

VOLLEYBALL | Bulldogs escape with win despite a combined .083 hitting percentage in sets 3 and 4

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Truman fell behind 3-10 to begin the third set. Although the Bulldogs had a few rallies, the hole proved to be too large and they never could pull even, losing 17-25.

Truman hit .067 in the third set while allowing the Mavericks a hitting percentage of .290. The Bulldogs were also plagued with service errors throughout the match, and they committed six in the third set alone.

"Both teams are very aggressive serving teams," Briney said. "So, you're going to have a lot of service errors. We did have more service errors than we would like to have had."

The fourth set was, again, competitive. The Bulldogs scored the first point of the set, as they did the whole match, but later fell behind, 12-13. Truman tied the set several times but was never able to overtake the Mavericks, eventually losing 19-25.

The Bulldogs hit poorly again in the fourth set, managing only a .093 hitting percentage.

"The girls were a little upset with themselves, knowing that they allowed themselves to be in that position," Briney said. "Omaha picked their game up. We have to give credit to them. And we didn't pick up the intensity to match them."

Truman scored on a kill from sophomore right-side hitter Lauren Radix to open the fifth set. However, the Bulldogs had two attack errors and allowed UNO senior outside hitter Kayla Uhing to tally three early kills, giving the Mavericks a 5-1 lead.

Back-to-back attack errors by Uhing allowed the Bulldogs to cut the lead to two, but a UNO rally left Truman trailing 3-8 at the turn. Radix said it came down to a fight for the last few points.

"We just knew we were going to have to fight," Radix said. "We had to really, really dig deep and fight to win. But there was no way I was going to lose that game, and I know all my teammates felt the same way. We weren't going to lose."



Sophomore middle blocker Emily Briseno goes up for the kill against SBU earlier this season. Briseno is fourth on the team in kills with 121 and has a .293 hitting percentage.

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The teams alternated points until the Bulldogs were down 7-11. Truman then scored six consecutive points, including three kills from senior outside hitter Allison Barker to take a 13-11 lead. After a Maverick point, the Bulldogs scored twice to win the set 15-12.

"In the locker room afterwards, I told the girls, 'We need to take how we play at the turn in the fifth

set and bottle it, and play like that all the time,'" Briney said. "That intensity needs to be played throughout the match so we don't get to those fifth sets."

Truman has a perfect 7-0 record in the fifth sets they have played this season. The Bulldogs are also undefeated at home.

Truman will host Northwest Missouri State University at 7 p.m. Friday.

WIN | Karen Grauel wins first meet

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third and Boedeker 10th. Junior Anne Ratermann and senior Amanda Brown rounded out the top five for Truman, both finishing in the top 15.

Truman had eight runners finish in the top 28.

"Some people ran well, some people ran in the middle and some people didn't run," Cochrane said. "We're still trying to work some things out."

Although the 'Dogs won the meet, they struggled with pack running. Cindy Grauel was nearly one minute behind Karen Grauel. Boedeker finished nearly one minute behind Cindy. Ratermann and Brown finished 15 seconds apart.

"We were spread out a lot more than we would like it to be," Cochrane said. "Ratermann had missed the last meet, and she didn't run real well in this one. The Grauels ran real well."

Truman's next meet is Oct. 23 at the Yellowjacket Classic in Lamon, Iowa. That is the last meet before the MIAA Championships in November.

Although Truman has won two meets and placed fourth in another, Cochrane said the team still has things to work on. He said Pittsburg State University and Northwest Missouri State University are still the teams to beat in the conference.

"I would like to have some things worked out a little bit more," Cochrane said. "We've got to get our people after one and two, we've got to get them closer together. We still didn't get into the race with some of those people. Now, they've improved a lot, but they've got to make it happen."

Senior Adam Kell led the men with a fourth place overall finish.

Runners two through eight finished within 12 places and 42 seconds of each other. Juniors Michael Dial and Joey Walls finished 11th and 12th, respectively. Sophomore Chad Petrofsky and senior Zach Chapman rounded out the top five.

"We did a pretty good job," head coach Tim Schwegler said. "We were aggressive in that race. I was pretty happy overall. Walls and Chapman didn't have as good of races as they would have liked, but some other guys stepped up and did a good job."

Kell has finished first among Bulldog runners in all three meets this year. He also has three top five overall finishes. Kell had just two top-five finishes last year and only led the team in one meet.

He did not finish better than 15th in any meet during his sophomore season.

"He's pretty consistent with how he's been racing," Schwegler said. "He didn't like the heat. It was close to 80 degrees at the start of race time. In the past, he hasn't done that well in the heat. It showed a lot of courage for him to battle through the heat."

The men will also compete in the Yellowjacket Classic Oct. 23 followed by the MIAA Championships. Schwegler said the MIAA is very competitive this year, especially when you get to the teams in the middle.

"You could run the [MIAA] race 10 different times and have 10 different finishes," Schwegler said. "You have to be ready to go that day."

PREVIEW | Women look to replace All-American alumna Kate Aherne, men bring in 10 freshmen

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squad this season, and all have experience at nationals. Senior Julia Jones led the class with four individual All-Americans in 2010.

Gole said one freshman he has been impressed with is Casey Jepsen, who won the 200-yard freestyle in the season-opening dual meet Friday against the University of Iowa. Overall, the team lost 159-99.

"She's learning her events," Gole said. "She wants to get faster. She doesn't have the versatility of Kate, she is primarily just a freestyler and backstroker."

The Bulldogs won three events in the Iowa dual meet. Junior Jessica Jenkot in the 100-yard breaststroke and senior Anna Grinter in the 200-yard butterfly picked up the other two victories.

