

Champions Put Two On Class A First Team



P&D FILE PHOTO

Elk Point-Jefferson's McKenzie Mennenga pushes the ball up the court against St. Thomas More's Savannah Sullivan during the South Dakota State Class A Girls' Basketball Championship on March 14 at the Watertown Civic Arena. Mennenga was named first-team all-state for Class A by the South Dakota Basketball Coaches Association and the South Dakota Sportswriters Association.

BY PADRAIC DUFFY
 Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY — Game-changing length on both ends of the floor and calm under pressure are recipes for success at any level of basketball.

So it's little surprise that the two qualities were well-represented on the 2015 South Dakota Basketball Coaches Association's Class A all-state team.

State champion St. Thomas More, with its second straight dominant run to a state title, placed two on the six-player first team, headlined by senior Alexys Swedlund, the school's all-time leading scorer at over 2,000 career points. She was joined by teammate Ciara Duffy, one of three juniors on the team, along with Mt. Vernon-Plankinton's Megan Bultsma, the South Dakota State commit who is also the first team's tallest player at 6-foot-3, and Elk Point-Jefferson's McKenzie Mennenga. Winner's Kelsey Bertram and Todd County's Erin Grimshaw add to a strong West River presence on the first team.

Swedlund, a 6-foot senior guard

who is headed to Washington State to play for the Cougars next season, used a deadly deep shooting stroke and great size, strength and speed to average 25.4 points, 6.6 rebounds and 2.3 assists per game while shooting 51 percent from the floor and 42 percent from 3-point range. Her ability to patrol passing lanes also played a big part in More's shutting down opponents on the defensive end of the floor.

"Certainly when you're talking about Alexys, I would consider her one of the top players in the state," More head coach Brandon Kandolin said. "The stats showed what she meant to the team but she's just a great all-around player, making things happen off the dribble and creating for her teammates, rebounding, she's become a great defensive player ... she really did a lot of other things than just provide the scoring."

The 6-1 Duffy also provided some all-around game for the Cavaliers, averaging 17.6 points, 5.3 rebounds and 3.6 assists while

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Mount Marty third baseman Olivia Rodriguez camps under a pop-up for the out during the opening game of the Lancers' Great Plains Athletic Conference softball double-header with Dordt on Wednesday at Riverside Park.

Bucks Roll In Opener

BY ALAN DALE
 Vermillion Plain Talk

To begin a season against two top-notch baseball teams presented quite the challenge for the Vermillion Tanagers.

After an opening day loss Monday at Dakota Valley, the Tanagers found themselves up against the Buck buzzsaw of Yankton High School — senior Austin Johnson.

The right-handed Yankton pitcher hurled a no-hitter with only two walks through four innings and thanks to a strong offensive start the Bucks (1-0) sent the Tanagers back home on the heels of an 9-0 non-conference defeat at Riverside Field.

"We're going to struggle if we give up a lot of runs early and have to go away from our game plan offensively," Vermillion head coach Jason Gault said. "We are not the kind of team that is going to drive in bunch of runs and hit the ball into the gap all the time. We have the ability, have good team speed, we have good bunters on our team, but we can't do that when we have to throttle back down eight runs."

Johnson was relieved by Ben Cameron in the top of the fifth after handcuffing a Vermillion (0-2) offense that showed signs of pop in the Dakota Valley contest.

"AJ is an experienced pitcher for us and he obviously set a tone and our guys feed off of him," Yankton head coach Trey Krier said after his team's season opening win. "He does a great job challenging batters and making sure they put the ball in play. We make plays behind him."

"We were able to execute offensively and jump on them a little bit and we were able to get a good win to get our season off the bat."

Some fielding mishaps early put the Tanagers in a first inning hole as the host

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Vermillion shortstop Carter Kratz sails high to grab a throw from first base during a pickoff attempt on Yankton's Tyler Guthmiller during high school baseball action at Tereshinski Stadium in Yankton Wednesday. Guthmiller was safe on the play.

Gayville-Volin Girls, Centerville Boys Win Lounsbery

GV's Lee Wins Three Events, Five Others Take Two Individual Titles

CENTERVILLE — The Centerville boys edged Irene-Wakonda and the Gayville-Volin girls ran away with top honors at the Lounsbery Early Bird track and field meet, held on Tuesday in Centerville.

