

Rugby defeats Benedictine 19-0

Bulls' record moves to 1-1 after home win on wet field

BY ARRON HUSTEAD
Staff Reporter

Despite wet field conditions Saturday that minimized potential speed for many players, one Bulls Rugby player broke free for a long score.

Five minutes into the second half of the Bulls' 19-0 victory against Benedictine University (Ill.), senior Will Holleman caught a toss from sophomore Aaron Loida and sprinted up the touchline. Holleman slipped through a few tackles on the way to a 35-meter try run.

"We just caught them off guard," Holleman said. "I'm always in pretty good contact with our scrum man, Aaron Loida, and I was just letting him know I was there on the weak side. He had seen me there a couple times, and a couple times it wasn't open. This time, he got the ball out quick and it was open. He set me up real nice."

Holleman's score helped pave the way for the Bulls' first victory of the season. The team is 1-1.

Senior Alex Koenen and freshman Jason Ralph also

scored tries for the Bulls. Ralph's score came on a goal line play at 27 minutes into the first half, which sent the Bulls into halftime with a 7-0 lead. Holleman's score increased the lead to 12-0, and Koenen scored on another goal line play 20 minutes into the second half.

Rain fell consistently throughout the game Saturday, after the field already was drenched from heavy rains Friday evening. The wet conditions slowed everyone down and made big runs like Holleman's few and far between.

"We had a couple times there where some of our fast guys on the outside should have broken it, but it's just like running in quicksand out there," Holleman said. "And on that they were just as fast as we were."

Along with his try, Holleman was two out of three for the game on conversion kicks.

Senior captain Justin Lacy said the conditions only partially affected the Bulls' strategy. He said both teams mostly rely on the play of their forwards to move the ball up the field in normal conditions, which is the strategy they had to use in this game.

"Honestly, it probably hurt us a little more than it hurt them," Lacy said. "We prob-

ably would have liked to kick the ball a little bit more, but with the conditions the ball would have stopped."

The Bulls shut out Benedictine in large part because of a strong red zone defense. There were several instances during which Benedictine players broke free but were stopped short of the goal line. Head coach Bill Sexton said he was pleased with how well the team worked together as a unit.

"You can coach defensive tactics," Sexton said. "You can coach realignment. You can coach people to tackle more effectively. What you can't coach is that desire, that courage that it takes to stand there and step up and make the tackle. That's the thing that I think really came out on Saturday as a real strong point."

Sexton said there was a lot of pride on the line between the teams with Benedictine trying desperately to score and Truman working hard to keep them shut out.

"One of the best [examples] was the end of the game, when the game was in hand and the hooker from [Benedictine] tweaked his neck," Sexton said. "I told the [team] that prior to that injury there were 40 seconds left, and Benedictine



Mayank Dhungana/Index
Sophomore Aaron Loida wraps up a Benedictine player and jars the ball loose during the rugby team's 19-0 shutout win. The Bulls are 1-1 this season.

was absolutely convinced they had to score. This was a matter of pride — they were going for it and just prior to that they had done the same thing. They attacked the goal line very hard, and our guys basically withstood the pressure."

As the Black Monks tried to push toward the goal line, Loida was able to pull the ball

loose and into touch phase as time ran out.

Another factor increased the intensity in this game for Truman. Former Truman vice captain, Mike Fitzgerald, now plays for the Black Monks.

"[Fitzgerald] had several breakaways, and I thought the guys played very well against him," Sexton said. "Every time

Benedictine got into a position where they were threatening to score, I was really pleased with the way the guys shored up on defense."

After this week's victory, the Bulls have this weekend off before they take on Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma on Sept. 27 and 28.

Cross country teams place fifth in Grinnell

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

Pack running was a key factor for the men's cross country team last weekend.

The Bulldogs finished fifth at the Les Duke Invitational in Grinnell, Iowa, on Saturday. The meet featured 26 teams and more than 360 runners.

The 8-km (4.971 miles) meet was longer than the men's season-opening meet Sept. 6. The difference didn't affect the Bulldogs, however, because the 8-km race is more common for the men.

Sophomore Bob Gorman and freshman Joey Walls led the way for Truman, placing 15th and 19th, respectively. Sophomore Adam Kell, freshman Mike Dial and sophomore

Alex Phillips rounded out the top five for the 'Dogs.

Pack running was a big part of the Bulldogs' success for the second week in a row. Their first seven runners finished within 1:25 of each other. Head coach Tim Schwegler said he was happy with the results but that the team still needs to pack in a little tighter.

"That's going to be one of the keys to our success," Schwegler said. "We're going to be able to pack up. We were really close this week. We were at 1:30, but we can't be there. It's got to be 45 to 60 seconds between runners one and five. If we can do that, we can be a pretty good team. Even though we got fifth, we figured out we could have won if we would have pulled everything together. That really gave a boost to the whole team."

Walls has finished in the top 20 in

his first two collegiate meets. Gorman said he has been impressed with the way Walls has run thus far.

"He had a great race obviously," Gorman said. "He's definitely adjusting well. The main thing we need to focus on is that it's a long year. He needs to stay healthy, as does everyone else."

The women's cross country team also took home fifth place at the invitational. There were 24 teams and more than 320 runners in the meet. It was a normal 6-km (3.728 miles) race, longer than the team's first race of 5-km.

Senior Danna Kelly and freshman Michelle Gronemeyer led the charge for the women, finishing sixth and 11th, respectively. Sophomores Amanda Brown and Kylie Raitel and

freshman Dani Dell'Orco completed the top five runners for the Bulldogs.

Pack running didn't show up as much on the women's side. The top five runners for the Bulldogs were spread out over 2:25. Head coach John Cochrane said this is something the women will have to work on but overall he was happy with the meet.

"Our first three runners ran OK," Cochrane said. "This turned out to be a very good meet with some very good teams. We needed to get our fourth and fifth runner with our third runner. If we would have done that, we could have gotten second place. We had talked about getting three, four and five together, and that's something we have to work on to make ourselves a better team."

Freshmen also have contributed to

the women's team. Gronemeyer has finished in the top 11 in the first two meets and second on the team behind Kelly. Dell'Orco also has ran well, finishing in the top six on the team in the first two meets. Cochrane said the freshmen still have things to work on but that he thinks they will improve throughout the year.

"I think with each meet we'll get better," Cochrane said. "Gronemeyer, who everyone went wacko about last meet, ran like it was a high school meet. We will see various things out of her. I mean, she ran OK, but she got herself off by herself. She's young, and these are just things we're going to have to work on."

The next meet for the cross country teams will be the Brissman-Lundeen Invitational on Sept. 27 in Rock Island, Ill.

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