

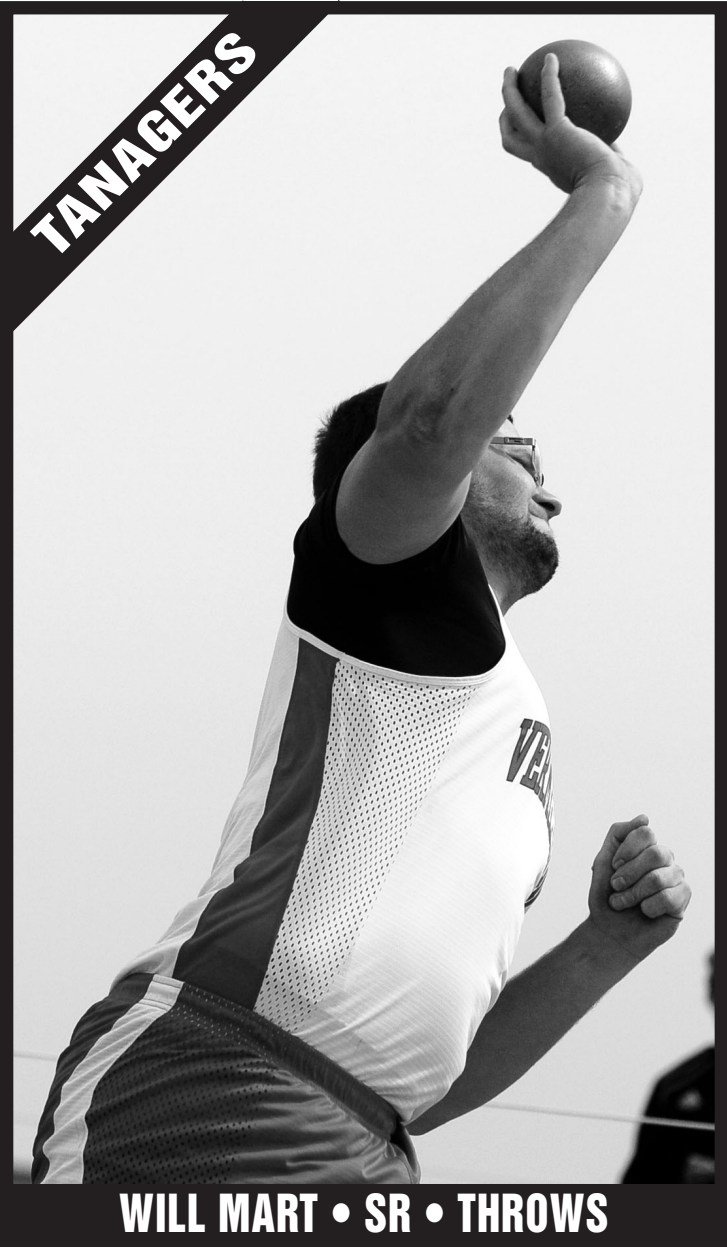
HALEY BRUNKE, SCOTLAND: 8th in 3200
CHLOE CORNEMANN, YANKTON: 8th in 300 hurdles
SENIOR BOYS
AUSTIN HAMM, BLOOMFIELD: 1st in 3200, 3rd in 1600
TY SOULEK, YANKTON: 4th in discus, 6th in shot put

JUSTIN LILLIE, YANKTON: 3rd in 110 hurdles
BRADY VIET, MARION: 5th in 200, 8th in 400
KIPP KINSLEY, YANKTON: 4th in 3200
KEEGAN RINGLING, PLATTE-GEDDES: 4th in 800
CONNOR FITZSIMMONS, YANKTON: 4th in triple jump

AUSTIN CARLSON, BERESFORD: 6th in triple jump
CONNOR FLOREY, ANDES CENTRAL: 6th in long jump
SAM KIGER, IRENE-WAKONDA: 6th in discus
WILLIAM MART, VERMILLION: 6th in discus
BEN FISCHER, MENNO: 7th in pole vault

SCOTT DAVIS, IRENE-WAKONDA: 8th in shot put
JUNIOR GIRLS
KIERAN O'MALLEY, CENTERVILLE: 4th in triple jump, tied for 4th in high jump, 6th in long jump
KELSEY FITZGERALD, YANKTON: 3rd in high jump

Tanagers Look To Build On 2011 Success



WILL MART • SR • THROWS

BY JILANNE DOOM
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VERMILLION — After returning several state place winners and qualifiers on both the boys' and girls' squads, the Vermillion High School track and field teams are expecting an even more successful 2012 season.