Centerville won just two events, a throws sweep by Christian Gruschin, but scored 115 points in the boys' division, three points better than Irene-Wakonda. Harrisburg JV was third with 84 points.

Gayville-Volin's C.J. Lee

was the only boy to win three individual events, taking the 200 (25.02), 110 hurdles (17.40) and pole vault (10-9). Irene-Wakonda's Gabe King won both the high jump (5-8) and triple jump (38-4). Gruschin's winning throws were 44-10 in the shot put and 158-8 in the discus.

Freeman Academy swept the distance races, with three different runners each taking one event: Brennan Haggerty (2:20.94) in the 800, Ryan Haggerty (5:00.51) in the 1600 and

Thaniel Schroeder (11:19.35) in the 3200.

The Gayville-Volin girls won three individual events, including a distance sweep by Laura Nelson, and took two relay titles on the way to 117 points. Freeman Academy finished with 86 points, followed by Harrisburg JV at 81.5 points.

Nelson took the 1600 in 5:29.09 and the 3200 in 12:14.10. DaNeila Jensen's discus (101-4) win and titles in the 3200 (10:24.45) and medley (4:51.47)

relays bolstered the Raider point total.

Irene-Wakonda's Lauren Sokolowski began her quest for a fourth straight Class B 100-meter hurdle title with an easy win in that event (15.88), as well as an easy win in the 300 hurdles (48.89). Freeman Academy's Hanna Yoder swept the 100 (13.45) and 200 (27.96).

Ten teams participated in the event.

Dordt Takes Two From MMC

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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Dordt survived a hard-charging Mount Marty College softball team, jumping out early and holding on for a 7-2 victory in the opener, then rallying late to take the nightcap 5-3 in nine innings in Great Plains Athletic Conference action on Wednesday at Riverside Field.

The sweep brought Dordt to 11-17 on the season and an even 3-3 in the GPAC. MMC dropped to 8-13, 1-7 in league play.

In the opener, Cassidy Van Voorst had two hits, including a triple, and Ashton Beard had a home run and three RBI to lead Dordt.

Kelsey Mitera had two doubles and Amber Krause had two singles for MMC. Cassidy Janicek, Sophia Lopez and Lauren Orwig also had hits for the Lancers.

Sidney Larsen picked up the win. Krause took the loss, striking out five.

Van Voorst led off the game with a triple, scoring on Beard's sacrifice fly. Jordan Harmelink, who walked in between, came around to score on an Erica White single.

Dordt added to its lead in the second, scoring on an error and Beard's two-run blast.

MMC left two runners stranded in the second, then broke through in the third. Kelsey Midora doubled off the center fielder's glove, then came in on a Krause single.

But Dordt answered with two more in the fourth. With the bases loaded, White laced a grounder to third that allowed Olivia Rodriguez to throw out Van Voorst at home. But Cori Valdivia followed with a single up the middle to plate two runs.

MMC threatened in the fifth, stranding two in scoring position when Dordt first baseman Michal Hoogland made a diving grab on a Karlee Kozak line drive. The Lancers scored again in the seventh on a Kelsey Mitera double and a double-steal with Krause, but could not close the gap.

"In game one we started slow," said MMC head coach Albert Fernandez. "We tried to come back but weren't able to get it done."

In the nightcap, Beard, White and Jansen each had two hits for Dordt, with White driving in the team's first three runs and Beard recording a double. Valdivia and Hoogland also doubled in the win.

Lopez had two hits and Kozak tripled to lead MMC. Rodriguez had a hit and two RBI. Jenn Mitera, Krause, Janicek and Erin Boyle added hits.

Amanda Malinowski pitched the first eight innings for the win, with Larsen pitching the ninth for the save. Krause took the loss in relief of Brooke Becker, who pitched into the seventh.

Neither team scored until the fifth, when Beard doubled and White singled to put Dordt on the board. But MMC answered in the bottom of the frame. Kelsey Mitera was hit by a pitch, advanced on a Krause single and scored on Rodriguez's sacrifice fly. Krause gave MMC the lead when the throw to try to get Mitera at the plate sailed wide.

Harmelink and Beard reached to lead off the seventh, sending Fernandez to the bullpen for Krause. White battled Krause to a full count before dribbling a grounder through the right side to score two runs.

In the bottom of the seventh, Jenn Mitera got a two-out single and Rodriguez followed

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