Women lose 83-63 at Pitt

'Dogs defeat Mo. Southern, snap seven-game skid

BY BRENT FOSTER **Assistant Sports Editor**

The women's basketball team's winning ways didn't last long. After a win against Missouri Southern State University on Saturday that ended a sevengame losing streak, the Bulldogs reverted back to old form last night.

Pittsburgh State University buried Truman with 11 points in 20 minutes. three pointers and cruised to an 83-63 victory

in Pittsburg. "They just outplayed us, head coach Mi-Smith chael said. "They just outworked and got a lot of chance second points. They were the better team tonight."

Truman started the game in a zone because Pitt entered the game shooting 27 percent from three-point range, 10th in the MIAA. But

the Gorillas caught fire, especially in the second half, when they made 9-of-13 threes. Smith said Truman played the statistics with the zone defense and said he didn't think the team was quick enough to guard Pitt man-to-man for 40 minutes.

Truman trailed 38-24 at halftime after shooting 29-percent from the field.

The 'Dogs (7-12, 2-10 MIAA) got within 12 points on a bucket from sopho- tory. The win ended Trumore forward Bri Daniels man's seven-game skid and with 19:34 left, but never got closer. After Daniel's bucket, Pitt went on a 37-19 run during the next 14 minutes to take a 30-point

The game was a far cry from the Dec. 5 game against Pitt in which the Gorillas went 2-for-20 from beyond the arc. Truman won 75-63 in overtime. In the first meeting, Pitt was without All-MIAA forward Nicole McCombs. Last night she finished with eleven

Truman with points "I'm trying to but was just find ways to help 5-for-19 from the field and this team be 1-for-5 from successful. Some beyond the coaches say Truarc. man was just they're letting 2-for-9 as a down their guard team from because they're beyond the three point changing up things. No, I just S e n i o r

Daniels led

guard Laura

Joya finished be successful. with 6 points 1-for-9 on **Michael Smith** shooting. She entered the game as Truman's lead-

want our kids to

ing scorer at 12 points per game.

Prior to Saturday's game against Missouri Southern State University, women's basketball head coach Michael Smith did something he had never done in his career — he started the game in a zone defense. The plan of attack worked.

The zone defense kept Southern to 3-for-11 on threes and Truman never trailed in a 64-57 home vicavenged an earlier loss to Missouri Southern.

"I'm trying to find ways to help this team be successful," Smith said. "Some coaches say they're letting down their guard because they're changing up things. No, I just want our kids to be successful."

The game was a far cry from the Dec. 2 meeting when Southern shot 10for-20 from three-point range. Lions guard Jolea Apon made eight threes in the first meeting, but made just one in 25 minutes Saturday.

The Bulldogs made the adjustments on defense following the Dec. 2 loss and played a defense that shadowed Apon the entire game.

"The first time we played them, we were all man," junior guard Amy Galey said. "That's what they scouted, and that's what they knew."

Freshman forward Megan Sharpe said playing a zone helped keep Missouri Southern out of rhythm.

"It just threw them off more than anything else," Sharpe said. "It just keeps them off balance."

Galey played what Smith called her best game of the season. Galey led four Bulldogs in double figures with 15 points in 28 minutes. She added six rebounds to go along with four assists. She scored most of her points from the line with a 10-for-11 mark. Truman was 17-for-19 from the charity stripe, after getting to the line just six times in last Wednesday's 27-point home loss to the University of Central Missouri, something Smith was upset with following the loss.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior point guard Amy Galey directs traffic during Saturday's 64-57 victory against Missouri Southern State University. Galey finished with 15 points, four assists and zero turnovers.

Southern threatened the Bulldogs late in the second half. The Lions used a 9-0 run to cut the lead to 56-55 with 2:57 left. But Truman outscored Southern 8-2 to secure the victory.

Besides the defensive switch, Smith made another decision that altered the game. Sharpe started for the first time this season. The move allowed sophomore Bri Daniels to move to her more natural position on the perimeter. It paid off for Truman — Daniels was 3-for-6 from behind the arc

and had 13 points. Freshman guard Becka McHenry added a careersenior guard Laura Joya's 11 points off the bench. The Bulldogs

rebounded the third-best rebounding team in the MIAA 34-29.

Truman returns home against No. 6 Emporia State University 1 p.m. Saturday. The Hornets defeated Truman high 11 points to go with 75-55 Dec. 28 in Emporia.

Women show signs of improvement



Baby steps.

That's how I'll describe the women's basketball team so far this season.

I gave the 'Dogs a vote of confidence at the start of the season with a prediction that they would cruise to the MIAA Tournament. I had a fair amount of optimism.

But as with any young team, the women have had some ups

and downs. At times, they seem to have made big strides. Other times, it seems they have barely been crawling. It's been an interesting season.

After starting 6-4, the team has just one win in its last eight games, including three doubledigit losses.

But after watching Saturday's 64-57 win against Missouri Southern State University, I am confident that this team has not given up.

There was freshman forward Megan Sharpe fighting for loose balls in her first start of the season. Junior forward Bri Daniels was her usual self with three treys and 13 points. Senior guard Laura Joya had 11 points off the bench. Freshman forward Becka McHenry contributed 11 points and six assists. The team didn't collapse in the second half when

Not to mention freshman point guard Amy Galey had the

Southern went on a 9-0 run to

best game of her career with 15 points, four assists and zero turnovers. She was 10-for-11 at

Clearly, there were a lot of good things about Saturday's game. It was a big stride in the season, especially because it was a game after the team scored only 33 against the University of Central Missouri last Wednesday — the worst Bulldog offensive output in 18 years and the worst shooting percentage by Truman since the conference tournament in 2006.

The team could have just thrown in the towel. They were three games back of a playoff berth. Head coach Michael Smith said a week ago, "The best coach in the country can't come in here right now and turn it around."

It seemed Saturday that the team is willing to improve.

Smith, despite some negative reactions after a couple of the losses, has done everything he can to keep the team going. He

knows it's a growing process anytime a new coach enters a

program. That's what I'm trying to teach them is when things get tough," he said. "You don't just shut it down. You keep fighting, because that's what life's about."

Smith has implemented a zone defense a couple of games — he started the game with it Saturday for the first time in his coaching career. But Smith's biggest move was after the Jan. 6 loss to the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He took out his motion offense, which was struggling, and installed a simpler offense in

which Smith has more control. Smith wants nothing more than to see his team in Kansas City for the conference tournament in March.

"Instead of watching them fight through it, because they really wanted to pick it up, I'm like, 'Let's just make it easy. Let's just do what we have to do to win

games right now," Smith said. Baby steps. One game at a

Smith said teams were switching off-screens against the motion, and Truman had not been able to slip off screens all year. The new offense avoids it by being a continuity offense. It is also more of a perimeter offense.

The early results have been average. The team is scoring 55 points per game — heavily influenced by the UCM performance down five points from the season average. It remains to be seen where the offense goes from here.

What if the simple offense doesn't work out? Will it hurt the progression of the motion? Smith says no, because he will have to teach motion to new players next year anyway.

There are eight games left in the regular season — can the team make the tournament? It would be a stride in the right direction if it

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