"Our team has a lot of returnees so we will be looking forward to a very deep girls' team. We have 30 kids out, which is really exciting, and we've got a lot of kids that can do many things. I also think we should be very successful in relays throughout the year," head coach Lenni Billberg said of the girls' squad.

"On the boys side we also return a lot of state placers from last year. We have Colin Olson, who is part of the triplets we have on our team, and we return Austin Krier, who is an 800 runner for us and ran a great leg for us in the Medley at the state meet. We've got Aaron Ruhaak, a multi-time place winner in relays at state. He's running some great 400s for us so we hope things are going to go well for him. Will Mart is another guy who is a discus thrower and we hope to get him to score a few points for us in the shot this year too. So we're really looking forward to see what they can bring."

Individually on the girls' side, Billberg has high hopes in many of her experienced upperclassmen to compete well throughout the season.

"We've got some great talent in Blair Gilkysen and the twins



BLAIR GILKYSO (right) • JR • DISTANCE

Megan and Paige Olson," Billberg said. We also look forward to being big in the throws. We have two throwers this year that should really figure in a lot of points for us before the end of the year in Beth Szymonski and Stacy Hirsch. So we're really looking forward to seeing them compete."

Luckily for the team, and for almost all other South Dakota teams, the unusually warm temperatures allowed them to begin practice right away. The Tanagers' training cycle benefitted

greatly from the lack of snow and rain that usually interferes with the early track season.

"The kids really have been working hard. We started the first day we were able to which was the first week of March and the last couple days of February," Billberg said. "So we've been going at it for four weeks already and we've got a good training cycle underneath us. We really look forward to what we can do throughout April when we have meet, meet, meet, and then May to build up for some state

qualifiers."

If past experience is any factor, building up the team for state qualifiers will come easily for the Tanagers, whose girls' team won the state title two years ago and boys' team who finished in the top eight in four different relays last spring.

"Just a couple years ago, we were state champs and we would like to be back to where we're competing for that top spot. But there are some tough teams out

TANAGERS | PAGE 6

NE Girls

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LAST YEAR: The Wildcats graduated five letterwinners, including state meet pole vault medalist Becca Heikes.

TOP PROSPECTS: Taylor Dybdal (high jump), Micheala Dendinger (sprints), Greer Olson, Kristina Huss

Hart. Cedar Catholic

COACH: Chad Cattau
ASSISTANTS: Adam Kuntz, Tate Cunningham, Steve Steffen, Chris Collier

VITALS: District C-6, Mid-State Conference

LAST YEAR: Katelyn Dicks placed fourth in the 300 hurdles at state as a sophomore.

TOP PROSPECTS: McKae Pinkelman, Joslyn Wiebelhaus, Savannah McGhee, Charice Stevens, Liz Steffen, Siera Becker, Katelyn Dicks, Leva Bakanaita, Anzhelika Tolstikhina, Lexi Steffen, Emily Schrempp, Rachel Loecker, Alli Walter, Lexi Schommer, Anna Brodersen, Alexis Arens, Amber Leise

Laurel-Concord-Coleridge

COACH: Nate Sims
ASSISTANTS: Carol Mangano, Shannon Benson, Kyle Kovarna

VITALS: District C-6, Northeast Nebraska Activities Conference

LAST YEAR: LCC finished as the girls Class C-2 runner-up. Amy Pritchard placed seventh in the long jump and triple jump at state as a junior.

RETURNING LETTERWINNERS: Jade Cunningham (Sr.), Amy Pritchard (Sr.), Mandy Nelson (Sr.), Erika Hochstein (Sr.), Kiley Thompson (Jr.), Sammie Camenzind (Jr.)

