

'Dogs lose Stick for ninth straight year

BY JACK NICHOLL
Managing Editor

Three football coaches, including head coach Gregg Nesbitt, will face off against their former team Saturday in what will likely be the largest crowd at Stokes Stadium this season.

"We certainly know Central Missouri State, so we're already excited for that one," said Nesbitt, who used to be UCM's co-defensive coordinator, of the Family Day matchup.

However, if the Bulldogs (2-2, 0-2 MIAA) repeat the same mistakes they made in a 44-10 loss to No. 7 Northwest Missouri State University (2-1, 2-0 MIAA), it will make little difference which team they play.

Truman twice fumbled on kickoff returns, had a bad snap on a field-goal attempt and had a roughing-the-passer penalty to negate a 3rd-

and-23 situation in a rainy game at Stokes Stadium.

Many of the mistakes likely had more to do with the constant rain than the strength of Northwest — the defending national champion and fourth-ranker up before that.

"Bottom line — two big kicking-game mistakes, big interception that led to 21 points, and can't do that against anybody," Nesbitt said. "Right now, while we're improving I think, we're not into moral victories."

The Bulldogs' loss marked the ninth straight time Northwest has won the O' Hickory Stick, although the Bulldogs did score for the first time in 11 quarters against Northwest. The Bearcats had outscored Truman 172-6 in their last three matchups.

"It's hard to evaluate today, but watching them on film, I think they're a better team [than last year]," North-

west head coach Mel Tjeersdema said. "I think they're executing — they're not doing too much. What they're doing, they're doing well. They came out and got after us early."

The Bearcats had a 10-0 lead before Truman ran an offensive play after a seven-play Bearcat drive and a Truman fumble on the ensuing kickoff.

Two more Truman first-half miscues led to two more Bearcat touchdowns, including another kickoff return fumble in the last minute of the first half. With a 30-3 lead at halftime, Northwest passed the ball just three times the remainder of the game.

"Turnovers really killed us today, but we have to learn how to fight and prevail through that, and most of all, I'm just proud of our guys' effort," junior defensive back Terrence Byrd said.

On offense, the Bulldogs also relied on the run — 44 carries for 131 yards. It was the fourth game this season that Truman has rushed for 100 yards, but the lowest yards per-carry of the season.

"I thought the game lended itself to [running it]," Nesbitt said. "They had a little point spread, so they're trying to shorten the game and run it, and we're not going to abandon who we are and what we're trying to get better at this particular point."

Senior quarterback Phil Davis was 7-for-17 passing for 86 yards and one interception, although he did complete a 34-yard pass to sophomore tight end Caleb Roberts. It matched Truman's longest play from scrimmage against Northwest since 2008.

"We would like to think that we have a pretty good defense," Tjeersdema said, when asked about Truman's

running game. "So hopefully they will play some people who probably aren't quite as good on defense. But I'm sure that's one of the things that they're working on."

Defensively, the Bulldogs, who are tied for sixth in the nation in sacks per game, did not have a sack for the first time all season.

However, the Bulldogs did stop Jake Soy, Northwest's preseason first-team All-American wide receiver. Soy had just 15 yards and two receptions.

"We had a couple schematics that focused on him because we tried to limit him as much as we could, so that helped out a lot," Byrd said.

The Bulldogs likely need to slow down the passing game again this Saturday if they are to win their first Family Day game since 2006, as UCM's quarterback Eric Czerniewski leads the nation in passing yards.

SHUTOUT | Grisham earns fourth shutout, Pelley scores first collegiate goal

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"We need to win second balls, like once we touch the ball and then it's a 50-50 ball again, we need to win those," Montgomery said.

Cannon said the team has been doing some things well, but that there are always aspects to improve on. The Bulldogs are about at the halfway point of the regular season with a majority of their conference schedule left to play.

"I'm pretty happy with where we're at so far," Cannon said. "[We] still got things to work on, but we're making progress. We're shutting people out, not giving up goals."

Although the win was Truman's fifth shutout in a row, Montgomery said that scoring needs to increase. All of the Bulldogs' games have been close this year, with each game being decided by one goal or a tie.

Montgomery said one of the Bulldogs' strengths is their flexibility to play a variety of formations, and that the defense's intensity and communication have been good all season. She said she would like to see the goal margin increase, because it takes pressure off the Bulldogs so Truman can build up a lead and put away a team.

"You can't just win 1-0 games that should be 5-0 games," Montgomery said. "Winning by one goal is not what we really want, because that leaves them in the game."

The next two games for the Bulldogs are important dates on the schedule. Washburn University has won its last three matches, and they play on a turf field. Truman practiced at Stokes Stadium on Monday to get a feel for the ball on turf.

