

# Volleyball trounced by No. 6 UCM

BY JOE BELL  
Staff Reporter

The No. 19 Bulldogs fell to 22-11 for the season last night when they were swept in blowout fashion by No. 6 Central Missouri State University.

Truman was in dire straits from the beginning of the match. The Jennies leapt to a large lead in the first set, and the Bulldogs never came close as they lost 25-12. In their first set, the Bulldogs had seven errors along with a .000 hitting percentage.

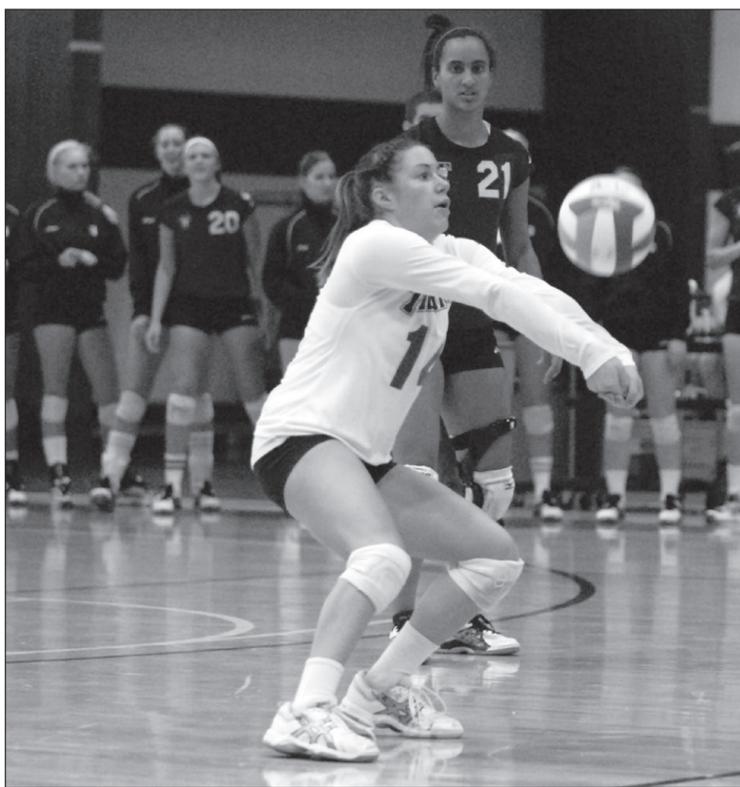
Truman jumped out to a small lead in the second set, but it did not last long. The Jennies dominated the set, racking up as much as a 14-point lead at various times throughout. The Bulldogs fell again, 25-12 as they had seven errors and their offense slumped even further with a -.028 hitting percentage.

The Bulldogs rallied in the third set, but to no avail. They tied the score several times, but never took the lead. In the end, the Jennies won the set 25-23. Truman hit .227 in this set, and only had four errors.

The Bulldogs hit .076 for the match with 18 attack errors, as well as eight service errors.

Truman also allowed the Jennies to score three or more unanswered points 14 times during the course of the match, 10 of which occurred in the first two sets.

Errors had been a problem for the Bulldogs the last



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Junior libero Casey Bruno, shown earlier this season, tallied 17 digs against UCM last night in Warrensburg. The No. 6 Jennies outthit the Bulldogs .200 to .076.

time they had played Central Missouri. The 'Dogs had hoped to use that match as a learning experience.

"Hopefully, [the Oct. 5 match] is a learning lesson that we need to finish every game," assistant coach

Megan Wargo said. "That's nothing new."

The team's difficulties last night coincide with struggles it has had lately. This marks only the second time all season the Bulldogs have lost two matches in a

row. It is also the first time they have been swept in two straight matches.

The Bulldogs seemed to hit their stride after the last time they played UCM, when they lost to the Jennies 3-2. After that, they

took down No. 15 University of Nebraska-Omaha and No. 7 Emporia State University before falling to No. 9 Washburn.

Inconsistency continued to plague the Bulldogs throughout the weekend.

The Bulldogs took on Missouri Southern State University and won 3-0 Friday but lost 3-0 to No. 24 Pittsburg State University on Saturday.

In their match against Missouri Southern, the Bulldogs struggled from the beginning. The Bulldogs led the Lions until halfway through the set. They did not regain the lead until two points before the end of the set, when Truman won 25-23. In the second set, the Bulldogs were down by as many as five points halfway, but eventually rallied to win 25-21. The final set was an even closer affair as Truman won 27-25.

The Bulldogs' match against Pittsburg State was tougher. The Bulldogs took one commanding lead the entire match when they led by six points in the third set. The Gorillas then answered with a 12-1 run. The Bulldogs hit .105 for the match, compared to PSU's .222. Truman also committed 22 errors during the match.

