

SOCCKER | Women second in MIAA by one point, still have two matches left this season

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run at the playoffs.

"We're really starting to click more as a team, and putting away two goals was huge for us because we've only had one goal differentials for a while," Buri said.

The Bulldogs got an insurance goal from freshman midfielder Suzanne Pelley in the second half, a feat Truman has struggled to accomplish this season. This is only the second game since Sept. 5th in which the 'Dogs have scored more than two goals.

Pelley scored from more than 20 yards out, and redshirt freshman defender Lindsay Brennan said the goal was the result of excellent passing and communication.

"[Sophomore forward] Olivia [Hayes] laid a ball back to the top of the box, and Suzanne put a great hit on it," Brennan said.

Even though Truman has found it difficult to put away opponents, its average of 1.25 goals per game is fourth in the conference.

As the season winds down, the playoff picture becomes more important.

The win places Truman at second in the MIAA with 29 points, only one point in front of the University of Nebraska-Omaha. According to the latest regional rankings, the Bulldogs would have the sixth and final playoff spot.

The next game is at 1 p.m. today at home against the University of Central Missouri, who is undefeated and currently ranked second in the nation and first in the region, but Buri said they are beatable.

"The game will be really tough, but they've had goals scored against them," Buri said. "If we can get some goals put away then we can make it a good game."

Buri said that the Bulldogs' strong defense makes them very competitive.

Head coach Mike Cannon said that having only two losses at this time of the year is phenomenal but five ties does not look great, and that the committee that determines the rank-



Karli Rae Kerr/Index

Freshman midfielder Kristina Weishar settles a ball against Washburn last Saturday. Weishar has started six games for the Bulldogs this season and has one goal.

ings will take that into consideration.

"Four out of the five [ties] were games that I felt we should have won," Cannon said. "We very easily could be 13-2-1, which would be an unbelievable record, so we're not that far off from being a really good team. We're still in the playoff picture, but coming into the season there were just a lot of questions to be answered."

For the women's soccer team to qualify for the national tournament, it has to be ranked as one of the top six teams in the South Central region, which is composed of the MIAA, Heartland and Lone Star conferences.

The region is widespread, and schools ranked in the top 10 in the region range from Texas and Oklahoma to Kansas and Nebraska.

Cannon said a committee of coaches and administrators computes the rankings with a formula that takes into account a wide variety of factors, including the strength of the team's schedule and whether its games were home or away.

The Bulldogs are currently the only team ranked that does not have at least 10 wins, but two games this weekend offer the 'Dogs a chance to boost their odds at the playoffs by securing a second-place finish in the MIAA. UNO has fewer chances to improve its standing, with only one game remaining.

Senior Day is at 1 p.m. today when the 'Dogs host UCM. Their last regular season game is at 2 p.m. Saturday at Missouri Western State University.

ANSWERS | Truman looks to rally in final three matches after dropping two of last three

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intensity and discipline and just did a great job. Senior Night is about the seniors, and all of the seniors played great."

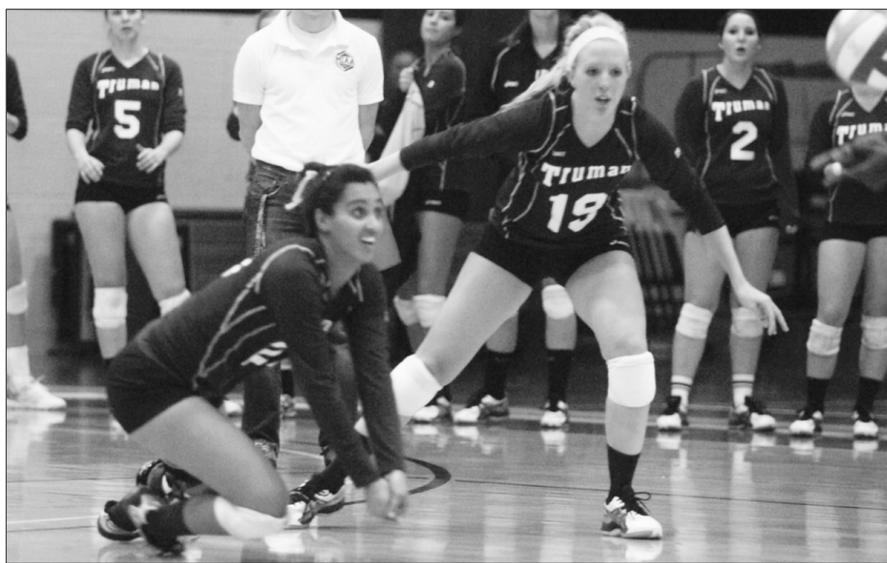
The Bulldogs hit .425 in the first two sets, easily winning. The third set required an 8-2 run near the end to give Truman the 3-0 win.

Sinclair finished the match with 10 digs and a team-high 13 kills, giving her five double-doubles on the season. Sharpe finished with 10 kills, including the match winner. On the defensive side, senior Casey Bruno finished with 21 digs. Petak also had a noteworthy performance with 26 assists.

Petak said she was satisfied with the way Truman finished the weekend.

"We played well," Petak said. "We took it to [Pitt State] on Saturday and did what we had to do."

