



GAZELLES: Jaclyn Arens

## Yankton Aims To Improve On Fourth Place Showing

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG  
P&D Correspondent

The Yankton Gazelles softball team issued a surprise during last year's South Dakota State Softball Tournament, and they have the pieces in place to add to that finish in 2012.

The Gazelles, who finished with a 17-14 mark, went into the tournament as the eighth seed and finished fourth.

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Yankton coach Bernie Goeden, who will be coaching the Yankton girls for a 14th season, returns seven letter-winners from the 2011 team along with junior Brooke Loecker, who lettered in 2010.

"We have a pretty good nucleus coming back with eight letterwinners," Goeden said. "We're looking at finishing higher than we did at last year's state tournament, and we have a good chance to do that," Goeden said. Seniors who return are Hannah Horn, Tayler Hutchison, Jessica Wirth, Karlee Kozak and Kourtney Erickson.

The Gazelle juniors are Loecker, Abby Schulte, Alisa Ruzicka, Brynn Albers, Jennifer Feilmeier and Kaylyn Peterka. Andriana Sprakel and Jaclyn Arens return as sophomore letter-winners. Other returning sophomores are Heather Hauer, Danielle Schmidt and Madison Dangler.

Arens will manage the bulk of the Yankton pitching duties while Peterka and Dangler battle to back her up.

The Gazelle infield should be comprised of Wirth at third, Kozak at shortstop and Sprakel at second base.

The Gazelles embarked on their season Monday as they play a double-header at Sioux Falls Roosevelt, but the early season

version of the Gazelles may not resemble the finished product.

"Probably the first part of the season, we'll get the girls used to their roles," said Goeden. "Wins aren't too important during the early part of the season; it's a feeling-out approach at the beginning of the season, and we'll try to get the girls used to their roles."

With their returning experience, Yankton hopes to incorporate all of the facets of the game in to a winning season.

"We should be a pretty solid defensive team," Goeden said. "For us to reach our goals, we're going to have to play the defense we're capable of."

"Our hitting can be pretty good this year," Goeden said. "The girls coming back have spent a lot of extra time to improve on their hitting and it could pay off."

The Gazelles also hope to add an element of speed to the game this year.

"We have some team speed we'll try to incorporate into our offensive scheme and we'll try to take advantage of that at times," Goeden said.

As the fall season commences, Sioux Falls Washington leads the AA pack.

"They have the best pitcher in the state and that's a pretty big deal," Goeden said of the Warriors. "Rapid City Stevens should be tough and Sioux Falls Roosevelt is pretty good then it's pretty wide open after that."

Goeden is assisted by Bob Cabalka, who has teamed with Goeden for all of his 14 years. Jon Andersen and Tiffany Townsend will coach the Gazelle JV squad while Kim Velk, Sean Cordell, Mark Velleck and Amanda Sparks will coach the Yankton middle-school girls.

## Bucks Hope To Be The Surprise Team Of The Season

BY NICK ROBINSON  
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*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally appeared in the Aug. 18 edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been updated to reflect the on-going season.*

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 opened the 2012 season on Aug. 18 at home with an 8-0 rout of Brandon Valley.

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 Savag, and Cameron Luken. Juniors Tully Taggart and Casey Skillingstad also return with experience. 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.

