

USD Removes Interim Tag From AD Herbster



David Herbster speaks at a University of South Dakota media event earlier this school year. Herbster, who has served as USD's interim athletic director since December, had the interim tag removed on Thursday.

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — There is no more 'interim' label with David Herbster. Herbster, the interim athletic director at the University of South Dakota for the past four months, was handed the reins permanently on Thursday during a staff meeting with USD president Jim Abbott. Abbott told the Press & Dakotan last December that Herbster's interim status would stay the same until at least June 2013. He said Thursday, however, that Herbster's performance dictated an earlier decision. "It just became clear over the last month or so, that he was everybody's choice," Abbott told the Press & Dakotan. "He has done a great job and deserves this position." The announcement will be made official this morning (Friday) at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. Herbster, who took over after previous A.D. David Saylor resigned for the same position at Miami University of Ohio last December, did not return phone calls on Thursday. Coyote coaches, on the other hand, were quick to share their excitement over the news. "I feel like we've built a solid relationship, and there's a lot of trust between myself and him, from coach to administrator," volleyball coach Matt Houk said. "I feel extremely confident in his ability to lead this department, to keep pushing us to bigger and better things." Abbott said he met with USD athletic department staff at 2:30 p.m. Thursday and informed the room that he would not pursue a search and had hired Herbster on a permanent basis. "I think everyone was really pleased," Abbott said. "He is clearly very popular with the coaches and staff, and with the folks in Vermillion, not to mention with our alums. It's a good,

solid choice." The news was greeted with joy, according to head football coach Joe Glenn — who was coaxed out of retirement to coach the Coyotes by the tandem of Saylor and Herbster in December 2011. "As soon as he hit that part of the speech, there was a huge cheer," Glenn said. "It's a tremendous shot in the arm for our department, for our university, for Vermillion, and even for our state." Glenn, whose program will play its annual spring football game on Saturday afternoon, said he first met Herbster in the mid 1990's, when Glenn was coaching at Northern Colorado and Herbster was an assistant A.D. at Pittsburg State (Kan.). "Anybody that knows David Herbster loves the guy," Glenn said. "He's Vermillion and red and white through and through." A former athletic director at Concordia-St. Paul (2001-04) and Nebraska-Omaha (2005-07), Herbster previously served as director of athletic development for the USD Foundation. He was also USD's interim athletic director from April 2010 to July 2010 when then-A.D. Joel Nielsen left for Kent State University in Ohio — in the same conference Saylor would later join. Getting the opportunity not once but twice to serve in an interim status showcased Herbster's true abilities, according to head swimming and diving coach Jason Mahowald. "He's done outstanding jobs both times he was the interim, and that speaks volumes that the president looked to you to lead the program through a transition," said Mahowald, who just completed his eighth year. "It's like when dad gives you the keys to the car. Eventually he gives you the chance to drive by yourself." Though he will be new to the role as full-time

athletic director, Herbster is no stranger to big projects at USD — including the hiring of Glenn and women's basketball coach Amy Williams. The biggest issue on USD's plate is the ongoing fundraising for the \$48 million volleyball/basketball arena and an outdoor track/soccer complex project — both of which have gotten approval from the Board of Regents and S.D. Legislature. Abbott said he has been "very pleased" with the way Herbster has handled the facilities endeavor, specifically when it came to criss-crossing the country to raise money. "This is a big project, about 68 million dollars when you include financing, and I've been impressed with the contacts David has made and the effort he's made visiting with alums," Abbott said. "That's not easy to do, when you're trying to run the day-to-day stuff and raising money and working with coaches and athletes." "He's done a great job with all of those." According to South Dakota's open government website (open.sd.gov), Saylor's annual contract as athletic director was \$165,600 when he resigned. Herbster's salary is listed at \$125,000 as senior associate A.D. for External Affairs. That amount figures to rise. One area that has continued to rise is the faith the department staff has in Herbster, Abbott pointed out when asked about Herbster's performance. "In most cases, searches are a necessary thing to do, but I wanted to see about fundraising; to see how things would work out," Abbott said. "Would they coalesce or wouldn't they?" "And I think David is the right person for this job at this time." You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

Steffen Set For Journey To Wayne State

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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When Hartington, Neb., Cedar Catholic standout Alexis Steffen was first looking at a place to play college volleyball, she thought that Wayne State might be too close to home for her tastes. But when she visited the campus and the program, she decided it was just close enough. Steffen, the 2012 Press & Dakotan Prep Female Athlete of the Year, will play volleyball at Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb., the institution announced on Wednesday, the opening day of the spring signing period. Due to travel, Steffen could not be reached until Thursday.

The three-sport standout didn't even consider Wayne State as an option until well after Cedar Catholic claimed the 2012 Class C2 volleyball title. "I didn't look at Wayne State until mid-January," Steffen said from her hotel in Dallas, Texas. "The coach is awesome, down to earth. I felt like it would be the best fit for me. It's competitive and a little bigger school." The 5-11 middle hitter's athleticism was a key draw for Wayne State head volleyball coach Scott Kneiff. "She can do so many things on a volleyball floor," he said. "She's a long athlete who can do a lot." Steffen helped the Trojans to a 31-5 record and a state championship in 2012, as well as a runner-up finish in 2010 and a state berth in 2011. "Lexi's a hard worker who has done a great job in the classroom," said Cedar Catholic volleyball coach Adam Kuntz. "She's been surrounded by a great group of classmates that's made her even better.

Wagner Headed To MMC



Parkston's Logan Wagner, left, drives against Miller's Hallie Fulton during their semifinal game in the 2011 South Dakota State Class A Girls' Basketball Tournament on Friday at the Young Center in Spearfish. Wagner will attend Mount Marty College and participate in both women's basketball and golf for the Lancers, the institution announced on Thursday.

Parkston Standout To Play Basketball, Golf For Lancers

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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When the winningest coach in South Dakota girls' basketball history says that he's never had a player who has put in more work or loves the game more, you can't get much higher praise. That's the case for Parkston's Logan Wagner, who will attend Mount Marty College and participate in both basketball and golf for the Lancers. "She works very hard at her game, and she absolutely loves the game," said Parkston girls' basketball coach Rob Van Laecken, the state's all-time leader in girls' basketball coaching victories. "There's not a girl that loves the game more. There's not a girl that puts in more hours or has worked more than she has." That work ethic and the results on the court — over 1,000 career points and three all-conference honors — were what made the 5-7 guard an attractive recruit for MMC head women's basketball and golf coach Tom Schlingen. "Logan's a good offensively and played in a nice program," he said. "We think she's college-ready defensively, and we know she's a good defensive player." Wagner said the atmosphere around MMC and the Lancer program were big draws for her. "It's such a close-knit group. They were welcoming, friendly, more like a family than a team," she said. "It was a nice feeling."

Tuesday Meets Shuffle Track & Field Leader Board

This is the Press & Dakotan Leader Board for the 2013 season. To qualify, an area athlete must post the mark at a varsity meet.

Table with columns for event (100-METER DASH, 200-METER DASH, 400-METER DASH, 800-METER DASH, 1600-METER DASH), athlete name, school, and time.

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