

Jacks Look To Rebound From 'Step Backward' In '10

BY JEREMY HOECK

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BROOKINGS — Following a post-season berth two years ago, the South Dakota State football team took a disappointing step backward in 2010.

Now, the question is, what happened, and how can the Jackrabbits rebound?

"The biggest thing was, we were not as mentally sharp as we needed to be," head coach John Stiegelmeier said. "Those things snowballed on us. If you make a mistake, you get frustrated and you end up doing something out of the ordinary."

"That's what happened with us."

SDSU, 5-6 a year ago, returns 15 starters to a team that sent four players to the NFL. Despite playing sixth-ranked Nebraska to within two touchdowns, the Jacks never really recovered from an 0-4 start.

"Truly, there's an emphasis on learning from what happened last year," Stiegelmeier said. "When I look at our team, I don't see a team of stars. We've got a bunch of guys who work hard and play together."

Offensively, the focal point will again be on quarterback Thomas O'Brien, who passed for 2,236 yards and 10 touchdowns as a sophomore. The problems, though, weren't simply with the 15 interceptions he threw.

"There again, I go back to the mental errors," Stiegelmeier said.



JACKRABBITS: Tyrel Kool (2)

"Sometimes for a quarterback, making the right play is not looking good at all. You have to get rid of the ball and take what's there in front of you. There's no doubt he's been through that, and it appears he's learned that."

Eight of the returning starters on offense are on the line, where

Jon Fick (Sr.), Zach Buchner (Sr.), Alex Parker (So.) and Bryan Witzmann (So.) are back after allowing a total of six sacks last season.

The receiving corps returns Brandon Hubert (So.) and Aaron Rollin (Sr.), while former basketball standout Dale Moss joins the

football team for his final season. SDSU will also boast two new starters at tight end.

Though the running game loses the school's second all-time leading rusher in Kyle Minett, the Jacks will move Yankton native Tyrel Kool (Sr.) from wide receiver to running back — his nat-

2011 Schedule

Sept. 3 — Southern Utah
Sept. 10 — at Illinois
Sept. 17 — at Cal Poly
Sept. 24 — at Illinois State
Oct. 1 — Indiana State
Oct. 8 — at Youngstown State
Oct. 15 — Northern Iowa
Oct. 22 — North Dakota State
Oct. 29 — at Missouri State
Nov. 5 — Southern Illinois
Nov. 12 — at Western Illinois

ural position.

"I'm so proud to have guys like Tyrel; those team-first guys," Stiegelmeier said. "When we moved him to receiver, I don't think he missed a beat, to be honest."

Last season, Kool led the team in receptions (64) and recorded 808 yards and two touchdowns. Yet it wasn't just his on-field accomplishments that told the biggest story, his coach said.

"Running back is a lot of natural instincts and abilities, and you don't lose those going to another position," Stiegelmeier said. "That young man, just by the transition he made back and forth, showed so many lessons to our football team."

On the defensive side, the Jacks return six starters, including linemen Zacharia Bowers (Sr.) and Jake Steffen (Sr.), line-

backers Dirk Kool (Sr.) and Mike Lien (Sr.), as well as safety Anthony Wise (Sr.) and cornerback Darryl Jackson (Sr.).

Though there is experience at every position, there are no standouts like previous years, Stiegelmeier said.

"We've got a lot of veterans, but no real stars. That's the story of our team," he said. "We've got experience working for us, but not that one guy at a position where you know you'll win a battle on every play."

Picked to finish fourth in the Missouri Valley Football Conference, SDSU plays three of its first four games on the road. The season opener is Sept. 3 at home against Southern Utah, the defending champions of the Great West Conference.

Following that early stretch of road games (at Illinois, Cal Poly and Illinois State in consecutive weeks), the Jackrabbits return home. The season's biggest stretch may come with consecutive home games against Northern Iowa and North Dakota State.

No matter what, the league should be balanced once again, Stiegelmeier said.

"The lower teams, if you can say that, have made really good progress, so you better be ready," he said. "If we play the type of football we're capable of, if I'm objective as a coach looking at what we can do, I don't think there's any doubt we can challenge for one of those top spots."

MM Cross

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women's group. "We didn't lose anyone and we've built some more in, so we're excited about that."

"We've got seven or eight who are going to be vying for those top-five spots," Fischer added.

Brooke Fischer, a junior from Sioux Falls, returns after being the top Lancer runner last year, while Kaylee Fly, a sophomore from Omaha, transfers in with junior college National meet experience under her belt and is expected to make an immediate impact.

"Another runner that could be

very good for us is Brittny Mikkelsen," said Fischer of the junior from Lennox.

