



JEREMY HOECK/P&D  
Professional golfer Kevin Staneck chips on to the No. 10 green Tuesday during the Hillcrest Ladies Pro-Am at Yankton's Hillcrest Golf & Country Club. The 40th annual Hillcrest Invitational Pro-Am begins today (Thursday).

## Length, Money Attracts Pros To Hillcrest Pro-Am

BY JEREMY HOECK  
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

Forty years ago, the Hillcrest Invitational Pro-Am offered a total prize package of \$11,000 for professional golfers.

As time has passed, that amount has increased.

Now as the 4-day pro-am — which begins today (Thursday) at Hillcrest Golf & Country Club — celebrates its 40th anniversary, that monetary potential has jumped to \$105,000.

The total amount includes all the events during the week, including Tuesday's Ladies Pro-Am and a putting contest, according to Hillcrest head PGA pro Sean Riley.

"That's a huge draw for these pros, having that much money at stake," Riley said Wednesday. "That's a lot of money for one tournament."

A total of 208 golfers, including 67 professionals, will take to the course for the pro-am, which is the longest event on the summer-long Dakotas Tour.

The combination of a high payout and a long weekend attracts some of the top pros, according to Neil Johnson who won the Hillcrest pro title last year.

"We like it because it's a shootout, not a marathon," Johnson said Wednesday. "There are a lot of little challenges here, more than the normal two or three day events."

Johnson, a 31-year-old from River Falls, Wis., has spent most of the summer in Canada on the PGA Tour Canada. He will be joined at Hillcrest by three other golfers (Andre Metzger, Josh Persons and Brady Schnell) who played on the Canadian tour.

"It's always fun to come back for this one," Johnson said.

Hillcrest also boasts one of the largest pro qualifiers on the Dakotas Tour, Riley said, referencing Tuesday's field of nearly 50 golfers for 27 spots.

The field will be cut after Saturday's third round, trimming the number down to the top 30 amateurs (plus ties) and 25-30 pros (plus ties) — the second of which is an increase this year.

There will be a couple of pros in the field competed in the Colorado Open last week, including Ryan Dillon who finished second. The winner was scheduled to compete at Hillcrest, but dropped out, Riley said.

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

# Ponder Still Under Pressure, Beginning Season 3

MANKATO, Minn. (AP) — The scrutiny Christian Ponder endured last season could pale next to what he'll encounter this year as Minnesota's quarterback.

Ponder improved statistically from his rookie season, and the Vikings won seven more games to make the playoffs. But those developments didn't quiet the questions about whether the former first-round draft pick fits the franchise's plans.

"I have more confidence," Ponder said. "It comes with experience. Last year, we were a playoff team. That gave everybody confidence."

The third year of Ponder's career will determine whether he's the answer or not. With Adrian Peterson coming off a 2,000-yard rushing season, an offensive line intact from the year before and upgraded group of receivers, Ponder should have more support than he did last season.

There is clearly plenty of pressure on him, particularly with Peterson in his prime at the one of the game's most punishing positions



Ponder

and several defensive starters in the final year of their contracts. But Ponder brushed off the subject the way the Vikings want him to evade pass rushers this season.

"Well, you can say that about any quarterback in the league," Ponder said. "I think quarterback kind of dictates what the success of the team is going to be, and I'm not putting more pressure on myself. It's already a high-pressure job. This year is no different than any other year. My approach is the same."

Last season, Ponder improved his completion percentage from 54.3 to 62.1. He threw 18 touchdown

passes and had 12 interceptions after totaling 13 of each as a rookie. His quarterback rating rose from 70.1 to 81.2.

But the Vikings still ranked next to last in the league with 171.9 yards passing per game while the offense was fueled by Peterson's historic season. Hence the persistent skepticism about whether Ponder will be a long-term starter in the NFL.

