

FOOTBALL | 'Dogs lose fifth straight Family Day game after Dickey leads winning drive

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 rect the bad spots. We can build off the good spots. We'll use this game from the positive for confidence. We know we can play with anybody. I have faith in our defense. Our defense is one of the best in this conference."

Turnovers played a role throughout the game. Pitt State and its No.1 ranked MIAA defense intercepted senior quarterback J.B. Clark four times racking up 40 combined return yards in the process.

Truman State's defense forced four fumbles recovering all four for 13 yards. Junior defensive back Dennis Walls added a fifth take away returning a Dickey interception early in the first half for 61 yards and the 'Dogs first touchdown of the game.

"It was a little surprising," Walls said. "The ball fell right in my lap and there was only one way to go from there, to the house."

Penalties brought back several plays that would have gone for scores or large chunks of yardage. Truman had eight penalties for 56 yards while Pitt State had 11 for 105 yards. Pitt picked up a first down on a flag while penalties gave the Bulldogs two first downs.

"As hard as it was played and as exciting as it was for the fans, it wasn't a very clean football game from [the penalty] respect," head coach Gregg Nesbitt said. "Both teams have plenty of stuff to get better at"

For the third straight week,

a different Bulldog ended the game as the team's top tackler. Junior linebacker Wade Pelc had 18 total tackles, 10 of which were unassisted. Pelc was the game's top tackler. No Gorilla had more than five solo tackles, a task five Bulldogs accomplished.

Four of Truman's top five tacklers were defensive backs who dealt with trying to limit penetration into the secondary by Pitt State junior running back Briceton Wilson and the No. 1 rushing offense in the MIAA. Wilson averaged 4.8 yards per carry Saturday, running for 140 yards overall. The Gorillas rushed for 267 yards compared to Truman's 53 rush yards.

"[I] thought [the Bulldog secondary] were a physical secondary," Nesbitt said. "You know your corners [juniors] Robert Gayden and Dennis Walls came up with some nice tackles. We played with 11 and, as elementary as that sounds, most corners just think they're past defenders."

Truman will play their first road game of the year Saturday against the University of Central Missouri on MIAA TV.

"This team has an unbelievable amount of heart and I think we really showed it [Saturday], every guy," junior defensive back Richie Schumacher said. "It's hard to tell a lot of times when you are in the stands ... but when you are down on the field, down on the sidelines with all these guys looking in all their eyes, being next to everybody you can just feel the intensity."



Jessie Poole/Index

Dropping back senior quarterback J.B. Clark looks to pass. Clark was 16 of 40 with 269 yards passing and a touchdown. Clark also threw four interceptions. Clark and the Bulldogs will play the University of Central Missouri on Saturday.



Jessie Poole/Index

Junior Heather Hargadine slides to make a play last week against No. 22 ranked Emporia State. The Bulldogs are now ranked No. 20 after beating the Hornets.

VOLLEYBALL | 'Dogs gear up for Friday versus No. 6 Washburn

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Radix said this win is an example of the true potential the team has moving forward.

"[It was] absolutely a team effort," Radix said after the victory. "We came out ready to go, and we had no hesitation as to what we hoped to accomplish. It was a total team victory and everyone did their part."

Radix said the win gives the team its confidence back and finally has everyone on the same page.

"I am so proud of my girls tonight," Radix said. "We aren't just playing anymore, we are playing to win. They didn't make many mistakes tonight, so we had to put them away. Tonight we finished points."

A key component to finishing those points was freshman outside hitter Allie Brak, who set a career-high with 18 kills for the match. She was set up by senior Kylie Easlon, who had 31

assists, and fellow freshman Meghan Zimmerman, who had 22 assists. Defensively, junior outside hitter Heather Hargadine and freshman libero Abby Moser contributed 24 digs apiece to help the Bulldogs hold the Hornets to a .150 hitting percentage for the match.

Next up, the Bulldogs (6-3, 1-0 MIAA) will take on No. 6 Washburn on the road. With a full week of practice, Briseneno says the team is focusing on improving in all areas of its game. Radix said the team has been studying film intently this week to prepare detailed offensive and defensive schemes for the Icha-bods. The Bulldogs will face Washburn at 7 p.m. Friday and MIAA foe, Fort Hays State, at 2 p.m. Saturday.

"It's so hard to play away from home," Radix said. "We have to give it everything we've got, and I know my girls and I are going to give 110 percent this weekend."

BRISENO | Middle blocker has high postseason expectations for self, Bulldogs

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way, no way I was going to walk out of the gym without a win."

The very next point, Briseneno blocked an Emporia State kill straight to the floor. Two points later, she clinched the Bulldog victory with a kill. For Briseneno, then and only then was it a good day.

"I love winning and I always want to keep winning," Briseneno said. "To me, winning is everything. Some people say, 'Play for the fun of the game.' For me, winning's fun. Losing's not fun. No one ever wants to lose. I'll do anything to win," Briseneno said.

Head coach Ben Briney is accustomed to Briseneno's competitive outlook.

"Emily is a pretty competitive girl. She is very passionate, not just about volleyball, but everything she does," Briney said. "Since she's been here, Emily's always played with a passion and a fire."

Briseno's mentality stretches back further than her Truman years. She was a relative late-comer to the volleyball world, choosing to play the sport in eighth grade because she didn't want to be a cheerleader.

