

Glenn: We're Not Changing Who We Are

Football: USD Introduced To Rest Of League With Preseason Conference Call

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

A new league home does not necessarily mean the University of South Dakota football program plans to completely overhaul its way of life.

That much was made clear by new head coach Joe Glenn during Thursday morning's Missouri Valley Football Conference pre-season media conference. It was USD's first unofficial order of business in its new home — also the same day it officially completed the Division I transition.

Defending FCS champion North Dakota State was the obvious No. 1 pick in Thursday's pre-season poll, while the Coyotes were picked to finish eighth, ahead of only Western Illinois and Missouri State. "We are what we are; we're not going to change who we are," Glenn said. "Having coached in the Big Sky; the same level as here, I'd have to say that this league might remind you a little more of the old North Central. There's more an emphasis on running the ball in this league."

In the sense that he arrived

late in the process, Glenn literally hit the ground running once he was hired last December. The program was already in the middle of prime recruiting months, and the veteran coach put together a staff around him that complemented his excitement for the future.

The Coyotes are coming off a 6-5 record from a year ago, but lost all five of their road games — including two chances to win the Great West Conference title — and saw their head coach get fired.

Glenn talked Thursday about a new "era" at USD, and a good

portion of that revolves around the program's new conference home — which automatically improved the schedule. With eight MVFC games, USD was left to schedule only three other contests: at Montana (Sept. 1), home against Colgate (Sept. 8) and at Northwestern of the Big Ten (Sept. 22).

A bulk of the off-season chatter, though, centered around moving the Oct. 20 home game with North Dakota State to Sioux Falls. That was a move Glenn said was the "right thing to do."

"I think it's a fist-fight league," Glenn said. "It's right

where we belong. Everybody said, 'You have a tough schedule, going up there with the national champs,' but this is who we are and this is who we were when I played here."

Like South Dakota State before them, the Coyotes are banking on a smooth transition from the Great West Conference to the Missouri Valley.

The Jackrabbits joined the MVFC in 2008 and subsequently went 6-2, setting the stage for an FCS post-season appearance the following year.

"We were blessed to be in the Great West. When we were

MVFC | PAGE 9A

State-U Tickets Sold Out

BROOKINGS — South Dakota State University ticket officials announced Thursday that all reserved tickets for the Nov. 17 football game against the University of South Dakota have been sold — one day after single-game tickets went on sale to the general public.

Fans still interested in attending the game can do so by purchasing standing-room-only tickets. Reserved tickets remain available for the other four Jackrabbit home games during the 2012 season.

Tickets can be ordered online at JackrabbitTickets.com, by calling 1-866-GO JACKS or in person at the Jackrabbit Ticket Office weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Class A

From Page 7A

ERA, 23 K).

"We have some really good arms to rely on, and that's the number one priority you need to have," Bryce Ahrendt said.

For the tournament, Brandon Valley added Ross Heine and Derrik Nelson from the Yankton Tappers.

Castlewood Ravens

The Ravens, locked into what manager Dan Haug called a "struggle" this season, are looking to overcome more than one obstacle this weekend in Yankton.

Castlewood (17-10) rode a pair of complete games by Matt Stevenson at regions last Saturday to reach the State A Tournament for the second straight year. This year marks the team's third in the Class A ranks.

"We've struggled most of the way, but at least we put it together," Haug said.

The Ravens had a couple of veteran players with 14 years experience retire along the way this summer, while another key cog (Bill McElhany) broke his hand diving for a ball last month.

Castlewood's offense is a mix of youth and experience, Haug said. Matt Cadwell, who went to high school with Minnesota Twins catcher Joe Mauer for one season at Cretin-Durham Hall in St. Paul, Minn., leads the team in hitting (.426). Also playing key roles are Lucas Hoftiezer, former Mount Marty College standout Andy Turbank, Derek Moe and Dave Steenstra.

The Stevenson brothers of Matt and Mark also bat first and fourth in the order, respectively. Matt Stevenson, however, probably won't pitch this weekend in Yankton, Haug said.

On the mound, the Ravens will feature Sean Wahl (another former MMC Lancer), Turbak and Steenstra. Castlewood also picked up Brookings' Marcus Heemstra, a South Dakota State basketball player.

"That's what you need to have if you want to win, pitching," Haug said. "The best teams out there have that."

Mitchell Mad Dogs

After eight years of not qualifying for the state tournament, year No. 9 is all it took for Mitchell.

The Mad Dogs (3-16) head to state for the first time despite an inconsistent crop of players at games, according to manager Pat Skinner.

"At this point, we're playing better baseball in the fact that we have the guys we need," Skinner said. "Throughout the season, we struggled to have most of our guys showed up, and it certainly made a difference in the games."

The Sunshine League members played only one other Class A team prior to regions, and that was a 12-11 loss to the Sioux Falls Saints.

Leading the way offensively for the Mad Dogs are Alex Loex (.380), Tyler Earls (.320) and Beau VanOverschelde (.300).

