

SPORTS

TENNIS WINS

Both teams remain undefeated on young season

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Thursday, September 18, 2008

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Ol' Hickory Stick game carries tradition

Truman-Northwest game Saturday will be 88th matchup between the schools

BY JACK NICHOLL
Assistant Sports Editor

October 20, 2001.
The setting is the Northwest Missouri State University football team's homecoming game, and a school-record 9,500 fans are in attendance. On one side of the field are the Bearcats, who are 6-1, ranked No. 8 in the country and riding a 41-game MIAA win streak. They are two years removed from back-to-back national titles.
On the other side of the field are the Bulldogs, also with a 6-1 record. They have not beaten Northwest since 1995,

then-head coach John Ware's first season at Truman. In the last six meetings, the Bearcats had won by an average of nearly 22 points a game.

Northwest took a 20-7 lead into the fourth quarter, but after back-and-forth scores, Truman got the ball on its own 25-yard line, down 23-17, with 1:23 left on the clock. Quarterback Eric Howe connected on three passes, including a fourth down conversion, to bring the ball to the Northwest 38.

Then came the clincher.
"Spectacular last 25 seconds," said Hank Janssen, longtime radio commentator for KRES, who was at the game. "Eric Howe [threw a] long pass to Alfonso Pugh inside the five yard line with about 30 seconds left and then Howe scrambles in. And it was spectacular."
"And 10,000 people, just dead silence."

Longest Div. II rivalry

Truman-Northwest is the longest running rivalry game in Div. II football, dating back to 1908. When the Bulldogs and Bearcats play at Stokes Stadium 7 p.m. Saturday, it will be the 88th meeting between the two schools.

In 1931, the two teams starting playing for a 30-inch hickory stick which former Northwest President U.W. Lamkin sent to former Truman President Eugene Fair, according to the Truman media guide.

According to the guide, Lamkin found the hickory stick on a farm where Fair grew up, which was near Northwest University. Since then, the annual matchup between the two teams has been dubbed the "Ol' Hickory Stick" game.

"The stick has so much history behind it, and there's been so many great players
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The Ol' Hickory Stick game

• The longest rivalry in Div. II.

• Each year, the winner dips the Hickory Stick in paint. The stick was a gift given to former Truman president Eugene Fair from former Northwest President U.W. Lamkin in 1930.

• Truman leads the all-time series 54-29-4 and they lead the "Hickory Stick" games 43-27-4.

• Northwest is currently on a six game win streak against Truman.

Design by Antionette Bedessie/Index



Central Missouri running back Glenn Milner attempts to stiff-arm linebacker Eric Sternberg during the MIAA opener on Saturday.

Ticich fit to lead

A visibly disappointed Matt Ticich milled around the field at Stokes Stadium minutes after the football team's 31-28 loss to the University of Central Missouri on Saturday night.

In his typical postgame fashion, the senior quarterback talked with his parents, then other members of his family, then friends and fans.

COMMENTARY



Blake Toppmeyer

Then, as he has after almost every home football game for more than a year, Ticich turned to me, prepared to answer any questions I had about the Bulldogs' season-opening loss.

"Not much to say really," Ticich said. "I threw a bad pass. I blew it." Ticich was referring to the interception he threw late in the fourth quarter with his team trailing 24-21. UCM's LaVance Dotson returned the pick for a touchdown, which ultimately put the game out of reach.

The interception was Ticich's only major mistake in 48 pass attempts, but it was all he could think about after the loss.

Never once did Ticich mention that if the offensive line would have opened some holes for the running backs, Truman could have gained more than three yards total rushing. A stronger running game also would have eased the pressure on Ticich.

Never once did Ticich mention that if sophomore wide receiver Kendrick Blue had not dropped the pass preceding the interception, the Bulldogs would have had a first down and Ticich's second down pass never would have been thrown. Blue's drop was Truman's fifth dropped pass of the game.

Never once did Ticich mention that Saturday's weather, which featured rainfall from the game's start to finish, was not ideal for passing situations.

None of these things were on Ticich's mind after the loss. All he could think about was his one mistake.