"Her freshman year [of high school], she had the size and athleticism, but she was a little bit behind volleyball-wise," said Mark Rice, Briseneno's high school coach at Lee's Summit West in Lee's Summit, Mo. "She worked really hard to catch up with the other kids and in the four years here she really developed into an outstanding player."

Lee's Summit West was where Briseneno developed her intensity and competitive nature, and won a state championship.

"When she came in, we nicknamed her 'Cotton Candy' because she's the sweetest kid, and she still is, but she went from being cotton candy to being a beast on the court where she kind of demanded the ball and wanted to get things done," Rice said.

During Briseneno's junior year, Lee's Summit West trailed by one set and was down 21-24 in the second in the sectional final. Briseneno blocked kills twice on match points. Lee's Summit West recovered to win the match and advance to the state tournament, which they ultimately won. Rice said he thought Briseneno's blocks gave the team an extra dose of confidence before the final rounds.

"I love getting a block," Briseneno said. "I like blocking more than I like hitting. For me the worst feeling is when I get blocked, cause you just feel like a failure. You're one on one and that girl just roofed you. I love making someone else feel like that and it's a huge momentum swing. If I can get a big block for my team and maybe swing the momentum, then I'll take that over a big kill any day."

After high school, Briseneno chose Truman State for a simple reason: the volleyball program's

historical success.

"I came from winning and I wanted to continue winning," Briseneno said. "I didn't want to have a drop-off."

Far from a drop-off, Briseneno said she initially struggled her freshman year, adjusting to not only collegiate life, but high-level collegiate volleyball.

"The transition from leaving home, not having that support I was used to living at home, getting used to a quicker game, having huge shoes to fill because the middle blocker I replaced, [alumna] Allie Cherven, was an all-American [was stressful]. The stakes are higher. You're playing for a top 25 team, and there's a lot of pressure, but it's made me a stronger person. As a freshman, playing a top 10 team in the nation is pretty scary, but junior year it's just another day," Briseneno said.

She credits her volleyball teammates with helping her through her initial struggles.

"I was struggling with not knowing if I wanted to come back to Truman, and a lot of why I came back was the team, just the love we all have for each other, and that's helped me become the player I am today," she said.

Freshman Abby Moser said Briseneno is not only a great player but also a great teammate.

"Emily always brings a lot of energy," she said. "She's one of our top motivators. She always knows how to get somebody to do their job without making them angry. She always wants what's best for the team."

Briseno said her role on the team is to pick people up and how her teammates view her is foremost in her mind.

"I want to be a good teammate. I want people to remember me as someone they could always count on if they needed anything and just be there for them. I want them to think of [the class of 2013] as good players, but better teammates," Briseneno said.

Briney said Briseneno gives the Bulldogs a vital weapon at the middle blocker position.

"Whenever Emily's really in that zone, she's as good as any middle blocker in the country," Briney said. "And when you have two middle blockers [Briseno and junior Megan Sharpe] that good, that puts a lot of pressure on the defense."

When Briseneno discusses her volleyball future, it's no surprise what her plans are.

"I just want to keep adding 'W's' to our schedule," she said. "I want to get to a Final Four, I want to get to a national championship game so bad," Briseneno said. "The other day I was thinking, my 21st birthday is the day after regionals end, and the best present I could ever get would be winning regionals and going to the Elite Eight. I want it so bad. I need it. I need another ring."

PROMISE | Time for fans to stop being critical of Bulldog football

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 team the Truman State students and fans were used to.

Last year the Bulldogs allowed 109 points more than they scored. The year before that, they allowed 180. During the three seasons prior to this one, the Bulldogs have had a 43 percent win percentage.

Although they lost last Saturday, there was something different about this team. It didn't give up. Even after the turnovers and penalties that plagued it, the team didn't surrender. It was hard to believe the Gorillas were ranked 19th in the nation Saturday and had the No. 1 ranked defense in the MIAA, because the Bulldogs should have beaten them.

I write that because of what I saw as a freshman and what I had heard when I arrived on campus in 2010.

"The football team sucks." Nobody on campus had faith in the team and it showed.

Attendance was poor and a lack of school spirit was inherently evident.

The Bulldogs currently are ranked third in attendance in the MIAA. Last year and the year before they were ranked sixth.

What I witnessed Saturday was a competitive football team in the hardest conference in Div. II football. This is a team that deserves support from students because this is a team that will win.

Head coach Gregg Nesbitt said the Bulldogs progressively are reaching a brighter future.

"As long as our kids are working hard, preparing, trying to get better and competing, I think good things will happen in the end," Nesbitt said. "Right now, we've been able to do that in a year and a half."

The idea of a moral victory can be debated for hours. Nesbitt said he doesn't believe in it, but the final score

of the game on Saturday certainly does not represent the way this team played. So, forget about the loss and focus on the positives.

Senior quarterback J.B. Clark threw four picks, but he also threw for 269 yards and a touchdown. When Truman needed him the most, he delivered in grand fashion, showing an extreme amount of poise in a time of pressure. Senior wide receiver Anthony Brown caught for 119 yards. Each time the Gorillas were on a roll, the Bulldogs' defense forced turnovers and penalties.

Instead of gazing at Truman football's troublesome past, look toward the bright future. If the pitch from Harvey to Mundwiller showed anything, it's that this team will not give up, and neither should Truman State students.