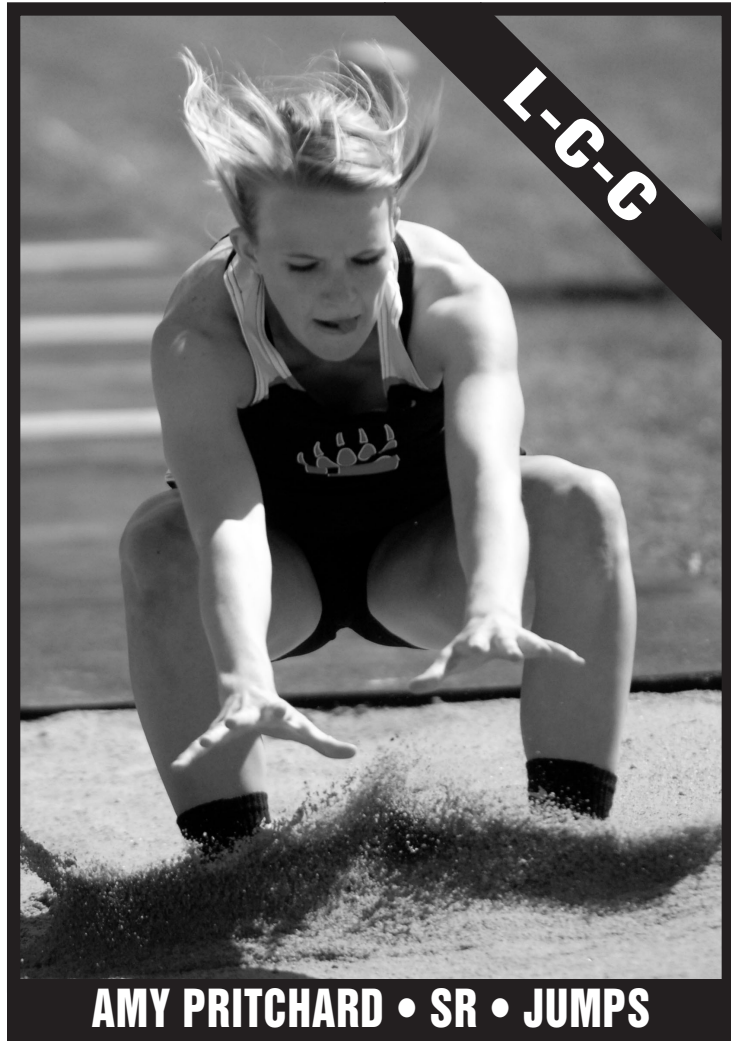
Niobrara-Verdigre

COACHES: Stacy Ludwig, Mary Snowdon
ASSISTANTS: Dana Konopasek, Jaime Guenther

VITALS: District C-7, Niobrara Valley Conference

LAST YEAR: Tessa Ives was seventh in the discus at state as a sophomore. The Cougars lost eight letterwinners to graduation.

RETURNING LETTERWINNERS: Ashley Chinana (Sr., distance/relays), Cynthia Sokol (Sr., sprints/relays), Jade Salmen (Jr., mid-distance/relays), Tessa Ives (Jr., throws/relays), Mariah Leisure (Jr., sprints/mid-distance, throws), Rylee Klawitter (So., sprints/mid-distance/relays), Andrea Burkhardt (So., hurdles/mid-distance, relays),



AMY PRITCHARD • SR • JUMPS

Cathryn Hanzlik (So., jumps/sprints/mid-distance/relays), McKayla Eisenhauer (So., throws)

TOP PROSPECTS: Amanda Boggs (So.), Amanda Ruzicka (Jr.), Madi Schreier (Fr.), Denielle DeSive (Fr.), Katie Hanvey (Fr.)

Santee

COACH: Natalie Stout (1st year)

ASSISTANT: Sheri Plumbtree
VITALS: District D-8, Niobrara Valley Conference

LAST YEAR: The Warriors had two competitors in the state meet last year. They lost two letterwinners from last year's squad.

RETURNING LETTERWINNERS: Georgianna Denney (So.), Chrissiean Swalley (So.)

TOP PROSPECT: Adrianna Duarte (So.)

Wausa

COACH: Teyl Conn (27th year)
ASSISTANT: Tylor Fincher
VITALS: District D-3, Lewis and Clark Conference

LAST YEAR: The Lady Vikings finished 10th overall at the state meet in Class D. They return the core of that team this year. Breanna Gallup placed third in the 3200, fourth in the 800, and fourth

in the 1600 at state as a freshman.

Wynot

COACH: Lee Heimes (5th year)
ASSISTANT: Amy Kathol
VITALS: District D-3, Lewis and Clark Conference

LAST YEAR: Ashley Heine was sixth in the 400 and eighth in the 800 at the state meet as a sophomore.

RETURNING LETTERWINNERS: Erica Burbach (Jr.), Shelby Hochstein (Jr.), Haley Gowery (Sr.), Ashley Heine (Jr.), Heidi Klug (Sr.), Angelique Stappert (Jr.)

TOP PROSPECTS: Faith Krie (Fr.), Samantha Wieseler (Jr.), Kelsie Higgins (Jr.), Jenna Heine (Fr.), Kristi Bruening (Fr.), Lacey Heimes (Fr.), Nicole Pinkelman (Jr.)