"She could be right up there too."

Jade Steinberg, a former Yankton Gazette also will be in the mix for her senior season.

"She had a little bit of an injury, but I think she's going to be fine," Fischer noted.

Becka Jensen (Sr., North Platte, Neb.) and Autumn Biermann (Sr., Wisner, Neb.) will also be neck and neck for top spots.

Contributions are also expected from Alicia Pick (Sr., Sioux City), Beth Finnegan (Fr., Newcas-



Steinberg

tle, Neb.), Beth Uthe (Fr., Madison) and Theresa Hendrickson (Sr., Flandreau).

Jensen, Pick and Steinberg are the Lancer captains.

The Lancer season starts Sept. 10 at the Nike Heartland meet in Sioux Falls. Mount Marty will host their invite Oct. 22 at Fox Run Golf Course while the GPAC meet is slated for Nov. 5 in Lincoln. Fischer hopes to have runners competing at the NAIA National Meet in Vancouver, Wash. Nov. 19.

"These are definitely the best teams I've had since I've been here," Fischer said. "It's been a process to build a quality program, so we'll see where the chips fall when the Conference and Nationals come."

USD Cross

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Duling (Sr., Gregory), Ashleigh Giese (So., Marshall, Wisconsin), Ali Gress (Sr., Papillion, Neb.) and Kelsey Robish (Sr., Huron).

Newcomers include the versatile Jillanne Doom, a freshman from Wagner. Kasey Presler (Fr., Brandon Valley High School) and Josee Jansen (Sioux City North) are two strong middle-distance runners who have had success in cross country, but have been overshadowed by bigger-named recruits.

On the men's side, seven Coyotes have conference experience, led by Ethan Marquardt, Jeff Mettler and Brenner.

Brenner took first for the Coyote men at UND with an 8K time of 26:02. Brenner, a sophomore, finished fourth (27:10) at the Creighton/Nebraska-Omaha Invite, and turned in his best 8K time at the GWC (25:10).

Marquardt, a junior from Albert Lea, Minn., has been a two-time all-conference performer while Mettler (Eureka) was the Freshman of the Year in the Great West.

Nick Beare is the lone Coyote senior and has the distinction of being one of just 12 athletes in the GWC to carry a cumulative 4.0

2011 Schedule	
Sept. 3	— Creighton/Nebraska Double-Duals, at Chili Greens, Omaha, Neb., 8 a.m.
Sept. 17	— Woody Greeno Inv., at Pioneer Park, Lincoln, Neb., 10 a.m.
Sept. 30	— Bison Open, at Rose Creek, Fargo, N.D., 5 p.m.
Oct. 15	— Tim Young Inv., at Don Baker Course, Vermillion, 10 a.m.
Oct. 29	— Summit League Championships, at Tulsa, Okla.

grade-point average and also being part of the entire USD transition.

Mark Hayden, a junior from St. Louis, was a conference place-winner in the steeplechase last spring, and Eric Thien (So., Tipton, Iowa) placed in the mile.

Jacob Evenson (Sioux Center, Iowa) and Jordan Fuglestad (Sioux Falls) are redshirt-freshmen who have the talent to develop into strong cross-country runners.

Alex Hoenthaner, a sophomore from YHS, should contribute as part of the top-five, a role he held as a Bucks harrier.

Four freshmen, led by Taylor Huseman of Manson, Iowa, will push the Coyote veterans.

Brant Haase of Lemmon is a

state champion in the 1600, and Fitzsimmons hopes he can tap into his talents.

Stephen Nielson (Pierre) and Patrick Peterson (Sioux Falls) are strong middle-distance performers on the track who will develop into cross-country runners.

The key to developing the men's team will be the ability to maintain stamina throughout the 8K and 10K distances.

"We have good enough speed, but how we develop our aerobic abilities to handle the 8K and 10K distances will be key," Fitzsimmons said.

As with any season, Fitzsimmons' goals are simple.

"The goal is to improve one day better than the last and then one week better and so on," Fitzsimmons said.

As for the season outcome in a new conference, that remains to be seen.

"It's kind of hard to predict since we're new, but we'd like to be a contender," Fitzsimmons said. "If we develop like I think we can, we can give some teams some competition, and if someone slips, hopefully we'll be in position to capitalize."

The Coyote season begins with the Creighton/Nebraska Double Duals Sept. 3 and ends with the Summit League Championships in Tulsa Oct. 29. The Coyotes host their Tim Young Invitational Oct. 15.

and that Robinson has a 27-inch vertical jump.

An added motivator for the Lancers was their pre-season ranking of 11th place — last — in the GPAC coaches poll.

