

Baseball swept at Emporia

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

The Bulldogs needed a lift after being outscored 17-2 in the first two games of a four-game series against No. 10 Emporia State University.

Truman had seven hits and committed six errors in the first half of the series. The first game Sunday was a different story. The Bulldogs (1-8, 0-4 MIAA) didn't pick up a win but forced Emporia (8-2, 4-0 MIAA) into extra innings. Truman lost that game 2-1 in 12 innings.

Sophomore Ryan Trimble started the game and carried the load for Truman. He threw eight strong innings and gave up one run on four hits and struck out six. Head coach Dan Davis said Trimble's outing was one of the best he's seen since coming to Truman.

"He threw strikes," Davis said. "He was around the zone and attacked the zone

aggressively. He didn't strike out a ton of guys, but he kept our defense in the game. This is the game right after the six-error game where we looked like we couldn't catch a cold. We made some tremendous plays behind him."

The 'Dogs lost the fourth game 9-3.

Emporia had 22 hits in the first two games but couldn't get anything going against Trimble. The Hornets have a team batting average of .303. Trimble said pitchers have to keep Emporia guessing at the plate.

"[Emporia] is a real good hitting team, so you have to mix it up," Trimble said. "I threw all three of my pitches, the fastball, splitter and slider. You keep them off balance and mix that in with throwing inside and outside."

Freshman Jarrett Eiskina took the loss for the Bulldogs. Emporia had a runner on second with two outs but he advanced to third after a wild

pitch, and a seeing-eye single scored the winning run.

Davis said the team was upset after the game but showed they could play with one of the top teams in the nation.

"I saw serious disappointment in our kids' faces," Davis said. "That's a huge confidence boost to me. We felt like we should have won that game. Our guys really believe in themselves and think they have a chance."

Truman started the weekend off slowly and lost the first game of the four-game series 6-1. Junior Kyle Veazey lost his second game of the year. He pitched five innings and gave up 10 hits and four runs. He also walked five batters.

Emporia picked up an 11-1 win in the second game of the series, and the Bulldogs surrendered eight unearned runs. Truman committed three errors in the first inning of that game



Submitted by Jarrett Eiskina
Junior outfielder Kody Strickland heads toward first base after making contact during last weekend's MIAA opening series against Emporia State University.

and that turned into three unearned runs. Two more errors in the seventh inning plated five more unearned runs. Sophomore Tyler Stefan started that game and gave up three earned runs in five innings.

In the last game of the series, the Bulldogs committed two errors that led to two unearned runs. The Hornets scored one run in the first, seven runs in the fourth and added another in the fifth to pick up a 9-3 win. Junior pitcher Jordan McLaughlin

was rocked in his second start of the season. He gave up seven hits and six earned runs in three innings of work.

The Bulldogs pitching staff allowed 28 runs during the weekend, with only 18 earned.

The 'Dogs offense didn't provide much of a spark either. The Bulldogs scored six runs during the weekend and had 18 hits. The Bulldogs hit .161 during the weekend against a quality Hornet pitching staff. Emporia has a team ERA of 2.45 through 10

games and has given up 21 runs in 77 innings pitched.

The Bulldogs haven't practiced outside because of the winter weather. Second baseman Luke Crader said the team has struggled getting into a hitting rhythm because of the weather.

"[Hitting] doesn't really transfer over, going from inside to outside," Crader said. "Seeing [batting practice] and then going to see a 90 mph fastball is tough. Emporia had us off balance all weekend."

Softball goes 1-3 at weekend tourney

Van Gennip sets single game record with 14 strikeouts in only victory

BY BRENDAN O'BRIEN
Staff Reporter

After jumping out to a 4-2 start, the softball team lost three of four at the Missouri Southern/Pittsburg State Tournament last weekend to even its record at 5-5.

Senior pitcher Richelle van Gennip said the team is not ready to panic after one lackluster weekend coming off last season.

"I think that in this last tournament, we've learned a lot more," van Gennip said. "We're still positive because everyone is still fresh, and I think that we played a couple better teams than we played last week."

Van Gennip had a school-record

14 strikeouts en route to the 'Dogs only win, 5-1 against Oklahoma Panhandle State University on Saturday morning. She has a 1.48 ERA through 42.2 innings. Named the MIAA Softball Pitcher Student-Athlete of the week for her opening weekend, van Gennip has averaged more than four strikeouts for every walk and kept opponents at a .136 average. Yet, she said she has a long way to go.

"I don't think [my pitching's] anywhere close to where I wanted to be," van Gennip said. "This is only the second weekend outside — we haven't practiced outside at all yet, so when we go outside I want to work on some pitches, adjust my steps and stuff."

The pitching staff currently maintains a 2.82 ERA, down from 3.99 last year, and the offense seems to be on pace to improve in nearly every aspect. Truman's

on-base percentage stands at .339, 69 points higher than last season, while opponents' OBP is about 67 points lower. This number is aided by the fact that the team already has had more than half as many walks and hit batters as last season despite having played just one-fifth of the games.

Head coach Erin Brown said much of this has to do with the new hitting approach of dividing the plate, but she said she thinks players must find a way to stay aggressive when they see a good pitch to hit.

"I feel we were more disciplined that first weekend, and then this weekend I felt like we were almost a little too hesitant or didn't jump on those first-pitch strikes that we were looking for up at the plate," Brown said. "We need to find a happy medium."

The changes are subtle but can

mean the difference between a win and a loss. In the first weekend, the Bulldogs won three games by two runs or less, but this weekend fell 5-4 to Quincy University (Ill.) on Friday and 6-4 to Northeastern State University (Okla.) on Saturday.

Junior shortstop Alex Weber and freshman catcher Meredith Kusky led the offense against Oklahoma Panhandle with two hits apiece. Freshman outfielder Laura Miller crossed the plate twice to give van Ginnip insurance runs. Senior outfielder Erica LaCombe said run production will be vital when the team begins conference play.

"The conference has a lot, a lot of really young freshman and sophomore pitchers this year, and I really think that'll be one of the key things, our offense taking advantage of that, really hitting the

ball and scoring a lot of runs on the inexperienced pitchers," LaCombe said.

Truman lost Sunday to Wayne State University (Neb.) 4-0 Sunday and had its game against Rockhurst University canceled later in the day because of field conditions.

"By the end of our game against Wayne State, our catcher was sinking down a couple inches in mud because it was so soft, ... and that's why they decided to cancel the games for the rest of the day," Brown said.

The Bulldogs' home doubleheader scheduled for today against Maryville University was also canceled because of snow. The team will not need to worry about winter weather next week as it heads to Kissimmee, Fla., for the Rebel Spring Games, where the 'Dogs will play 10 games in six days.

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