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SD GIRLS TRACK

Alcester-Hudson

COACH: LeeAnn Haisch (22nd year)

ASSISTANTS: Brian Haak, Jeff Sebern, Eric Bauder, Josh Hohn
VITALS: Region 4B, Tri-Valley Conference

LAST YEAR: The Cubs saw their 4x800 and 4x400 relay teams win state titles. Their medley relay placed second at state while the 4x200 relay team placed third at state. The Cubs finished sixth overall at the Class B state meet, but lost three letterwinners to graduation.

RETURNING LETTERWINNERS: MaKayla McConnell (Sr.), Brittani Liston (Sr., high jump), Jessica Wegh (Jr.), Ivy Pearson (Sr.), Jamie Jansen (So.), Courtney McKee (So.), Katie Homandberg (So.), Chantell Westberg (Jr.)

TOP PROSPECTS: Brandi Vandenberg (Jr.), Ariyanna Miller (8th), Cassie Schiefen (8th), Brianna Walth (8th)

Andes Central

COACH: Cliff Johnson (4th year)

ASSISTANT: Diane Deurmier
VITALS: Region 6B, Little Missouri Valley Conference

LAST YEAR: Sierra Svatos placed fourth at the state meet in the high jump. Kellie Winckler placed second at the state meet in the triple jump.

RETURNING LETTERWINNERS: Laren Bryant (Sr.), Jenna Kitchenmaster (Sr.), Joy Kirkpatrick (Sr.), Sierra Svatos (Jr., high jump), Kellie Winckler (Jr.), Makayla Pavel (So.), Payton Johanneson (Fr.), Brooke Deurmier (Fr.), Erica Kitchenmaster (8th)

TOP PROSPECTS: Jaelley Braun (8th), Makayla Petsche (8th), Dakota Goode (Jr.), Kiyanne Bruguier (Jr.), Sydney Meyers (So.), DeMera Dyvorka (So.), Denisha Johanneson (So.), Cybil

SD GIRLS | PAGE 6

YHS Track

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big thing, but it is huge in terms of getting kids excited about going out for track."

One of those kids that is back in the fold is junior Mikala Hora, a two-time state placemaker in the 100-meter hurdles (seventh in 2008-09).

"We're going to be strong from the 400 and up, and we have Hailey Luken and Mikala Hora coming back in the hurdles."

Youmans said. "Everyone knows about the success of Jenna Grossenburg and Whitlee Larson, but we have three or four of the top distance runners in the state."

Larson placed sixth in both the 800 and 1600 a year ago, while Grossenburg was third in the 3200 and eighth in the 1600. Senior Chloe Cornemann, eighth in the 300-meter hurdles a year ago, also returns.

While the Gazelles lack depth in the field events, they still have the potential to score big points.

"We're not deep in the field events, but we don't need three, four placers, just one good one," Youmans said. "Clara Schild in the throws was on the outside looking in last year at state. In the jumps, we have one good one in all of them."

Kelsey Fitzgerald is a multiple state placemaker in the high jump for the Gazelles.

The Gazelles have some gaps in the sprints, but have young athletes that may make an impact there.

"If somebody could surprise us in the 100 and 200, help us fill the void in the sprints and relays, we could be a balanced team," Youmans said.

The Yankton boys have the bulk of their returning points coming in field events, led by double-placemaker Ty Soulek. The future Northern Iowa walk-

on football player finished fourth in the discus and sixth in the shot put a year ago.

"The field events will be a strong point," Youmans said. "We look at the throws and jumps and see potential state placemen there."

The Bucks also return fourth place finishers Connor Fitzsimmons in the triple jump and Jordan "J.J." Hejna in the high jump.

On the track, the Bucks return third placer Justin Lillie and Kipp Kinsley, who finished fourth in the 3200.

"The 400 and up are all events where we will have a fair amount of success," Youmans said. "The place we'll really be searching is the 100, 200 and sprint relays. We're hoping one or two incoming freshmen can raise the bar and be 'that guy' in those events."

Both teams have the potential for big points at state, Youmans said.

"It is not unrealistic that we have five or six kids that could be state champions if the right things happen on the right day," he said.

The Bucks and Gazelles will only compete on the Williams Field track three times this season, the first of which is not for another month. Yankton will host Sioux Falls Lincoln in a dual on April 23, host its annual First Dakota Relays on April 26, then host the Eastern South Dakota Conference Championships on May 12.

"This is an off year for all our rotations," Youmans said. "So when we are home, we have to make sure we put our best effort out there, let our community and city see what kind of program we have."

The two big meets, First Dakota Relays and ESD, will be especially important, Youmans noted.

"The First Dakota Relays is second only to Howard Wood," he said. "ESD is always a fun competitive meet."

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