**BULLDOGS VOLLEYBALL TAKES ON FOUR REGIONAL FOES AT HENDERSON STATE TOURNAMENT**

The Truman State University volleyball team (14-4, 7-0 MIAA) took care of business in MIAA conference play last week and will look to do the same in regional action this weekend. The Bulldogs will go up against four South Central Regional opponents at the Henderson State Tournament, the only non-conference regional opponents on Truman’s schedule this year.

Last week, the Bulldogs won two more conference games, including a 3-1 win over 11th-ranked Central Missouri, to remain undefeated near the halfway mark of the league schedule. Truman, which has a one-game lead over Washburn in the conference standings, also pushed its winning streak halfway mark of the league schedule. Truman, which has a one-game lead over Washburn in the conference standings, also pushed its winning streak to 10 matches with a 3-1 non-conference win over SIU-Edwardsville on Saturday.

**SOUTH CENTRAL REGION:** Truman is currently 7-0 against South Central Regional opponents with all the wins coming against conference schools. This weekend’s tournament will be the Bulldogs first, and only, chance to face regional teams outside of the MIAA.

The Bulldogs were in a three-way tie for first in the regional ranking released last week with Central Missouri, who the Bulldogs beat last Friday, and North Alabama, Truman’s opponent Saturday afternoon. Henderson State and Alabama-Huntsville were seventh and eighth, respectively, in the ranking and Montevallo was not ranked.

The top six teams in the region at the end of the season advance to the NCAA Tournament with the top seed being the likely host school of the regional tournament.

**BULLDOGS IN AVCA POLL:** For the second week in a row, Truman moved up in the AVCA Coaches poll. The Bulldogs jumped two spots this week and are ranked 15th in the nation.

**SCOUTING THE HENDERSON STATE TOURNAMENT:** The Bulldogs will open up the Henderson State tournament on Friday with matches against Montevallo and Alabama-Huntsville. Saturday, Truman takes on two other teams in regional action this weekend. The Bulldogs will go up against four regional opponents at the Henderson State Tournament, the only non-conference regional opponents on Truman’s schedule this year.

**Montevallo (9-11, 4-4 Gulf South):** The Lady Falcons started out the year slow, losing eight of their first nine matches, but have rebounded nicely. Last weekend, it won all four matches at the Birmingham Volleyball Club Tournament to improve to 9-11 on the year before a match on Tuesday.

The leading hitters for Montevallo are Gabi Raposo with 3.43 kills a game and Sevdalina Barutova with 3.00 kills per game. Erika Burns averages 10.78 assists for the Lady Falcons, Raposo has a team-high 3.85 digs a game and Joanna Greiner averages over a block a game.

Montevallo is coached by Margaret Sherman who is in her fourth season at the school and has a record of 80-51. She has a career coaching mark of 310-161 in 13-plus seasons as a head coach.

**The Bulldogs and Montevallo have met just twice before, both coming last season. Truman won the matches by a 3-0 margin.**

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AVCA DIVISION II TOP 25 POLL (OCT. 8)

1. CS-Bernardino (35) 875 170 1
2. Minnesota-Duluth 822 15-1 3
3. Grand Valley State 770 16-1 5
5. BYU-Hawaii 717 12-1 7
7. Northern Colorado 650 16-2 7
8. Western Washington 624 12-2 9
9. UC-San Diego 581 13-3 10
10. South Dakota State 522 17-3 11
11. Augustana 509 16-2 12
12. North Florida 495 13-2 13
13. Metro State 475 13-4 13
14. Nebraska-Kearney 441 18-2 14

15. TRUMAN

16. Central Missouri State 334 14-7 11
17. University of Tampa 321 9-6 18
18. Northwood 220 18-3 20
19. North Dakota State 220 13-6 16
20. North Dakota 201 20-2 25
21. Lewis 193 17-0 23
22. Barry 106 7-6 21
23. Findlay 103 16-5 19
24. Hawaii Pacific 75 8-3 24
25. Ferris State 65 16-2 NR

Receiving Votes (Truman's 2002 Opponents): Regis (43), Rockhurst (27), Washburn (7)

Truman's 2002 Opponents in italics.

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Alabama-Huntsville (8-11, 6-1 Gulf South): The Chargers have gone just 2-10 in non-conference action this year but currently have a 6-1 Gulf South mark heading into Tuesday night's contest against Mississippi Women's.

Emily Miller has led Alabama-Huntsville with 4.02 kills a game and a .246 hitting percentage. Kristian Kleminski is second on the team with 3.07 kills a game. Cathryn Sterling leads the team with a 4.07 digs a game pace and Kristen Henley averages 1.11 blocks a game. Heather Grumke and Samantha Polkowski have split time at the setter position and both average over eight assists a game.

Laura Tabe is in her ninth year as head coach for the Chargers. She has a career coaching mark of 246-92.

The all-time series between Truman and Alabama-Huntsville is knotted up at three matches apiece. Last year, the Bulldogs won 3-2 in a match played at Pershing Arena.

Henderson State (10-8, 3-0 Gulf South): The Lady Reddies have won five straight matches through last weekend and are a perfect 3-0 on their home court.

