

'Dogs tie season low in points at UCM

Four Mules end night with double-digit point totals as Bulldogs fall in Warrensburg

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Truman dropped to 5-10 overall and 3-9 in conference last night suffering a 73-45 loss at the University of Central Missouri.

The Mules had seven steals and scored 18 points off 14 Bulldog turnovers. The UCM bench outscored Truman's by 32.

With 7:57 left in the first half the Bulldogs found themselves only trailing by one. Central then rattled off a 15-2 run that put them on top 32-18 and did not end until junior center Vesko Filchev sank a lay-up with 2:44 remaining.

"They have as much, probably more talent, than anybody in the league," head coach Jack Schrader said. "They got three starters back from last year (senior guard Ryan)Harris, (senior forward Tyler) Oakley and (senior guard Bryce) Brunz and they brought in I don't know how many D-I transfers and JuCo All-Americans. They've got talent."

Four UCM (10-7, 5-6 MIAA) players ended the night with scoring totals in double figures. Two of whom were senior forwards Manny Richardson and Joel Barkers who had been averaging 2.3 and 7.3 points per game apiece before last night's game.

The Mules biggest lead was 32 points with just under eight minutes remaining in the game.

"I don't think they have really a weakness," Schrader said before the game. "They're strong, they're physi-

cal, they're athletic, they can score and they can defend alright."

Truman shot only 37 percent from the floor compared to the Mule's 49 percent mark. Central had 35 points in the paint and 38 rebounds. They out-rebounded the 'Dogs by 12. Truman struggled at the free-throw line shooting 52.9 percent on 17 shots. Last night's game represented the smallest number of points Truman has scored all season.

"Central is always, ever since I've been here, played great against us at home," senior guard Alex Henderson said. "Tonight was no exception. Their defense was really able to take us out of a lot of things that we wanted to do as indicated by the score I think. We did not put up very many points at all."

Truman won their fifth game of the year Saturday afternoon at Pershing Arena against the Lincoln University Blue Tigers 83-79. Senior forward Ethan Freeman recorded a double-double with 15 points and 13 rebounds.

Truman trailed by five with 7:27 left in the first half. They then strung together a 5-0 run to secure their first substantial lead of the afternoon. A Freeman lay-up at the 3:18 mark in the first half opened up a 38-28 lead. The Bulldogs never fell behind again on their way to their third conference victory of the season matching last year's win total in the MIAA.

Lincoln allowed 18 points to Filchev during his 20 minutes on the court. The total tied a season high in points for Filchev who also had four fouls.

"Their coach kept switching them up," Filchev said. "So it was kind

of good so they couldn't get in any rhythm guarding me. All the baskets I had were pretty easy shots too. I owe this to my teammates. Usually I work for my baskets. Not this time. They just hit me down low."

The Blue Tigers kept Truman's lead to single digits for most of the game. Lincoln junior guard Cedric Ride led all scorers with 29 points, along with two steals and five rebounds. Fellow junior guard Marquis Davis secured eight rebounds and 28 points as well.

"We knew they were going to come in playing hard because they haven't won a conference game yet," senior forward Brian Nwelue said. "They were looking to steal one on the road. We kind of expected that."

The Bulldogs went to the free-throw line 41 times making 27 foul shots adding up to a 65.9 free-throw percentage. Lincoln was awarded 13 foul shots and was perfect from the line.

This was the first meeting between the Bulldogs and Blue Tigers since Lincoln rejoined the conference last year after leaving the MIAA in 1999.

Schrader said he respects Lincoln and beating a team with an 0-10 record in conference does not make the victory less important to his team.

"It's huge," sophomore guard Tom Norton said. "It's a lot of fun and it's just huge for our self-esteem and confidence. We've been in those close games and haven't pulled out but we got this one and hopefully it leads on to more wins."

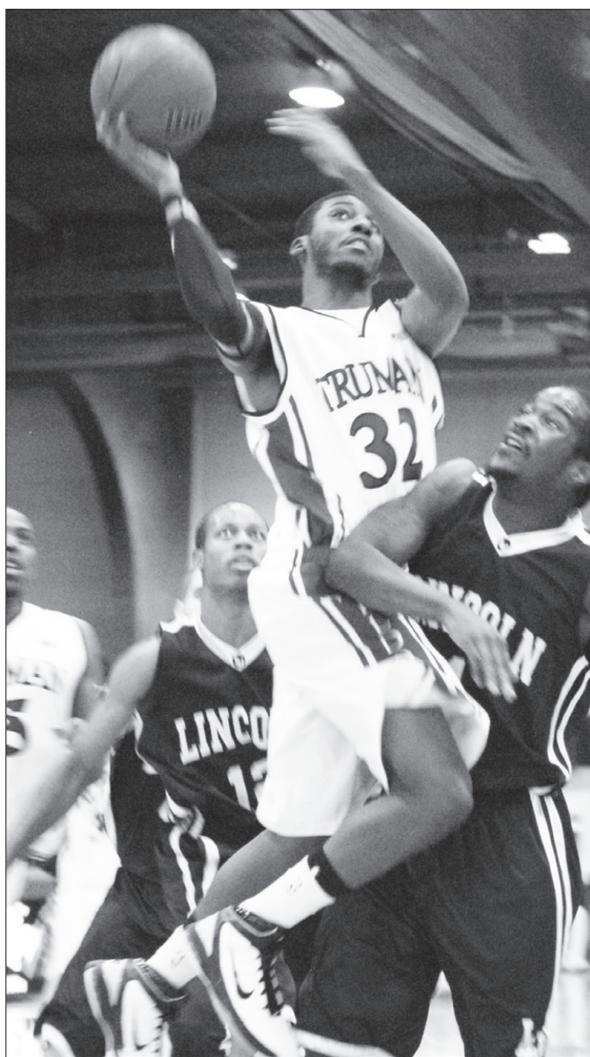
Truman faces conference-leading Missouri Southern State University at 3 p.m. Saturday in Joplin, Mo.

