

Men eye postseason

BY JOHN MOENSTER
Staff Reporter

While the men's soccer team was hoping to return to Kirksville this week with two more road wins, it can't be disappointed with the results of the past weekend.

The No. 11 Bulldogs defeated Northeastern (Okla.) State University 1-0 and battled back against Columbia College last Friday night for a 2-2 draw. Truman made a two-goal comeback while down a player for the final 55 minutes of the match. Junior midfielder Matthew Sanderson was issued a red card without receiving a warning or a yellow card. Senior forward Matt Kimball said that while he did not see the call, the official thought Sanderson kicked an opposing player while they were tangled up.

"After that happened, everyone knew we would be playing the rest of the match a man down," Kimball said. "It was definitely shocking, but it made us think to ourselves, 'Now it's time to battle.'"

Kimball said the team made some changes to accommodate for the loss. While the 'Dogs usually have three men up front for offensive purposes, head coach Duke Cochran kept Kimball and sophomore forward Andy Chapman in the front.

"I think it was after they scored on us when we realized we're going to need to play better defense if we wanted to tie the game," Kimball said.

After a goalless first half, the 'Dogs were down 2-0 going into the final 20 minutes of the match. Kimball said it looked bad for the team, but then senior midfielder Dan Meagher was given a penalty kick after being taken down in the Columbia College goal box.

"Andy Chapman stepped up, took it and buried it in the left corner [of the

net]," Kimball said. "So then we were down 2-1 with about 20 minutes left and it really brought life back into the game for us. It gave us some hope."

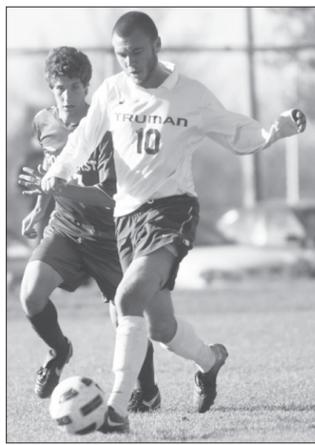
Chapman's goal was his fifth of the season, and approximately two minutes later, Kimball put away his ninth goal of the year. Kimball has led the team in goals all season. The 'Dogs held on for the final minutes of the physical match. Columbia College (10-5-2) was called for 21 fouls and three yellow cards, while Truman (10-2-2) was called for 15 fouls and two yellow cards, along with the straight red.

The 'Dogs then traveled to Oklahoma on Sunday, where they pulled off a 1-0 regional win against Northeastern (Okla.) State. The match was scoreless after the first half, but the 'Dogs began generating much more offense in the second. In the 72nd minute, junior midfielder Jonathan Brown sent the ball up the field to the top of the box, where senior midfielder Bobby Larkin fired a game-winning one-touch goal past NSU keeper Jordan Ladbrooke. It was Larkin's third goal this season. Larkin, who still leads the NCAA in assists, attributes his success to his teammates.

"I think it's a huge shoutout to [the team] for finishing our opportunities," Larkin said. "Without guys like Kimball and Chapman up front, I wouldn't have statistics like that."

Larkin said the team remains positive as it enters the home stretch of the season. Larkin said he thinks the team has a good chance of going to the NCAA tournament and is focusing on winning the remaining games. If the 'Dogs make the post season, the team likely will face Midwestern State University (Texas) because they are currently No. 1 in the region, just above the 'Dogs.

"They're undefeated and ranked nationally," Larkin said. "We're looking for-



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Senior midfielder Bobby Larkin gets around a defender last week.

ward to playing them in the first round if we make it."

Head coach Duke Cochran said the team controls its own destiny right now, and that if they want to see the post season all they have to do is win. Cochran said it was a tremendous team effort during the past few games.

"They're hunting down chances and taking advantage of it," Cochran said. "They're keeping other teams on their heels. I think it's just a testament to how strong this team is from top to bottom."

The 'Dogs will wrap up the season Friday and Sunday at the Newman (Kan.) University Invitational, where they will take on St. Mary's (Texas) and Texas A&M-International.

"It's a big tournament with a lot of teams, so we're calling it the 'Wichita Mega Bowl,'" Cochran said. "So we're going to go and win the Mega Bowl."

Daniels, Galey lead Bulldogs to first win

'Dogs beat NAIA school 56-43 to open season

BY TYLER KILLEN
Assistant Sports Editor

The Truman women's basketball team picked up its first win of the season on Oct. 28 in an exhibition game with Central Methodist University. The Bulldogs won 56-43 despite being outshot by the Eagles 32 to 28 percent.

Head coach Michael Smith said the team struggled early in the game, but the goal was to get returning players back in rhythm and give freshmen experience.

"I noticed we had a lot of jitters in the first half," Smith said. "We had 10 turnovers in the first half. We missed about 10 layups in the first half, and five of them were uncontested. And to a lot of the [freshmen], it was their first college game and first college experience."

Eleven of the 12 team members played in the game for the Bulldogs. Junior guard Breanna Daniels led Truman with 17 points in 30 minutes. Senior guard Amy Galey had nine points, eight rebounds and led the Bulldogs with nine assists. Galey said the team still has some work to do before

the regular season starts.

