior libero Whitney Boehler said the loss to Kearney was tough to figure out.

"There were moments that showed we were a winning team," Boehler said. "We just had a few too many glitches. I don't even know how to explain that game."

Senior outside hitter Eli Medina recorded a season-high 18 kills and hit .292 for the match, but no other Bulldog reached double figures in kills. Boehler led the team with 17 digs.

This match was the first time these two teams have met since the 2005 NCAA Tournament when UNK knocked the Bulldogs out in the Elite Eight.

Please see LOSS, Page 19

Women take first place

Kelly, Gronemeyer take top two spots, men place second

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

The cross country season started off on the right foot for both Bulldog teams.

Truman took home first place in the women's meet at the Miner Invite in Rolla, Mo., last Saturday, beating out five other teams, and the men placed second out of eight teams. The women had six of the top 11 times in the meet.

Senior Danna Kelly and freshman Michelle Gronemeyer paced the Bulldogs, finishing first and second, respectively. Sophomore Amanda Brown, junior Fiona Williams, sophomore Kylie Raitel and freshman Dani Dell'Orco rounded out the top 11 for Truman.

Head coach John Cochrane said that although the meet did not feature top competition, he was pleased with the results.

"It's an average meet," Cochrane said. "It's nice that we won. We went to try to find out what everybody was going to do because we have a lot of young people. It was nice to win, but it wasn't the toughest meet in the world. It's definitely better than not winning."

Pack running was a huge



Photo Submitted

Freshman Michelle Gronemeyer (left) runs alongside senior Danna Kelly. The duo led the women's cross country team to a first-place finish at Saturday's Miner Invitational.

part of the Bulldogs' success. Kelly and Gronemeyer were the first of two packs for the women. The second pack consisted of Brown, Williams, Raitel and Dell'Orco, who all finished within seven seconds of each other.

Kelly said pack running is an important aspect of the sport.

"It was really exciting to see that we were all, for the most part, together for the first mile," Kelly said. "Our top five finished within a minute and a half of each other. I think

we would like to decrease that time, closer to a minute within each other. It was still nice that we were able to run in a pack."

The 'Dogs are preparing for Les Duke Invitational this Saturday. The meet will take place Please see FIRST, Page 19

Emokpae likely done for season

BY JACK NICHOLL
Assistant Sports Editor

Junior Vanness Emokpae, the football team's leading receiver in 2007, is likely out for the season with an apparent anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury.

Emokpae was injured after catching a screen pass during the second quarter of Saturday's game against Southern Arkansas University in Liberty, Mo. He said the opposing tackler, after avoiding a block by going under it, made helmet-to-knee contact.

"Initially I thought I broke my leg because I heard something pop — I wasn't sure if it was my knee or what, but I heard something pop and then I went down,"

Emokpae said. "And as soon as it happened, it's just one of those things that, you know, 'This isn't good.'"

After the play, Emokpae was helped off the field to the sideline. He said that after initial tests trainers thought it might have been a sprain, but further tests during halftime revealed that it could be an ACL injury. He returned to the sideline for the second half with a brace on his leg.

Emokpae said trainers are pretty sure it is a torn ACL, but he will have an MRI today to confirm the extent of the injury.

If it is indeed a torn ACL, he will be out for the season and surgery will be required, which involves completely replacing the torn ligament. Please see INJURY, Page 19



Joe Barker/Index

Vanness Emokpae, who had 462 yards receiving last year, will have an MRI today to confirm the extent of his injury.