

Jackrabbits Look To 'Take The Next Step'

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BROOKINGS — "Take the next step." That's a common phrase around the South Dakota State football team, especially after one of the program's most successful seasons last.

The Jackrabbits, who open the 2010 season Sept. 11 at Delaware, are not only looking to repeat last year's performance, but move forward in that Division I production.

"We're really trying to build off of last year and take this program to the next step; maybe even win a conference title," said Yankton native Tyrel Kool, a 5-foot-9, 190-pound sophomore wide receiver.

"We lost a lot of good guys, but we have some young talent stepping in," he added. "We have a really solid base to build around."

In all, the Jackrabbits return 14 starters to a team that went 8-4 last season, finished second in its conference and earned the program's first-ever berth in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) postseason.



2010 Schedule

Sept. 11	— at Delaware
Sept. 18	— Illinois State
Sept. 25	— at Nebraska
Oct. 2	— at Northern Iowa
Oct. 9	— Western Illinois
Oct. 16	— at Southern Illinois
Oct. 23	— Youngstown State
Oct. 30	— at Indiana State
Nov. 6	— Missouri State
Nov. 13	— at North Dakota State
Nov. 20	— North Dakota

Though SDSU lost its Division I playoff debut to Montana, expectations are understandably high for 2010.

And not just in Brookings. The Jackrabbits were tabbed second in the Missouri Valley Football Conference preseason poll, behind only defending champion Southern Illinois, and ninth in the FCS media poll.

"There's certainly a lot of anticipation and expectations, but there's also a responsibility for us to take the next step," head coach John Stiegelmeier said. "The playoffs were a huge accomplishment, but now what

do you do?" "Naturally, that would be, win a conference title and win a playoff game," he added. "That's our motivation."

As is a rematch with MFVC rival Southern Illinois, Kool said.

The third-ranked Salukies beat SDSU last season in Brookings, giving SIU at the time a share of the league crown and the automatic berth into the playoffs. It was the only conference loss of the season for the Jackrabbits.

"Those expectations are something that fuels our fire, knowing we'll be one of the contenders," Kool said. "I know all the guys are anxious to play (SIU) again. We don't feel like we played our best game last year; we want another shot at the championship."

As pointed out by both Kool and Stiegelmeier, SDSU's road schedule in 2010 is daunting.

The Jackrabbits will face Delaware, Nebraska (Sept. 25), Northern Iowa (Oct. 2), Southern Illinois (Oct. 16) and North Dakota State (Nov. 13) on the road.

SDSU's home games at Coughlin-Alumni Stadium include Illinois State (Sept. 18), Western Illinois (Oct. 9), Youngstown State

(Oct. 23), Missouri State (Nov. 6) and North Dakota (Nov. 20).

"We're going to be in some really tough environments," Kool said. "It's really important that we learn how to adapt to those places. You just have to play your game."

One such 'hostile' atmosphere will be in the week three matchup in Lincoln, Neb. with the Cornhuskers. Nebraska, coming off a near-win in the Big 12 Conference title game last fall, is ranked No. 9 in the USA Today preseason poll.

"That's tremendous exposure going into a game at Memorial Stadium," Stiegelmeier said. "So many people approach a game like this in different ways. But in the end, why do we play the game? It's to measure ourselves and attempt to win it."

SDSU will be led offensively by preseason All-American running back Kyle Minett (Sr.), who has posted back-to-back 1,000-yard rushing seasons. Anchoring the offensive line will be another preseason All-American Ryan McKnight (Sr.), a first-team All-MVFC selection in 2009.

Quarterback Thomas O'Brien (So.) will have a young receiving

core around him, including Brandon Gant (Sr.), Matt Hylland (Sr.), Aaron Rollin (So.) and Kool.

Kool appeared in all 12 games last season, recording 17 carries for 96 yards out of the backfield and also caught one pass for seven yards.

"I feel like spring ball was my time to get my feet under me," he said. "I feel comfortable now, like I'm understanding the concepts and developing that timing with our quarterback."

