Bearcats face Mules for shot at MIAA title

ANDREW WESLEY
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Northwest football doesn’t have a conference title in hand, nor has the team clinched a playoff spot. All the Bearcats really have is a matchup with Central Missouri Nov. 16 and a list of goals, one they made four months ago.

The Bearcats crafted the list before they survived a Week 1 scare at Missouri Western. They made it before they trailed the likes of Washburn, Emporia State and Lincoln early in contests.

It was before they turned statements wins over Pittsburg State, Central Oklahoma and Fort Hays State and before they surmounted a 4-0 loss Oct. 6. The team, Gordon said, carried the mindset of trying to prove that they are capable of competing with stronger teams. Assistant coach Quaid Curtin said they went into the game to overtake and score the eventual game-winning goal served as a moment that reflected a situation the Bearcats found themselves in throughout the season.

“The team went out, performed very well, had some early goals, but we had other opportunities and just didn’t put them away,” Gordon said. “It wasn’t about great saves; it was about misplacement and mishit balls by us in situations we haven’t put ourselves in.”

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The team had more of an internal approach coming in to rematch instead of an adjustment based on their previous result against the Hornets, a 4-0 loss Oct. 6. The team, Gordon said, carried the mindset of trying to prove that they are capable of competing with stronger teams. Assistant coach Quaid Curtin said they went out and gave that mentality.

“Was that mentality that these girls know they can compete so they went out on the field and said, ‘Why not us?’” Curtin said.

The Bearcats were close, knocking at the door of the second round of the tournament, but close doesn’t win. It never has, and that didn’t change against Emporia. Their hopes of a tournament run were thwarted and seniors were left heartbroken as their first tournament appearance was over as quickly as it began.

“I was overtime; whoever scores wins,” Gordon said. “It was heartbreaking for the seniors because of their commitment. Seeing their commitment and their payoff to get into the postseason, it was disappointing. They were deserving to get that win, but Emporia was as well.”

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Path ahead toughens for spotty Bearcats

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

Congratulations to Northwest football on its Nov. 9 win over Fort Hays State in double overtime to keep the Bearcats’ playoff hopes alive.

The win was pretty impressive, but it shouldn’t have come to the Vaibs. Scratching and clawing down the stretch to even have a chance at making the postseason. Everything for Northwest was going great — until it wasn’t. Well, sort of. Most programs across the country would consider 9-1 and in a position to fight for a playoff spot to be a pretty successful season. For Northwest, Bearcat fans rambling on Facebook think that’s a pretty sloppy one.

I mean, come on. They survive a Week 1 scare on the road to Missouri Western, dominate for three weeks before surviving another scare in Week 5 on the road against Emporia State, win in the battle of undefeated Arrowhead Stadium against Pitt State, just to lose on the road to Nebraska-Kearney.

Soccer blows lead, exits after first round loss

GADI BROOKS | NW MISSOURIAN

Senior forward Taylor Wolfe compete in the Bearcat’s 3-2 win over Rogers State Oct. 18 at the Bearcat Soccer Pitch. After clinching a spot in the MIAA tournament for the first time since 2012, the Bearcats fell in their first postseason game against Emporia State with a final score of 3-2. SEE OPINION | A9

CORBIN SMITH
Contributing Reporter | @curly_corbs

Coming into its first MIAA tournament since 2012, Northwest soccer was ready to prove it was capable of contending for a conference championship. After a regular season plagued with hot-and-cold performances, the Bearcats found themselves in their first, and only, round of the tournament.

Northwest (10-3-3) got put to an early 2-0 lead over Emporia State (13-4-2) Nov. 9, but the momentum quickly dissipated. Two goals from juniors Alex Mausbach and Taylor Wolfe gave the Bearcats the two-goal lead at the break. Much like the rest of the season, Gordon said, missed opportunities would hurt the Bearcats.

Allowing the Hornets to take the game to overtime and score the eventual game-winning goal served as a moment that reflected a situation the Bearcats found themselves in throughout the season.

“This team went out, performed very well, had some early goals, but we had other opportunities and just didn’t put them away,” Gordon said. “It wasn’t about great saves; it was about misplacement and mishit balls by us in situations we haven’t put ourselves in.”

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“It was overtime, whatever score first, that’s it,” Gordon said. “It was heartbreaking for the seniors because of their commitment. Seeing their commitment and their payoff to get into the postseason, it was disappointing. They were deserving to get that win, but Emporia was as well.”

SEE SOCCER | A9

ANDREW WESLEY | NW MISSOURIAN

Senior tight end Marques Andrews (15) and senior running back Justin Rankin (11) celebrate in the end zone after Rankin scored a touchdown of Northwest’s 4-3 overtime win against Fort Hays State in Hays, Kansas, Nov. 9. Rankin quietly scored for two touchdowns in the victory, rushing for 36 yards in the contest.

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