

'Dogs split four during weekend

Men start quick Saturday before two blowout Sunday losses

BY SAM SHERMAN

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After holding the Northwest Missouri State University Bearcats to just four runs during the first two games of the four-game series this weekend, the baseball team lost the last two games by a margin of 38-14.

Head coach Dan Davis said he thought the team became overconfident after its Saturday wins, and as a result didn't play the type of baseball expected of them on Sunday.

"I think Northwest was pretty much down, even to start game three," Davis said. "Next thing you know, they hit everything we threw for a strike and it was just a slugfest for them, it was like [batting practice]. ... I thought we were a little arrogant on Sunday morning before we even started

playing."

As a team, Northwest is hitting .308, but the Bulldog pitchers who threw on Saturday held them to a team batting average of .276, allowing only two runs during each game. Junior Logan Siegler and sophomore Tim Lee earned the wins Saturday for the 'Dogs.

Siegler said the team was running on all cylinders Saturday as they picked up the wins.

"We were executing a lot of pitches on the mound," Siegler said. "Hitting came through when they needed to, a lot of clutch hits. Fielding was solid the whole time, so it was all-around just a collective effort."

The two wins in a row was the first time the 'Dogs have done that all season, and Davis said it showed Sunday morning.

"I grabbed one of our guys and I said, 'You know what? You might want to talk to the guys right away because the way we're approaching today is like we think we're a lot better than we actually have been playing,'" he said. "We experienced a little success, and I don't

think we were well-prepared, and that's my fault."

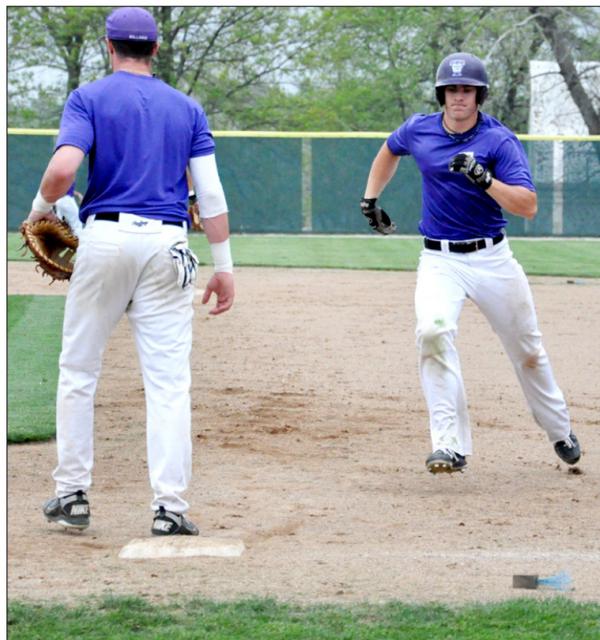
During the first inning of game three, the Bulldogs immediately got off to a poor start, allowing five runs and totaling four walks, two hits and one error. The nightmare never stopped, with the Bearcats getting 16 hits en route to the 17-7 loss.

"As a team, you don't want to get down, but when you're down 5-0 in the first [it's tough not to]," freshman Zak Larkin said.

During game four, the offensive showcase continued for Northwest, picking up 18 hits in 44 at-bats and scoring 21 runs.

Davis said the team will focus on offense this week as they prepare for their four-game series against Southwest Baptist University next weekend.

"We certainly have to become more offensive," Davis said. "That's been our Achilles' heel all year. We started pitching pretty good until the two games on Sunday. ... We're definitely better than



Lindsey Gillam/Index

Junior outfielder Joe Emery returns to first base during practice Tuesday. The baseball team picked up two conference wins Saturday against Northwest Missouri State University.

what we showed on Sunday."

The Bulldogs, ranked 10th in the MIAA, will have the entire week to prepare for their conference series against the SBU Bearcats next weekend. The Bearcats are ranked sixth in the MIAA with a 14-13-1 overall record and a 9-9 conference record. SBU is ranked fourth in the

conference in team batting average and fifth in runs scored.

"Now it's just about getting our confidence back up after it was lost Sunday, because that was embarrassing," Larkin said.

The series will start with two games at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday at the Truman State baseball fields.

Truman tennis defeats Div. I team

BY JONNY BROWN

Staff Reporter

With a 5-4 victory against South Dakota State on Wednesday afternoon, the mens tennis team won its second dual match within a week.

Senior Eric McCollough picked up a victory at the number one spot to go with his win at number one doubles with fellow senior Mark Sturley. Sophomore Mike Merchant made the step up to number 5 singles when sophomore Joe Murphy-Baum was ruled out with illness. Merchant went 2-0 during the day.

Head coach Pete Kendall said he was pleased with how his team played.

"It's always good to get a win no matter who you play against," Kendall said. "To beat a Div. I team is even better."

