

Reporter reviews football victory



By Curtis Wichmer
Staff Reporter

Reporter shares Truman's keys to victory and areas of improvement from the win against the University of St. Francis.

While many students were visiting their families during midterm break, the Truman State football team faced the University of St. Francis Saints. Although the Saints had a commanding 20-3 lead at halftime, the Bulldogs mounted a third quarter comeback and won the game 24-20. How were the 'Dogs able to overcome such a sizable deficit? Perhaps a statistical view of last

Saturday's game will reveal how the Bulldogs came home with a win, and what they can learn from how the game played out.

An important aspect of Saturday's game was the Bulldogs' ability to contain the Saints with their strongest asset — defense. Before the matchup against Truman, the Saints had accumulated more than 1000 rushing yards this season and averaged 148 yards per game. Truman's defense, however, limited the Saints' rushing offense to 117 yards. The St. Francis defense, which allowed an average of 98 rush yards per game, was no match for the Bulldog rushers who worked for 226 yards on the ground — nearly doubling the Saints' running backs that day.

Where the Saints were strong, the Bulldogs outplayed them, and where the Saints were weak, the Bulldogs overpowered them. The Saints' statistics show a heavy run game, averaging only 195 passing yards per game compared to their opponents' average of 220. Truman's offense continued this trend and out-passed the Saints 158 yards to 98.

Complementing their offensive effort, the Truman defense recorded two sacks, two interceptions and forced two fumbles. These turnovers by St. Francis not only gave the Bulldogs' offense great scoring opportunities, but also allowed their defense to extend its narrow lead.

The 'Dogs can credit their win to perseverance and resourcefulness. While the defense kept the Saints scoreless during the second half, during the third

quarter, the Truman offense took charge and overcame the 20-3 deficit.

However, a glaring problem with Truman's performance on Saturday was penalties. Throughout the game, the Bulldogs were flagged for nine penalties totaling 85 yards — a staggering amount compared to the Saints, who committed only one penalty. Penalties easily can cost a team the ball game, and the same nearly happened to the Bulldogs. Statistically speaking, Truman performed better than the Saints in nearly every way and it was a close game — a game that might not have been so close if the Saints weren't given drive-continuing penalty yards.

What can we take away from this game? The Bulldogs showed their ability not only to overcome their opponent's strong points, but also to recognize and respond to their opponent's weaknesses. However, the game was a lot closer than it should have been. During the second half Truman showed it was the superior team, and the Bulldogs don't deserve to be bogged down by penalties when they clearly would dominate otherwise.

Overall, the Bulldogs are a talented team that need to commit less penalties during games. They have a potent defense, a very capable offense and solid special teams — take the penalties away in the game, and the outcome would be completely different. Despite this, the Bulldogs showed perseverance. They proved no matter the condition of the game, Truman isn't going to get down without a fight.

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