

**Athlete of the Week**

**Olivia Hayes**  
Sport: Women's soccer  
Year: Freshman  
Hometown: Clayton, Mo.

Freshman forward Olivia Hayes had three goals combined in the Bulldog's two wins last week. Hayes leads the 'Dogs and is tied for first in the MIAA with seven goals this season. She also has four game-winning goals.

# Hayes nets three in two victories

**Freshman forward now tied for MIAA lead in goals scored**

BY CORY WEEKES  
Staff Reporter

The women's soccer team faced the challenge of playing Missouri Southern State University on Thursday and rival University of Nebraska-Omaha on Saturday.

The Bulldogs came out of the week with two wins. This success is largely because of freshman forward Olivia Hayes.

In the 4-0 win against Missouri Southern Thursday, Hayes scored two goals to help lift the team to victory. She then scored the game winner on Saturday against UNO, who had dealt the Bulldogs a 4-1 defeat on Sept. 12th.

Only a short time after the second half whistle, Hayes found the back of the net, beating the UNO goalkeeper to the right side.

"We knew Emporia hadn't done so well," Hayes said. "But we couldn't overlook them. And since Nebraska-Omaha

is such a big rival, we had to prove that we could play with them and come out with a victory."

Hayes leads the team in goals scored, and is tied for first in the MIAA with her seven goals.

"I've just been working on being more aggressive," Hayes said. "Knowing when to make runs and stuff has been a main point of emphasis for me in practice, and it has really helped."

Since arriving at Truman, Hayes has improved her game.

"I think she has just started playing with more confidence," head coach Mike Cannon said. "We were hoping she would be that kind of player for us, and so far she is having a good year."

Cannon said the secret to Hayes' success is simple.

"She has just been putting the ball in the net," Cannon said. "She knows how to stay busy on the field and has a

knack for being in the right place at the right time. She has a really good first touch and is aggressive enough to make the tough plays when she has to."

The Bulldogs play Missouri Western State University on Thursday, followed by a game against Southwest Baptist University on Saturday.

"There aren't too many easy games from here on out," Cannon said. "Missouri Western is a good young team, and Southwest Baptist is always a tough place to play at."

"We just have to build on our success from last week and hopefully we can keep it going."

Entering this week, Hayes is confident the team will improve its record during the next two games.

"We just have to build off of how we played last week," Hayes said. "If we play like that every week, we will be a tough team to beat."

**"She has just started playing with more confidence."**

**Mike Cannon**  
Head Coach



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Freshman forward Olivia Hayes dribbles downfield against UNO on Saturday. Hayes scored three goals in two matches, including the game-winner against UNO, last week.

**PETAK** | Junior setter has played a significant role in team's success during last three years

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another 900 assists and earned All-MIAA honorable mention.

"I guess from high school [to] your first year, the speed of the game is just drastically different," Petak said. "You have bigger hitters, and you just got to pay attention to a lot more things. So that was definitely some getting used to. And it's not like in high school, where you may be ... the best at something. But when you come here, everyone is good. And so it really makes you step up and work hard."

More impressive, however, was Petak's ability to come in and play the important setting position for the Bulldogs. Head coach Ben Briney likened this position to the quarterback of a football team. When it comes to the offense, setters run the show. And Petak has been able to do that well so far in her career.

"She has, obviously, come in and done a great job for us," Briney said. "She's been an indispensable part of this team. She came in as a freshman and said, 'Hey, I'm going to take this setter's spot. And I'm going to take it and own it.' And we owe a lot of our success to her ability to come in and set."

"She's known what she needs to work on. Her freshman year, she was not that good of a defender. And each year, she has come in and said, 'I'm gonna work and get better as a defender.' ... She has come into practice every day this year saying, ... 'Whatever the problem is, I'm going to fix it.'"

Also Petak seems to have gotten better as a defender. After posting 315 digs last season, Petak is on pace for 334 digs this year. But improving her defensive might not be Petak's biggest challenge this season.

Petak is the only player left on

the team who started nearly every match last year. With last year's starters and All-Americans gone, Petak and a few other holdovers have been forced into new leadership positions. They have been given the task of bridging the gap between the winning ways of the Skoch era and the current Truman team.

Despite these changes, one goal remains: to lead the team back to the top of the MIAA and into the postseason.

"We all knew this year, coming in, was going to be a rebuilding year," Petak said. "So we've really tried to pull together. I think this weekend with our first home win, we're really almost having a new start to our season. It's anyone's game in the conference. There's been a lot of upsets. ... We all know that at the end of the season, we can be top of the conference and at regionals."

Briney let the returners know what he expected of them as they went into the season, and he had every confidence that Petak could help return the Bulldogs to the top of the MIAA.

"She's very driven," Briney said. "She wants to win, that's all she's ever known. So she brings that will to 'Let's go, we can do this' type [of] leadership. When she steps on the court, she expects to win and expects perfection out of herself and expects her teammates to play well."

The look on Petak's face when she is on the court may lead some to believe that she is doing more than expecting to win — she demands it. That fearsome look has helped lead the Bulldogs to success the last two seasons, and it's possible to expect that it will lead the Bulldogs to success once again this year.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Junior setter Ashley Petak prepares to serve during a match earlier this season. Petak leads the Bulldogs with 450 assists.

**COLUMN** | Bulldogs prepare for four regional matches at Washburn Invitational

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(Texas), Tarleton State (Texas) and Southwestern Oklahoma State University are three regional matches the team cannot afford to lose. The three have a combined record of 19-34.

