

Women drop finale at UCM

Bulldogs lose 79-63 for first loss in last five games

BY BRENT FOSTER
Assistant Sports Editor

The women's basketball team couldn't make it five wins in a row to end the season.

The Bulldogs jumped out to an early eight-point lead but couldn't maintain it and closed the season with a 79-63 loss Saturday at the University of Central Missouri. Truman finished the season at 11-16 overall and 6-14 in the MIAA.

"They just kind of went on a run and kind of got momentum, and we kind of lost it from there," freshman forward Megan Sharpe said.

The Bulldogs finished the conference in 10th place, missing the MIAA tournament for the second straight season and fifth time in the last six seasons, but ended the year winning four out of five. Truman has not won five MIAA-games in a row since 1998-99.

The 'Dogs led 24-16 with just more than nine minutes left in the first half, but the Mules controlled the game from there.

Truman stayed in the game until the Mules went on a 21-6 run early in the second half to go ahead 60-43. UCM spread the margin in the second half with hot shooting. The Mules shot 66.7 percent from the field in the second half and went 12-for-13 from the line, after getting to the line just once in the first half.

"More than anything, we started to get tired" head coach Michael Smith said. "They switched up some defenses back and forth. They're the third place team in the conference."

After falling behind 60-43, the Bulldogs twice cut the lead to 12.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Freshman guard Becka McHenry surveys the defense during a game earlier this season. McHenry was the Bulldogs' leading freshman scorer this season, averaging 6.6 points per game.

They had a chance to get it single digits, but UCM answered with baskets each time. The Mules led by as much as 21 late in the game.

"With our new offensive style of us pushing the ball, I think we just kind of grew tired in the second half," junior point guard Amy Galey said.

Senior guard Laura Joya finished her Bulldog career with 14 points off the bench.

Sophomore guard Bri Daniels also finished with 14 points on 5-for-16 shooting. She averaged 13.1 points per game and finished as the team's top-scorer.

Joya and Daniels combined for 28 shots. The rest of the team took 29 shots.

The Bulldogs shot just 38.6 percent for the game, their lowest total since the Feb. 6 home loss to Washburn University.

Truman outrebounded Central

32-31, but UCM outscored the 'Dogs 44-24 in the paint. The Bulldogs outscored their opponent in the paint just three times in conference play.

The Bulldogs' 31 first-half points were just two shy of their total from the 60-33 loss to UCM Jan. 20. Smith said they kept this game closer because they tried to be more of a running team, something they did during their win streak. He also said that after talking to several returning players he wants to be more of a running team next season.

"We might be more of a transitional team, possibly a pressing team because we'll have the depth," Smith said.

The Bulldogs return four starters and seven of their top nine scorers next season. Smith said he feels much better about the state of the team this offseason than last. The 'Dogs improved their win total from eight last season to 11 this year.

Smith said he expects the new recruits to mix in well with returning players. He also said getting junior forward Malorie Kiecker back from a knee injury will add a greater post presence to the team, an area the 'Dogs struggled with this season. He said he wants the team to shoot more threes next season. The Bulldogs ranked third in the MIAA in three-point percentage, but attempted just 113, last in the conference.

"We have some depth coming in with next year's recruiting class that will allow us to do more things," Smith said.

Despite the season-ending loss, Sharpe said winning four-of-five to close out the year will carry momentum into next season.

"I think it gives us confidence to know we can play with anyone in the conference," Sharpe said.

Men lose finale at No. 2 Central Missouri

Bulldogs lose 80-63, finish season with 5-22 record

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Staff Reporter

Another rough first half led to the Bulldogs ending their season on a low note last weekend.

The men's basketball team (5-22, 3-17 MIAA) lost at No. 2 University of Central Missouri on Saturday, 80-63.

Central Missouri (25-2, 18-2 MIAA) went on a 12-0 run to begin the game and never looked back. Truman shot 26.7 percent in the first half and made just eight field goals in the first half.

"[Central] came out on fire," junior guard Alex Henderson said. "It was senior night, and the crowd was into it. They're obviously a very, very good team. We were a little shell-shocked at the beginning. Once we got our act together, we did a good job."

Truman was outscored by 170 points in the first half of games this season. The team battled in the second half but was outscored by 99 points.

The Bulldogs trailed by 17 at the half but played evenly with the Mules in the second half. Freshman guard Tom Norton said the team seemed to be hesitant at the beginning of most games.

"We felt like we were in about every game," Norton said. "We came out in the first half timid in a lot of games. We knew what we were supposed to do but didn't do it. In the second half, everyone loosened up, and we played well."

Sophomore center Vesko Filchev led the Bulldogs with 14 points and nine rebounds. Henderson, Norton and junior guard Stefan Garrison had 13 points apiece. Henderson added five assists and two steals.

Truman had four players end the season averaging at least 10 points per game. Filchev led the team with 11.6 points per game. He also led the team in blocks and was second on the team in rebounds. Filchev started 25 games this year after starting just 13 last year, when he averaged 5.6 points per game. Head coach Jack Schrader said Filchev made big strides this season but still has

room for improvement.

"[Filchev] understands better what competition is," Schrader said. "He has obviously physically improved his conditioning. He's just scratching the surface, though. When he plays well and is on, we're good."

Norton turned in a solid freshman season. He averaged 10.7 points per game and led the team in steals, 3-pointers and free-throw percentage. He finished third in the MIAA in 3-point field goals. Henderson said Norton is an extremely smart player and did well under pressure.

"He had a great year," Henderson said. "He shoots the ball well and understands basketball. You can go over a play once, and he can remember it. He's not ever scared, and some freshmen can be timid."

Norton has a chance to take home MIAA Freshman of the Year honors. He started 26 games this season and had a stretch during which he made 31 straight free throws, a Bulldog record. Norton said playing guard in the MIAA was tough at times, but he adapted to it throughout

the season.

"The biggest obstacle [for me] was strength," Norton said. "Strength-wise, everyone I played against was stronger than me. That's going to be a big goal of mine for next year. I want to improve my strength and get into the lane instead of just shooting threes."

Junior forward Ethan Freeman led the team in rebounds. His 8.4 rebounds per game ranked second in the MIAA.

Schrader said the team has come together but still has work to do. He said bad chemistry last year forced the current roster to lose a year of growth. The Bulldogs will have seven seniors next year, and Schrader said seniors usually step into the leadership role.

"I think you always put leadership on a senior," Schrader said. "It was tough for [senior guard Matt] Taylor because he just came off soccer. He's a class kid. Leadership is still developing. I don't think it's set."

Taylor is the lone Bulldog senior. He ended his Truman career with 92 points in 63 games.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Sophomore center Vesko Filchev goes up for a shot during the Feb. 20 game against Missouri Western State University. Filchev led Truman in scoring at 11.6 ppg.



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