

Swimming deals with a month off from competition as they prepare for nationals. See page 12

Women win in double overtime

BY KIRK SCHLUETER
Staff Reporter

For better or worse, the Truman State women's basketball team has lived and died by its defensive play this season. During last weekend's home stand, both sides of the 'Dogs were displayed. Despite a shaky effort Saturday, the Bulldogs emerged with two home wins.

Against the University of Southern Indiana Thursday, Truman's defense was on lockdown, keeping the Screaming Eagles to 26 percent from the floor during a 74-57 victory. Saturday versus Bellarmine saw a wilder game, as Truman overcame deficits during both halves and the two teams traded buzzer-beaters before the Bulldogs emerged with a 100-88 win.

Thursday night, the 'Dogs faced a team that had scored 100 points during its last game. Sophomore guard Courtney Strait said against Southern Indiana, Truman's pre-game scouting report said the Bulldogs would have to stop Southern Indiana's talented post player, junior forward Anna Hackert, the GLVC's leading scorer. Strait said the Bulldogs executed their game plan perfectly, allowing Hackert to only 16 points, 10 of which were from the foul line. The 'Dogs limiting the Screaming Eagles to one made three-pointer the entire game. It was the lowest scoring game of the season for Southern Indiana, which leads the GLVC for scoring offense, averaging 81.7 points a game. Senior forward Bianca Szafarowicz led Truman offensively, scoring a career-high 22 points while adding nine rebounds.

The Bulldogs' shutdown defense from Thursday night was missing Saturday against Bellarmine University, however. Head coach Amy Eagan said the 'Dogs struggled to defend and move their feet around the basket, which led to multiple starters getting into foul trouble. After a 12-3 Bulldog run tied the game at 38 at halftime, it looked as if Truman might be ready to pull away. However, the Bulldogs soon found themselves trailing by nine with six minutes remaining. Despite the situation, Strait said the team remained upbeat.

"When we were down, you can't have any negative thoughts going through your head because you need to do what's best for the team," Strait said. "We had a similar situation last year against Fort Hays State, so we knew it was definitely doable, we just had to buckle down and take care of the ball."

Truman responded to the challenge with another offensive run, and senior guard Amy Briggs moved the Bulldogs ahead by one with a three-pointer. Strait added two free



Elle Fitzgibbons/ Index
Senior forward Bianca Szafarowicz shoots over a Bellarmine player. The Bulldogs won 100-88.

throws to put Truman up 70-67 with 11 seconds left. Then things got interesting.

Bellarmine's freshman guard Destony Curry made a long three-pointer to knot the game at 70 and send it to overtime. It was the second time this year Truman had a

lead snatched from them at the buzzer — Pittsburg State had an identical play en route to defeat the Bulldogs during overtime 75-66 Dec. 18.

"At Pitt State, we pulled everybody off the line, this time we left them on the free throw line, so I've got beat twice on that, so now we might go to just fouling," Eagan joked. "I think I've learned my lesson."

She said Truman remained focused, however. The team often plays games of five minutes in practice, and she said the coaching staff told the players they just needed to win one five-minute game.

"[Against Pitt State] we were kind of dejected and thought the game was over and we'd already lost, but [Saturday] we knew we were going to win," Gloor said. "We had the momentum. We knew we could do it."

Despite Truman's confidence, the Bulldogs found themselves trailing by three with 12 seconds left. When Eagan saw Bellarmine using a full-court press, she called for a play she said Truman practices before every game — a baseball style pass the length of the floor. This time, sophomore guard Kasey Gassensmith threw the pass to Briggs, who caught the ball inside the three-point arc, but dribbled out for the game-tying shot with seven seconds left.

"When it left Briggs' hand I knew it was going in," Gloor said. "I was already standing up. We actually had to make sure the bench didn't get in trouble for being up and too excited or anything."

During the second overtime period, Eagan said she told her players the tougher team would be the one to leave with a win. With several starters fouled out, Truman ended the game with a lineup of three sophomores, a freshman and a junior. But one name stood out in the second overtime — Strait's.

The forward scored 13 points during the second overtime period as Truman pulled away. In addition to eight free throws, Strait added a three-pointer and a jumper as well as multiple steals and defensive rebounds. Strait said the credit lay with her teammates for passing to her when she was open.

Truman now faces a tough road test against No. 16 University of Indianapolis and St. Joseph's University this weekend. Eagan said a road trip during February when the team is tired and facing a tough opponent in Indianapolis who is coming off a loss means the Bulldogs will have to be ready to play their best if they want to return to Kirksville with victories.