"It's tough to be in that position because there's so much spotlight and pressure," said tight end Kyle

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# Somsen Adjusts To Pro Life

Former YHS, SDSU Pitcher Off To Strong Start For Rookie Ball Team

BY CODY BALL  
P&D Correspondent

BILLINGS, Mont. — Clouds collected and rolled over the Rimrock Mountains overlooking Dehler Stadium threatening to force an early end to the Pioneer Baseball League game between the Missoula Osprey and the Billings Mustangs earlier this summer.

There was another dark storm looming over Yankton native Layne Somsen: being called out of the Mustangs' bullpen in the top of the fourth inning into a bases-loaded jam with no outs recorded.

Somsen calmly took to the bump and retired three straight batters to keep the Osprey from putting any more runs on the board. The right-handed Somsen then pitched another inning without allowing an earned run, before handing over the ball to teammate Nick Fleece in the top of the sixth. Despite Somsen's efforts, Billings dropped the north division game to Missoula by a score of 6-1.

But the game against Missoula is symbolic of the pressures and immediate changes that Somsen has gone through in his two months with the rookie-league team affiliated with the Cincinnati Reds. The first change was going from the comforts of his basement couch with no immediate plans for the sum-

## By The Numbers

Yankton's Layne Somsen has emerged as a reliable force for the Billings Mustangs. His 2013 stats (current as of July 31):

Games	9
Record	3-0
ERA	1.33
Innings Pitched	20.1
Hits Allowed	14
Walks	9
Strikeouts	19
Opp. Batting Avg.	.197

mer to packing his bags for spring training.

"On draft day I was just sitting and watching TV and had kind of stopped watching the draft tracker," Somsen said in a phone interview this week. "I was just relaxing downstairs and then my mom came down and told me I had just been drafted in the 22nd round by the Reds."

Rather than an explosion of joy and cheers from the basement, Somsen had a bit of a reserved and uncertain reaction.

"I just said 'OK, well that's great,' but I didn't really know much because they didn't call me and tell me they were going to draft me, so I just didn't know what to do," Somsen said. "Then a few minutes later the Reds' regional scout called me and told me they had drafted me, and told me they were going

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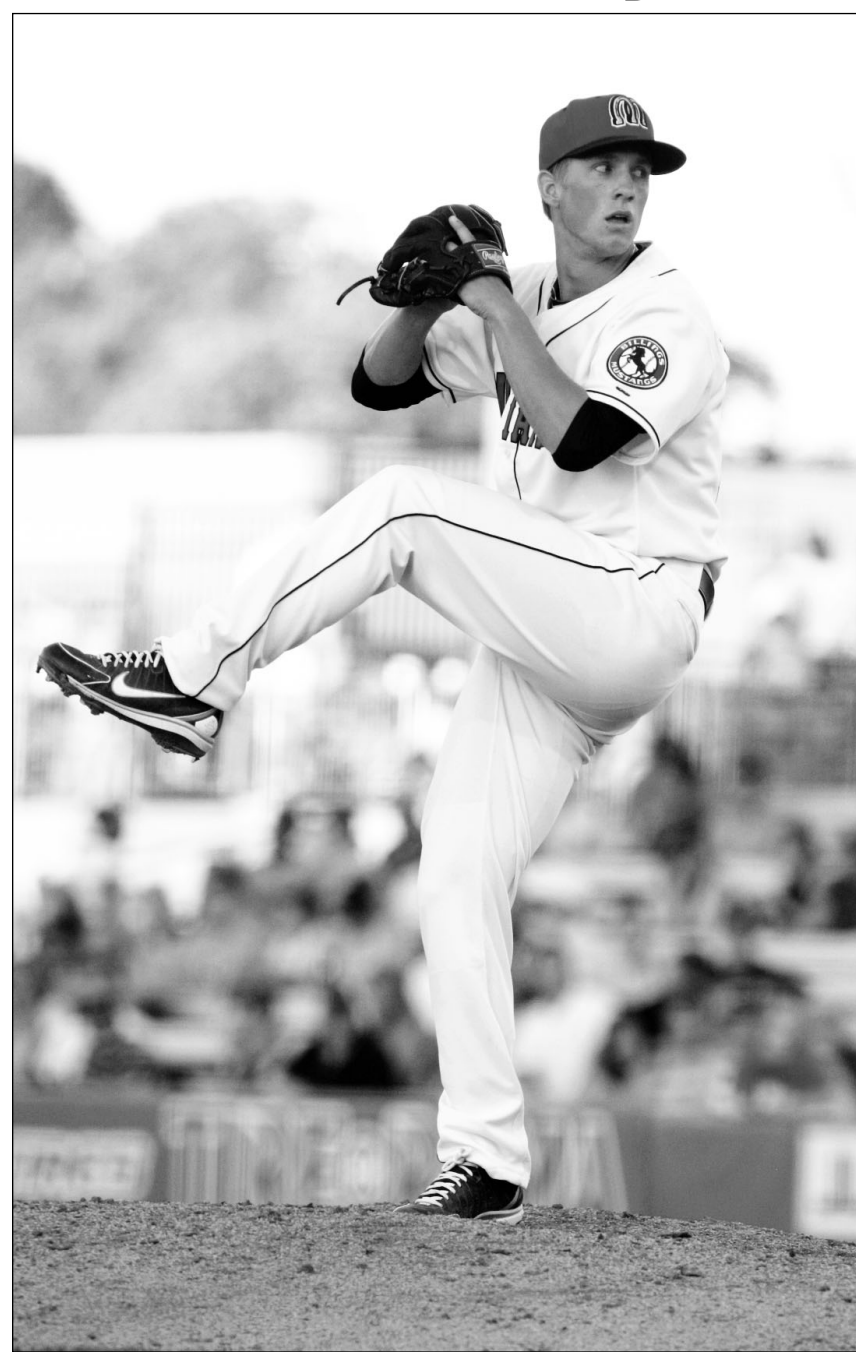