"When the girls saw that, they

weren't down about it. They're just really hungry to prove people wrong," Climer said. "They want to show people how hard they've worked over the summer."

MMC Golf Team Expects Continued Growth

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

In its third year as a Great Plains Athletic Conference competitor, the Mount Marty golf program is growing in numbers and, hopefully in 2011, in improvement on the GPAC links.

One sure sign of the program's steady growth is the number of upperclassmen that will compete for the Lancers this fall.

"We're finally getting some upperclassmen," said head coach Tom Schlimgen, who is captaining the Lancers through golfing continuity in his third year at the helm. "It's been a struggle getting from being just freshmen and then sophomores and so on."

The women finished seventh at the GPAC meet last season, and with a growing squad, moving up is imminent.

"We've progressed quite nicely, and we're expecting to move up," Schlimgen said. "We're going to have a team of five golfers who compete and put up pretty good scores."

Mount Marty's women have two seniors among them in Kaylea Karst (Castlewood) and Micaela Rausch (Big Stone City).

Sophomores Kaitlin Roth (Delmont), Abby Bollinger (Mitchell), Emily Bronneman (Harrold) and Jennifer Nelson (Plattsmouth, Neb.) are also looking to crack the top-five.

2011 Fall Schedule

Aug. 31 — Morningside Inv. (Men & Women), Whispering Creek GC, Sioux City	Sept. 22 — Hastings Inv. (M), Lochland GC, Hastings, Neb.
Sept. 9 — Mount Marty Inv. (M), Fox Run GC, Yankton	Sept. 27 — Midland Inv. (W), Fremont CC, Fremont, Neb.
Sept. 9 — Dordt Inv. (W), The Ridge, Sioux Center, Iowa	Sept. 30-Oct. 1 — DWU Inv. (M & W), Lakeview and Wild Oak, Mitchell
Sept. 13 — GPAC #1 (M), Fox Run GC, Yankton	Oct. 6 — GPAC #2 (M), Lochland GC, Hastings, Neb.
Sept. 16 — GPAC #1 (W), The Ridge, Sioux Center, Iowa	Oct. 8 — GPAC #2 (W), Fremont CC, Fremont, Neb.

Adding depth to the women's team are freshmen Tara DesLauriers, who comes from a winning program at Clark/Willow Lake, Gina Ludens, a state qualifier for Bon Homme High School, and Whitney Boese, also from BHHS.

"We've come up with a couple of good girls each year, and now we've got nine girls who are going to compete for the top spots," Schlimgen said. "All the players are going to get a chance; we'll be able to take a team of girls to the JV meets, so that's going to be a plus."

The men's team hasn't enjoyed the rising success that the women have, but with six returning and experienced golfers, they are continuing to build.

"We were last in the GPAC men, but we saw some improvement," Schlimgen said of his men. "What we're lacking on the men's side is that zero-handicapper that everyone in the GPAC seems to have."

"We're going to move up but it's tough; we've got some experience now, so that's going to

help," Schlimgen added.

The Lancers return Weston Swanson, a junior, from Homer, Neb. who was the team's most valuable golfer in 2009. Sophomore Chris Hoffman of Yankton returns as the 2010 MVG.

Three others juniors, Dylan Bales (Onawa, Iowa), Brett Springman (Adrian, Minn.), and Chandler Edwards (Scotland) give the Mount Marty golfers a solid corps of upperclassmen.

Also experienced is Alex Warnke, a sophomore from Ida Grove, Iowa.

"No one said it was going to be easy to start a program from scratch, but we're excited about the season," Schlimgen said. "We host the GPAC meet and our own invite, so that is exciting."

"We've got a lot of things to look forward to," Schlimgen added.

Both the men and the women will open their season at the Morningside Invite, played on the Whispering Creek Club in Sioux City.

MMC VB

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High School standouts Emily Anderson (OH/RH) and Heather Ray (MH).

Climer said Anderson, who "picks up on everything so quick," figures to split time between right-side hitter and a backup setter for the junior varsity team. And Climer said Ray is, "quick and strong up front."

Among the other freshmen are Elisa Robinson (MH, Wayne, Neb.), Courtney Miller (DS, Mitchell), Caitlyn Illg (S, S.F. O'Gorman), Kristen Boyle (OH, Norfolk, Neb.), Kayla Deranleau (OH, Rapid City Central), Laura Groseth (MH, Corsica-Stickney), Dana Fanning (DS, Miller), Roxanne Ross (OH, Colman-Egan) and Sarah Schiley (S, Webster).

"We have all areas coming in, so it makes for good competition in practice," said Climer, who added that Boyle — of Norfolk Catholic — has "amazing hops"

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