

# Yankton Soccer Teams Open Season At Home Today

## Brenner Takes Over Veteran Bucks Roster

BY NICK ROBINSON  
[sports@yankton.net](mailto:sports@yankton.net)

Despite losing five seniors and some key varsity experience from last year, the Yankton Bucks boys' soccer team is looking to make a run for the state championship. Yankton opens the 2012 season today (Saturday) at home against Brandon Valley. Action starts at 3 p.m. at Lewis & Clark Soccer Complex. The Bucks have significant varsity experience back this fall, including juniors Landon Breen and Derek Brenner, and senior Andrew Hummel. Hummel is back from two torn labrums in his shoulders this past year. Other returning seniors that will play a role this season that have varsity experience are Zach

Benjamin, Derek Gravholt, Zander Savage, and Cameron Luken. The juniors will be Tully Taggart, Casey Skillingsstad. The underclassmen who will see a strong amount on the field will be John Dannenbring and Osmar Pacheco. "Our goal is to compete in every game," Hummel said. "(Sioux Falls) Lincoln will be our best competition, because they are the defending state champs and have a lot of guys back." Along with the Gazelles, the Bucks will have a new varsity head coach, Warren Brenner. Even though they have a new coach, the players' expectations are still going to be high even though the preseason poll has Yankton at number ten. "We're gonna be a surprise team," coach Brenner said. "I feel

like we are one of the better teams this year. The (preseason) ranking system is usually way off." Helping Warren Brenner, as his assistant coaches this autumn will be Riley Smith and Wes Chambers. The JV coach is Nick Shade. "So far we have been really good in practice," Brenner said. "Our defense could be a little better. But, were a good team, and we're going to be fun to watch." For the Bucks to have a successful campaign this fall they will be leaning on the offensive side of the ball to take the pressure away from a lesser experienced defensive side. "We have a lot of returning experience, and a new coach. But, he

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## Gazelles Look For Return Trip To State

BY NICK ROBINSON  
[sports@yankton.net](mailto:sports@yankton.net)

The Yankton Gazelles soccer team is looking to take off where they left off last year; a berth to the state tournament. Yankton finished last year with a 13-6 record and got 8th in the state tournament. In which they only lost four seniors from last year's squad. Yankton, which finished last year at 13-6 and eighth place in the state tournament, opens its season today (Saturday) against Brandon Valley at 3 p.m. Lewis & Clark Soccer Complex. To repeat what Yankton did last year it will take, "a lot of teamwork. Us (seniors) and the older ones with more varsity ex-

perience have to help the whole team out," Brianna Newman said. "If we all work together and come to every practice locked in like it's a game I'd say we would have a successful season." There will be a new but familiar coach on the sidelines for the Gazelles in head coach Dave LaCombe. LaCombe has 12 years of coaching soccer experience (seven with Yankton and five with Vermillion) and has been apart of three sportsmanship awards. His assistant is Jason Winterringer, and the JV coach is Kellen Moser. In the preseason polls, Yankton is ranked 10th out of 11 Class AA teams. "My expectations are to excel and by the time of the state tournament be in the top three." La-

Combe added. The strengths for Yankton will be having a lot of talent back, though many of those players will be moved to different positions. Senior Katie Greenaway will be counted on at goalkeeper, a spot vacated with the graduation of former standout Courtney True. Though the Gazelles boast six seniors on the roster (Morgan Bakke, Carli Al-Azzeh, Newman, Kennedy Winterringer, Megan Ford and Greenaway), they are still relatively young. Yankton still has the mindset of making a late post-season run later this fall. "What us (as seniors) want to

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## Impatient Ponder Believes Vikings Can 'Win Now'

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Christian Ponder's success as an NFL quarterback is years away from being determined. He's not interested in waiting for the Minnesota Vikings to improve, though. "We want to win now. We're putting that pressure on ourselves that we want to do a lot better than 3-13. We want to make the playoffs. We want to be competitive in the NFC North," Ponder said. The Vikings (29th in the preseason AP Pro32) are 9-24 since they advanced to the NFC championship game behind Brett Favre 2 1/2 years ago. Even if running back Adrian Peterson is back to normal from the start following his rehabilitation from reconstructive surgery on his left knee, there are too many rookies and recent late-round draft picks in the starting lineup for the Vikings to be seriously considered around the league as contenders. But one of the beauties of the NFL, of course, is the thin margin between bad teams and good ones. With 16 games and the constant competitive balance provided by the salary cap, there's almost always one club that turns a double-digit-defeat season into a playoff spot the next year. "In our minds, we have a good team," Ponder said. "Obviously, we've still got a lot of things to get better at in these next two weeks. Obviously, we know it's tough. We know it's a tough division. You look at last year: We were in so many games. We could have easily been 10-6, and we ended 3-13. So that's a good sign. We were close last year, and we're only going to be better this year." The question is how much better the Vikings can be with Pon-

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# Stevens Clips YHS In Opener



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Yankton sophomore Sarah Rockne prepares to hit a return shot during the Gazelles' season-opening girls' tennis match on Friday at the YHS/SAC Tennis Courts.