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Bulldogs lose 31-28 to Mules

'Dogs fall behind early, unable to complete 17-point comeback

BY JACK NICHOLL
Assistant Sports Editor

Junior linebacker Eric Sternberg knew the Bulldogs had all the momentum at the end of the game.

Down 24-7 with 3:25 to go in the third quarter, Sternberg turned the game around by going untouched on a blocked punt. It was

returned for a touchdown, igniting a Bulldog comeback.

But the comeback fell short. Truman scored twice in the fourth quarter, but the University of Central Missouri held on for a 31-28 victory last Saturday at Stokes Stadium.

"Like our coach said, 'We didn't lose the game, time just ran out,'" Sternberg said.

Truman (1-1, 0-1 MIAA) never led in the game, but the 'Dogs were never out of it either. The Bulldogs had two more first downs, more yards per play, three less punts and

they outgained No. 24 Central Missouri (3-0, 1-0 MIAA) 408 to 297.

Senior quarterback Matt Ticich was 27 of 48 for 378 yards and two touchdowns. His only mistake of the day, an interception returned for a touchdown with five minutes left, proved to be the game winner.

Even after the pick put Central ahead by 10, the Bulldogs never let up.

"We didn't get down throughout the whole entire game," Sternberg said. "Even when they returned the interception for a touchdown we

came down and scored. And the offense did their job and we just came up short."

The Bulldogs went 75 yards to answer the touchdown in just more than two minutes, with a key fourth down conversion on fourth and nine. Ticich threw a lateral to senior wide receiver Philip Henry, who looked like he was going to run a screen but instead threw across the field to wide-open senior Phil Kenney, which brought the drive down to the yardline.

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Soccer tops Upper Iowa 2-1

Bulldogs snap scoreless streak with two first-half scores, improve to 3-3

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER
Sports Editor

It took 17 days and four games, but the men's soccer team finally scored a goal in September.

Sophomore forward Robbie Narrow broke Truman's 282-minute scoreless streak — which spanned parts of five games and included three September shutout losses — when Narrow scored a goal in the 11th minute against Upper Iowa University yesterday.

Narrow fired a shot off the post and placed a rebound shot in the goal for the Bulldogs first goal since Aug. 31.

The Bulldogs kept applying the offensive pressure for the rest of the game, and Truman beat the Peacocks 2-1 on a warm, clear day at Truman Soccer Park.

"We needed [some offense] just for the spirit of the team," Narrow said. "... It was good to get that one early in the first half. We would've liked to score a little more on them, but we played good."

With the win, Truman snapped a three-game losing streak and improved to 3-3 (3-1 in regional games).

"This was definitely a must-win game for us," Narrow said. "We needed it to keep our spirits up and keep us going."

The 'Dogs continued to pepper Upper Iowa goalie Andy Youde with shots throughout the game. The Bulldogs switched from their old 4-4-2 formation to a 4-3-3 against Upper Iowa, and it led to 21 shots, with 11 shots on goal.

Sophomore midfielder Scott Biggerstaff padded Truman's lead when he flicked a cross from junior back Dan Russell into the net in the 35th minute.

Truman had several more opportu-

nities to score, but Youde made multiple diving saves to keep the game close.

The Peacocks added a goal in the 88th. UIU's Craig Signorin buried a shot in the corner of the net from well outside the 18-yard box, but Truman closed out the final two minutes for the win.

Upper Iowa was the ideal opponent for the Bulldogs to break out against offensively. In its last five matchups with the Peacocks, Truman is 5-0 with a combined margin of victory of 31-2.

Before the Bulldogs' win against the Peacocks, Truman was shut out in a 2-0 loss to the University of Tampa on Thursday and fell 1-0 to No. 3 Lynn University on Saturday.

"Both teams, Tampa and Lynn, I think will be teams that have an opportunity to make a run at the title," head coach Duke Cochran said.

"Lynn's more organized than Tampa, [but] Tampa's maybe a little more dynamic in the attack with some of the

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Junior goalkeeper Kyle Talbot punches the ball away from the goal against the Peacocks yesterday. Talbot had two saves in the win.

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index