

Football: Tangers Look To Improve On 3-6 Campaign

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

VERMILLION — The Vermillion Tangers have some obstacles to overcome during the 2012 football season as they try to improve on a 3-6 record and a 39-0 opening-round loss to Tea in the first round of the South Dakota State Football Playoffs to end the 2011 season.

Tanager head coach Gary Culver, now in his 36th season at the Vermillion helm and with 201 wins under his belt, thinks his 2012 team is ready to step up to the plate.

"We feel like we have a pretty good nucleus of kids coming back as we have both lineman and skill position players with experience," Culver said. "We have

experienced linemen who have started and our skill players have seen time but we feel they're ready to step in."

The Tangers graduated two star players from the 2011 squad in D'Andre Fore and Will Mart.

"Fore and Mart are two players we built our team around and both played in the All-Star Game this summer," Culver said.

Fore was the Tangers' top rusher and scorer while Mart led Vermillion with 69 tackles as a linebacker.

Vermillion also suffered key losses due to other moves.

Chase Meierkort and Mitch Brown combined for 72 tackles as juniors last season and will play their senior seasons elsewhere.

Brett Bye, who started last season as a freshman as an outside linebacker and had three tackles for a loss among his 45 stops is out with a knee injury.

"We lost two pretty good kids in Meierkort and Brown," Culver said. "Brown was an all-conference player for us, but that's life for us in the coaching business, especially at the high-school level."

"We're stymied a little bit by these off-the-field things, but we feel pretty good about our time right now," Culver added. "We'll have some pretty good kids who want to step up and meet the challenge of filling in for those losses."

Culver returns an all-conference lineman in Nick Jensen, a junior who checks

in at 6-6 and 295 pounds. As a defensive lineman, Jensen had five TFLs among his 42 tackles.

Avery Garcia returns for his senior season after earning honorable-mention all-conference honors in 2011.

Garcia, a 6-3, 215-pound tight end and linebacker, had 64 tackles and a pair of sacks.

Also returning is Kyle Weiss, Vermillion's senior quarterback, who threw for 498 yards last season.

Other letterwinners are seniors Tanner Anderson (5-10, 175), Anthony Leber (6-2, 165), Michael Sand (5-9, 175), Thomas Walker (5-9, 140), Damarius Cheeseman (6-0, 170), Joe Mazour (6-2, 150) and J.T. Sorensen (6-4 175). Junior

letterwinners are Alex Osbourne (5-10, 180), Erik Peterson (6-2, 220), Nathan Svendsen (6-1, 150) and Ty Iverson (6-1, 195). Tyler Madsen (6-0, 185) and Travis Weber (6-0 150) return as letter-winning sophomores.

Vermillion opens at West Central Aug. 24 to begin the regular-season.

"We have one of the most competitive schedules in the A ranks," Culver said. "Each and every week will be a challenge but hopefully we'll be ready to meet those."

"We'll play the games and find out where we're at," Culver said. "Hopefully we'll progress the way we want to and get to the post-season where anything can happen."



TANGERS: Abby Weiss

Vermillion Girls' Tennis Continues To Fight Through

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

VERMILLION — Despite almost not having a tennis program for the second year straight, the Vermillion Tangers 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 Weiss, a sophomore and Libby Sykes, who is an eighth grader.

Weiss 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 Ross-dail, Brandi Styles and Kirstyn Bohn.

The Tangers 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.

Weiss 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 Tangers opened the season by going 0-3 in a quadrangular in Yankton.

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at twitter.com/theFRANCHISE_9

Experienced Tangers Look To Keep Building Boys' Golf: Vermillion Boasts Five Returning Golfers From 2012

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally appeared in the Aug. 14 edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been updated to reflect the ongoing season.

VERMILLION — The Vermillion Tangers sent just one golfer to a state tournament held on their home course a year ago. With five letterwinners back, the Tangers are hoping for a better showing in 2012.

Vermillion opened its 2012 boys' golf campaign on Aug. 14, returning one state placewinner among its five returning golfers. Mitch Ellison is the only Tanager golfer not back from a year ago.

"We're still rebuilding a little bit," said Vermillion head coach Kirk Hogen. "But we've got a stronger group of guys."

Sophomore Carter Andre tied for 16th in the state as a freshman last fall. Senior Peter Haught, junior Jay Munger and sophomores Jacob Odens and Andrew Heine were also part of that squad. Freshmen Paul Schwasinger and Sam Craig are also expected to be in competition for varsity positions.

"We have a good nucleus of players," Hogen said. "We also have a good range of ages."

Others playing for varsity and JV positions include senior Jim

Yao, sophomore Tim Ellison, freshmen Gavin Gilbertson and Tristen Meadows, and seventh graders Stian Olson and Josh Prescott.

