

SHOEMAKER | Senior leads the soccer team in goals scored, and ranks third in shots on goal

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Hayes said her off-field personality complements her on-field persona well. "She's very goofy," Hayes said. "She's just a really happy, peppy person. I love playing with her because she does have that really serious side but you know at practices we can poke fun at her."

Shoemaker has logged 602 minutes on the field for the Bulldogs this season and currently is first on the team in goals, second in points with 17 and third in shots on goal with 24. She said soccer and the team's support serve as her escape from the stresses of everyday life.

"Forever it seems like [soccer's] just been my stress reliever," Shoemaker said. "[It helps] get rid of anything I'm worrying about, and I know that there's girls on the team that will always be there for me too."



Junior Trisha Shoemaker drives the ball down the field during Monday's game against Central Missouri. Shoemaker leads the team in shots on goal. **Sam Gorden /Index**

BRAK | Sophomore outside hitter has 19 kills during the four-set victory against Missouri Western University Friday night

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Zimmerman said. "That coolness is definitely what makes her the imposing striker she is. Allie brings fire to our game, and that confidence is huge for us."

After the win against Missouri Western on Friday, Brak helped the Bulldogs sweep Northwest Missouri State on Saturday in three straight sets, handing the Bearcats their first conference loss of the season. After adding three more kills, two digs and a block against Northwest, Brak is second on the team with 153 kills, and her 3.48 kills per set average is 3rd best in the MIAA.

Brak said she is happy to see her kills-per-set average rise, as that was one of her main concerns during the offseason and something she has focused on.

"Getting those big wins last weekend felt really good," Brak said. "It was awesome to feel like a dominant offensive threat on the court, which is something that I have really worked hard to become."

With two consecutive conference wins, the Bulldogs improved to 12-4 overall, and 5-2 in

the MIAA. Looking forward, head coach Ben Briney said he thinks his team is on track to earning a national ranking.

"Allie is a key player for us," Briney said. "She has explosive talent that adds a new dimension to our game. As a team, we know we have what it takes to get the wins and move on to the next goal of being ranked."

Brak said she looks to continue her recent success as the 'Dogs head to Topeka, Kan. to compete in the Washburn Lady Blues Tournament this weekend. Truman's first games will be 9:30 a.m. Friday against East Central Oklahoma University, and 4:30 p.m. against Harding University.

"As a team, we couldn't be more excited," Brak said. "This tournament will be huge for us. If we can win it, there is a very good chance we will be back in the nation's top 25."

While the team hasn't achieved a national ranking since the beginning of last season, a strong performance during this weekend's tournament has a chance to make the difference in the 'Dogs' national ranking.

SCRIMMAGE | Bulldog baseball and softball teams use scrimmages to prepare for the season

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played Missouri Baptist University, Mineral Area Community College, St. Louis University and William Woods University Sept. 22 and 23.

Brown said she wanted not only to have more scrimmages, but to also play higher caliber teams.

"I felt like our stats were kind of padded [last year]," Brown said. "We won everything, and we came away feeling good because you gain some confidence, but we didn't come away with knowing what we really needed to get better at."

This year, three of their practice days will be taken up by scrimmages. Because teams are only allowed so many practices and only 20 hours of practice each week during the nonchampionship season, the team had to take off Monday and Tuesday following scrimmages that weekend.

According to NCAA rules, softball teams only are allowed to have three scrimmages during the fall against other teams.

Two of the five scrimmages the softball team played count toward its 56-game limit for the season. This means the team only is allowed to play 54 games throughout the spring. Although they count toward the total games the team can play, the two scrimmages will not affect the team's record or statistics, Brown said.

Junior shortstop Corey Niblett said the team wanted more scrimmages against other teams to see where they stand and what they need to improve. She said she finds scrimmages against other teams more beneficial than intrasquad scrimmages.

"In an intrasquad scrimmage, you see what your teammates are capable of, but we also need to see how we perform as a full team against another competitor."

Brown said the team could have played better against SLU and William Woods, but it figured out what they needed to improve, which was the important part. The team has focused on two-strike hitting, fundamentals of defense and not losing the ball because of the sun since the first four scrimmages, she said.

Brown said these scrimmages set the tone for next season, and they are important because of the high number of injured players. Brown said many players are being put in positions they have never played due to the number of injuries.

"There has been a lot of people moving around," Brown said. "It's nice who to see who can play where, especially if the situation ever comes up again in the spring if someone gets hurt, or someone isn't able to play or we need to move somebody here, they have a little bit of experience doing that."

REFEREES | Football fans should appreciate referees

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Not only did fans criticize the calls, players and coaches let their views be widely known through tweets or interviews. After the first week it was apparent the real refs probably weren't as bad as everyone thought they were, because now things that had been harshly blamed on referees during the past actually were coming true.

The replacement referee fiasco served as a stark reminder to not take officials for granted in sports. This summer I umpired Little League baseball for the Springfield, Mo. Park Board — a job that I figured would be easy money with minimal stress.

What I found instead was a target on my back. If I had a close play to call, I was guaranteed to hear something negative from a parent or coach of one of the 10-year-old kids I was umpiring. Adults neglected the fact their kids were young, inexperienced and prone to error and instead would throw insults my way.

The sports world we live in now is one that mirrors society itself. Fans are so desperate for a break that they look for anyone to serve as the figurehead for their team's demise, and this translates to the younger generations and maintains a vicious cycle that no one tries to change.

This NFL season has shown what an impact a good referee has on a sport, and now that the real referees are back and we've learned our lesson, it's time to make a change. Sporting officials need more respect from fans and players in professional sports because they're a crucial part of every sport that no one notices.

Instead of looking for a scapegoat for your team's loss, look deeper into the problem, because the referees are not the root cause. A perfect example of this occurred during the Monday Night Football game two weeks ago, when a controversial call ruled a Seattle Seahawks touchdown to win the game despite overwhelming video evidence showing a Green Bay Packers interception. As I watched the sound bytes play on ESPN and listened to the Packers players and fans complain, it was hard for me to feel sympathy.

Green Bay had an offense widely considered to be one of the most high-powered throughout the league, yet was held only to 12 points. Because of their offense's poor performance, they put the decision instead on the shoulders of two replacement referees with no NFL experience. Sure they made the wrong call, but the referee who signaled the touchdown's only experience in sports officiating was during junior high and high school football, so can you blame him for missing one?

The referees always will have an impact on a game, but they should never be considered the only problem. Instead of pointing the finger at the black and white, fans need to look at the players and coaches, because at the end of the game, they're the ones with the ball in their hands.



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**Rebecca
McClanahan**
STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 3



I went to college at Truman and later became a professor of nursing here and taught students for over 30 years. I would be honored to represent Truman and Kirkville in the Missouri House of Representatives.

Remember to make students' voices heard this election! The deadline to register to vote is Wednesday Oct. 10th!

Rebecca McClanahan

Paid for by McClanahan for Missouri, Marvin McClanahan Treasurer

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