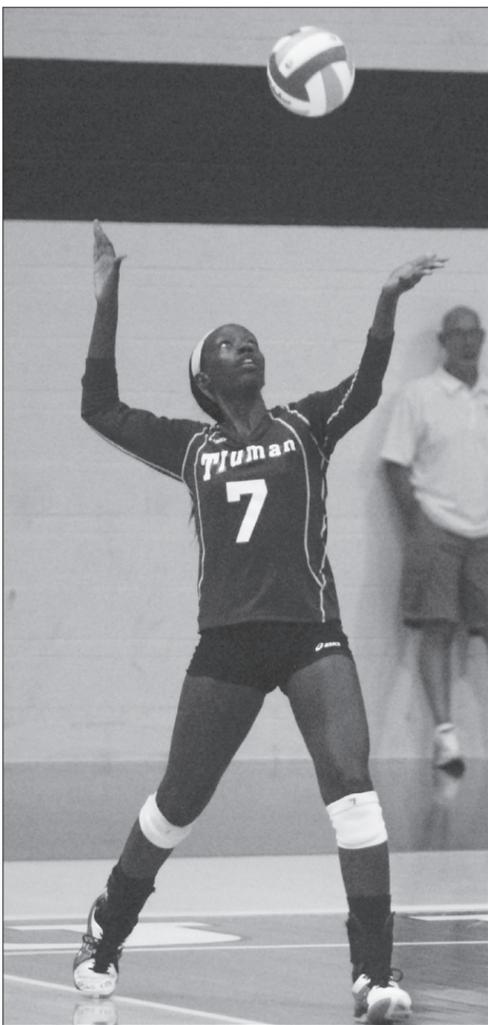
"I feel like we came out with a lot of energy, and defensively that's the kind of style we wanted to play," Galey said. "But offensively, [we struggled with] the spacing. And we missed 18 points in the paint. And at the end of each half we gave up half-court shots. But I think the first game kind of got out the nerves a little bit. I think we were just excited to get on the floor."

The Bulldogs beat Central Methodist on the glass, out-rebounding them 54-34. Truman also picked up eight steals on the night.

Smith said the game did not go as well as he had hoped, but the team still had several positives to come away with.

"I think the thing I was most impressed with was our ability to run the floor," Smith said. "We had 10 to 12 fast break layups off transition, which is what we want to do, run the ball more this year. And I thought defensively we played pretty well. And we played hard. We were diving on the floor for loose balls and things like that."

Truman will open the regular season at 2 p.m. Sunday at Western Illinois University. The Bulldogs' first home game is Nov. 27, when they host Maryville University.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Sharpe serves earlier this year. She leads the team in blocks.

Sharpe improves defensive numbers

Sharpe helps team in more areas than just kills

BY LOGAN JACKSON
Sports Editor

When middle blocker Megan Sharpe returned to Truman for her sophomore year, everybody already knew about her offensive numbers.

Sharpe was named the AVCA Div. II National Freshman of the Year last season. She led the team with 390 kills and 104 blocks while starting 36 of Truman's 37 matches.

Head coach Ben Briney said he knew coming into this season that other teams would change their defensive strategy when they faced the Bulldogs. Briney said he knew that if Truman wanted to be successful, Sharpe might have to make a few small changes to her game.

"That was something that I challenged her to do at the end of last year," Briney said. "We know she can put up the numbers offensively. I challenged her to come into this season and be a better blocker, to dominate the net from a defensive standpoint."

So far this season,

Sharpe has met those challenges. Sharpe still has her share of kills — she is second on the team with 282 — however, her blocking numbers are up.

After averaging 0.8 blocks per set last year, Sharpe has raised that average to nearly a block per set. She also has 63 digs compared to last season's 58.

"I feel that I've become smarter as a player all around," Sharpe said. "There are a lot more people following me so I'm getting a lot less balls than I normally would. It's really helping us that other people are putting away balls when they get the chance."

This week was another example of how Sharpe has evolved her game. Sharpe tallied 13 kills, three blocks and two digs against Missouri Southern State University. Those numbers came after she had only 17 kills in the prior three matches, including a career-low one kill against Fort Hays State University.

The next day, she posted 10 kills, another three blocks and a career high of six digs.

In the Central Missouri University match Wednesday night, Sharpe had seven kills,

four digs and three blocks. She also led the team with a .438 hitting percentage.

"She's facing double-blocks, sometimes triple-blocks, and it gets to a point when that kind of gets to you," Briney said. "It was a matter of her having to refocus and us having to change our offense a little. A lot of it is, 'Hey, guess what? Everybody knows about you now. You're not a secret.'"

Because of her efforts this week, Sharpe won the MIAA Hitter of the Week award for the second time this season.

Sharpe currently is fifth in the MIAA in blocks and sixth in hitting percentage.

The Bulldogs have three matches left in the regular season, all of which will be played on the road. Truman has already beaten all three teams earlier this season.

"The way we've kind of taken this season is that it's one match at a time," Briney said. "The only thing that matters is what's right in front of us. So, this match is the most important match of the season, just like Saturday's match, when we get there, will be the most important match of the season."

Athlete of the Week

Megan Sharpe

Sport: Volleyball

Year: Sophomore

Position: Middle Blocker

Hometown: Edwardsville, Ill.

Sharpe is second on the team in kills with 282 this season, despite frequently facing double or triple teams. On defense, Sharpe leads the team in blocks with 105 total. She also has 63 digs on the year. Last season Sharpe finished with 104 blocks and 58 digs.

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