

# WOKSAPE

## Gazelle Track Competitors Motivated for the Season



BY  
**TORY GROSS**

As the new spring season kicks off, so too, does another: the Yankton Gazelle's track season.

The Yankton Gazelles look to improve from last year's finish.

At the state track meet in May 2011, the girls finished in an unsatisfactory 11<sup>th</sup> place.

It is that dissatisfaction that drives the girls this year.

"Last year didn't really turn out the way we expected," senior and SDSU commit, Jenna Grossenburger explained. "We know what we are capable of and our results last year definitely did not show that. This year we're aiming to not let that happen again."

The Gazelles will definitely have experience on their side, as they return many of their most established athletes.

Grossenburger and sophomore Whitlee Larson are two big returners for the distance group. Grossenburger placed third in the 3200 and eighth in the 1600, while Larson placed sixth in both the 800 and 1600 a year ago.

Senior Chloe Cornemann, who placed eighth in 300 meter hurdles last year, should be returning, but she is slowly recovering from a knee injury.

"We have a lot of people coming back who have experience, so it helps to have people familiar with the system. It makes things run a lot smoother," Grossenburger stated.

Two more returning athletes are competing in the 100 meter hurdles, including junior Mikala Hora and sophomore Hailey Luken.

Hora is a two-time state place winner in the 100-meter hurdles and will be a great help to the team.

Junior Kelsey Fitzgerald is also a multiple state place winner returning for Yankton and sophomore Clara Schild returns for girl's shot put and discus.

These returners, along with a bulk of young athletes, look to kick off their season on a positive note.

Grossenburger is one who strongly supports this sentiment. "We have a lot of talent, experience, and ambition on our side, and I think that is why we are going to be successful this season," Grossenburger said.

In their second meet of the season, the Yankton Gazelles showed much of that success.

Grossenburger delivered in her distance performance. She placed second in the 3200 with a time of 11:51 and also placed fifth in the 800 with a time of 2:31.

Sophomore Annie Kruec placed fifth in the mile run at 5:40.

Since she is slowly recovering, Larsen only competed in relays, where her contributions showed through.

The sprint medley team consisting of Hailey Luken, Janae Osborne, and Ashtyn Haak received fifth place.

Haak finished with a time of 2:35 to place ninth overall in the open 800.

For the jumping events, Fitzgerald had an outstanding performance in the high jump with a jump of 5-2. She also placed eighth in the triple jump.

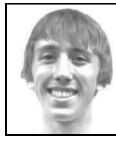
Hora closely followed Fitzgerald's eighth place finish by placing ninth overall in the triple jump (15-2).

Clara Schild led the Gazelle throwers with an 11th place showing in the shot put.

Overall, the Gazelles had a strong performance which they look to build upon for the remainder of the track and field season.

"It was a great confidence builder for us to start our season off with. We saw competition from Iowa and Nebraska and got in some good experience," Grossenburger said. "I think when we come back from all of our injuries, we'll be in really good shape."

## Yankton Boys Expect to Excel in Both Track and Field Events



BY  
**JUSTIN GRODE**

The Yankton Bucks Track and Field Team is looking to have a strong season this year.

With many returning former state qualifiers like Kipp Kinsley, Brice Cowman, and Logan Smith, it will make the long-distance group a tough one to defeat.

Kinsley, along with a couple other distance runners, has accumulated quite a bit of mileage during the winter. Kinsley ran about 677 miles along with 35 hours of biking and swimming this offseason.

As a result, Kinsley said, "I expect to cut time in all my events and hopefully place in the top three at state this year. A lot of other guys have put in time also, so I expect them to have a great season also."

The shot put and discus group have some talent this year with Ty Soulek throwing a shot put 50 feet in practice. Some other good shot put throwers to watch are Kellen Soulek and Troy Hunhoff who were on varsity last year and performed well.

The sprinters and hurdlers seem to be a quick-footed clan this year with Connor Fitzsimmons and Ricky Culver at the front of the pack. They have several guys that can run a 100 meter dash in under 13 seconds and a few more who can run it in under 12 seconds.

Only the fastest and strongest can run the 100 meter dash in under 11 seconds which means



PHOTO BY MATTIE BLAGG

Yankton junior, Troy Hunhoff, practices his shot put form while senior Brady Knodel looks on.

that there are very few who can run this fast at Yankton.

Connor Fitzsimmons and Ricky Culver are the two that are closest on the Yankton team to breaking 11 seconds in the 100 meter dash.

Ricky Culver expects to make it to state in the 100 meter dash and the long jump this season. He expects the sprinting group to be strong, because it seems like they are pretty well-rounded in all the events this year.

The running competition will be tough with the Greenway brothers from Mitchell imposing their sub 11 second times in the 100 meter dash which is very

intimidating to nearly every team in South Dakota.

The long jump, triple jump, high jump, and pole vaulting groups are looking to be very good this year.

