

## RIVALRY | "Ol' Hickory Stick" game has become more of a traditional rivalry in recent years because of Northwest's dominance

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and so many great teams that have played for it that it's just as important as a large trophy," senior linebacker Bob Massop said. After the game, the winner dips the stick in their team's color, and the result of the game is etched into the side of the stick.

Truman owns a decided edge in the series with a 54-29-4 record overall and a 43-27-4 record since the stick became a prize. The series has been marked by streaks, with Truman going

undefeated from 1956 to 1965 and winning 11 straight from 1985 to 1995.

But lately, Northwest has dominated, winning 10 of the last 11 contests.

Since the meeting in 2001, the Bearcats have made the playoffs five of the last six years, and they have been the national runner-up the last three seasons. In the same time span, Truman has not won more than six games in a season.

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**Shannon Currier**  
Head Coach

"For our program, it may be a rivalry because that's

kind of the team we use as the standard to compare or measure our team against," head coach Shannon Currier said. "That's where we want to be. What they've done, that's what we want to do, you know, going to the national championship games."

Northwest has won the last six games between the teams by an average of 22 points. Truman came close to winning in 2003, when former Bulldog quarterback Jake Czeschin passed for a then-MIAA record 479 yards (since broken in 2007 by current senior quarterback Matt Ticich).

An undefeated Bearcat squad needed a one-yard touchdown run on fourth down with :24 to go for the 45-42 victory against the winless Bulldogs.

"We tried everything, not

that it all worked," Currier said. "... Onside kicks, fake punts — we did whatever we could do to try to manufacture points."

Because of their dominance, the Bearcats have made rivalries with other teams, most notably Pittsburg State University, to make up for what has become more of a traditional rivalry with Truman.

Northwest and Pittsburg will play in the seventh running of the "Fall Classic at Arrowhead" game this season, and conference-newcomer University of Nebraska-Omaha will square off with the Bearcats for the ninth time in the last 11 years.

**Losing its luster**  
The "Ol' Hickory Game" has lost some luster in recent years. Currier, who previously

coached at Div. II Concordia University-St. Paul, had barely even heard of the rivalry before he came to Truman.

"It's more a traditional game in the last 10 years than it is a real rivalry game," Janssen said. "Still, there's something there, but I really think the edge came off a little bit when it wasn't Northeast-Northwest."

In the past, many of the Bulldog coaches also were alumni who had played on the football team, which made them involved in the "Hickory Stick" game as both a player and a coach. Janssen said former coaches Bruce Craddock, Jack Ball, Eric Holm and Ware were pivotal to the rivalry.

"That rivalry aspect was really invented in those guys," Janssen said. "The tradition

was really alive, and it was important. And I think Shannon Currier keeps it alive, and it's a little different. ... But all those years the 'Dogs were winning, it was a huge game. It was traditional, and it was big."

Although Currier said the team prepares equally for every game, winning against Northwest on Saturday would mean something extra.

"Because of the tradition, and former players come to talk to our team, if there was to be one game [to win], or one team, it would probably have to be Northwest Missouri," Currier said.

Janssen calls the 2001 team Ware's best squad. The 2008 team can follow in its footsteps by winning Saturday with what is arguably Currier's best squad in his five years as a Bulldog.



**Junior Ben Green fights for possession yesterday. Although Green did not score in the game, he was tied for the team lead with two shots on goal.**

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

## SOCCER | Team gets much-needed win against Peacocks after losing in two shutouts during weekend games in Florida

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players that they have."

Against Tampa, Truman outshot the Spartans 12-11 and had six shots on goal compared to their three, but the Bulldogs could not find the net. Tampa (4-0-1) has not allowed a goal this season.

Cochran said Narrow had one of Truman's best chances to score. Tampa goalie Ryan Thompson made a diving save on Narrow's shot in which the ball got stuck under Thompson's body. Thompson scooped up the ball before it crossed the goal line.

"Their keeper pretty much almost stood on his head to save some [shots]," Cochran said. The Bulldogs had another opportunity late in the game when a shot hit off the post.

"The chances are there," Green said. "We're hitting the bar, and we're getting our shots off, and we're forcing the offense in their half. Right now, it's just a matter of the ball not going in the net."

Tampa broke a scoreless tie just before halftime. The Spartans' Greg Sasser received a cross inside the box and placed a shot past sophomore goalie Kyle Talbot.

The Spartans added another goal in the second half after Talbot committed a turnover while trying to advance the ball upfield. Tampa's Ryan Maxwell then faked out Talbot and scored an easy goal.

"In fairness to Kyle [Talbot], he is a sophomore still, and when he's on his game, he is as good as I've seen," Cochran said. "Any players in the back, when you're that close to goal, you have to limit mistakes so they don't

lead to goals."

The Truman-Lynn matchup Sunday was marked by the color yellow — as in yellow cards. The teams combined for nine yellow cards and 38 fouls (19 for each side). Senior captain midfielder Josh Weir was given a red card.

"It was a physical game, but it wasn't anything that was dirty by any means," said Green, who had one of Truman's five yellow cards. "Neither team was going for a foul. ... I think the referee tried to get a hold on some calls early in the game by giving out cards, and he didn't necessarily need to issue cards for them. And he had to kind of keep face after he started that trend."

The 'Dogs' offense really slumped against Lynn. Truman attempted just seven shots with only three on net.

Lynn scored the lone goal of Sunday's game in the 28th minute. The Fighting Knights were awarded an indirect kick after a foul call and converted the kick for a score.