GLVC Standings

Men's Basketball		
TEAMS	W	L
UW-Parkside	12	1
Drury	12	1
Indianapolis	11	2
Lewis	10	3
Truman State	10	3
Southern Indiana	9	4

Women's Basketball		
TEAMS	W	L
Lewis	12	1
Quincy	12	1
Drury	11	2
Indianapolis	10	3
Truman State	10	3
UMSL	9	4

Men's Swimming	
TEAMS	
National Rankings	
Drury	# 1
Lindenwood	#6
Indianapolis	#11
Missouri S&T	#16
Lewis	#11

Women's Swimming	
TEAMS	
National Rankings	
Drury	#1
Indianapolis	#13
Lindenwood	#14
Truman State	#22

Wrestling		
TEAMS	W	L
Nebraska-Kearney	6	0
Central Oklahoma	5	1
Lindenwood	4	2
Fort Hays State	2	3
Central Missouri	1	2

Last second shot leads Bulldogs to conference win

BY SAM SHERMAN
Staff Reporter

There were 22 seconds left during the Truman State men's basketball game when junior point guard Reed Mells received an inbounds pass Saturday against Bellarmine University, but hindsight shows he only needed four.

Mell's crossover took four seconds to throw the defender off-balance at the top of the key as he dribbled left, just inside the three-point line, and pulled up for the open 17-footer. Meanwhile on the bench, head coach Matt Woodley said he knew the end of the story the second Mells pulled the trigger. He had seen that move, the one-dribble, pull-up jumper, more times than he could count from Mells — it was his shot. So it came as no surprise, Woodley said, when the net didn't register movement as the ball passed through it, destined for the floor with a 92-90 Bulldog victory as its implication.

The win capped off a wild weekend for the Bulldogs. Before the last-second victory against Bellarmine, the Bulldogs defeated No. 15 University of Southern Indiana 71-68 with an overtime thriller Thursday. Two of the Bulldogs' last three wins were settled during overtime, the third — Bellarmine — was decided during the last second. With all the last-minute heartbreak the Bulldogs have experienced throughout the last three years, Woodley said it's about time.

"We're playing good ball at the right time," Woodley said. "The thing is, we took punches both games. ... I'm proud of this group. This has been a mature group, and these guys have stuck together the last couple of years. All those close games the last couple of years are starting to pay off. These guys really know how to play late in the game."

Four Bulldogs finished with double-digit scoring Saturday, shooting 53 percent from the floor and 48 percent from behind the arc en route to the victory Saturday. Falling in line behind Mells' 23-point and five-assist performance, the squad Woodley once dubbed as "the best 32-minute team in the country" kept their lead until the end to earn its 17th victory, and 10th conference victory of the year.

Mells' performance during the weekend earned him GLVC Player of the Week honors, making him the second Truman player throughout school history to pick up the award. Mells said after the team's 10-point loss to No. 4 Drury University last weekend, it took a mental detachment from the present to allow the team to refocus during preparation for the difficult weekend.

"I didn't play well and I just kind of felt like I let the whole school down," Mells said. "It felt really bad at the time but when you step back from it, we were like, 'It's just one game.'"

Yet the Bulldogs won three of four during its hardest four-game stretch of the season, starting with the Bulldogs' overtime shootout win against Missouri University of S&T, and ending with the victory Saturday against Bellarmine.

Woodley said the loss to Drury was disappointing, yet provided a revelation for the Bulldogs to move into another weekend of top conference competition.

[The Drury loss] gave us more confidence than anything," Woodley said. "Just understanding that we do have a good basketball team and we can beat this team."

Following one of the best weekends throughout Woodley's three years at the helm of the Truman program, the Bulldogs have just one more top-25 matchup as they get closer to postseason play. Senior



Elle Fitzgibbons/ Index
Senior forward Mike Carlson works the ball into the post during a game against Bellarmine. The 'Dogs won 92-90.

forward Mike Carlson is third in the conference for scoring, averaging 22 points per game. Junior Andrew Vander Zwaag had two of the best games of his career last weekend, with 22 points Thursday against Southern Indiana, and six three-pointers Saturday to earn him 18. Junior guard Seth Jackson's 17-point performance Saturday vaulted him to a season average of 14 points a game, ranking him at 27th in the conference.

The win Saturday cinched a spot in the GLVC postseason tournament, and Mells said the 'Dogs couldn't be happier with the opportunity to extend their season well past the regular season.

"We've given ourselves a chance to do something special and that's really all you can ask for," Mells said. "I think we've been taking care of business for the most part and we're just giving our-

selves a chance to play during the postseason."

The Bulldogs will travel to Indianapolis to square off against the No. 8 Greyhounds Thursday before finishing the road trip at St. Joseph College Saturday. With five games remaining during the team's regular season schedule, three of those are against teams the 'Dogs already have beaten this season.

With that in mind, Woodley said he cautioned against complacency as the team fights to finish with 20 wins for the first time since the 2005 season, the last time made it into the national tournament.

"I think the number one thing is continuing to be who we are," Woodley said. "I think teams that have an identity towards the end of the year are the teams who continue to win and continue to improve."