The SDSU defense returns six starters, including linemen Ross Basham (Sr.) and Jake Steffen (Sr.), linebacker Derek Domino (Sr.), safeties Conrad Kjerstad (Sr.) and Anthony Wise (So.), as well as cornerbacks Cole Brodie (Sr.) and General Parnell (Sr.).

In the end, any success the Jackrabbits have in 2010 is due in part to the support they receive, according to Stiegelmeier said.

"This is a great level of foot-

ball, and I hope people realize that," he said. "Guys are getting drafted from our league and competing for national titles. The support we get from people all over the region makes a difference to us."



JACKS: Tyrel Kool (NICK HARTLEY/HARTLEY'S HUDDLE MEDIA)

Cornemann Excited About One More Season As A Jackrabbit

Yankton Native Takes To VB Court After Completing Hoops Career At SDSU

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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BROOKINGS — Ketty Cornemann hadn't picked up a volleyball competitively since helping the Yankton Gazelles win the state title back in 2005. But now, with her four seasons for the two-time NCAA national qualifying South Dakota State women's basketball team behind her, she's returning to her second love to compete one last year as a Jackrabbit.

Cornemann was given the opportunity to try out for the SDSU volleyball team this past spring and, this fall, is competing for the Jacks with what will be her final season of eligibility.

Cornemann is the first Division I volleyball player to come out of Yankton for longtime head coach Leasa Woodward.

"I'm not at all surprised," Woodward said of Cornemann making the transition to collegiate volleyball. "She is a very strong, athletic young lady. She was Gatorade Player of the Year



for South Dakota in 2005."

The road to this season actually began in the fall of 2005, as Cornemann was taking part in the Gazelles' first state championship in volleyball.

"When I was being recruited, I knew basketball was my first love," she said. "I really enjoyed playing volleyball in high school, and winning the state championship sparked it even more."

In her first four years at SDSU, Cornemann would occasionally find herself on the volleyball court during the summer, when the Brookings campus would host camps. Even though it was an informal setting, SDSU head volleyball coach Nanabah Allison-Brewer took notice.

"I'd seen her play some pick-up games in the summer," Brewer noted. "She could hit a pretty good ball and was very aggressive."

Those pick-up games started the conversation to bringing her to the volleyball team, Cornemann noted.

"A couple times (Brewer) jokingly said, 'What are you doing your fifth year?'," she said.

Cornemann talked to Brewer after the season, then trained

with the Jackrabbits during the final weeks of spring ball. The first thing the veteran college athlete noted was the difference in conditioning.

"You use a lot of different muscles in volleyball," she said. "I was in basketball shape, not volleyball shape."

Another part of the transition was something that any athlete deals with when moving from the prep to the collegiate ranks.

"When I started playing basketball, I thought I knew the sport well. But there are all these little things," she said. "It was the same with volleyball. Small little things, like footwork, don't necessarily get noticed in high school, but they definitely do when you're playing D-1."

While Cornemann adjusted to the techniques and speed of the

collegiate game, she did provide something that carried over from her successful college basketball career.

"For us, what she brought was the experience from the leadership role she played," Brewer said. "She spent the last four years as part of a great program. She knows what it means to work hard. She knows what it means to be a Jack."

The fifth-year senior has been welcomed into the program by her teammates as well.

"They've been really welcoming," Cornemann said. "They respected me as an athlete, and made it really easy on me."

Cornemann has already been asked to represent the team, co-hosting the "Above The Net" blog on the SDSU athletic website with teammate Ellyce Youngren.

While rotations are still shaking out as the Jacks prepare for the season-opening Air Force Academy Tournament, which begins today in Colorado Springs, Colo., Cornemann has been working mostly at right side hitter during practice.

After two Summit League titles and two NCAA tournament trips on the basketball court, she would love to end her collegiate career with another in volleyball. SDSU made the NCAA Volleyball

Tournament in 2007, falling to perennial power Nebraska in the opening round.

"I really would like to see the team make the Summit League Tournament and win that," Cornemann said. "I think we have a team that is good enough to make the NCAA Tournament, and maybe win a couple games there."

No matter how the season ends up, Brewer is confident Cornemann will have a positive impact on the team.

"We're happy to have her for one season," she said. "She's truly a person that is respected by her peers across campus."

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