Green said Truman's defense and Talbot "played well for the most part" during the weekend and that Tampa and Lynn simply took advantage of a few Bulldog miscues.

"All three goals that got scored on us this weekend were just small mistakes that got magnified by good teams," Green said. "It was something that if we had done against the last place team in the region, they might not have scored, but again, these were [NCAA] tournament [caliber] teams we were playing."

Truman is off for a week before hosting Washington University at 4 p.m. Sept. 26.

**"It was a physical game, but it wasn't anything that was dirty by any means. Neither team was going for a foul."**

**Ben Green**  
Junior  
referring to the 10 cards issued in the men's soccer team's game against Lynn University.

## TICICH | Quarterback steps up in second half, combines for 398 yards of total offense in season-opening football game

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"If it wasn't for that late interception, I think we beat these guys," Ticich said.

That might be true, but if it wasn't for Ticich, Truman never would have been in a position to win anyway.

Despite the wet weather, Ticich accounted for 98 percent of the Bulldogs' total offense. Ticich compiled 398 yards of total offense Saturday, compared to 10 total yards from the rest of the team.

The refusal-to-blame-others attitude that Ticich exhibited Saturday demonstrated why he has been the perfect fit for Truman's quarterback position for the last three seasons.

After a mediocre first half against UCM, Ticich elevated his performance in the second half and kept his team in the game. In the final two quarters, Ticich completed 16 of 25 passes for 193 yards and a touchdown. Three of his incompletions were dropped passes.

And as Ticich came alive, so did his teammates. The special teams blocked a punt and returned it for a touchdown. The defense tightened up and allowed just one offensive TD in the second half.

Truman's comeback and refusal to quit was something rarely seen last season. Several times last season, when the Bulldogs fell down by a few touchdowns early in the game, Truman never recovered and got blown out.

In the Bulldogs' five losses last season, their margin of defeat was almost 35 points per game.

When the Mules scored early in the

third quarter Saturday to take a 24-7 lead, it looked like Truman was headed for another 35-point loss.

Yet the Bulldogs never stopped thinking they could win and twice narrowed UCM's lead to three points.

Even after Ticich's interception, there was a feeling of confidence on the sidelines.

"We believe in you," Steve Anderson, a redshirt freshman defensive back, said to Ticich after the interception as he gave his quarterback an encouraging slap on the thigh. "We still got this. There's still time."

After the interception, Ticich and the Bulldogs marched 75 yards for a touchdown in about two minutes to remain close. But time ran out before the offense got another shot to complete the comeback.

Had the game lasted another five minutes, Truman probably would have won the game or forced overtime.

Northwest Missouri State University will arrive in Kirksville on Saturday. The Bearcats have dominated Truman for more than a decade, but if the Bulldogs can channel the determination and intensity they had in the second half last Saturday, this could be the year Truman regains the Ol' Hickory Stick.

One thing seems certain — the Bulldogs appear to have rallied around their quarterback. Now, the running game and offensive line simply need to give him more support.

If they do, Ticich will be deferring all the credit to his teammates after a win Saturday, instead of accepting unnecessary blame.

## FOOTBALL | Bulldogs struggle with ground game, gain only three rushing yards on 23 attempts while giving up 135

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"That's a play we had been working on all week, and we felt like if the game came down to it, that'd be the play we'd go to, and it was there," Henry said.

With three minutes left and only one timeout remaining, Currier made the decision not to go for an onside kick. With a quick 3-and-out, the Bulldogs would have gotten the ball back with good field position needing only a field goal to tie.

The Mules ran three straight running plays, including a one-yard run on a third down conversion that required a measurement, before they were able to run the clock out.

"Our players nowadays, they just expect to keep battling," head coach Shannon Currier said. "You know, it's a long game. And as they did here, they make a couple plays and all of a sudden they have a chance to win."

Kenney led the receiving corps with seven receptions for 126 yards, and senior tight end Ryan King also had seven catches for 93 yards. Central played zone coverage on defense, which Currier said allowed Truman to throw more high-percentage short passes.

On the other half of the

offense, the Bulldogs were massively outplayed when it came to running the ball. They had three net yards rushing on 23 attempts. That's less than 2 yards a carry. Freshman Donald Harvey had 24 yards on 11 carries, and Ticich had 22 yards on eight attempts. Sixteen of their combined yards came on back-to-back plays at the end of the first half.

"I think the fact that we attempted to run the ball, it still affects your passing game because they still have to honor it," Currier said. "But we do need to run the ball more effectively. And it's easier said than done. And I'm not sure how yet. We've got to move people and we're not doing that. Part of it is we've got young players in the O-line."

Of the five starting offensive linemen, three are sophomores and one is a freshman.

The defense allowed 135 yards on the ground, but only a 3.8 average per carry because Central rushed the ball 36 times. Central running back Glenn Milner, who rushed for more than a 1,000 yards last year, had 132 yards on 25 carries.

### Photo Slideshow

**For a full photo slideshow of the football team's game against Central Missouri, visit [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com)**

Two games after the new turf surface at Stokes Stadium was supposed to be finished, Truman didn't even get to play in the first game on the field: That went to a high school matchup between Kirksville and Moberly on Friday night.

The new field did just what it was made to do — showing no signs of wear and tear through two games in the rain.

"Considering years before this would have been a mud bowl game, it was a great experience, especially as a senior. It's definitely a dream come true," Henry said.

Bulldogs play Northwest Missouri University in the Ol' Hickory Stick game during Family Day weekend. Kickoff is at 7 p.m. Saturday at Stokes Stadium.

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