



Rose Sparks/Index

Redshirt freshman quarterback Zach Tobin, left, looks to pass the ball during practice yesterday. Head Coach Gregg Nesbitt said ironing out kinks in the offense is a priority leading up to the game against Lincoln University Saturday.

BY THE NUMBERS

Truman's total number of offense yards 358

16 SBU's 3rd down conversion percentage last Thursday

Conrad Schottel's total passing yards 221

3 number of times **Michael Elliot** picked off SBU quarterback **Dan Connors**

Truman's total sacks against SBU 5

10 number of tackles **Tremaine Millender** had

37 yards, length of **Derek Koon's** 4th Quarter field goal to win the game

during the Aug. 30 game against Southern Baptist University

Football starts strong

BY SAM SHERMAN, Staff Reporter



Michael Elliot

The Players

At the beginning of last season, senior defensive back Michael Elliot was named a 2011 Preseason All-American before being medically redshirted and sitting out for the entire season. Aug. 30, Elliot announced his return to the field in grand fashion.

Elliot picked off Southwest Baptist University quarterback Dan Connor three times during the fourth quarter to help the Bulldogs hold their 24-14 victory over the Bearcats.

Head football coach Gregg Nesbitt said Elliot's absence last year from the defensive roster might have given him the edge during the game.

"I'm certain he's very pent-up," Nesbitt said. "Everybody is [during the] first game of the season ... but particularly when you've sat [for] a year as a senior. I think he made the most of his opportunities."

The Bulldogs' defense also returned a few other key players to the lineup including senior defensive back Tremaine Millender. Millender led the team in total tackles against SBU with 10, while senior defensive end Patrick Blackwell finished with seven tackles and two sacks.

Blackwell said the addition of Elliot and Millender was noticeable on the field.



The Plays

The 'Dogs held the Bearcats to 257 yards of total offense and a scoreless first half against Southern Baptist Aug. 30. SBU scored twice during the third quarter, and Nesbitt said it was scary to see the momentum shift so quickly after jumping to a 21-0 lead during the first half. The first interception by Elliot halted any momentum the Bearcats had left, setting the offense up to put the game away with a late field goal by junior Derek Koon, proving to be the final change to the scoreboard.

Against the Bearcats last season, the Bulldogs' defense allowed 400 yards of total offense, 143 yards more than the game on Thursday.

Nesbitt said the goal for this week is ironing out offensive kinks. Junior quarterback Conrad Schottel went 14-32 for 221 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions.

On the ground, the 'Dogs rushing attack was led primarily by running backs senior Will Mosquera and sophomore Garrett White. Mosquera finished with a team-high 79 yards rushing while White finished with 67 yards and two touchdowns, one rushing and one receiving.



The Predictions

Truman's next opponent is the Lincoln Blue Tigers, a team the 'Dogs beat 53-0 last season, though Nesbitt said this isn't the same team the team played a year ago.

"They're very scary," he said. "With their speed and their athletic ability, they literally can score from any spot at any time on the field. That is going to put more pressure on our offense to perform at a higher level."

The Blue Tigers lost to Lindenwood University in their first game, 49-28. Junior Dallas Grier said the team is treating the game just like any other, and he said the big win last season doesn't make the team any more comfortable come Saturday.

"They have athletes, so we're going to have to treat it like any other game and go in there and earn it," Grier said. "Anybody can beat anybody else on any given day, so we have to remember that. ... They might want a little payback for that 53-0 [score] from last year."

The 'Dogs will compete against the Blue Tigers at 7 p.m. Saturday at Stokes Stadium. The game will be broadcasted live on 88.7 The Edge and will be available for on-line streaming on KTRM's website.

Kicker places clutch kick for Bulldogs

BY KIRK SCHLUETER
Staff Reporter

After Southwest Baptist scored two touchdowns to cut the Bulldog lead to 21-14 last Thursday, head coach Gregg Nesbitt said the momentum began to shift.

Then junior placekicker Derek Koon trotted out onto the field.

Koon sent a 37-yard field goal through the uprights to extend Truman State's lead to the eventual final score of 24-14. Nesbitt said the kick effectively killed the Bearcats' rally.

Koon's entrance to placekicking began with another kind of football entirely — soccer. During high school, he said, he was undersized but the one advantage he did have was a nearly ten-year soccer career.

"I decided kicking was prob-

ably the best route for me," Koon said. "That way I could use my skills as a soccer player in a sport that I really love."

When Nesbitt became the head coach during Winter 2010, he said Koon immediately stood out to him for reasons beyond his kicking.

"He wasn't just a normal kicker," Nesbitt said. "He wasn't afraid to lead drills and work and get his hands dirty ... his work ethic and toughness really jumped out and grabbed me immediately and I think that toughness, you see it on the field."

Nesbitt said Koon's attitude is different than most kickers, who don't always view themselves as "football players." Nesbitt and Koon said this is not a view Truman's kicker holds at all.

"Before games I'm sitting around with a lot of the guys and

I'm getting just as hyped as they are," Koon said. "Maybe I don't get as many tackles as they do, but I'm in there with them just as excited as they are."

For the last two years, Koon has been a valuable football player for the Bulldogs. Last season he was 15 for 17 for field goals, including eight of nine from 30 yards or longer, good enough to garner both honorable mention All-American and honorable mention All-MIAA honors. Throughout the process, he made 12 consecutive field goals to break the Truman record.

Koon said his consistent performance is a result of thousands of hours honing his technique by him-

self and with the guide of coaches at Truman and at camps often run by ex-professional or college kickers. The reward for such dedication, he said, is having a game like



Derek Koon

last year against Fort Hays State when he made all three of his field goal attempts, or the game against Central Missouri when he made a kick from 42 yards out.

"It's a sigh of relief to know all the work you've put in over the years has paid off," Koon said. "A lot of kickers over-think a lot of things, but a good day like that really takes a lot of stress off your shoulders."

Nesbitt said Koon's consistency also takes stress off of the offense, as the team is not under as

much pressure to score a touchdown, knowing they will likely come away with at least three points. Such confidence from his teammates and coaches is exactly what Koon wants to hear.

"I just try to make sure [the team] knows no matter what when I'm on the field, they have absolute confidence in me," Koon said. "They don't have to worry."

Junior quarterback Conrad Schottel said worrying is the last thing on his mind with Koon as his kicker.

"It definitely changes my mindset a little bit," Schottel said. "With a weapon like Koon, it definitely takes pressure off of our offense."

As the Bulldogs take the field Saturday against Lincoln, they'll do so knowing they have a dependable edge in one part of the contest — thanks to Derek Koon's right foot.

Truman State University

INDEX

http://tmn.truman.edu/theindex/

NOW HIRING

Scholarship/Institutional

SECTIONS

NEWS OPINIONS FEATURES SPORTS

REPORTERS NEEDED

While You Were Away...

We Moved Closer!!!

810 Green St.

(Baker Signs & Graphics Building - Across From Gleason Auto)

Have a project? We'd love to help!

Call for a price quote:

(660) 665-8001

- Screen Printing •
- Embroidery • Awards •
- Banners • Cut Vinyl •
- Custom Graphics/Logos •