

# 'Dogs look to dig out of hole

BY TYLER KILLEN  
Assistant Sports Editor

The No. 18 Truman volleyball team continued its struggles at the University of Nebraska-Omaha last Saturday. The Bulldogs lost a five-set match for the second consecutive time, after beginning the season a perfect 7-0.

"It was really frustrating," senior outside hitter Allison Barker said. "It wasn't that nobody was on top of their game, we were just a little [out of it] and spaced out a little bit. We just couldn't come together as a team I guess."

Truman (23-7, 12-6 MIAA) struggled on offense. The Bulldogs hit .087 for the match, marking the sixth time this season they've hit below .100 in a match.

The Bulldogs and Mavericks started the first set exchanging points and were tied at three. However, UNO scored 13 of the next 14 points to essentially put the game out of reach. The Bulldogs never led in the set and eventually dropped it, losing 10-25. Truman hit only -.033 in the set.

Head coach Ben Briney said the Mavericks threw the Bulldogs off their game.

"We were struggling a little bit at times with serve receives," Briney said. "They kind of made us one-dimensional, so we couldn't get our middle [blockers] involved. So, that's kind of what happened."

The second set was slightly better for the Bulldogs. Truman had offensive problems again to begin the set, falling behind 5-10. But, the 'Dogs rallied to close the gap at 10-13. The Mavericks answered by scoring five straight points, including three off of Truman



Senior libero Casey Bruno makes a dig in a match earlier this season. The Bulldogs play their final two regular season games this weekend.

errors. The Bulldogs did make a late push in the set to pull within four at 17-21. But, the rally was not enough, and UNO won the set 18-25.

Barker led Truman with 13 kills and 24 digs.

"It wasn't a good environment to be in," Barker said. "We were just upset with ourselves because we knew we weren't playing even half as good as we could be. And I guess for me that's like the light at the end

of the tunnel, because we can play better. And that's what we did. We didn't play great, but we started fighting back."

Truman did come back with its best offense in the third set, hitting

.186. The Bulldogs rallied to take an 8-5 lead early in the set and never trailed after that, going on to win the set 25-17.

The fourth set featured nine ties and five lead changes. Truman started slow, but rallied and came from behind to take a 17-14 lead. UNO scored six of the next seven points to put the Bulldogs down 18-20. However, Truman scored seven straight points, including back-to-back kills from sophomore outside hitter Megan Sharpe and sophomore right-side hitter Allyson Stellmach to win 25-20.

Sophomore outside hitter Lauren Radix said the team felt confident going into the fifth set, because they had just won the previous two sets.

"We came together and fought hard," Radix said. "I think we were pretty confident going into the third set as well. So, it was great, we had the momentum."

The momentum carried Truman to a 9-8 lead in the fifth set. UNO then rallied to score seven of the final nine points to beat the Bulldogs 11-15.

Truman has two games remaining in the regular season. The Bulldogs will travel Friday to Northwest Missouri State University and Truman will play Saturday at Missouri Western State University. Truman defeated both teams earlier this year. Briney said these games will be vital.

"We've just got to get that momentum going," Briney said. "This weekend, right now, that's all that matters. We need to go in and build into the weekend. Hopefully we'll get some momentum Friday and build that into Saturday, and finish the season strong."

## Bulldogs lose nailbiter

BY JACK NICHOLL  
Managing Editor

Senior wide receiver Kendrick Blue said it best on the phone Monday night when he analyzed the football team's 17-14 defeat at Pittsburg State University last weekend.

"Probably one of our best games statistically, but I guess a couple missed opportunities in the red zone kind of hindered us from actually winning the game," Blue said. "But the team played well. We played as a team. It was the most collective team effort ... all season."

Blue, who scored a touchdown with four minutes left in the fourth quarter, was referring to the game in which the Bulldogs had more total offense, more time of possession and less turnovers than the Gorillas.

In fact, it was the second time this season Truman (4-6, 2-5 MIAA) won the turnover battle with at least a plus-2 margin. And it was the first time this season the 'Dogs outgained their opponent by more than 100 yards.

Yet the team did not come out with a victory, or a chance for a winning record in the last game of the season 2 p.m. Saturday

against the University of Nebraska-Omaha at Stokes Stadium — although the team still has a chance for the most wins since 2007.

"We knew we were the best team, we just didn't capitalize on opportunities given to us," Blue said.

The main reason why the Bulldogs lost is simple: red-zone offense. They scored three out of five times in the red zone, with just two field goals and a touchdown — including the most costly missed opportunity at the end of the game.

After Blue's touchdown and a quick stop on defense, Truman engineered a 12-play, 66-yard drive to the Gorillas (4-5, 2-5 MIAA) 18 yardline.

On 2nd-and-10, senior quarterback Phil Davis found junior wide receiver Donald Harvey in the endzone for the potential go-ahead score with :02 on the clock. Harvey had one foot in bounds, but it appeared he bobbled the ball before his second foot barely caught the line.

"The catch could have went either way," head coach Gregg Nesbitt said. "We thought we had stolen another one on the road."

The Bulldogs still had a chance to tie, but the 36-yard field goal from fresh-



Senior quarterback Phil Davis gives instructions to wide receivers before a play in a game earlier this season. The Bulldogs lost to Pittsburg State last weekend 17-14.

man kicker Derrick Koon was ruled wide right when it flew above the short goalposts. Nesbitt said the kick was a yard either way.

It was Koon's third miss of the day and second with the 'Dogs inside the redzone. He made two field goals in the second half, and a successful two-point conversion after Blue's touchdown set the Bulldogs up with a field goal to tie.

"It was the most collective pain, discouragement that I've seen after a loss,"

Nesbitt said, who took some of the blame for the redzone offense. "I, as a head football coach, need to have a better gameplan in the red zone and goal line area to score, and you as a player have got to execute better. We can't be three for five in the red zone with one touchdown."

The Bulldogs defense kept Truman in the game until the offense engineered three drives of at least 50 yards to end the game.

Junior defensive back

Terrence Byrd had two interceptions on the day to help keep the Gorillas to only three drives of more than 20 yards. Pittsburg State had negative three yards on its last two possessions, including a key three-and-out that allowed the Bulldogs plenty of time for their final drive.

"We all knew that we were going to come back and get a scoring drive going and compete to the end," Davis said.

Davis threw for 210 yards, his best of the sea-

son, and tacked on 81 yards rushing on 22 carries. Sophomore running back Will Mosquera had 76 yards on the ground, and wide receivers junior Anthony Brown and freshman Dallas Grier each had more than 65 yards receiving.

"We go into every game trying to compete, trying to go hard, and the way the game turned — it's hard to swallow," Davis said. "It's disappointing. We wanted the victory really bad and we came up short."

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