THE GAME: Truman State University Bulldogs (Independent/NCAA II) vs. Quincy University Hawks (Great Lakes/NCAA II)
Date: Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2003
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Quincy, Ill.

THE GAME: Truman State University Bulldogs (Independent/NCAA II) vs. Harding University Bison (Gulf South/NCAA II)
Date: Sunday, Nov. 2, 2003
Time: 12 p.m.
Location: Memphis, Tenn.

TRUMAN (15-0-0): With its regular season winding down, the Bulldogs remain perfect heading into a busy week of play.

On Tuesday, the team has a makeup game at Quincy at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Truman takes on Christian Brothers University at 7 p.m. The team will then remain in Memphis, Tenn. and face Harding (Ark.) on Sunday afternoon.

Last week, the Bulldogs had two contests which resulted in two more shutout wins. Wednesday, the team survived a close 1-0 battle at home against Missouri-St. Louis. Sunday, Truman scored four times in the second-half in a 4-0 win at William Woods.

BULLDOGS IN THE POLLS: Truman remains third in the latest NSCAA/adidas national ranking. The first NCAA regional poll, the poll which decides postseason berths, will be released tomorrow.

QUINCY (8-7-2): After a slow start to the season, the Hawks are 6-1-1 over their last eight contests.

Offensively, Josh Worth leads the team with 10 goals and five assists. Kevin Vaninger has five goals and four assists on the year and Nick Frederickson has added three goals and three assists.

Brian Forrest has seen all of the action in goal. He has a 0.92 goals against average and six shutouts.

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Christian Brothers (8-7-0):
The Buccaneers are another team that has been hot lately, winning six straight matches before losing last weekend to Central Arkansas in overtime.

Mariano Illari is the top goal scorer with 13 on the season, and he is also tied with a team-high six assists. Marcus Bailey has six goals for Christian Brothers which is averaging 3.5 goals a game.

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Marvin Hypolite and Beau Lotz have split time in goal. Hypolite has a 1.25 goals against average and Lotz has a 1.87 goals against mark. Both players have one shutout.

Seamus Loftus is in his first year as the head coach of the Buccaneers.

The two teams have split a pair of previous meetings, with Truman’s win coming last year in Kirksville by a 1-0 score. Christian Brothers won 3-2 in 2001.

HARDING (6-7-1): The Bison were 6-7-1 prior to facing Dallas Baptist last weekend.

Harding is scoring over two goals a game, led by Ben Faris with 13 goals. Mitch Jones has a team-high six assists.

Michael Allen has started every game in goal and has a 2.09 goals against average and four shutouts.

Greg Harris is in his third year at the school and has a 19-28-2 coaching record.

TRUMAN VS. MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS: On a day when the offense had trouble finding the back of the net, the Bulldogs’ defense carried the team on the way to a 1-0 win over Missouri-St. Louis.

Truman allowed just six shots, two on goal, in the game and Nate Gibson made two saves on the way to the shutout. Offensively, the Bulldogs took 34 shots, 15 on goal, but Campbell McLaurin made 14 saves to keep the Rivermen close. The lone goal was scored in the 50th minute when Martin Claryes converted a penalty kick.

TRUMAN VS. WILLIAM WOODS: Truman took advantage of its free kicks in a 4-0 win over William Woods.

The two teams played a scoreless first-half but the Bulldogs struck twice early in the second-half. Sean Birrell, who tallied three goals on the day, scored his first in 48th minute from a pass from Bryan Defoe off an indirect kick in the box. Birrell scored again in the 49th minute, this one off an assist from Luke Bolar.

Bryan Defoe with 13 goals. Mitch Jones has a team-high six assists.

Luke Bolar scored the second in the 88th minute. Truman scored twice more in the final 10 minutes, both on penalty kicks. Birrell scored the first one in the 81st minute and Lars Pottgiesser scored the second in the 88th minute.

Nate Gibson made six saves on the way to his 11th shutout of the year, a new school record.

SHUTOUT STREAK #2: For the second time this season, the Bulldogs have tied a school record with six straight shutouts. They are one shutout away from moving into a tie for 12th in NCAA history with seven consecutive shutouts.

