

# 'Dogs face 'Cats in four

Truman State had a split weekend against McKendree University

BY SAM STEWART  
Staff Reporter

While some Truman State students were shaking off the last bit of sand from spring break, the baseball team was shaking off the dirt after rival McKendree University rolled into town last weekend.

The Bulldogs came into the weekend off a sweep against the University of Southern Indiana March 14-16. This Saturday, however, Truman was swept during the first doubleheader against McKendree.

"Coming into the weekend, we knew that we could not take McKendree lightly, and I think they proved that by taking two from us on Saturday," freshman outfielder Adam Gregorich said. "As a team we really didn't play well on Saturday, and we felt

like they came into the series ready to play and we didn't."

Senior outfielder Jarod Hahn put up a pair of home runs for the Bulldogs, but a late ninth inning homer from McKendree gave the Bearcats the edge to win the game, 11-8.

The second game Saturday was less of a home run contest as the 'Dogs fell 3-1. As Saturday ended, Hahn said the Bulldogs had to gear up for another two games against the Bearcats Sunday. Hahn said the team was discouraged about their performance Saturday, but looked forward to making up for the loss Sunday.

"We got knocked down a notch by losing the first two games," Hahn said. "But this

made us work even harder to make sure that doesn't happen again. This team is something special and we got back to playing Bulldog baseball."

The Bulldogs got it together in time to beat the Bearcats in both games Sunday, earning a split for the series. The Bulldogs' bats were barking as they opened up each game with four runs during the opening inning. Truman marched onward as the team kept tacking on runs. Hahn hit his third homer of the weekend during the first game Sunday to put the 'Dogs up 7-2 during the fourth inning. Red-shirt freshman pitcher Kent Frantz closed the game win as the 'Dogs beat the Bearcats 7-3.

The Bearcats recorded five errors in the back side of the double header Sunday that added to the Truman victory. Senior first baseman Paul Trenhaile extended a team-best 16-game hitting streak in the win and Gregorich recorded his first Truman home run in the pro-

cess, according to the official season statistics.

The Bulldogs won 10-6 during the second game Sunday to earn the split in the series against McKendree.

"We really needed those two wins on Sunday to bounce back after Saturday as we are now approaching the toughest part of our schedule," Trenhaile said. "We'll be playing much more now on shorter rest so it will be important for us to stay healthy and stay focused during the grind."

The Bulldogs will play Washburn University Thursday at home and then will head to current GLVC West leader William Jewell College for a two-game weekend March 28-29 in Liberty, Missouri.

**"This team is something special, and we got back to playing Bulldog baseball."**

— senior outfielder

Jarod Hahn, on closing out the doubleheader with wins

# Truman ends with win



BY HENRY JANSSEN

When the Bulldogs' basketball season came to an end in St. Charles, Missouri, a few weeks ago, I felt an overwhelming surge of pride for the 16 men heading for the locker room.

That might seem a bit counterintuitive — after all, in competitive sports, we are told a loss is nothing to take pride in. We are taught that to be successful we must always win — on or off the court. The 'Dogs proved this conventional idea wrong that early spring evening. The Bulldogs left the court as winners — the scoreboard just failed to acknowledge it.

Down by 13 points at halftime, Truman State easily could have rolled over and given in to the statistically superior, two-loss Rangers. The undersized players of the Bulldog team, playing against a very physical University of Wisconsin-Parkside, were out-rebounded 31-11 during the first half and simply could not get many of their tried-and-true looks to rattle home.

Head coach Chris Foster said he did not have much to say at halftime — he knew his club already had too much fight in them to let the game get out of hand. Suddenly, during the early minutes of the second half, junior guard Cole Myers and redshirt senior guard Isaac Gardner hit a few threes. The 'Dogs got rolling. Senior guard Seth Jackson banked one home and converted a three-point play. Sophomore forward Connor Erickson picked up right where he left off on both sides of the ball against Quincy during the Bulldogs' two previous

games. During the second half, Truman out-rebounded its opponents 19 to 16. Everything was clicking, and though Truman never led, the Bulldogs suddenly were playing their best postseason basketball since nearly a decade, dating back to the 2005-06 season — all against the No. 8 ranked team in the nation.

During the final 3:22 of the second half, the Bulldogs did not allow a field goal. Foster said he did not know about this until I told him two weeks later. A smile flashed across the University of Northern Iowa alumnus' face — a rare sight when any coach reflects on a tough loss, no less one to end his team's season.

"I don't doubt it," Foster said.

Myers was a perfect two-of-two on the day from the three when senior guard Reed Mells dished him the ball on the final possession of Mells' career. Both of Myers' baskets were 25-foot circus shots. Though his final shot did not go in, he got a clean look to force overtime as time expired — no one can discredit him that.

"I thought it was in," senior center Patrick Burmester said.

The 'Dogs were that close to one of the most memorable comebacks during any of its players' lifetimes.

As painful an ending as that might have been, the Bulldogs still have a multitude of reasons to hold their heads high. Not since the days when NBA Hall of Fame center alumnus Harry Gallatin played for the Bulldogs during 1947 has Truman, then Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, had back-to-back 20 win seasons. The 'Dogs reached a neutral site during the postseason for the first time since 2005-06, when they were granted an at-large bid into the NCAA Div. II tournament. Jackson broke a 33-year-old record for most points during a single season, and he did so in about the least selfish manner possible.

Perhaps the Bulldogs would have earned an at-large bid had they defeated Parkside, perhaps not. Truman would have been 21-9 and counting, with a number of quality wins under its

belts, the sweetest of all being its victory at Drury University — the squad that went on to win the GLVC tournament. Five GLVC teams went on to compete in the national tournament, a testament that the selection committee thinks the conference is just as strong as everyone says it is.

I honestly can say, though I never have donned a purple uniform, I am proud to be a Bulldog. The men's basketball team has represented the highest level of class and dignity you can expect from any group of college men, time and time again. A few 50-50 calls down the stretch, including two questionable fouls on Erickson during the waning minutes, played largely into Truman's inability to claim the lead.

Burmester said a few weeks afterward that no official has ever lost him a game. This is coming from a guy to whom these calls might or might not have meant the conclusion of 15 years of playing the sport.

Jackson said the only silver lining about his career ending is how much more time he will have for his studies.

Gardner, in describing his experience as a Truman student, used terms like "grateful" and "special." This is before even factoring in the athletic component of the equation.

Yet these three four-year Bulldogs are the guys who helped turn the culture of this basketball program around. If you were at the Bulldogs' final regular season home game against University of Missouri-St. Louis, the student turnout to that game alone will support that claim. Sure, the men played some pretty exciting basketball during their time here, but these guys really latched onto the Truman student body with their modesty, intellect and likeability.

During a day and age where common logic hints that the dollar rules all in intercollegiate athletics, during a period where the former half of the phrase "student athlete" is almost tongue-in-cheek, we as a culture sadly sometimes overlook smaller, less funded programs like Div. II Truman basketball. Thankfully, Foster and company are here to make sure no other teams do.

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