Henderson State is led by Nikki Dancer who is averaging 5.42 kills a game and was leading the nation in that category through Sept. 29. She also has a .319 hitting percentage and tallies over one assist a game and Gabby Gallardo has a team-high 3.02 digs a game.

The Lady Reddies are coached by Rhonda Thigpen who is in her 12th year as head coach and has a career mark of 344-173.

Truman leads the all-time series by an 8-3 margin. The Bulldogs have won five straight in the series including the last four by 3-0 sweeps.

North Alabama leads the all-time series with Truman, 7-4. Last year, the teams met twice with the Bulldogs winning both matches, including one in the South Central Regional Final.

LAST WEEK'S ACTION:

#17 Truman 3, Northwest Missouri 0: Truman held the Bearcats to a .177 hitting percentage on its way to a 30-23, 30-19, 30-23 victory.

Shelby Orthwerth had team-highs with 17 kills and 19 digs and Jessica Sears also recorded a double-double with 10 kills and 12 digs. Monica Marlowe had 43 assists and Kelly Vogel had a team-high 3.02 digs a game.

The fourth and final game was back and forth. Truman was down 16-13 but Shedd's serving sparked a 7-0 Bulldog run. Central Missouri would tie the game at 20 before Truman would go on another run, this one a 6-1 run, to open up a 26-21 lead. Truman had match point at 29-24 but the Jennies didn't die, scoring four straight points before folding at 30-28.

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SIU-Edwardsville had four players in double-figure kills led by Jennifer Trame with 12. Erica Schuette had 51 assists and 16 digs and Jenny Franklin recorded a team-high 19 digs. Kelly Schaill and Andrea Voss each had four blocks.

The turning point of the match came in the third game with the score tied 11-11. A side out gave Truman the lead and Kelly Vogel served 10 straight points to give the Bulldogs a lead that would never be threatened. The Bulldogs also jumped out quickly in the fourth game with a 9-3 advantage. The Cougars got within one once but Truman pulled away for the win.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK: Shelby Orthwerth was named the Wilson/MIAA Hitter of the Week for her performances last week. For the week, she averaged 5.27 kills and 4.55 digs a game. She hit .321 and had four aces and six blocks in three Bulldog victories.

CAREER LEADERS: Monica Marlowe moved into another top 10 Truman career list last week when she recorded her 110th service aces. Marlowe will also likely move into two more top ten lists this week in games and matches played. She is now in the top 10 in nine Truman categories including second in assists and first in assists per game.

MIAA LEADERS: Several Bulldogs were listed among the top 10 conference leaders this week.

Offensively, Monica Marlowe is second in the conference with 11.57 assists a game. Shelby Orthwerth is eighth in kills with 3.64 a game and Jennifer Hunter is ninth in hitting percentage with a .277 mark.

Defensively, Rebecca Knefelkamp is sixth in the conference with 3.80 digs a game.

As a team, Truman leads the league with 17.34 kills, 15.98 assists and 19.52 digs a game. The Bulldogs are fourth in hitting percentage (.240), seventh in service aces (1.59) and eighth in blocks (2.00).

NATIONAL LEADERS: Through Sept. 29, Truman was among the top 20 national leaders in three categories. Truman was second in the nation with 17.34 kills a game and 15.98 assists a game and 19.52 digs a game.

HEAD COACH QI WANG: Qi Wang is in his second season as head coach of the Bulldogs. Wang had an impressive coaching debut, leading Truman to a 37-2 overall record in 2001 and was named MIAA and South Central Region Coach of the Year.

Wang is in his sixth season at Truman after being assistant coach for four years. Since Wang has been at the school, the Bulldogs have gone 147-
49, won their first outright MIAA title, shared another MIAA championship and advanced to two NCAA tournaments.

Assistant coach Becky Pike has also played a huge role in the Bulldogs’ success the last six years. Pike was the head coach from 1997-2000 before accepting the assistant’s role before the 2001 season. Pike was named the MIAA Coach of the Year in 2000 after Truman earned a share of the MIAA championship for the first time.

SEASON HIGHLIGHT REEL:

◆ The Bulldogs were the preseason MIAA favorites according to the coaches’ poll and were ranked fifth in the nation in the AVCA preseason poll, Truman’s highest-ever preseason ranking.

◆ Truman went 4-0 during the Nebraska-Omaha tournament, including a 3-1 victory over nationally-ranked Rockhurst.

◆ Shelby Orthwerth was named the Wilson/MIAA Hitter of the Week on Sept. 16.

◆ Truman tied a school record with a .333 attack percentage in a four-game match against SIU-Edwardsville.

◆ Shelby Orthwerth became just the fifth Bulldog in history with 20+ kills and digs in one match when she recorded 23 kills and 20 digs against Washburn.

◆ Truman set a school record with 78 assists and had the second-most assists (68) for a four-game match against SIU-Edwardsville.

◆ Following wins over Central Missouri and SIU-Edwardsville, Truman has won 23 straight MIAA contests and 28 straight matches at Pershing Arena.

◆ Truman begins a three-match homestand starting with an Oct. 18 match against Washburn. The following afternoon in another MIAA match, the Bulldogs will face off against Emporia State.

UP NEXT: Truman begins a three-match homestand starting with an Oct. 18 match against Washburn. The following afternoon in another MIAA match, the Bulldogs will face off against Emporia State.