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Jack Schrader
head coach on the
University of Central
Missouri



Krista Goodman/Index
Junior center Vesko Filchev loses the jump ball last Saturday against Lincoln. Filchev led the Bulldogs with 18 points.



Krista Goodman/Index
Freshman guard Justin Strickland makes a lay-up last Saturday against Lincoln University at Pershing Arena. Strickland scored six points.

Several freshmen making the most of opportunity

Sodemann and Gardner see minutes as MIAA schedule picks up

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Most young boys dream of playing college basketball. They spend countless hours in front of their driveway hoop fantasizing about buzzer-beaters, half-court shots and Final 4s.

Many high schoolers hope to be recruited into a conference that will give them a game every night, but only a few get the chance to take the court at the next level.

This year freshman guards Isaac Gardner, Pat Sodemann, Marek Bush, Justin Strickland and forward Josh May are getting that college experience.

As a group they have played a combined 492 minutes. They are contributing 16.6 points per game out of the team's combined 72.8. During the last three games Gardner and Sodemann alone have combined for 56 points, 18 rebounds and three steals in 137 minutes.

The freshmen also have given the Bulldogs a deeper bench than last year. During the 2009-10 season senior guards Alex Henderson and Stefan Garrison were averaging more than 30 minutes per game and senior forward Ethan Freeman was on the floor for nearly 30 minutes per game.

"This year definitely the freshmen have come in and relieved the tension a little bit," junior center Vesko Filchev said. "They fill in the spots

pretty good. They try to gain our confidence and we believe in them too. They've improved a lot since the first day we started practice and I don't consider them freshmen anymore."

Several freshmen are toward the top of the 'Dogs stat sheet in multiple categories. Bush is third on the roster in blocks with four, Sodemann is shooting 80 percent from the free-throw line, making him second among players with at least 10 attempts. Gardner is second in made 3-pointers with 32 trailing sophomore guard Tom Norton by just two baskets. Gardner also leads the team in 3-point percentage, at 47 percent.

Gardner is fifth on the team in overall points averaging 8.5 and fourth in overall minutes with 20.5. Sodemann is averaging 4.1 per game, which ties him for sixth with senior guard Stefan Garrison. He also is seventh in minutes played with 14.6 and has appeared in 15 games.

"Sodemann played really well in the Northwest game and was very important, because we won that," head coach Jack Schrader said. "Gardner has been playing very solidly. Strickland has been playing well in practice, got his shot against [Missouri] Western, produced and really did well the other day. Really gave us a shot in the arm."

Strickland has appeared in 10 games this year. In addition to offering the Bulldogs speed the guard also has been used as a defensive specialist. He is sixth on the team in blocks and seventh in steals averaging just 7.3 minutes per game.

Learning how to adjust to being

a role play can be difficult for some first-year college players who were the top athlete on their high school teams. Most of the Bulldog freshmen did not see significant minutes at the beginning of the season and some still spend most of their time on the bench.

"I think everybody wants to play," May said. "But I understand there are seniors ahead of me so I'm willing to do my part. Sit the bench, and come off the bench ready to make an impact on the game and do my job."

Schrader said he admires his players work ethic and the sacrifices the seniors have made. He also said the current freshmen have a chance to return Truman to its winning ways of the early part of last decade.

"Last year was developing," Schrader said. "But the two previous years it was frustrating. It is night and day the way we're working, the way we're practicing, the way we're eager to learn, the way we are eager to compete. Can I guarantee it (future success)? No, but I would not bet against us."

Though there still is learning to do for the freshmen they said they cherish the experiences they have had so far and look forward to the future.

"The first game at UMKC when I got the ball on a loose ball right at the elbow and I caught it and I didn't really think," Sodemann said. "I just shot it and it hit the rim a couple of times and bounced in. I heard the [public address announcer] call my name and as I was jogging back I was like, 'Man I'm really doing it.' It was just one of those feelings I'll probably never forget."



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