This sector of the team does not expect to dominate at the state meet, but these competitors don't plan on getting blown out of the competition either.

The jumpers and vaulters expect to be in the top five teams for these events and are hoping to win it all.

J.J. Hejna is the Bucks' best high jumper. With a few broken records under his belt, he is looking to go to state and come

home with a medal.

Mr. Dave Dannenbring, cross country coach and distance track coach, said, "I expect that if everyone does their best and works to their potential that we will win some races this year. As a team, I think if we can get in the top 6 at state that it would be a great season for the guys' track and field team."

The Bucks' track and field team is planning on having a great season this year and is eagerly anticipating the end of the season when it comes time to try and win the state championship.

## Bucks Tennis Begins the Season with Young, Talented Team



BY  
**ABBEY VANMEETEREN**

The Yankton boys tennis team, coached by Mr. Brady Muth, started gearing up for their season a few weeks ago.

The beautiful weather has made it easy for the team to dust off their rackets and start hitting some balls. Team members are excited and looking forward to an awesome season this spring.

The team's first match was held on Saturday, March 31 at the Yankton tennis courts. The Bucks played Sioux City North and Vermillion. Results were not available at press time.

To get the boys ready for the tough matches this spring, Mr. Muth has the team working hard to get in shape.

Every day they run about a mile and stretch before they do anything with a racket. They also perform a variety of drills and conditioning. The team ends their practices by playing a few games against each other, which can get pretty intense.

"This season I'm really looking forward to just being outside playing in the nice weather we've been having and seeing how much the team can improve this year," said Luke Rockne, who is a freshman this year.

"I'll be working on my foot work this year and also trying to hit harder, because I'm playing in a higher flight," Rockne added.

This season twenty-one boys are competing on Yankton's team compared to last year's total of twelve.

Muth's overall outlook on the season is positive. He said, "This year we are very young, but we still hope to compete. The ESD conference will have teams that are all just as young as us this year, so we're all kind of in the same boat."



PHOTO BY MATTIE BLAGG

Yankton freshman, Jason Shindler, looks to return a serve during Bucks tennis practice.

All the competition this year will be fairly even on the difficulty scale. "O'Gorman and Sioux Falls Washington are always the toughest competitors. In the ESD conference, the toughest teams will be Mitchell, Watertown, and Pierre, but overall everyone will be pretty tough," Coach Muth added.

Junior Eric Stratman, a new addition to the team, said, "Tennis so far has been a great experience, and I advise people to go out and give it a try."

The boys enjoy being out on the courts playing tennis and having a good time. "We have really good team chemistry. It's a good group of guys who can all get along with each other and like to have a good time," said Coach Muth. "We have different advantages and disadvantages. Obviously, the fact that we are very young is a disad-

vantage. We do have some good assets too. One of those assets being that the guys are very competitive. Even while they're playing each other in practices, they can get into it. Also, they're a naturally athletic group."

The weather has been beautiful and they've been out on the courts practicing for a few weeks without a drop of rain. "You can't ask for a better weather than what we've been having. Last year we got rained out a lot. The boys are just really excited to go out and start playing actual games. I think we're all getting a little sick of practice and conditioning every day," said Muth.

The ESD conference matches will be held on May 11 and the state tournament will be May 17-19.

As they make their way through the season, the team welcomes fan support.

## Gazelle Golf Team Plans to Defend ESD Title



BY  
**MEGAN MINGO**

The Gazelles have recently started golf practice after school and are looking forward to their first meet.

Head coach, Mr. Sime expects "the girls to work hard and to try to improve on their game the best they can, and give it their best every time they go out and compete."

Gazelle senior, Hannah Withrow, feels losing two seniors, Taylor Specht and Kaitlyn Erickson, was tough but thinks the girls will do alright this year.

Withrow said, "I hope to defend the ESD title."

This offseason the Gazelles have had plenty of fair weather, allowing them to have already played quite a few times.

Withrow stated, "Since we had good work ethic in the off-season, we will enter the season with good ball striking right away and won't have to deal with early season shakiness."

Withrow also said that the team will need to work on their short game.

Mr. Sime agreed and said that anything within 100 yards is

what the girls need to work on most.

The Gazelles' first meet is this afternoon against Brookings and Brandon Valley. One key attribute for the girls will be their ball striking due to a good golf winter.

Withrow predicted the meet to be "a tough call." She added, "We had a good golf winter, but I know that other teams have been working hard too. So if we all stay focused and play our hardest, we hopefully can come out on top."

After the Brookings-Brandon Valley triangular, the Gazelles will have eight other regular season meets.

Mr. Sime thinks the toughest of those will be the O'Gorman dual or any of the three invites the girls play this spring, because that is where they will see the best competition in the state.

The ESD meet and the State meet will also be challenging for the Gazelles.

Withrow believes that the Brookings golf team will also provide good competition for the Yankton team, but she agreed with Coach Sime and said, "O'Gorman will be our toughest competitor this year."

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