"This weekend, probably the biggest challenge is to keep everyone focused on the three other matches," Briney said. "The thing we can't do is to go in there and just focus on West Texas because there are three other good teams that we play that we have to beat that are regional opponents."

Briney seems to have the team focused on Friday's matches.

Senior setter Ashley Petak said she is excited to see and play against Skoch but she also understands the importance of winning games against regional opponents.

Angelo, Tarleton and Southwest Oklahoma are teams Truman has to beat if they plan on making the NCAA Tournament for the 10th consecutive season. A loss to any of these teams would damage the 'Dogs' chances of making regionals more than a victory against West Texas would help. The top eight teams from the South Central Region make the NCAA Tournament.

In previous seasons, Truman might have been able to overlook lesser opponents and get away with it. Friday's surprising home loss to Missouri Southern State University proves that this year's team does not have that luxury. Although Truman might have been caught looking ahead to its match Saturday, Truman bounced back and defeated No. 20 Pittsburg State University. Because of this factor, the other three matches this weekend become even more important.

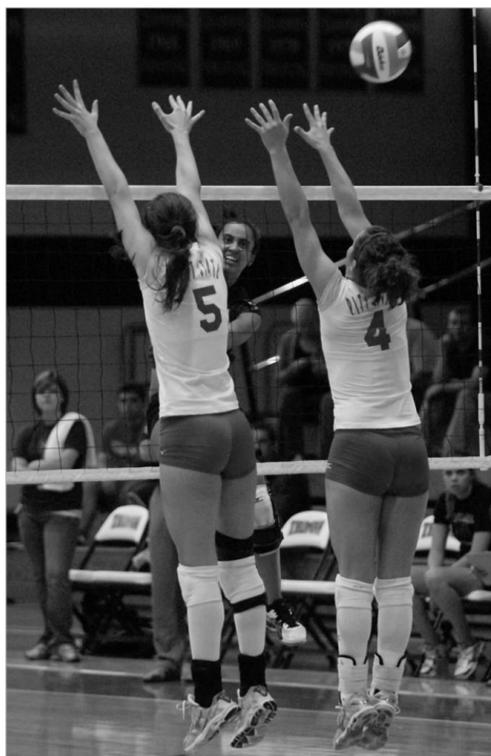
"It was a match we should have won," Briney said. "We had opportunities and didn't take advantage of them. To Southern's credit, they did what they needed to do."

Losses to teams like Missouri Southern have been rare the last several seasons. From 2006-2008, the Bulldogs lost just two matches to unranked opponents. This season, the Bulldogs already have been defeated three times by unranked teams.

A 2-2 record this weekend for the Bulldogs would put a lot of pressure on the team heading down the stretch. Truman is in sixth place in the conference, one match ahead of Missouri Southern, but two matches behind first place University of Central Missouri. During the next few weeks, it will be critical that the Bulldogs do not look past any team, and that begins Friday.

Briney said playing against Skoch is a bigger deal for the players.

"As far as getting caught up in, 'Oh, it's Jason vs Ben,' that's not that big of a deal," Briney said. "I mean yeah, I definitely want to win, but more I want to win because it's a regional match."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Junior outside hitter Allison Barker spikes the ball through two Pitt State players on Saturday.

**VBALL** | 'Dogs prepare for match against former head coach Jason Skoch and No. 7 West Texas A&M University

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good or really energetic, you want to keep them out there all the time," freshman middle blocker Megan Sharpe said.

Against Missouri Southern (6-6, 1-2), Truman took a 2-1 lead but could not hold on. The 'Dogs, who wore black jerseys for the match in honor of the late Tom Martin, had not lost a set in the previous seven matches to MSSU.

Truman used the 5-1 formation in the first set against the Lions, which Truman lost 25-18, but switched to 6-2 for the last four. Head coach Ben Briney said the 5-1 had worked in the previous couple matches, but MSSU exposed the weaknesses.

"I was planning on keeping the momentum going into this game, knowing that eventually we have to switch back to [the 6-2]," Briney said. "They had two very good outside hitters who did what they needed to do, so that's when we switched it."

In the first set, Briney also started both of his libe-

ros — junior Casey Bruno and redshirt freshman Nastassia Hegyi — to place two good defenders at the back of the court.

The Lions had two outside hitters notch 20 kills in the match as they outit the Bulldogs .229 to .130. Graybeal and freshman outside hitter Heather Hargadine led Truman with 11 kills apiece.

Petak played the entire first set but was removed from the lineup for the remainder of the match. Sharpe, who hit a season-worst .067 on 15 attempts, also was removed from the match early in the second set.

Briney said both players were substituted out because of a lineup change, which allowed sophomore middle blocker Johanna Ruff and freshman rightside

hitter Emily Briseno more playing time. Ruff and Briseno combined for 15 kills and a .407 hitting percentage.

"People that came in did great," Briney said. "It wasn't

necessary, it was a lineup change. It was just something to shoot something different at Missouri Southern."

The Bulldogs compete next in the Lady Blues Fall Classic this weekend, where they will face No. 6 West Texas A&M University (see story, p. 15). West Texas (15-2) is where Skoch now coaches, along with 2008-senior Dana Hanselmann, who is a graduate assistant there.

Truman returns home at 7 p.m. Wednesday to take on No. 5 University of Central Missouri.

**"I think everyone is just sick of losing. We had a lot of people step up, come off the bench and play."**

**Ashley Petak**  
Junior