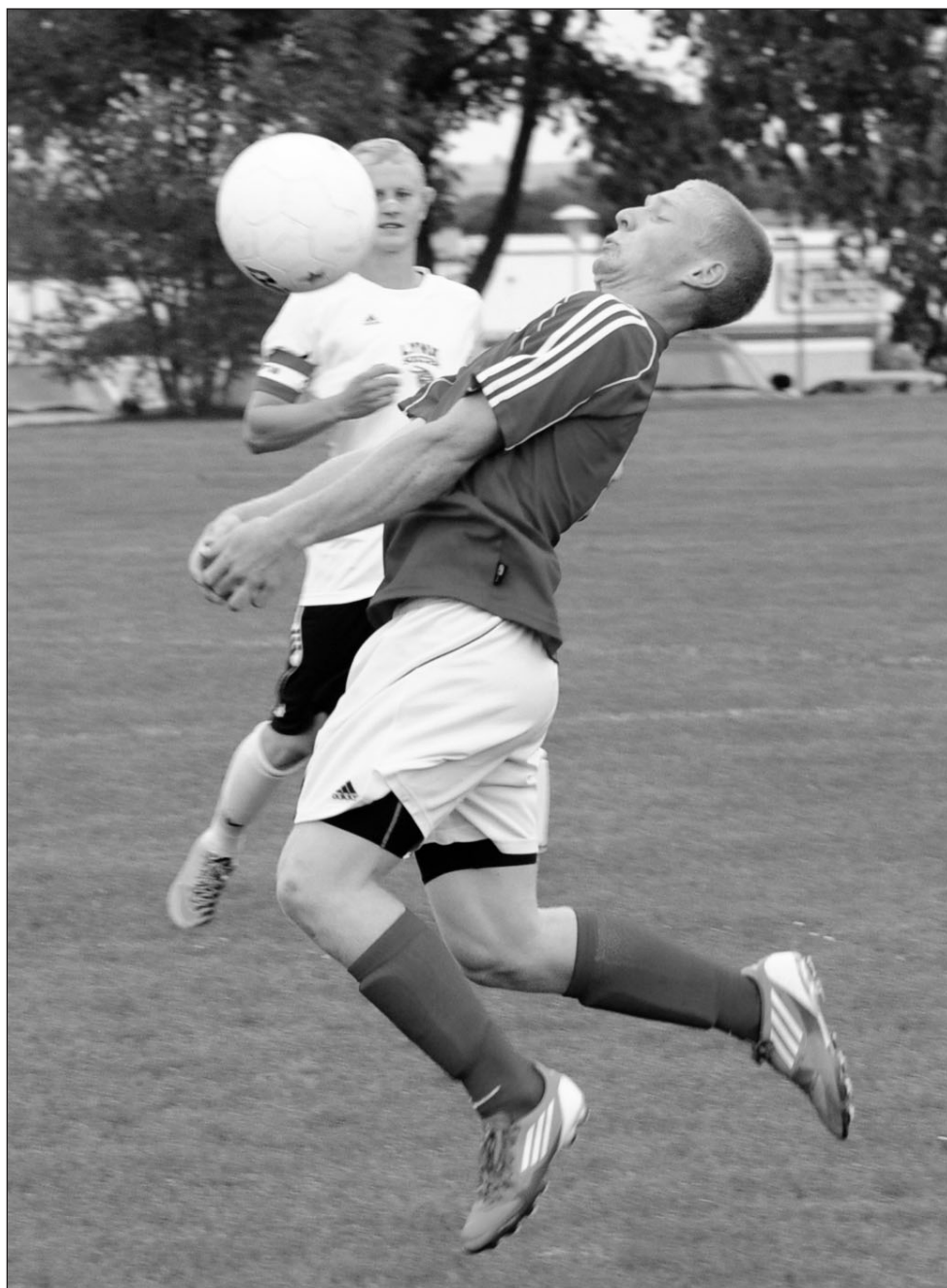
"We're gonna be a surprise team," coach Brenner said. "I feel like we are one of the better teams this year. The (preseason) ranking system is usually way off."

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 (Brenner) knows his stuff and what he's talking about," said



BUCKS: Zach Benjamin

Breen, the team's goalkeeper. "My expectations are to make it to state and to compete for a state title."

Added coach Brenner, "We're a really exciting team. They all want to be there, and

are all dedicated. They really want to make things happen."

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at [twitter.com/theFRANCHISE\\_9](https://twitter.com/theFRANCHISE_9)

## Gazelles Look To Build On Eighth Place Finish

BY NICK ROBINSON  
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*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally appeared in the Aug. 18 edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been updated to reflect the on-going season.*

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 in 8th in the state tournament. It 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 experience 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 a part 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." LaCombe 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 Greenway 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 Greenway), 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 do is help make the younger girls grow in their soccer experience and help the team make it to the state tournament," Newman said. "So basically, make this very young team into champions in the end."