The University of Central Missouri is currently in first place in the MIAA standings at 15 points, and the 'Dogs sit in second place, trailing UCM by two points.

"We're winning the close games, which is a good sign," Cannon said. "We have a couple tough games coming up this week on the road. It's always a little bit tougher on the road."

The Bulldogs play at 6 p.m. today at Washburn University and at 2 p.m. Saturday at the University of Central Missouri.

GOLF | Women finish second for the second straight week, Kovach leads men to fifth-place finish

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you change, actually the only thing you can affect is the next shot. You can't think about three shots down the road, or three shots back. You can only actually affect that next shot, so you've got to just get it out of your mind."

The women had to combat several par five holes at Red Tail Run golf course.

Hole 14 was a prime example. It dog-tailed left and forced players to deal with water hazards. The fairway on the second hole included a sharp right turn in the middle of the fairway.

"This course has a couple holes you can take some big numbers on, and we did both days, actually," Lesseig said. "Team-wise we wanted to be a little lower the first day, but that's what happens."

The men's golf team finished fifth at the Iowa Wesleyan College Fun City Classic, shooting a 634 this past Monday and Tuesday. Senior Chris Kovach led the 'Dogs, scoring 79-75 and placing fourth overall.

Head coach Tyler Madsen said that despite having a quiet first day, Kovach did not disappoint.

"It was another top-five event for Chris," Madsen said. "It is his second one in three events. Even though this isn't a 'regional event,' that will factor in at the end of the year, putting up another top five."

Kovach said he thought he put together a good tournament considering he was unfamiliar with the golf course.

"The first day, we hadn't seen the course before," Kovach said. "New course, different type of grass, but it was brown. Actually, the 79 I played was pretty much the best I could have done that day. I just wasn't hitting the ball well. Made a lot of putts, which saved me. The second day was a little different. I hit the ball a lot better. Hit a lot more greens. Didn't putt quite as well, but hit the ball a lot better. Helped save those four shots."

Madsen said conditions were tough at Spirit Hollow Golf Course. Wet surfaces and fescue grass made his players remain conservative in their approach.

"Spirit Hollow is bent-grass fairways and what-not," Madsen said. "It takes a little bit of adjust-

ment. It was very wet out there. If you don't hit the ball first off that grass, you're going to chunk a lot. It's tough to hit off of when it's wet and if you haven't played off it in a while."

The event was won by Viterbo University with a score of 602. Viterbo golfer Mike Hesselman shot five under par and placed first in the individual standings. His score was seven better than the rest of the field. Truman started round two just three shots out of second place in the team standings.

Madsen said fifth place was a respectable finish, but he thinks his golfers are capable of more heading into the Missouri Western Invitational on Monday. He said his team gave in to the pressure to start pressing on the back nine.

"We played very well for the 27 holes as a team, and then on the final nine the bogey train just started running and it picked a lot of our guys up on the way," Madsen said. "On that back nine it's hard to gain confidence. If you make two or three bogeys in a row, you weren't in a position to start pressing, and that's just a natural tendency."

EXPAND | Lindenwood and Nebraska-Kearney admitted to MIAA on 10-0-2 vote last week

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was part of the Lindenwood visit team. Lindenwood will compete in 26 NCAA sports and every sport the MIAA sponsors.

Kearney could have the easiest transition of the four universities to the MIAA, which is regarded as one of the best Div. II conferences, having finished 29th in the 2009-10 Div. II, behind only two MIAA schools.

Central Oklahoma, 82nd in Director's Cup, and Northeastern State, 122nd, also will undergo a transition phase, as the Lone Star Conference has said they must play independent schedules in 2011-12, Wollmering said.

"These are all schools that will come in and, I think, be competitive in our league," Wollmering said.

With the four-team expansion complete, the focus now shifts to divisional play and scheduling within the MIAA.

Wollmering is the Truman representative for the expansion task force, which has representatives from all 16 schools. The first meeting is set for Nov. 1, and Wollmering said he hopes scheduling will be complete by the third meeting in June.

"By June we should have all those scheduling issues worked out and approved, so going into the fall of 2011 everybody will know what the schedules will be like for the following year," Wollmering said.

Wollmering said in August that the task force will also work with cost-saving travel issues, which is a key to Div. II expansion.

One possible divisional scenario is to have an eight-team division made up of Missouri schools and an eight-team division of non-Missouri schools, Wollmering said. This particular format would create a natural east-west divide.

However, Creer said he was told something different when the commissioner and visit team came to Lindenwood.