Rapid City Stevens, one of the state's powerhouse programs in girls' tennis, handed the Yankton Gazelles a 9-0 defeat in Friday's season opener at the YHS/SAC Tennis Courts. The Raiders dropped only six games in the match. The closest margin was at flight four singles, where Kate Salbowski beat Yankton's Kim Cap 10-3. Dropping singles matches for the Gazelles were Sarah Rockne, Sarah Santos, Alexa Bryan, Anna Kokesh and Maddie Logue. The Raiders return two singles champions from last year, Sydney Moyle and Kristina Hammerquist. Yankton, 0-1, returns to action today (Saturday) for continuation of a quadrangular with Stevens, Watertown and Vermillion. YANKTON 9, RAPID CITY STEVENS 0 SINGLES: Sydney Moyle RCS def. Sarah Rockne 10-2; Taylor Messinger RCS def. Sarah Santos 10-0; Kristina Hammerquist RCS def. Alexa Bryan 10-0; Kate Salbowski RCS def. Kim Cap 10-3; Sarah Kelly RCS def. Anna Kokesh 10-0; Stephanie Griffith RCS def. Maddie Logue 10-1 DOUBLES: Moyle-Messinger RCS def. Rockne-Taylor Rothenberger 10-1; Hammerquist-Salbowski RCS def. Bryan-Cap 10-0; Kelly-Griffith RCS def. Santos-Logue 10-0 JV: Katie Sedewie RCS def. Mimi Garcia 10-0; Annika Hammerquist RCS def. Anne Knoff 10-0; Kayla Gill RCS def. Jaclyn Arens 10-0

## Coyote Soccer Drops Opener At Gonzaga 3-1

SPOKANE, Wash. — Danielle Anderson scored a goal in the final minutes, but it wasn't enough as the South Dakota women's soccer team fell to Gonzaga, 3-1, in the season opener for both teams Friday in Spokane, Wash.. The Coyotes fell to 0-1 on the year while Gonzaga improved to 1-0. Reeves scored her second career goal in the 87th minute to get the Coyotes on the board and bring them within 3-1. However, Gonzaga scored twice in the first half to take a 2-0 lead and made the margin stand to earn the win in the first-ever meeting between the two schools in women's soccer. Sophomore Brittlyn Dillow led the Coyotes with two shots, including one on goal. Freshman Rebecca Sparkman had a shot as well. Sophomore Mackenzie Viktor had six saves in net for the Coyotes. South Dakota will look to earn a split on the opening road trip with a game at Idaho on Sunday. Game time is 3 p.m. Central time in Moscow, Idaho. It will be the third meeting between the two teams with Idaho leading the series 2-0, winning both games by 2-1 scores.

# Vermillion Girls' Tennis Team Opens Season Today

BY NICK ROBINSON  
[sports@yankton.net](mailto:sports@yankton.net)

VERMILLION — Despite almost not having a tennis program for the second year straight, the Vermillion Tanagers girls' tennis team is excited and eager to kick off the season this fall. The program was cut from the school district budget. But, however again this season the community decided to raise the \$8,500 necessary to compete this fall. "Our success was due to the support of the community: from individuals, businesses, a Save Our Sport (SOS) Tennis

Tournament, and personal fundraising by our team members," head coach Betsy Hughes said. "Our largest contribution came from the Tanager Athletic Boosters. We want to take every opportunity we can to thank all those who contributed to Save Our Sport. "We wouldn't be having a tennis season if it weren't for the community's generosity and support." Vermillion is led by Abby Weis, a sophomore and Libby Sykes, who is an eighth grader. Weis and Sykes were letter winners from a year ago. They also have five returning players who saw the court last

year: Audrey Miller, Hope Knedler, Alex Rosdail, Brandi Styles, and Kirstyn Bohn. The Tanagers graduated their top two singles players, who also made up the flight one doubles tandem, Claire Jones and Valerie Robinson. Robinson is attending Northern State University in Aberdeen to play tennis. Weis and Sykes may have some tough shoes to fill, but have a couple years of experience behind them. In order for Vermillion to have success on the court this season they must focus on their improvement in practice, Hughes said.

"My favorite thing about this squad is that we are all starting out together from the beginning," she said. "We can focus on success with the fundamentals and nip any bad habits forming right from the start. We are in a position to build our team from the ground up and we have a hard working, positive, enthusiastic group of girls to do that." The Tanagers open the season today (Saturday) at a quadrangular with Rapid City Stevens, Yankton and Watertown in Yankton.