Pitchers who have seen time on the mound this summer include Jamie Huber, Cody Palmer, Greg Hento, Josiah Stroup, Jason Skinner, Nick Anglin and Loes.

"We need to play smart, regardless of who's there and who we play, and be somewhat aggressive," Pat Skinner said. "When we have everyone there, we can play more aggressively than we normally would."

Though they are new to the state tournament, the Mad Dogs aren't unfamiliar with Yankton's Riverside Field, Skinner said.



P&D FILE PHOTO

Colby Lessman, shown here during the 2011 state tournament, is one of the veterans the Vermillion Red Sox will be counting on this weekend as the 2012 South Dakota State Class A Amateur Baseball Tournament takes over Yankton's Riverside Field today (Friday). The Red Sox play the Rapid City A's Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

"I love the atmosphere in Yankton," she said. "We've been down there enough where most of our guys are familiar with the field. That certainly helps you relax more."

Pierre Rattlers

Though the Rattlers haven't seen many of the other Class A participants (mostly because of geography), they still feel they can not only compete with them but come out on top.

Pierre (23-2) has defeated Sioux Falls twice, Aberdeen twice and beat Watertown in regions, but other than that, tried to fill out a competitive schedule.

"I think we've had a pretty good season, but one of the problems out here is that we're so far from everyone else that it's hard to get a quality schedule," general manager Tom Magedanz, a Yankton native, said. "We've tried to get some tough teams in there."

Managed by Tyson Lindekugel, the Rattlers boast a potent offense, regardless.

Leading the way are Harry Decker (.461, 3 HR), Lindekugel (.429, 3 HR), Ryan Yackley (.392, 2 HR) and Adam Spoehr (.367).

On the mound, Pierre may be even more dangerous, with three — now four — legitimate big-game pitchers. Decker (8-0), Allen Goodman (6-0) and Yackley (3-1) have been the main pitchers all season, but the Rattlers also picked up Dominic Wiesler — a Mount Marty College pitcher — from Watertown.

"We've got pretty good depth, so we feel good about our situation," Magedanz said.

A first-round matchup Saturday night against Brandon Valley figures to test the Rattlers unlike many other teams have this season.

"Brandon Valley's a good team, obviously, but I think we match up pretty well with them," Magedanz said.

Rapid City A's

If the A's are to have any success on this half of the state this weekend, it will come down to who shows up.

That's been the frustrating part of the season, manager Wade Huntington said.

"The (Sturgis Motorcycle) rally is out here, so we have some guys who will stay to work that. When we meet in the parking lot on Saturday morning to head to Yankton, that's when we'll know who we got," Huntington said. "I haven't had all my guys together for any one game yet this year."

When it comes to action on the field, the biggest issue for Rapid City has been scoring runs. Huntington said his team has yet to hit a home run this season, and has consequently lost a lot of 1-run games.

Pitching, on the other hand, hasn't been a concern. The A's boast a quality 1-2 punch on the mound with Marcus Kiewel and J.R. Krogstad.

"That's where we're the strongest," Huntington said. "We're in good shape there. I'm pretty confident about that."

Rapid City qualified for the Class A tournament in 2010, the last time the event was played in Yankton. The A's lost a 1-0 game

to the Vermillion Red Sox in the opener — a result Huntington remembers well.

When it comes to the strength of the 2012 tournament field, Huntington said it "could be anyone's game."

Renner Monarchs

The most experienced team in the tournament, Renner may be primed for yet another championship run.

Not only have the Monarchs (15-4) won six of the last eight Class A titles, they have played in the championship game each of the past nine seasons. And the 2012 team is essentially the same crop of veterans, manager Kevin Knetsch said.

"By and large, it's the same

group we've relied on for a while," he said. "We're another year older and hopefully wiser. It's definitely nothing new for us, we know each other and know what we can do as a team."

Their first round opponent, Sioux Falls Saints, is one the Monarchs are familiar with from their showdowns in the Sioux Empire League, as is the case with the Brandon Valley Merchants and Vermillion Red Sox.

To advance past this weekend, Renner will rely on a balanced lineup with 10 players hitting at least .300. Leading the way are Bryan Nikkel (.393, 9 RBI), Jason Nyhus (.385, 3 HR, 12 RBI), Kevin Knetsch (.365, 3 HR, 19 RBI) and Dallas Schneiderman (.364, 4 RBI).

"Top to bottom, we don't have an easy out in our lineup; I'd put our lineup against anyone's," Knetsch said. "That's a big reason why we've been as successful as we've been. We're not overly reliant on any one guy, but one through nine, we'll be competitive."

On the mound, the Monarchs boast a team earned run average (ERA) of 2.57 and opponents are only hitting .210 against them.

The top four pitchers are Matt Kozziara (3-0, 2.01 ERA, 23 K), Derek Ohme (3-1, 3.10 ERA, 14 K), Chad Moreland (2-1, 1.21 ERA) and Darren Terveen (2-0, 1.67 ERA, 18 K).

