



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Bulls' rugby dropped to 1-3 after a 24-19 loss to St. Louis University on Saturday afternoon.

Rugby loses 24-19 to St. Louis University

BY CORY WEEKS
Staff Reporter

The Bulls have one more opportunity to improve on what has been a less than stellar fall season.

The Bulls fell victim last week to St. Louis University 24-19 because of what head coach Bill Sexton called "very poor officiating."

The Bulls started the game off fast. They scored first and went into halftime with a 12-7 lead. However, after a back-and-forth battle, SLU's three second-half tries proved to be too much for the Bulls to handle as SLU took the match from the Bulls.

"We played on a very poor field and had a referee that didn't call anything," Sexton said. "We put ourselves in position to win and then got shut down. We just couldn't get the fire lit."

The Bulls' season hasn't gone exactly according to

plan as they carry a 1-3 record into their last game.

"There are still a lot of positives that have come from this fall season," Sexton said.

The play of the younger players has been one of Sexton's most emphasized points throughout the fall.

"We went into last week with four starters missing," Sexton said. "We had seven freshmen on the field for most of the game. We had freshmen playing out of position and, considering the number of freshmen out there, we played really well. We continue to get really good games out of them, and, for that, I am very pleased."

Sexton said experience definitely played a big role in last week's game against SLU.

"We are a young team, and consequently, we lost our heads a little bit toward the end," Sexton said.

The Bulls close out the

season against the University of Nebraska, a team that is considered one of the best in the conference. Earlier in the season, Nebraska tied Kansas State, which beat the Bulls 29-12.

"Nebraska is very big, very fast, and very aggressive," Sexton said. "We will need to get up to speed in our scrum and tackling this week in practice."

Freshman Joe Krispin said the team remains optimistic and plans to focus on the little things to compete with Nebraska.

"Our defense let us down late in the game last week," Krispin said. "I'm excited about this week. Nebraska is our last game of the season, and we are going to make it a game. It's all about cracking down on the little things this week. If we can do that, we will be successful."

Junior captain Aaron Loida has seen his fair

share of tough games during his career, and despite the injuries sustained by the team, he thinks that his team has a good shot against Nebraska.

"It's easy to focus on the bad things," Loida said. "But our scrum and lineouts have gotten a lot better, and everything we have been working on in practice is showing big-time in the matches. It's going to be a fun game, and we have a really good chance to win."

The Bulls are banking on the home-field advantage to be a major factor. With the final game of the fall season at hand, the team is set to end on a good note to make a run in the spring.

"Nebraska is a good opportunity for us to get back on track," Loida said. "We have faltered along the way but this is the final game, at home, in front of our fans. We will be ready."

Roller hockey opens season 1-2-1

Bulldogs follow up victory Sunday with mercy-rule loss to SIUE

BY JACK NICHOLL
Sports Editor

For the second straight year, the Truman roller hockey team had an up-and-down weekend to start the season.

The team traveled to Ballwin and St. Peters, Mo., last weekend and left with a 1-2-1 record. It was the third time in the last four seasons that the team, which has made the national tournament for three straight years, failed to sweep in the opening weekend.

"The first weekend is always very typical in that you think you're prepared," co-coach Dane Moody said. "You think you've been doing a lot of the right things, and then you get out onto the floor and you realize that you

haven't been working on the right things, or you haven't been working on things the right way."

Saturday, Truman lost against Kansas State University 10-8 and tied Washington University 5-5. The Bulldogs followed it up Sunday with a 13-9 win against St. Louis College of Pharmacy and an 11-1 mercy-rule loss against Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

Moody said that as the weekend progressed the team realized how much they have to work on, but there were still flashes of potential.

"We were very undisciplined this weekend," Moody said. "We took a lot of penalties, especially early in the weekend. A lot of people kind of lost their temper — you kind of forget what it's like to play in a competitive game."

The early-season troubles were apparent in the game against KSU — one that Moody said the Bulldogs probably would have won if they had played it at

the end of the weekend.

"It was a pretty back-and-forth game," sophomore forward Cody Dependahl said. "We played well — they had a couple bounces here and there that went their way."

The weekend provided the first opportunity for much of the team to play at the Div. II level. Only senior forward Truman Patterson and Dependahl, and senior defender Nick Blechle started for the team last season. Other than those three, the rest of the players are either new to the team or moved up from last year's B team.

Patterson and Dependahl account for half of the offensive players. Dependahl, who led the team in points last season, ac-

counted for most of Truman's offense last weekend.

"He did a phenomenal job putting pucks on net, creating space for himself, creating space for the other people on the team," Moody said. "But we need more people who are willing to shoot the puck like Cody did all weekend."

Last season, Dependahl was third on the team in goals and second in assists. He also was best on the team with only two penalty minutes.

"Kid's got an amazing shot," Blechle said. "I dream to shoot half as well as he can."

The lack of experience and numbers also was felt on the de-

fensive side. Apart from Blechle, only junior Dylan Blake and freshman Cary Nave form the defense.

Nave is new to the squad and Blake, who was listed as a forward on the B team last year, is still adjusting to the new position.

"When we only have three subs, you're only resting one defensive player at a time," Moody said. "And so that means guys are out there for two or three minutes at a time, which, in hockey, is an eternity."

Dependahl said the level of fitness probably tripped up the team the most in the second match of each day. He said that is one of the things the team has to work on heading into its games this weekend.

"We're going to have to get a lot more in shape, especially the returning A players, so we can be out there longer," Blechle said.

Classifieds

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