

'Dogs lose in Texas, win big at home

Mens basketball loses a pair of close games at the ACU tournament

BY KIRK SCHLUETER
Staff Reporter

By halftime, the crowd in Pershing Arena on Tuesday night knew a new era in Truman State mens basketball had begun.

Matt Woodley took home his first victory as Truman's head coach as the Bulldogs cruised to a 99-51 victory against Central Christian. The 'Dogs never trailed and led by as much as 23 during the first half, only widening the gap in the second.

Freshman guard Seth Jackson led all scorers with 25 points and redshirt freshman forward Mike Carlson had the season's first double-double with 17 points and 10 rebounds.

"Anytime you get a win, it's important, but obviously it's my first one as a college head coach, so it's one I'll remember for a long time and maybe something I can look back on a little bit later," Woodley said. "I'm really happy for the kids. We haven't had much success here in this program, and just being able to win no matter what the score or who you're playing against is important to that attitude we're trying to develop."

Woodley nearly earned his win several days earlier, as the 'Dogs traveled to Texas for the Wildcat Classic, dropping a pair of close games during the weekend. In both, Truman fell behind early, and their second-half comebacks came up just short.

Woodley said the problems that plagued Truman during the weekend were things that have been on his radar for quite a while.

"There's two things that have had me worried since the start of practice, and that's ball handling and rebounding," Woodley said. "Friday we rebounded great, but had 18 turnovers. Saturday we didn't have as many turnovers, but didn't rebound very well. You'd like to find a happy medium with those two."

Truman's road trip began Friday as they were defeated 70-68 by Abilene Christian University in a contest that went down to the wire. After trailing by 15 at halftime, the Bulldogs staged a second-half rally culminating in a three-pointer by junior guard Tom Norton to tie the game at 68-68 with eight seconds

left. Truman's hopes were dashed, however, when Abilene sank a buzzer-beater on the next play for the win.

"I wanted to take the shot early so if it didn't go in, we'd have time to get off another shot," Norton said. "Fortunately it went in, and unfortunately they got a guy who hadn't taken a shot all game come down and hit a shot at the buzzer. That's just how things go sometimes."

Woodley said that while he would have liked the victory, he saw a lot of positive things from his team.

"I thought once we got settled in and handled their pressure, we were a really good basketball team Friday night," Woodley said. "We just didn't figure that out until 25 minutes in. In the last seven minutes Friday, they made only one field goal, and that was the buzzer beater."

Carlson led the Bulldogs with 15 points against ACU despite only playing seven minutes of the first half because of foul trouble, followed by Norton and junior guard E.J. Hicks, who both scored 10.

On Saturday, the Bulldogs' comeback again came up just short against Angelo State, falling by a score of 63-69. Truman's defense at the end of the game was strong for the second night in a row, holding the Rams scoreless for more than five minutes, and allowing the 'Dogs to cut a 45-60 deficit to 58-60 with three on a shot by Hicks with 53 seconds remaining. Angelo State held on, however, and took home the victory. Woodley identified losing the rebound battle as the main factor in the loss.

"We had two offensive rebounds, they had 14," Woodley said. "That's hard to overcome, especially in a one-possession game like it was Saturday."

Norton led all Truman scorers with 20 points, followed by Carlson with 18, who also grabbed seven rebounds.

"I thought I did some things well this weekend, but I need to be more consistent," Carlson said. "I thought my aggressiveness, especially in the Angelo State game, opened up some things for other people."

Woodley said despite the losses, he took an optimistic picture away from the weekend.

"We're playing a lot of young guys in their first Div. II experience," Woodley said. "We were able to go on the road and compete and have a chance to win at the end. There's quite a bit of character in our basketball team right now."

Truman's next game is, Nov. 17 against Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa.



Sonny Phan/Index

One of the newest Bulldogs, junior transfer guard E.J. Hicks attempts to tip in a rebound Tuesday night against Central Christian College of the Bible [Mo.]. Hicks played at the junior college level last season.

Womens basketball wins first two

BY MEREDITH KUSKY
Staff Reporter

The womens basketball team hasn't trailed during the first 80 minutes of play this season, and the team has put two wins in the record book.

The Bulldogs defeated William Penn University from Oskaloosa, Iowa on Tuesday at home with a final of 72-39.

At the half mark the Bulldogs led 38-15. The womens squad had shot 50 percent and 47.5 percent from the floor at the end of the 40 minutes.

"It wasn't a hard game, just a game to wake us up a little," junior forward Jennifer Conway said. "These games are helping our freshmen get used to playing because conference play comes and it's not easy anymore."

Conway led the team with 20 points, while sophomore forward Bianca Szafarowicz recorded 11. The Bulldogs had 45 rebounds, 36 of which were defensive. The 'Dogs held William Penn to 34 rebounds.

"I was very pleased with our 40 minutes of defense," head coach Michael Smith said. "I thought our intensity was there tonight, I thought our focus was there tonight and more importantly I thought our bench was there tonight."

Truman was outshot LU-Bellville going 66.7 percent from the free-throw line and shot 30 percent from the three-point line.

"We knew that William Penn had come in and struggled a little bit but it wasn't about William Penn," Smith said. "It was about Truman. [It was about] us trying to work some kinks out and still trying to figure out our rotation. Our chemistry is [made up] with a bunch of new players, but I was very pleased overall."

Before the win against William Penn, the Bulldogs' kicked off the season with its home-opener last Saturday with its first win against Lindenwood-Belleville



Lindsey Borgna/Index

Junior guard Becca McHenry uses a pick by junior forward Rachel Remick to shed a defender McHenry Lindenwood-Bellville [Ill.]. McHenry has 19 points and five steals through the first two games of the season.

[Ill.] with a final of 79-55.

The 'Dogs were the first to score, making a basket seven seconds into the first half. Senior guard Breanna Daniels led the team with 12

rebounds. Szafarowicz and junior transfer forward Rachael Remick had nine each.

Collectively, the team went 8-12 from the free-throw line. The 'Dogs shot 40 percent on

the floor after attempting 84 field goals. The team sunk three three-point field goals.

Junior guard Becca McHenry led the team with 15 total points, Conway close behind with 14 and Daniels trailing with 13 total points.

At the end of the first half, the Bulldogs were leading 41-20.

"We did some things right, especially early, but in the second half our defense was not where it needed to be," Daniels said. "A win's a win and were going to be happy with what we got. It just showed us some areas that we need to work on."

Although a win goes in the record book, Smith said, he would like to see more intensity and mental focus from his team.

"That's kind of been a mentality that I've been fighting the last three years since I got here, the understanding that we expect to win," Smith said. "It shouldn't be miserable to win. It should be fun to win because we've gotten picked on a lot over the last few years to do that. I want to turn that table a little bit, and it starts right here with our mentality and our focus."

Although four of the five players on the floor at the starting jump ball were returners, each of the five freshmen and Remick saw some minutes during the home-opener. The newcomers collectively racked up 12 points throughout the game. During the last six minutes of the second half the Bulldogs' defense gave up 10 points.

"We've got to be prepared day in and day out for 40 minutes, not just for 20 minutes or 25 minutes," Smith said. "That was a problem tonight. We weren't focussed for that entire game."

Truman's next game is at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at home against Central Methodist University from Fayette, Mo.

"We have a lot of kids that have the tools," Smith said. "That's what I'm excited about with this team this year is we just don't have to rely on Brie Daniels like we have in the past. We got some people that can do some things."