"They gave some indication that it would not necessarily be divisional as much as it might be looking at different 'pods,'" Creer said. "That's the terminology they used, was different pods. That there could be ... up to four different pods located around where schools that would be in that same vicinity or like-mindedness or something that might create a rivalry. Those would all be looked at for consideration."

Creer added that he does not know of any decisions that have been made yet.

The basketball teams still will play a 22-game league schedule and four non-conference games, Wollmering said. Football also will likely no longer have non-conference matchups.

"How are they going to determine true champions in football?" said Jack Schrader, men's basketball head coach. "I think to determine a true champion, you play everybody twice — home and home."

Wollmering said wrestling could now be added as a conference sport. Three MIAA teams — including Truman — have wrestling, as well as three of the expansion teams, to make the minimum of six.

Wollmering said no other non-conference sports will add enough members to become MIAA sponsored.

The four-team expansion follows the additions of Lincoln University two years ago and the University of Nebraska-Omaha in 2006.

"There's a lot of questions that need to be asked," Schrader said. "It just seems maybe they should have had these answered before they went ahead and just expanded to 16."

FACILITIES | Recent rainfall floods Red Barn Park, causes Stokes and Kenneth L. Gardner Track to flood

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back, regrade the rock and put it back together and reseal the turf."

The track also suffered damage after the rainfall. Assistant track coach Tim Schwegler said the track is still usable for practices but is not in proper condition for competitions.

"It looks like there are a few more ripples in it than before," Schwegler said. "The east end, where the high jump is at, is getting beat up. Water is an enemy of a track."

The track was resurfaced last year, but Wollmering said the track has sustained a lot of damage during the last three summers.

Wollmering said this is not the first time Stokes Stadium has experienced flooding this year. He said Truman had to bring in a group to clean up the turf.

"We brought in a company that has a machine that works through the turf and picks up the debris," Wollmering said. "Last week was kind of a repair week, but by Friday, it was like a brand new field."

Both Bulldog soccer teams played at the soccer pitch last weekend despite bad field conditions. Wollmering said both teams have used Stokes Stadium for practice to avoid damaging the soccer field.

Wollmering said the baseball and softball fields also have been sick because of standing water.

"The biggest issue we have with soccer, baseball and softball is that there's no drainage," Wollmering said. "There's no built-in drainage on those fields. Those fields need some type of drainage system, otherwise the water just sits there."

Pershing Building also had a few areas of flooding, Wollmering said. Although the water did not reach the court floor, he said the training room, laundry room and a hallway did have standing water.

Schultz said the east side of Pershing Building has not allowed quite as much water in, but the west side still is being repaired.

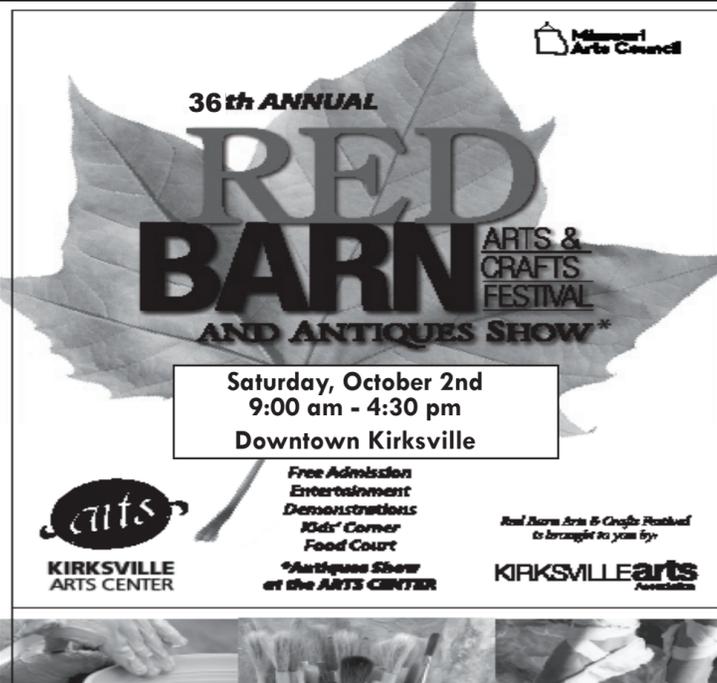
"Some water did come in along the west entrance door down there by the Arena," Schultz said. "That well in there has a very small drain in it. That drain is notoriously getting clogged with leaves, debris and trash."

Schultz said storm water management has been ignored on campus for quite some time.

"Until the flooding can be dealt with in Red Barn Park, we're never going to be able to fix this flooding [on the field]."



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