With a 7-2 victory Saturday against Emporia State, the Bulldogs picked up their first conference win since April 21, 2010, which was also against the Hornets.

"I think a 7-2 win was good to start us

off," Sturley said. "It showed that we were dominant over them. It gives us some momentum for the other conference games."

The men had two key wins during the doubles flight, with McCollough and Sturley winning 8-4 and sophomore Adam King and Murphy-Baum picking up an 8-3 decision at the number three spot. Merchant said this gave the 'Dogs a boost going into the singles flight.

"It really helped getting a good start in doubles," Merchant said. "It helped snowball in to the singles and we took it from there and ran with it."

McCollough picked up another key win at the number one spot, with a 6-2, 6-1 decision. From there the Bulldogs never looked back, only losing the match at the number three spot. Sturley said a good start always is important for conference matches.

"We got a couple of early wins in singles and it gave us a lot of confidence," Sturley said. "We played solid all round and it was a good day."

After ending last season without a

conference win, Merchant said it was a relief for the team to get one during its first conference match of the season.

"It was really good to get that win," Merchant said. "We lost a couple of close matches last year, so it was good to win convincingly."

With the win, the Bulldogs improved to 4-3 for the season and 1-0 in MIAA play. The Hornets moved to 0-2 in the conference.

"It was really good because those are the teams we have to beat," Kendall said. "It's important to win the matches you're supposed to win."

The 'Dogs traveled to Maryville to meet the Bearcats of Northwest Missouri State. The Bulldogs couldn't carry their momentum from Saturday's victory to the Sunday match. McCollough was the only Bulldog to win a set as Northwest controlled the match.

"It was just a really good team," Sturley said. "We didn't play badly. They are just one of the strongest teams in the conference."

The Bulldogs step out of conference play to battle South Dakota State on Wednesday afternoon at home. Sturley said the team is looking forward to testing itself against tougher opposition.

"It's exciting to get an opportunity to play good people," Sturley said. "Any



Andrea Hewitt/Index

Sophomore Mike Merchant hits a ball during a match against Lewis University. Merchant clinched the dual match Wednesday. The 'Dogs are 5-4.

time you play a Div. I school, you get good competition, which prepares us well for our conference games."

After Wednesday's matchup, the Bulldogs welcome Southwest Baptist University at 1 p.m. Saturday afternoon. Southwest Baptist is currently first in the MIAA.

Womens tennis on three match skid

BY JONNY BROWN

Staff Reporter

The Truman womens tennis team stepped out of MIAA play to battle Div. I South Dakota State University at home Wednesday afternoon.

Despite a couple of close matches, the women couldn't pull through. Seniors Ellen Russell and Dagmar Velez lost 8-6 in the number one flight, the loss of a break deciding the game. It was the same story at number two as junior Maggi Schutte and freshman Kim Birenbaum lost by the same score line.

In the singles flight, Velez forced a tiebreak but came up short, losing 7-5, 3-6 and 10-6. With the loss, the Bulldogs fell to 3-7 for the season.

The Bulldogs battled Emporia State on Saturday afternoon, but struggled to keep up with the Hornets. After losing the three doubles matches, they managed to pick up Birenbaum and Schutte. Senior Jennifer Hawkins narrowly lost in a tiebreaker at the number five spot. Russell said that despite the result, she is happy with the way she's performing.

"I feel like I've been playing pretty well lately but competition is super hard at the number one position," Russell said. "Everyone is just real solid. I'm not one to roll over and give up, but my scores don't really show that."

With a 6-4, 6-4 win at the number four spot, Schutte picked up her first conference win of the season. She said that even though the Bulldogs are losing right now, she is happy with how the season is going.

"We play in a very competitive confer-

ence," Schutte said. "I feel like with each match we continue to gain experience and grow as a team. I wouldn't trade a conference title for the character our team demonstrates on and off the court."

Head coach Pete Kendall said the team is working hard despite the high MIAA competition. He said the team will start to win soon.

"We still have to play a couple of teams who aren't as good as what we have faced," Kendall said. "We have some teams coming up that we should beat which is good for confidence."

The Bulldogs traveled to compete against Northwest Missouri State on Sunday afternoon, another of the stronger teams in the conference. Russell said the 'Dogs can't get think negative and must stay focused so they can learn their first MIAA victory.

"We need to focus a little better at practice and during matches," Russell said. "I feel like ability-wise we can keep up with these teams and compete with them but we're losing the big important points."

After Wednesday's non-conference matchup, the Bulldogs welcome the MIAA leading Southwest Baptist on Saturday afternoon. Kendall said next week will be easier.

"Hopefully we'll get a couple more victories," Kendall said. "Then we can go into conference having finished strong."

Russell said the 'Dogs won't stop fighting for the first win because they come easier after that.

"Just go out and battle for every point and every match," Russell said. "Pick up a few wins before conference and grow stronger as a team."



Russell



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