The Bulldogs will travel to play the University of Nebraska-Omaha at 5 p.m. Saturday.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Senior outside hitter Allison Barker and junior outside hitter Molly Sinclair go for a dig against UCM last night.

PREVIEW | Bulldogs return 12 wrestlers and add eight freshmen, look for three All-Americans this season

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wrestlers were freshmen. Maus was one of two Bulldogs to win 30 matches last season. Ryan Banning and Zach Hayes finished with the third- and fourth-best records for Truman, and Colton Schmitz was 18-14 overall.

The four combined to go 90-79 — 73-59 in tournament matches and 17-20 in dual matches.

"Last year was their first year and they now have a season under their belt," Kurvoski said. "We're not looking to win nationals in the first semester. It's important to come out strong in the first semester, but at the same time, you don't want to peak early. The experience they now have is very important."

The Bulldogs wrestle in more tournaments, but the dual matches are just as important. Schutter said the second day of the national tournament is set up as a dual match, as well as the second day of the regional tournament.

"With a dual, you have a one-hour weigh-in

and then you wrestle that dual," Schutter said. "With a tournament, you have a two-hour weigh-in and then you start wrestling the tournament. You might sit around all day long before you wrestle a match. With a dual, you know you're going to wrestle within two hours."

Of the eight freshmen, several could fight for a starting spot this season. Devon Fenstermaker, Joshua Wells, Nick Shea and Ryan Maus will all have a chance to break into the lineup this season.

"They're fresh bodies at practice," Kurvoski said. "Wrestling in high school and wrestling in college is a big difference. You don't just want to throw them out there right away. But they will be in tournaments and will definitely see some mat time this year."

The freshmen also will have to learn to split time between school and the gym, and that has not been a problem for the wrestling program during the last few years. The

Bulldogs have won four straight NCAA Div. II Wrestling Coaches Association All-Academic Championships. The team has six of those awards in its history.

"One of [the upperclassmen's] main roles will be to show the younger guys how to manage and balance their time between class and practice," Schutter said. "Those upperclassmen are really good about communicating."

While the team hasn't had an All-American in the past two years, Bader said the team isn't focused on the past. He said they are motivated to reach Schutter's goal.

"We're getting up and getting at it at six in the morning, four days a week," Bader said. "And that just sets a mindset for the whole year. We're getting up early, waking our bodies up. When it comes to tournaments on the weekends, we normally have to be up at six anyway. We're going to be used to that so we won't be dogging it like other teams."

LOSS | 'Dogs give up 372 yards, have three turnovers

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The 45 points are the most the Bulldogs have given up this season.

"Unfortunately, we're going into the 10th week of the season and it's almost back to square one," head coach Gregg Nesbitt said. "We're right back to the basics. What I'd like to say is that after the first 15 minutes, Washburn made some adjustments and we didn't adjust back — it would make you feel better. But they did the same thing from the first snap to the last snap."

Offensively, the 'Dogs regressed in both their running and passing games. The Bulldogs averaged only 2.6 yards per carry and completed less than 31 percent of their passes.

Truman sustained two long drives in the first quarter — one for 84 yards and a touchdown and another for 37 yards on 12 plays. The Bulldogs converted five of six third downs on the drives to help them take a 9-7 lead.

But the offense sputtered from the second quarter on. Truman gained only 36 yards in a span of 12 possessions, including 11 punts.

"First time all year we really didn't play very well," Nesbitt said. "In particular, we struggled after the first quarter, we inexplicably stuttered for the rest of the day offensively. Our punting game was not very good."

On special teams, the Ichabods blocked one punt and Truman averaged less than 30 yards in net punting, some of it coming into the wind in a run of Truman 3-and-outs.

The Ichabods started nine drives in front of their 40 yard line. Meanwhile, the Bulldogs only had field position that good on their last two possessions of the game.

"I didn't feel any more pressure [because of field position]," said Millender, who had five tackles. "I just tried to go out there and relax and do what we have been doing for the majority of the season — is play good defense."

"We knew what they were going to do, we just didn't make the plays when we needed to."

Nesbitt said that if there was a bright spot, it was the play of the run defense. Washburn had 31 run plays for 63 yards and a fumble, and only two of the Ichabods' 16 first downs came via a running play.

The Ichabods added 309 yards through the air, four touchdowns and zero interceptions. Meanwhile, the Bulldogs had only 87 yards passing — the third time this year Truman has passed for less than 100 yards.

"We kind of shot ourselves in the foot," Millender said. "We knew once we stopped the run they were going to pass. ... They have great receivers who went and got the ball. We just didn't make plays."

Sophomore running back Will Mosquera led the 'Dogs in total offense with 83 yards on the ground as he took the majority of the running duties with junior Harnish Ayora out with a minor knee injury. Nesbitt said Ayora was cleared to play.

Senior defensive back Michael Elliott led the Bulldogs on defense with seven tackles and a fumble recovery.

The Bulldogs travel to Pittsburg State University Saturday before ending the season Nov. 13 against the University of Nebraska-Omaha at Stokes Stadium.

"We're still hungry," Millender said. "We feel we're a good team, we just haven't made good plays when we've needed to."

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