"We just weren't in focus the whole weekend," head coach Ben Briney said. "We had a lull, and we went in and were able to fight ... and claw back and beat Southern in three [sets]. Truthfully, they're a better team now than when they beat us back

in September, so I was proud of the girls for that, they were able to beat an even better Southern in three.

"It was Pitt State's Senior Day. They were jacked, the crowd was jacked. We came in and we out-dug them, out-blocked them, and out-serve-aced them, but weren't focused on the offensive end, so we couldn't take care of opportunities, and that's why we got beat."

What the Bulldogs do have to worry about, however, is the inconsistency that has plagued the team in recent weeks. With several big matches still left to play down the stretch, Truman will need to stay consistent as they prepare for the postseason.

"I don't know if [the problem] is everyone's kind of complacent," senior right-side hitter Lauren Graybeal said. "We're 90 percent likely to be in regionals. People can get complacent with that. It could have been that, or if people just overlooked Pitt and Missouri [Southern]. ... Hopefully that's all out of our system, we've forgotten, it's behind us and we'll just move forward from here on out."

The Bulldogs will host No. 20 University of Nebraska-Omaha in their last home match of the season 6 p.m. Saturday. The next weekend will be the Bulldogs' final weekend of regular season matches, when they take on Northwestern Missouri State University and Missouri Western State University.

## 28-point run sparks Bulls rugby to victory

BY BLAKE TOPPMEYER  
Editor in Chief

For the first 38 minutes of the Bulls' rugby game Saturday, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln bottled up the Bulls' offense.

That all changed in a matter of seconds just two minutes before halftime when senior Dylan Rohr burst free for a 50-meter run to the try line. Rohr finally was stopped just outside the end zone, but he pitched to senior Luke Wenger, who carried the ball in for a try.

The try sparked a 28-0 scoring run for Truman, and the Bulls pulled out a 28-15 victory to finish the fall season 3-3.

Head coach Bill Sexton said falling behind early was not a concern, but rather it essentially was the game plan for Saturday. Two weeks ago the Bulls staked a 19-17 lead against St. Louis University, but they didn't have enough left in the tank at the end of the game and suffered a 24-19 loss.

Sexton said the Bulls were aiming to prevent a similar late collapse Saturday against Nebraska.

"We actually consciously talked about starting the game a little slower, not getting too wound up, not getting too hyper-kinetic and just going out there and burning

ourselves out but instead really focusing on the long-term aspect of the game and staying close," Sexton said.

Wenger's try and the subsequent conversion came after Nebraska, playing with the wind in the first half, jumped to a 15-0 lead on two tries and a field goal. But Nebraska's lead could have been even bigger had it not been for a try-saving tackle near the goal line from senior Dustin Homer. Homer made a one-on-one, two-legged tackle as the last line of defense to prevent a try.

"You can coach a lot of things but you can't coach fearless[ness], and you can't coach a willingness to go in there and make the tackle," Sexton said. "That's a senior player making a clutch tackle that prevented a try that surely would've put us down 22-7 or 22-0 at the half. That could've changed the whole tone of the game."

Homer is one of three seniors, including Justin Lacy and Scott Boswell, who will graduate in December and were playing their last game for the Bulls on Saturday.

Senior Phil Powell said knowing those three were playing their final game provided a motivational boost to the rest of the Bulls. Powell also said the game carried significant weight because a loss

would have made qualifying for Westerns at the end of the spring season nearly impossible. With the win, the Bulls are now 2-1 in league play.

"If we lost this game, we pretty much would be playing a point-less spring season with no chance of going to Westerns," Powell said. "So we didn't want a spring season that just wasn't worth anything."

Homer wasn't the only Bull who made a try-saving play. After the Bulls took a 21-15 lead in the second half on tries from freshman David McDonough and Lacy, Nebraska threatened to regain the lead when one of its players carried the ball into the end zone.

But Truman's junior Matt Englebart prevented the ball from being touched down in the end zone, and in rugby, for a try to count, the offensive player has to touch the ball to the ground. The held ball resulted in a scrum for Nebraska at the 5-meter line, but the Bulls prevented the try.

Had Englebart not prevented the try, Nebraska would have closed the gap to 21-20 and could have taken the lead with a conversion.

"Not only is that huge for us, but it deflates the other team as well when they're on the goal line and can't put it in," Powell said of En-



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Bulls rugby closed out their fall season with a 28-15 victory against Nebraska-Lincoln on Saturday. Truman finishes the fall at 3-3.

glebart's defensive stand.

Lacy tacked on his second try of the game later in the second half to seal the Bulls' win.

"We finally learned how to play a complete game instead of starting out on all gears and then breaking down and getting penalties late,"

Wenger said. "We learned how to finish a game."

Six Bulls — Lacy, Homer, McDonough, freshman Alex Koenen, senior Jason Ralph and junior captain Aaron Loida — will represent the Central Region in an all-star game in Dallas this weekend.

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