## Hawkeyes Shake Things Up After Back-To-Back 4-4 Big Ten Marks

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz doesn't mind if people think the Hawkeyes are boring. He is not willing to accept the perception that Iowa has become an average team. The Hawkeyes have gone stale over the past two seasons, with a 4-4 record in the Big Ten, 15-11 overall and a pair of trips to the In-stight Bowl. The departure of two top coordinators led to the most turbulent offseason of Ferentz's 13-year tenure. A little turmoil might be just what the Hawkeyes need to return to the Big Ten's upper tier in 2012. "If you do something for 13 years there's a good chance something is going to change. And based on the national average I think we certainly outlived what the norms are," Ferentz said. "But it gave us an opportunity to bring some really good people in, and I think that's what we've done." The defense shouldn't look much different under new coordinator Phil Parker, who moved from the secondary to the top spot to

replace retired coordinator Norm Parker. The Hawkeyes might be more aggressive with their blitzes and coverage schemes, but that's probably about it. That won't be the case on offense. Longtime Texas offensive coordinator Greg Davis was brought in to overhaul an offense that had grown painfully predictable by the time it combined for just 21 points in losses to Nebraska and Oklahoma to end last season. Davis won't have a variety of schemes and a ton of talent while with the Longhorns. After a year off, he vowed to bring a fresh set of ideas to Iowa City. He won't have the team speed he was used to at Texas, but he will have a talented senior quarterback in James Vandenberg. Vandenberg threw for 25 touchdowns against just seven interceptions a year ago. He is arguably more comfortable out of the shotgun than under center, so Iowa

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## Bowl Game Or Bust? Gophers Believe It's Possible

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Maybe this is the year. For historically struggling teams like Minnesota, the start of the season always brings the confidence that comes with a spotless record, strong chemistry and perceived improvement. After finally surrounding themselves with some calm and continuity, the sounds of optimism from the Gophers are louder than usual. "Minnesota is different this year. It's a new mindset. Different players. New jerseys. Everything about Minnesota is getting better and evolving," sophomore Owide receiver Marcus Jones said. "It's just time for the program and the team to start winning games. That's what I believe is going to happen. That's what we believe as a team is going to happen." After consecutive 3-9 seasons, the first marked by the firing of Tim Brewster and the second by Jerry Kill's seizures, the Gophers have their sights set on a bowl game. Any bowl game. Because that would be a lot better than

what they've been the last two years. "It's not, 'Can we do it?' anymore. It's, 'We will do it,'" Jones said. "So we feel if we don't get to it, we let ourselves down. We let Minnesota down." Stiffer competition for starting spots is usually a sign that a team is getting better. The entire roster was divided into different mini-teams during the winter strength and conditioning session, and points were awarded for accomplishments in the weight room and subtracted for no-nos like missing a class or arriving late to a meeting. "Guys couldn't wait to get to practice," junior free safety Brock Vereen said. "When you're excited to get to practice, you're doing something right." The program was so popular the Gophers started another version this summer. "It wasn't just something that we shrugged off. Everybody really wanted to win it," senior middle linebacker Mike Rallis said, adding: "The team is as close as

we've had since I've been here." Beating Illinois to close 2011 gave the Gophers some much-needed self-assurance to take into the offseason. They rallied around the sudden death of former middle linebacker Gary Tinsley. They gained a better grasp of the schemes brought by Kill's staff after playing for so many coordinators during Brewster's time. At each of Kill's previous stops, Saginaw Valley State, Emporia State, Southern Illinois and Northern Illinois, his teams had a better record in his second year. Now the Gophers have their chance to prove they're not the easy win they've been for so many the Big Ten opponents the last few years, and it starts with senior quarterback MarQueis Gray. "For me to have a big year is going to determine how this program goes," Gray said. "I'm going to accept that role and work as hard as I can to make sure we go to a bowl game and come back with that bowl win."

Kill has raved about Gray's strides in leadership and poise. As elusive as he is — he rushed for 966 yards and six touchdowns last season — if Gray doesn't scramble as much this year that'll be one sign the offense is in better shape. Replacing Duane Bennett at running back and Da'Jon McKnight at wide receiver are the two most important issues of training camp on that side of the ball. The defense is likely where Minnesota's bowl goal will be made or broken. The Gophers forced only nine turnovers last year, the fewest of all 120 teams at the FBS level. Vereen moved from cornerback to help stabilize a secondary that lost three starters, and Rallis moved to the middle to replace Tinsley. They'll need more consistent production from linebacker Keanon Cooper, defensive end D.L. Wilhite and cornerback Troy Stoudermire.

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