

# Jacks Out To Prove They Are Better Than 5-6 Finish In '11

BY JEREMY HOECK  
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Though it finished 2011 on a strong note, the South Dakota State football team is not satisfied.

Coming off a 5-6 mark last season, 4-4 in the Missouri Valley Football Conference (MVFC), the Jackrabbits know exactly what went wrong, according to head coach John Stiegelmeier.

"We didn't come close to playing up to our potential last year," Stiegelmeier said in the pre-season MVFC teleconference. "We need to eliminate turnovers and create turnovers; our ratio has been terrible the last two years."

"When you shoot yourself in the foot, you don't know how good you can be."

The Jackrabbits ranked second-to-last in the conference in the turnover margin category, with nine lost fumbles and 17 interceptions — a ratio of minus-8 in total. Penalties were also an issue, adding to what was a mostly frustrating 2011 campaign.

Once SDSU got past back-to-back lopsided losses to Northern Iowa and North Dakota State last October, the season turned a corner. The key now is to use that sting to fuel the fire for 2012, Stiegelmeier said.

"They're tremendously self-motivated," he said. "They were disappointed last year, but when you look at the film, there was a reason why. Football's not magic, just do your job. I think they have a bit of a chip on their shoulder; there's some embarrassment there."

Helping to alleviate such frustrations is a potent offense.

The Jacks ranked fourth in the league in total offense per game (370.3), but came up seventh in total defense (405.7).

Sophomore quarterback Austin Sumner led the conference and the FCS in passing yards per game (238.2) as a red-shirt freshman last season. Sumner recorded totals of 2,382 yards through the air and 16 touchdowns.

The strong season earned him a captain's role as the sophomore — a first for the program, Stiegelmeier said.

"He is such a mature guy. He was so mature as a true freshman as an 18-year-old," Stiegelmeier said. "That is not a concern. He's got a great arm and a big body. It'll be the mental part of the game; you can be mature, but you have to make the right decision."



## Jackrabbits Football

9/1	@ Kansas	6 pm
9/8	@ SE Louisiana	7 pm
9/15	UC Davis	2 pm
9/22	@ Indiana State	1:05 pm
9/29	Missouri State	6 pm
10/13	Western Illinois	6 pm
10/20	@ Northern Iowa	4 pm
10/27	Youngstown State (HC)	2 pm
11/3	@ Southern Illinois	2 pm
11/10	@ N. Dakota State	2:30 pm
11/17	South Dakota	2 pm

Yankton native Tyrel Kool, a senior this fall, is moving back to wide receiver after leading the Jacks in rushing yardage last year. He ran for 534 yards and four touchdowns a year ago, but transitions to receiver where he will join All-MVFC selection Aaron Rollin (61 rec., 906 yds., 7 TD).

One area of concern for the pass-heavy offense was a last-place ranking in rushing yards per game (83.5), a mark that was almost 60 yards behind the average of Western Illinois. Zach Zenner returns in the backfield for SDSU after rushing for 470 yards and three touchdowns last year.

Junior defensive back Winston Wright (57 tackles, 3 INT) highlights the returners on defense for the Jacks, while senior Andy Mink (75 tackles, 7 sacks) anchors the line.

In the pre-season MVFC poll, the Jacks were picked sixth — a spot that no doubt provides some motivation, Stiegelmeier said.

"I'm going to ask each guy to judge how they felt in their heart, then we're going to put it away," he said. "We're all playing for respect. Every day you line up, it's your chance to prove what you stand for."

"It's all a T-shirt and a sugar pill; the whole deal is working hard and staying focused on your goals."

Three of SDSU's first four games this season are on the road, starting with the Sept. 1 opener at Kansas.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at [twitter.com/jhoeck](https://twitter.com/jhoeck)



SOUTH DAKOTA COYOTES: Marcus Sims (32)

# 'Swagger' Returning To USD Football Program

BY JEREMY HOECK  
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VERMILLION — Whether it was guys swarming to the ball or teammates doling out chest bumps, the defense for the University of South Dakota football team looks to have a new attitude.

Two different players later called it "swagger."

Whatever it is, the defense — with seven transfers and three new coaches — appears to be in front of the offense through the early stages of fall practice.

"Everyone wants to win this year, especially after last year," said junior defensive back Aaron Swift, who started all 11 games last season. The Coyotes were 6-5 a year ago but lost a pair of chances to share the Great West Conference title.

"We're still mad about losing conference, so that's what we want to do this year."

