

Volleyball sweeps SBU

Hargadine hits .429 as No. 18 Bulldogs continue to move up

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

The volleyball team put another win in the books last night, and with it, took another step toward the postseason.

The No. 18 Bulldogs (21-9) defeated Southwest Baptist University 3-0 in their penultimate home game of the season.

Truman continued its trend of strong first sets in its match against the Bearcats. Truman dominated the set, winning 25-14. The Bulldogs hit .217 for the set and held SBU to a -.059 average.

In the second set, the inconsistency that has plagued the Bulldogs of late struck again. The Bulldogs pulled through in the end, however, and won the set 25-22. The third set was a close affair. The two teams battled back-and-forth with neither gaining a clear edge. The Bulldogs pulled away from the Bearcats and won, 25-19.

"I think there are some things we still need to get better at," assistant coach Megan Wargo said. "Overall, I thought we served really aggressively tonight and we passed pretty well. We were able to keep them out of system with our aggressive serving. ... I thought, in general, we could have come out with a bit more energy, but fortunately, we played just steady enough to win tonight."

Freshman outside hitter Heather Hargadine continued a streak of strong play. Against SBU, she led the team in hitting percentage (.429), kills (11) and tied for the team lead in digs with junior libero Casey Bruno (14).

The Bulldogs outhit SBU 258 to .052 for the match. But Truman gave up 16 errors in the match, and this allowed the Bearcats to stay close in several of the sets.

"We learned some things tonight," head coach Ben Briney said. "We learned we have

got to stay focused all the way through. We let up. We also learned that we are better at getting rid of those hiccups when it happens. You know, stopping the runs and making a run of our own."

The Bulldogs' hopes of going undefeated the rest of the season were laid to rest Friday.

Senior right-side hitter Lauren Graybeal said she told the team they were not going to lose another match the rest of the season as they prepared to face No. 7 Emporia State University on Oct. 21. Truman promptly responded and beat Emporia 3-1. The Bulldogs were unable to vindicate Graybeal, however, as they fell 3-0 to No. 9 Washburn State University last Friday.

The Bulldogs' rough streak continued Saturday, when they played against Fort Hays State University. Although the Bulldogs won by a score of 3-1, some of the malaise from the previous night's match lingered.

"I think we came in a little sluggish from the Washburn match," Briney said. "From being in Emporia and getting back at three in the morning on Thursday morning ... then you add to the fact that Hays has got a new coach, and they're a much improved team."

The Bulldogs won the first set 25-15, but lost the second set 25-23. The Bulldogs came back to win the third set 25-20, but began to fall behind again in the fourth set. The Bulldogs trailed Fort Hays 23-18 and looked like they were going to head to a fifth set but junior setter Ashley Petak spurred the team to victory with eight straight service points to end the match. The Bulldogs hit .228 as a team during the match.

Washburn turned out to be another tough match for the Bulldogs as well. The Bulldogs matched the Lady Blues point-for-point for most of the first set until they lost 25-21.

The match deteriorated after that for the Bulldogs. They lost 25-17 in both of the next two sets. The Bulldogs hit .069 as a team for the match com-



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Freshman Heather Hargadine led the Bulldogs with 11 kills last night. Truman has won six out of its last seven matches.

pared to Emporia's .226.

"It was eerie, almost," Graybeal said. "It was weird. We didn't really play like a team. We let [Washburn] determine the tempo of the game. We let them kind of run the game and we just fell behind them. The first game wasn't too bad, but then from there we just kept breaking down farther and farther."

These two matches came as something of a hiccup in a recent run of success for the Bulldogs. Briney said the team has been more focused, and as the season has continued, they have started to gel. While these matches should not be too much cause for concern, they are slightly disconcerting

for the Bulldogs because they have only six matches left in the season.

"From here, there's only two ways it could go," Graybeal said. "One, we could just keep breaking down farther and farther and drop even more games and not even make it into regionals. Or, the second way is we just win out the rest of the season, or at least play everybody tight. ... And I think just from our practices and stuff, I can tell that we're going to be the second team."

The Bulldogs next compete at 7 p.m. Friday at Missouri Southern State University. They will travel to Pittsburgh State University to play at 3 p.m. on Saturday.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Football: Sternberg eyes sack record

Senior linebacker Eric Sternberg is closing in on the Truman single-season sack record. Sternberg added two sacks to his total during Saturday's overtime loss to Emporia State University. He has nine sacks this season to lead the MIAA. He also ranks sixth in Div II. His nine sacks this season are the most for a Bulldog since Ernie Myerson had nine in 1987. Elijah Lockhart set the all-time record for sacks in a season by a Bulldog with 12 in 1982.

Sophomore defensive back Michael Elliot finished Saturday's overtime loss to Emporia State University with a season-high 15 tackles. Elliot is second on the team with 85 tackles, two behind senior safety Demetrius Lavant's 87. Lavant and Elliot are second and third respectively in the MIAA in tackles.

Basketball: MIAA preseason polls released

The preseason MIAA basketball polls were released Tuesday with very little love for Truman. The men and women both were listed in last place by the media and coaches.

Emporia State University was first in the women's media and coaches polls. On the men's side, Southwest Baptist University was selected first by the media and University of Central Missouri was selected first by the coaches.

The Bulldog men went 1-19 in the MIAA last season, while the women finished 5-15 in the conference. Both teams missed the MIAA Tournament. The men open the regular season against Culver Stockton College on Nov. 16. The women begin the season against Hannibal-LaGrange College on Nov. 17. Both games will start at 7:30 p.m. and will be played at Pershing Arena.

Women's Soccer: Winning streak reaches 10

The women's soccer team has won 10 matches in a row, the most since 2003. The 2003 team won 12 matches in a row and finished with an overall record of 18-2-1. The most matches any Bulldog team has won in a row is 13, a mark set by the 2001 team.

Truman also has recorded 11 shutouts this year. The Truman record for shutouts in a season is 15, set in 2001 and 2004. Sophomore goalie Jayne Grisham has eight of those shutouts. Lauren Davis holds the record for shutouts by a Truman goalie with 15 in 2001.

Men's Soccer: Brown dishes out assists

Sophomore forward Jonathan Brown has become a master at dishing out goals to teammates this year. This weekend, he assisted four goals and added another goal himself. Three of his assists came on corner kicks that either set his teammates up for a header or gave them control of the ball. Brown credits the team's preparation for the team's success off set plays.

"You know, over the summer I think Coach [Cochran] and [Assistant Coach] Joe Nick worked hard on coming up with some new routines for corner," Brown said. "Last year we were just kind of putting it in the box and hoped that we were kind of going to get the end of it, but this year we've worked a lot harder."

In 11 games this season, Brown has recorded eight assists, which puts him in a tie for fourth of all Truman players in the last 10 seasons. It is the most assists by one player since senior midfielder Martin Clayes' 16 in 20 games during the 2005 season.

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