Jones said she thought the team swam well at the Iowa meet, but that she thinks there are areas the team still must work on.

"I think we did pretty good as a team," Jones said. "It definitely showed us where we needed to improve."

One issue the team has coming into the season is the myriad of injuries and illnesses hampering

several swimmers, Gole said. However — unlike previous seasons — the Bulldogs will only taper their swimmers in the spring because of changes in the A and B cuts. The NCAA changed the A-cut times to make it so only a handful of swimmers will get them, while B-cut times will make it to nationals on an invitation-only basis.

Teams now will wait until the spring to taper so as to not get passed up by other swimmers with faster B-cut times later in the season.

The system also is used in Div. I and Div. III and was implemented to help cut down on the number of swimmers attending nationals. The women had 12 swimmers qualify last season.

The relays also are a work in progress. In the 200-medley relay, the fastest breaststroker and fastest backstroker swam on the A team. The fastest flyer and freestyler swam on the B team. Gole said that wasn't by design. He also said the four fastest swimmers may not all be in the same relay in the end.

"We're kind of playing around with those right now," Gole said. "Just because we have to figure out

what the best possible lineup is going to be. We're going to use these first half of the season meets to try to figure out what our relays are."

Gole said the team is continuing to improve, but that the effort to replace Aherne, if possible, will probably take a good recruiting class next season. However, neither he nor Jones has written this season off. Jones said they will continue to get better.

"I think we're all training as hard as we can and trying to work together as a team to try and compete this year," Jones said. "I think it will be a good year."

The men's swimming team is focused on getting faster as a whole. The Bulldogs brought in 10 freshmen this season, and many will contribute right away.

Gole said there is a lot of talent present in the underclassmen, and that he expects them to do well this season.

Sophomore Jerod Simek led the men's team at the Iowa meet, placing third in the 1,000-yard freestyle, but the team lost 180-75. Simek was the lone male to qualify for nationals last spring. He

scored in three events and placed 23rd by himself.

"I think I swam pretty well, considering it was the first meet," Simek said. "I was a little tired because of all the training. I swam the race, for the most part, how I wanted to."

The Bulldogs struggled with their pacing in many events. Gole said even some of the upperclassmen were making mistakes during the meet.

"I was really pleased with how some of our juniors and seniors performed in our meet this past weekend," Gole said. "But even our returning athletes were making rookie mistakes, as far as pacing and race strategy. But I think our men's team has the ability to pick that stuff up and make corrections the next time."

Despite the team's youth, Simek said he expects the team to be much better this season.

"As a whole team, we expect to do a lot better than we did last year," Simek said. "We have some really fast freshmen and we only lost one guy. So as a team, we're looking to do a lot better."

LAWSON | Lesseig considers Lawson to be one of the four best players he has coached at Truman

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chipper. In fact, it was filled with tears.

The then-freshman had a blow up on the last hole of the final-round 83 at the regional tournament, possibly costing the 'Dogs a spot at nationals.

"When she walked off the course all she was, was all tears," Lesseig said. "And her statement was 'I cost the team going to nationals.' I told her at that time, 'This is a team sport. No one person wins a tournament. No one person costs the team a tournament.' What happened in that tournament wasn't her fault. It's just one of those things."

After an emotional postseason exit from her freshman campaign, Lawson started working on her golf game in an attempt to get the most out of her talent. She dropped her average number of strokes per round by two during the summer between the end of her freshman and sophomore year.

Before the beginning of her junior season, she began revamping her swing with the help of Clint Fitzpatrick, the golf professional at the Kirksville Country Club, where the Bulldogs practice and where Lawson worked that summer.

Fitzpatrick said he was impressed with her love for the game and the way she used breaks during the work day to fine tune her golf skills. He determined that with a more compact swing, the Truman upperclassman could reach a new level.

"The biggest thing we did was shorten her swing to tighten it up," Fitzpatrick said. "It was definitely long, and I'm a big believer the shorter the swing, the less problems you run into. She is as strong as any of the girls who play women's golf right now, so she didn't need to be much stronger. But it's definitely helped her with her consistency."

Lawson had an average of 80 strokes per round in 2009. Her average for the first half of the 2010 season was 78.3. She never shot worse than 87 in any round, and she set a career low by shooting 73 on multiple days.

The woman who grew up across the street from a golf course in Central Illinois played her first-ever round of golf at the age of five. The game that once acted as a bonding experience with her father and grandfather has become a way for Lawson to display her skill on the course and in the classroom.

"Jen epitomizes a lot of what we are looking for out of our student athletes," said Tyler Madsen, men's head golf coach. "Just having the success in the classroom, the success on the course and being able to balance that."

In February 2007 it may have been difficult for Lesseig to imagine the Lawson he saw inside Pershing, bundled up because of illness, winning a tournament someday for Truman. This spring she will have the opportunity to win her fourth straight contest in a row.

Lawson said that determination is the greatest thing she has contributed to Truman golf. She could have given up after losing her team's chance at nationals in 2008, but she didn't. Instead, she refined her game and kept a good attitude.

"I can definitely say I'm a leader in the program," Lawson said. "I don't want to, by any means, say that I'm the best in the program, because any one of the girls on the team can come out and shoot well. I just feel like my experience has led to more consistent success."

Jen Lawson is strong. Her golf swing is almost as strong as her work ethic.



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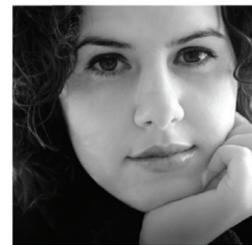
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