"We've got several guys who are big-game pitchers," Knetsch said. "They're not the 'horses' they used to be, but we wouldn't hesitate to give them the ball in a tournament game."

Getting past Sioux Falls, though, is understandably a challenge for Renner.

"This is a big step for them, but winning the first game would be the next big step," Knetsch said. "We know that and we're ready for it."

Renner added Yankton's Trey Krier and Jesse Bailey for the tournament.

Sioux Falls Saints

In their fifth year of existence, the Saints are in the state tournament. Their reward? A first-round game against the Renner Monarchs — a playoff-seasoned squad.

"The guys at our district (tournament) knew right away who we would be playing, and when we heard Renner, it was like 'Alright, this is the perfect time to beat them,'" Sioux Falls manager Mike Archer said. "We've played them tough the last couple times."

Keyed by a young, productive offense, the Saints (19-14) this summer have been able to put some runs up on the board, Archer said.

The offense is led by Clarke Coler (.471, 1 HR, 15 RBI), Cole Halgerson (.434, 33 hits, 11 RBI, 21 runs) and Danny Hughes (.393, 1 HR, 17 RBI).

"It's nice to finally have some strong bats," Archer said. "In

those first few years we relied on our pitching. We were losing games 2-1 or 3-2, so it was just tough to never get that timely hit we've been getting this year. Everything finally came together."

On the mound, the Saints have two pitchers who have combined to start 15 of their 33 games, with a rest of other players filling in the rest of the appearances. With an increase of five games from last season, the Saints have allowed between 30-40 fewer runs, Archer said.

The two main pitchers are Nick Seliski (3-2, 3.09 ERA) and Archer (4-3, 4.80 ERA).

"It's really kept us in more games," Archer said.

Vermillion Red Sox

A back-and-forth district tournament resulted in the Red Sox qualifying for the State A Tournament yet again. Now, they're ready to make some noise.

Vermillion (17-8) bounced back from a 14-2 loss to Renner by defeating the Yankton Tappers 11-1 last Friday night — sending the Red Sox back to state.

"It's always a great feeling," veteran manager Kirk Sorensen said. "We were fortunate to be back in it and now we're excited."

Many of the usual names have led the Red Sox this summer, including Robin Chute, Travis Hanson, Reese Steckler, Dan Hansen, Tyler Candor, Colby Lessmann and Kasey Neumann. More than experience, Sorensen said one of the strengths has been personal-ity.

"Guys are always coming and going, but their attitude was always optimistic," he said. "Our defense and our speed is what gets us going. When you can have both of those, you're in pretty good shape."

The pitching staff is led by Nate Olsen, who threw a 2-hitter in the decisive win over Yankton. Also seeing significant time on the mound for the Red Sox have been Charlie Benz and Josh Merrigan.

"Most of those guys are getting into that veteran status, because they've been out of college for a few years," Sorensen said. "And it shows. They've really grown."

When it comes to producing at the state tournament this weekend, Sorensen said that is the nice thing about such an event — "All the teams are tough, you know that for sure."

Yankton's Riverside Field figures to be a good setting for state, Sorensen said.

"What the people have done to that field in Yankton has been great," he said. "It's an amazing setting; an old ballpark with modern changes. You'll see a lot of good baseball."

Playing for the Red Sox during the tournament will be Josh Engquist and Jared Miller from the Yankton Tappers.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

The Cardinals draw a Lake Norden (13-10) team that has some talent at the top of the order.

"They have a couple of big hitters," Johnke noted. "They're quick and they like to bunt. They've got to be a good team because they're always at state."

Jordan Johnson (6-4) and Tim Kuphal (5-1) anchor the Lake Norden pitching staff.

For the Cardinals to extend their stay in Mitchell, they will need to play solid defense, according to Johnke.

"It doesn't matter how many runs you score if your defense isn't playing strong," he said.

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/aceman904

Bray from third. The Lumberjacks added an unearned run in the ninth on a throwing error.

"We couldn't buy anything, and all three of their runs we gave them," Bures said. "Joe (Sees) pitched a heckuva game, but we didn't help him on defense or offense."

Knecht, the Lumberjacks' player-manager, doubled and singled to lead Britton's 12-hit attack. Keppes, Bray and Evan Jordre also had two hits apiece. Avon got singles from Hajek,

Jeff Sands and Matt Yost.

Link struck out six and walked none in the win. Sees took a tough-luck loss, striking out three and walking one.

Britton (16-7) now advances to the second round, facing the Clear Lake Slough Sharks, 2-0 upset winners over the top-ranked Dell Rapids Mudcats on Thursday afternoon.

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/aceman904

Avon

From Page 7A

Britton loaded the bases with three straight singles to start the fourth. After a force out at the plate, it appeared that the Bards might escape the inning unscathed, but miscommunication resulted in one out on a potential double-play ball, scoring Bill

• Commercial • Residential • Industrial

Proefrock Electric

Professional Grade Service 605-624-7000 • 1-877-695-0247

Please call us today to discuss your upcoming project.