The Tangers will be tested early. After the opening dual with Beresford, Vermillion turned around and heads to Two Rivers Golf Course for the Dakota Valley Invitational. Vermillion has five outings, including three invitationals, prior to Labor Day. Three weeks later, the Tangers head back to Two Rivers for the Region 2A Meet, with berths on the line for the State A Championships, Oct. 1-2 in Spearfish.

"The challenge is what we're going to do in the first 30 days," Hogen said. "We'll know where we are as a team early on."

Hogen expects another tough road to state, as four of the top nine teams in the 2011 state tournament came from Region 2A.

"Our region is by far the toughest one every year. I've been doing this a long time and, year in and year out, this region is the toughest, boys or girls," Hogen said. "Sioux Falls Christian will be in it again. Dakota Valley's got a good team. You're not just going to show up at regions and get kids to state."

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



TANGERS: Carter Andre

Veteran VHS Squad Set For Season

BY CHRIS RILEY
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TANGERS: Nathan Ford

VERMILLION — In the always competitive world of South Dakota Class A cross country, Vermillion High School has a pair of seniors looking to end their Tanager cross country careers with successful final seasons.

Returning All-State runner (20th place) Nathan Ford joins five-time state qualifier Blair Gilkyson (43rd at state in 2011) as the leaders of the boys' and girls' Tanager squads, respectively.

According to Tanager head coach Kelly Fischbach, Ford had a great summer of training.

"We look for him (Nathan) to be one of the top runners in the region," Fischbach said. "Hopefully he can improve his place at the state meet as well."

While Ford is coming into the season in great shape, Gilkyson is on the opposite end of the spectrum, currently injured. Fischbach is hoping to have her star harrier back in time to compete later in the fall.

The boys' do have other state meet experience returning this season, as Matt Hirsch ran on the state qualifying team as a sophomore. Colin Olson also has post-season experience, as he was on

the state champion medley relay team this past fall. Fischbach will also look to Jacob Ford and Logan Peterson to add depth to the Tanager lineup. Peterson is doubling in football, an "extra challenge" according to Fischbach.

Joining Gilkyson as top returners on the girls' squad is 2008 state qualifier Morgan Hower, along with Jade Postvedt and Cheyenne Mallory. Mallory plans to double in soccer.

Fischbach expects seventh-grader Madisen Lavin to have a big impact right away in the girls' squad.

Both teams will be looking to move up in the always competitive Big Eight Conference and Region 3A.

The Tangers kick off their season August 24 at the Beresford Invitational. They host the Big Eight Conference meet on October 4 before returning to Beresford on October 12 for regions.

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Avon Pirates Football

8/24	Tripp-Delmont-Armour	H	9/21	Scotland	H
8/31	Hanson	A	9/28	South Central	Bonesteel
9/7	Gregory	Sioux Falls	9/5	Corsica-Stickney	Corsica
9/14	Andes Central	A	9/12	Marty Indian	H

Avon Lady Pirates Volleyball

8/25	Bon Homme	H	9/25	Scotland	A
8/28	Parkston	A	9/29	Marion Tourn.	Marion
8/30	Andes Central	A	10/1	Mitchell Christian	A
9/4	Tripp-Delmont-Armour	H	10/2	South Central	H
9/6	Centerville	A	10/4	Bridgewater-Emery	H
9/11	Wagner	H	10/11	Freeman	H
9/13	Hanson	H	10/15	Ethan	A
9/15	Bridgewater-Emery Tourn.	10/16	Corsica-Stickney	Corsica	
	Bridgewater	10/19	Manno	A	
9/20	Irene-Wakonda	10/22	Gayville-Volin	H	

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Gayville-Volin Raiders Football

8/24	Viborg-Hurley	H	9/21	Menno	H
8/31	Alcester-Hudson	A	9/28	Irene-Wakonda	Irene
9/7	Centerville	A	10/5	Baltic	H
9/14	Marion	H	10/18	Parker	A

Gayville-Volin Raiders Volleyball

8/28	Marion	H	9/29	Tri-Valley Conf.	Centerville
8/30	Alcester-Hudson	H	10/2	Irene-Wakonda	Wakonda
9/4	Centerville/Scotland	A	10/4	Menno/Irene-Wak.	A
9/6	Freeman	A	10/6	G-V Tourn.	Gayville
9/11	Viborg-Hurley	Hurley	10/16	Marty	H
9/13	Baltic	A	10/20	Eagle Classic	Lake Andes
9/18	Canistota	A	10/22	Avon	A
9/27	Tri-Valley Conf.	Freeman			