

Soccer falls in NCAA tourney

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The Truman State women's soccer team advanced to the NCAA regional tournament for the 11th time in program history, earning a win against Cedarville University and losing to GLVC rival Bellarmine University last weekend. After winning the GLVC Conference, the team had the opportunity to compete against regional opponents during the postseason.

Sophomore defender Caity Schmitt said winning the GLVC title gave the team momentum going into the NCAA Tournament. Schmitt said this excitement helped the team defeat its first tournament opponents, the Cedarville Lady Jackets.

"Winning the GLVC Conference was absolutely amazing because it created a team-wide desire to keep winning," Schmitt said. "We were all super determined because we had never played [Cedarville] before and it was a really special game for a lot of the girls."

It took the Bulldogs more than a half hour before senior midfielder Megan Frkovic scored during the 50th minute. Four minutes into the second half, the Bulldogs earned a corner, which was taken by Frkovic. Frkovic sent a ball into the box, which was quickly returned out to her just off the end line. Her shot at the goal carried just enough to go over the hands of the CU keeper and into the goal, giving Truman a 1-0 lead.

Much of the possession during the second half belonged to the Bulldogs. However, the Bulldogs were not able to find the back of the net despite outshooting Cedarville 7-1 during the second half. The Lady Jackets put together one last effort during the final three minutes with two late corner kicks, but the Bulldog defense kept the Lady Jackets at bay and earned a spot in the next round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Bulldogs led many categories in the stat book, outshooting CU 7-2 during the first half alone. Truman outshot CU by nine and took eight corner kicks to the Lady Jackets' two. Senior midfielder Alexis Heffernan took five shots, and junior forward Stephanie Williams took four. Sophomore goalkeeper Katie Mattingly recorded her 12th shutout of the year, making two saves against a Cedarville offense that

had scored 76 goals on the season entering Thursday night's match.

After the victory against CU, the Bulldogs advanced to face the Bellarmine Knights, which were the No. 2 seed in the tournament and previously had defeated Truman 1-0 during overtime in Louisville, Kentucky, earlier during the season.

Head Coach Mike Cannon said the players felt very prepared to face the Knights.

"After advancing through the first round, we felt prepared to face the host team on their field," Cannon said. "We knew it would be a close, difficult game but we were ready for the challenge."

Throughout the contest, the stats were even between the GLVC foes. The biggest factor was a Bellarmine goal during the 47th minute that propelled the Knights into the next round of the tourney.

Sophomore midfielder Kelsey Murphy said the Bulldogs were especially excited to play Bellarmine because Bellarmine gave the team one of its only losses during the season. She said the Knights are a great team she knew would pose a challenge. Murphy said because it was Bellarmine's first game of the tournament, the players felt they had an advantage with one game under their belt.

During the game both teams took 10 shots on goal. The Bulldogs earned one more corner kick than the Knights, but Bellarmine connected on a goal during the 47th minute that was the eventual game-winner. Bellarmine's junior defender Lexy Hazle, who scored the game winner, tallied her first goal of the 2015 season.

The Bulldogs' senior class, Heffernan, Frkovic and defenders Jessica Hanson and Taylor Park, helped guide the Truman program to 52 victories throughout the past four seasons, including two NCAA Div. II Tournament appearances, according to trumanbulldogs.com.

With the 1-0 defeat, the Bulldogs finished the 2015 season 15-3-5, with two of its three losses against Bellarmine, finishing with a 1-0 final score both times. The Knights advanced to the third round with the victory and will play during the Midwest Regional Championship next weekend.

The 'Dogs will return 26 players for the 2016 season, including eight starters. Truman women's soccer will begin its 2016 season next September.

'Dogs split in GLIAC games

BY HENRY JANSSEN
TMN Reporter

The women's basketball team opened its regular season with a pair of neutral-site games in Quincy, Illinois, last weekend. Truman State split the series, falling to the Grand Valley State University Lakers 77-61 Saturday before picking up its first victory against Northern Michigan University Sunday afternoon, 71-54. Truman's opponents are members of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Truman trailed Grand Valley State throughout the game. The Lakers led 40-30 at the half, and a 15-2 run early during the fourth quarter put the game well out of reach for the Bulldogs. Nine different Bulldogs played double-digit minutes.

Senior guard Courtney Strait led all scorers against Grand Valley State, posting 18 points on a six-for-nine shooting effort along with five rebounds. Senior guard Kasey Gassensmith was the only other Bulldog in double figures, scoring 10 points. Sophomore guard Rachel Steinhoff recorded a team-high five assists for the 'Dogs.

Grand Valley State had two 16-point scorers — senior guard Brianna Barnett and junior forward Kayla Dawson. Barnett also led the Lakers in rebounds and assists with five each.

Assistant Coach Adam Tandez said though the Bulldogs were not able to get the result they would have liked against Grand Valley State, he still noticed some things the team can improve upon.

"Looking at that Grand Valley game, we shot 80 percent from the free throw line, we made as many free throws as they attempted," Tandez said. "That's huge for us. Even though it was a loss, we did some decent things — 19 points from the bench, we shot 40 percent from the field, we ran into a Grand Valley State team that really executed a good game plan."

The following afternoon, Truman took control against the Northern Michigan

Wildcats, with a 9-0 run during the second quarter. The first quarter had five ties and four lead changes, but the 'Dogs entered the halftime break with a 39-28 lead and they maintained the lead for the remainder of the game.

Sophomore forward Ashley Hartwig said it was encouraging to beat Northern Michigan after a tough game the night before.

"It was great to bounce back the next day and play a lot better," Hartwig said. "Our defense really improved between the two games. We were definitely a lot stronger on Sunday. We boxed out much better. Our communication improved so much over the two games."

Strait, Gassensmith and redshirt senior center Michalina Tomczak each scored 13 points against the Wildcats. Junior center Cassidy Clark, who transferred from Kirkwood Community College, scored 12. Redshirt freshman guard Chloe Tompkins led Northern Michigan with 15 points. The 'Dogs out-rebounded Northern Michigan 37-28.

"We shared the ball really well," Tomczak said. "We played very unselfish basketball. Our field goal percentage was very high, so that just shows that we were taking good shots. We were getting the ball into the right hands at the right time."

Tomczak said the 'Dogs learned last weekend what parts of their game need fine-tuning, specifically in the area of rebounding.

"Rebounding, in particular, was something that we struggled with on Saturday," Tomczak said, "We need to stay tough. I think Grand Valley outworked us a little bit. There was physicality that we weren't ready for yet. We need to keep working on mental toughness and physical toughness, I know we worked very hard in the offseason for that and we need to take the next step."

The Bulldogs are in the midst of a 3-game home stand. The 'Dogs will play at 1 p.m. Saturday in Pershing Arena against Missouri Southern State University.

FOOTBALL | 'Dogs fall short 31-3 in season finale.

Nesbitt said if Truman continues to be a national contender in the major defensive categories, he is confident the team will always have the opportunity to be successful.

The Truman football players have winter break to recuperate and spend time at home before the offseason weightlifting program begins on campus. Although the

offseason is quite different than regular season, Nesbitt said the mindset does not change much. He said football in general is a yearlong process that takes a lot of preparation, whether that be light lifting and flexibility workouts or heavy training. Nesbitt said regardless of the type of workout done, performing during the offseason is crucial for the upcoming season.



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