

Women win 4th straight in MIAA

Bulldogs defeat Griffons 73-67 on Senior Day, Daniels nets 17

BY BRENT FOSTER
Assistant Sports Editor

It was a night to honor four Bulldog seniors, but a sophomore stole the show.

Guard Bri Daniels scored 11 of her 17 points in the second half and helped push Truman (11-15, 6-13 MIAA) past Missouri Western State University (7-18, 5-13 MIAA) for a 73-67 Senior Night victory.

"People got me the ball when I was open," Daniels said. "It was one of those things just reacting to it and not thinking about [shooting the ball]."

The 'Dogs have won four straight MIAA games for the first time since February 2000.

Despite Truman's win, the Bulldogs are likely eliminated from contention from the MIAA Tournament. Southwest Baptist University defeated Northwest Missouri State University on Tuesday, meaning the Bulldogs can only tie SBU and the University of Nebraska-Omaha for eighth place. The Bulldogs appear to lose all tiebreakers in that scenario, but official word from the conference won't come until today or Friday.

With senior guards Laura Joya and Julie Guinn and forwards Sarah Seberger and Kristen Nissen starting, Daniels came off the bench for the first time this season.

Truman led 53-50 with 5:19 remaining when Daniels helped put the game out of reach. She hit three 3-pointers during a three-minute stretch that helped balloon the lead to nine.

Daniels said she had to have a different mindset coming off the bench.



Left: Senior guard Julie Guinn celebrated Senior Day with four points in 16 minutes in the 'Dogs' 73-67 win against Mo. Western on Saturday. Right: Junior guard Amy Galey makes a pass as sophomore guard Bri Daniels looks on. Daniels had 17 points and Galey six assists Saturday.

"I kind of started out thinking I'd already been playing and I was getting a break, instead of thinking this is my first time going into the game," Daniels said.

Joya, who started for the first time since Jan. 6, had 14 points and a season-high 10 rebounds to garner the second Bulldog double-double this season. Freshman guard Becka McHenry recorded a double-double with 17 points and 10 rebounds in the Feb. 17 victory against Northwest Missouri State University.

Freshman forward Jennifer Conway tied her career-high with 10 points and grabbed five rebounds in 18 minutes off the bench.

Junior guard Amy Galey made a

layup with 1:18 left to give Truman its biggest lead of the game, 69-58, but the Griffons scored the next seven points. With 17 seconds left, Galey was called for a five-second count on the inbound. But a steal by McHenry on the next Mo. West possession sealed the victory.

"I don't know how quick of a five-second count it was, but our players, not just Amy, all five players need to know that if we're in trouble we need to call timeout," head coach Michael Smith said. "That could have been crucial for us."

Truman led 35-29 at halftime behind the balance of eight different 'Dogs scoring.

"We were really balanced in



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the first half, and in a way I was pleased, but at the same time I was like, 'OK, who's going to step up?'" Smith said.

The 'Dogs kept up the balance in the second half with six Bulldogs scoring at least eight points.

Truman's defense kept Mo. West's leading scorer Jessica Koch off balance most of the night. She scored nine points. Koch ranks seventh in the MIAA in scoring at 14.4 points per game. She scored 15 points and had five assists in the Griffons' 65-59 victory against Truman Jan. 13.

Daniels has reached double figures in 11 of her last 12 games and is averaging 14.3 points per game during the stretch.

"She gave us momentum to finish off the game strong and get the win," McHenry said.

The four Bulldog seniors combined to score 30 points.

"The three that have been here for four years, they have been through a lot as far as the coaching change," Smith said. "A lot of times probably they haven't liked the way things have gone, but that's just life. ... Our kids have been really receptive. I appreciate their hard work they've given me. It has meant a lot because they didn't have to."

The Bulldogs close the regular season at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the University of Central Missouri. The Mules crushed Truman 60-33 Jan. 20 in Kirksville.

Athlete of the Week

Richelle van Gennip

Sport: Softball
Year: Senior
Hometown: Oldenzaal, The Netherlands

Senior pitcher Richelle van Gennip struck out 33 and had a 0.62 ERA in 22.2 innings last weekend. She threw three complete games, winning two, and threw a one-hitter against Kentucky Wesleyan.

Van Gennip excels despite battery switch

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

It didn't matter who was on the other side of the battery for senior pitcher Richelle van Gennip last weekend at the season-opening Alabama-Huntsville Tournament.

Van Gennip lost her 2009 catcher, senior Erica LaCombe, to the outfield but posted stellar numbers in four games while working with two freshman catchers. Van Gennip posted a 2-1 record and a save en route to a 0.62 ERA in 22.2 innings pitched. She allowed just nine hits and struck out 33.

Van Gennip's performance led the softball team to a 4-2 start to the season. "We're all getting on the same length with what we want to call," van Gennip said of the catchers.

Freshman Christine Ulses caught van Gennip in the first game against Southern Indiana University, and van Gennip struck out a career-high 12 in the 3-1 victory.

With freshman Meredith Kusky catching two days later, van Gennip came with one batter of a no-hitter against Kentucky Wesleyan College. She struck out 10,

walked none and allowed just three base runners in the 2-1 win. The only hit was a third-inning bunt down the third-base line.

After Kusky caught van Gennip for 2.2 scoreless frames in the relief against the University of West Alabama, it was back to Ulses for another complete game, this time against the University of West Georgia.

Sophomore Kristen Siegler also saw time behind the plate as the 'Dogs' third catcher, but not in the games van Gennip pitched.

Although LaCombe was in center field, van Gennip still communicated with her former catcher. She said she and LaCombe would talk with the catcher in the dugout between innings to discuss what was and wasn't working well.

At one point while on the mound and with LaCombe in the outfield, LaCombe signaled to van Gennip to tell her on which side of the plate to throw the next pitch.

Head coach Erin Brown said she thinks the pitchers and catchers are still in a period of adjustment, especially when a new pitcher enters the game in relief.

"I don't expect it to be perfect right now," Brown said. "I think we should continue to get better throughout the season."

Van Gennip attributed part of her success to her riseball and screwball, the two pitches she relied on. She said she would get ahead in the count with a low riseball before mixing in some high riseballs. The success of the riseball led to a 26-to-9 flyout-to-ground-out ratio, but just one extra-base hit.

Brown said van Gennip's off-speed pitches can still be improved, particularly her drop ball and curveball.

"There's still some things that we can work on and hope to work on this week to add to her ammunition on the mound so that she has more options," Brown said.

But the biggest adjustment still comes from pairing with inexperienced catchers instead of LaCombe.

"It's difficult for them to have that instant bond communication right away," Brown said.

At least the Bulldogs know they have one side of a working battery.



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Senior pitcher Richelle van Gennip had a 0.62 ERA and a 2-1 record last weekend to lead the 'Dogs to a 4-2 start.

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