The seniors will be seeing the most of the playing time along with junior Morgan Tessier. But, that doesn't mean the underclassmen will be left out. They consist of sophomores Raquel Cole, Taylor Ruter, Janae Osborne, Danielle Beckmann, Elizabeth Rust and Kendall Lillie. The newest members of the varsity squad are freshmen Amanda Gravholt, Madeline Manning, Haley Schild, Madason Tessier, Erin Luken and Brianna Benjamin.

"Rapid City Stevens will be our toughest opponent this year, and we play them at home so that will help us," Ford said.

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at [twitter.com/theFRANCHISE\\_9](https://twitter.com/theFRANCHISE_9)

## YHS Cross

From Page 1

Annie Kruse, tenth, Ashtyn Haak, and freshman Savannah Woods.

"For the boys, Brice and Justin have put in a lot of miles this summer and when they

came into practice this week, the other guys saw that they were in pretty good shape," Dannenbring said. "So they tend to set the standard and pull the rest of the team up with them. Same with Whitlee and Annie. They had a lot of miles this summer so the kids could see when they started practice they were ready to go. That's what it takes to be a top team."

Other than the state meet which will be held in Huron on October 20, Yankton is focused on a few key meets on the schedule to see where they will measure up to not only their South Dakota competitors, but also the best of Nebraska and Iowa.

"We kind of focus on the Augustana Invitational on September 8 because a lot of the Sioux Falls schools and the Rapid City Schools are there," Dannenbring said. "So it's good to see how we match up with them. Then the next week we go down to the Norfolk Invite and we really like to see how we compare with the good teams from Nebraska. And the South Sioux City meet has become a big meet for us because we get to see all the Sioux City schools and some of the better

schools in Iowa."

But in the mind of a successful squad like Yankton, these meets are only training for the one day that counts in cross country, that South Dakota State AA Championships.

"We have the philosophy that in cross country, you only have to be good on one day and that day is going to be October 20 at the state meet," Dannenbring said. "So our whole season is working towards getting better, competing better, and being able to compete at our best at the state meet."

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**Wynot Blue Devils Football**

8/24	Humphrey	A	9/28	Winnabago	A
8/31	Bloomfield	H	10/5	Pender	H
9/7	Wynot	H	10/12	Randolph	H
9/22	Allen	A	10/19	Emerson-Hubbard	A

**Wynot Lady Blue Devils Volleyball**

8/30	Wynot Tourn.	Wynot	10/4	Winside	H
9/4	Allen	H	10/6	Wisner-Pilger Inv.	Wisner
9/6	Viborg-Hurley	H	10/9	Bloomfield	A
9/11	Hartington	A	10/11	Wausa	A
9/13	Lynch	H	10/13	Hartington Tourn.	Hartington
9/20	West Boyd	A	10/16	Osmond	H
9/22	Wisner-Pilger Inv.	Wisner	10/18	Niobrara-Verdigre	H
9/24-25	Ponca Inv.	Ponca	10/22-26	Lewis & Clark Conf.	TBD

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**Niobrara-Verdigre Cougars Football**

8/30	Boyd County	A	9/28	Elgin Pub.-PJ	Verdigre
9/7	O'Neill St. Mary's	A	10/5	Neligh-Oakdale	A
9/14	Allen	Verdigre	10/12	Bloomfield	Niobrara
9/21	Plainview	A	10/19	Creighton	Niobrara

**Niobrara-Verdigre Cougars Volleyball**

8/30	Creighton/Osmond Osmond	10/2	Winside	H (TBD)
9/4	Elgin Public-Pope John/Stuart	10/4	Stuart/N. Central	O'Neill
9/11	O'Neill St. Mary's/Santee	10/9	Clearwater-Orchard/Stuart	Orchard
9/20	Santee	10/11	Elgin Pub.-Pope John	A
9/24	Santee	10/15-16	Knox Co. Tourn.	Crofton
9/25	N-V Tourn.	10/18	Wynot	A
9/27	Clearwater-Orchard/Wausa Orchard	10/22-26	Niobrara Valley Conf.	TBD/West Boyd/O'Neill