

Bulldogs still searching for depth

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Sports Editor

Formation and player changes have not slowed the women's soccer team this season, as the 'Dogs have started the season 3-1. Truman started MIAA conference play this weekend and won both games 1-0.

However, head coach Mike Cannon said the team still is trying to add depth, even with the strong start.

"We don't have a solid formation, but we do have a solid starting group," Cannon said. "We're kind of tweaking things depending on who we're playing."

The Bulldogs have used a few different formations and with each formation, player positions change. The Bulldogs use junior defender Amy Schnoes, sophomore defender Stasia Montgomery and freshman midfielder Sally Smith on the backline when they run a 3-4-3 formation. When Truman drops back to a 4-3-3 formation, freshman midfielder Suzanne Pelley moves to the backline.

"[Pelley and Smith] have really adapted well," junior midfielder Jaclyn Schumann said. "They work very hard. Wherever we put them, we know they're going to be strong and well-suited for the position."

The Bulldogs have 11 players who have appeared in all four games this season. All 11 of those players also have started at least three of the games.

Cannon used 19 players in the first game of the season against Midwestern State (Texas) University and 16 players in the next game. However, in the first two MIAA conference games, only two bench players saw action against Northwest Missouri State University, and three players were used in the next game against the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

"We'd like to be deeper,"

Cannon said. "If we're playing 11, 12 or 13, it's tough. If some of those kids out of that main group go down, what's our next move? Hopefully some of these kids find a successful and consistent role."

Smith and Pelley have started all four games this season. Those two, along with midfielder Hayley Bollwerk, are the only true freshmen to appear in at least three games. Several true and redshirt freshmen have seen action in matches but most have been limited to one or two appearances.

"It's a catch-22," Cannon said. "They need to prove themselves in games. If you don't get into the game, how do you prove yourself? They have to show me in practice and in scrimmages."

With new players in the lineup, junior goalie Jayne Grisham said the team is working on communication throughout the entire field.

"Our main issue now is picking up the talk on the field," Grisham said. "Some of the younger girls are getting used to voicing their opinions and helping each other out."

After scoring just two goals in three preseason games, the Bulldogs have scored six goals so far this season while giving up four goals. Three of the four goals they gave up came in the first game of the season.

Cannon said so far the Bulldogs have adapted to the other teams' formations instead of playing the same one each game. He said the team is still working on keeping possession, clearing the ball out of the backfield and moving quickly when they have the ball in the middle of the field.

"Our goal on Saturday was a nice combination play," Cannon said. "These are the kind of goals that we should be able to score. We still have some work to do. We don't create enough really, really good chances. We have to get to that level



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Top: Freshman midfielder Sally Smith heads a ball to an open teammate Saturday against the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Smith has started all four games this season as a true freshman. The Bulldogs have started the season 3-1.

Right: Sophomore midfielder Heather Niebling fights for a loose ball against Nebraska-Omaha.



where we punish teams." With all of the formation changes and players learning new positions, Cannon said the team seems to be meshing better.

"Right now, we're scor-

ing timely goals and creating chances which is good," Cannon said. "We have to take advantage of opportunities. When we get good chances, you have to put those in."



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