The current streak stands at 602:27. The previous shutout streak was snapped at 593:22 by Colorado School of Mines. The Bulldogs have not allowed another goal since then, meaning the team has allowed just one goal in almost 1,200 minutes of playing time. Nate Gibson has been in goal for 512:27 of the current streak. He needs 73 more shutout minutes to break into the top 15 list in the NCAA Division II records for consecutive shutout minutes.

SCHOOL RECORD WATCH: Truman is completely rewriting parts of its record book this season.

Team single-season records already set this year include shutouts (13), consecutive wins (21), consecutive games unbeaten (21) and consecutive games with a goal (21). The team has also twice tied the record for consecutive shutouts (6).

Truman is one win away from tying the school record for most wins in a season (16) and are on pace to set school marks for fewest goals allowed (14) and goals against average (0.65).

Individually, Nate Gibson has already set a new school standard with 11 shutouts for the season. His 11 career shutouts tie for fifth among Truman’s career leaders. Adam Johnson has two shutouts on the year, pushing his career total to six, eighth-best at the school.

Offensively, Sean Birrell needs just one more goal to tie for 10th on the single-season goals list. His 11 goals are the most by a Truman player since Matt Byers scored 17 during the 2000 season.

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The Bulldogs are also threatening to move into several NCAA Division II leader lists this year. Individually, Nate Gibson needs one more shutout to move into a tie for 13th in the national records for solo shutouts. His current solo shutout percentage would be the best in NCAA Division II history and his goals against average would be the second-best mark.

The team’s current 21-match winning streak is the longest active streak in NCAA Division II and it ranks tied for seventh in NCAA Division II history for consecutive wins and tied for 10th for consecutive games unbeaten.

The Bulldogs are threatening NCAA team single-season records for goals against average and shutout percentage. With one more shutout this year, Truman will move into a tie for 14th for shutouts in a season.

OFFENSIVE SURGE: After scoring more than two goals just once in the first nine games of the season, the Bulldogs have now scored three or more in five out of the last six games. In that span, Truman is averaging four goals a game.

Sean Birrell continues to lead the team offensively. In the last six contests, he has recorded a point in every game but one, and he has eight goals. He has two three-goal games in that span.

Lars Pottgiesser, who recently returned from an injury, has five goals and one assist in the last four games. Martin Clayes also has at least one point in five out of the last seven games. Ricky Vigil has been kept out of the scoring summary the last three games, but is second on the team in assists.

PENALTY KICKS: The Bulldogs have been awarded three penalty kicks over the last two games, doubling their season total. Truman is six-of-six in penalty kicks on the year, including three by Martin Clayes and one by Sean Birrell, Ricky Vigil and Lars Pottgiesser.

BULLDOG STARTERS: Seven Truman players have started every game for the team this year. Bryan Defoe, Ryan Cravens, Brett Coppage, Mike Boyle and Jared Atwood have been in the starting lineup in the back or midfield all season long, playing a huge role in Truman’s shutout streaks. Sean Birrell and Ricky Vigil have started every game at the forward positions.

NATIONAL STATISTICS: Through Oct. 19, Truman led the nation in shutout percentage (0.85) and goals against average (0.23) and was tied for 21st in scoring offense (2.69). The Bulldogs are one of two teams with a 1.000 winning percentage.

Individually, Nate Gibson led in the country with a 0.270 goals against average.

Currently, the Bulldogs have a 0.87 shutout percentage and a 0.20 goals against average. Gibson has a 0.23 goals against average.

HEAD COACH ALF BILBAO: Alf Bilbao became the seventh coach in the 24-year history of Bulldog soccer prior to the 1998 season. His teams have compiled a mark of 79-23-7 (.757), giving him the best winning percentage of any head coach in school history. He recently passed Dave Poggi for the most wins by a Truman head men’s soccer coach. Prior to the season, he ranked seventh among active Division II coaches in winning percentage.

UP NEXT: Truman ends the regular season with a Nov. 8 home match against Missouri Southern, scheduled for 11 a.m.