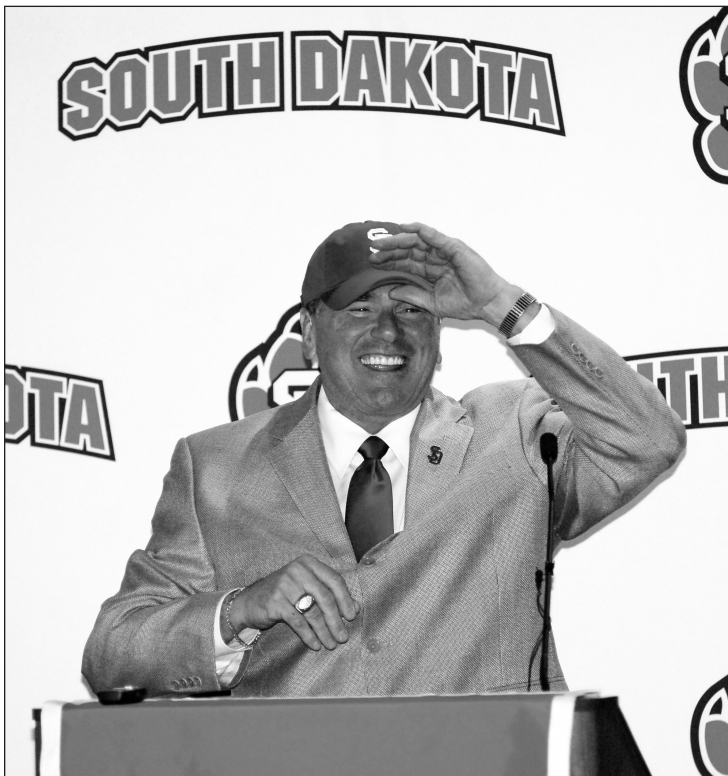
Through the early parts of fall practice, it looked like the defense was giving its counterparts fits.

The Coyotes return six starters on defense but will benefit from the addition of seven transfers, four from Butler Community College in Kansas and another (James Caraway) from the University of Wyoming. Joining USD are defensive backs Devin Taverna, D.J. Wakes, Dyllon Knox and Steve Tellefsen, as well as linemen Emilous Davis and Darrius McMullin.

"I feel like there's a little more camaraderie," junior linebacker Tyler Starr said. "We all have the same goal, to be a shut-down defense, to be one of the best in the nation. We have high expectations."

"We're just coming out here and working at them; something we haven't had in a while."

Also new to the fold are three assistant coaches on the defensive side, led by first-year coordinator and secondary coach Jason Petrino. He is joined by Kurt Troutman (defensive line) and Shane VanDiest (graduate as-



SOUTH DAKOTA COYOTES: Coach Joe Glenn

sistant, safeties).

Even with all the changes, Petrino said the main goal is maintain the intensity apparent Wednesday to every play.

"I don't know what it was like here before, but ultimately every day we want to get better," he said. "We want to be successful on each play. We can't worry about a play before, whether it was good or bad, we have to focus on the next one."

"It's all about bringing that energy and enthusiasm all the time."

Sure, there were brief spurts where frustration boiled over in early practices, but that might just be a sign that the energy is there, head coach Joe Glenn said.

"They've got a real good feel to them," Glenn said. "They made great progress since spring. I felt like they hit a road block later on, but they've gotten better and better. I feel better about them every practice."

"We've got a lot of new peo-

ple, so it's like a different look than what we're used to," Swift said. We still have a lot of areas we can improve in."

Chief among those areas, he said, are communication and forcing turnovers.

By number of tacklers, USD graduated its top three leaders including two starting linebackers. Back on the line are David Giese and Jordan Eaton, while Darius Hogans is the top returning linebacker. Starr, a pre-season All-American by numerous publications, will shift from the line to linebacker.

"There's always been cliques



## Coyotes Football

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9/8	Colgate	2 pm
9/22	@ Northwestern	TBA
9/29	Illinois State	2 pm
10/6	Western Illinois (HC)	2 pm
10/13	@ Missouri State	1 pm
10/20	N.D. State (S Falls)	6 pm
10/27	@ Indiana State	1:05 pm
11/3	@ Youngtown State	1 pm
11/10	Northern Iowa	noon
11/17	@ South Dakota State	2 pm

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with different positions, but now everybody's hanging out together," Starr said. "When you have guys working at one goal, it's easier."

That goal, Swift said, is the post-season.

If the Coyotes are to make the FCS playoffs in their first year eligible, they would need to win seven games.

"That's what we're focused on," Swift said.

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