PHOTO: PAUL RUHTER, BILLINGS MUSTANGS  
Yankton's Layne Somsen pitches during a home game earlier this summer for the Billings Mustangs, a rookie ball affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds. Drafted in the 22nd round of the MLB Draft in June, Somsen has succeeded in Billings, posting a 3-0 record in nine games.

# Alex Rodriguez Mum As MLB Drug Suspension Looms

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Alex Rodriguez didn't stop to talk with reporters after his rehabilitation session at the team's minor league complex, two days before Major League Baseball is likely to suspend the New York Yankees third baseman for his connection to a clinic accused of distributing banned performance-enhancing drugs.

Coming back from January hip surgery and a late-July strained quadriceps, Rodriguez increased the intensity of his leg workout by taking on-field batting practice and running the bases at the Yankees' minor league complex.

A-Rod felt tightness in the quad before the Triple-A

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre game on July 20. Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said he will play in a simulated game Thursday at the minor league complex.

Rodriguez could be sent to Double-A Trenton for a new rehab assignment on Friday. Scranton is on the road.

"Tomorrow's simulated game is the first step in that process and then I just don't want to get anything past tomorrow just because of the weather, but the plan would be for him to be in a rehab game on Friday," Cashman said.

A suspension would prevent Rodriguez from playing in any major or minor league games unless the penalty is stayed.

New York has made the playoffs in 17 of the last 18 seasons but is fourth in the AL East, 8 1/2 games behind division-leading Tampa Bay and 3 1/2 games back of Baltimore for the last wild-card berth.

"You have to walk before you can run, and right now obviously we're closer to the wild card than the division," Cashman said. "So I didn't say we can't win the division, but right now if somebody says 8 1/2, I'll say 3 1/2."

While Rodriguez's status is uncertain, outfielder Curtis Granderson could rejoin the Yankees for Friday's series opener at San Diego. Granderson broke an arm in the Yankees' spring training

opener, returned May 14, then broke a pinkie on May 24.

"I think we're shooting for Friday for an activation on Granderson. Hopefully Alex will be back shortly thereafter," Cashman said.

He thinks there's a chance third baseman Kevin Youkilis could return this season from a back injury but doesn't expect catcher Francisco Cervelli to heal in time from elbow and finger injuries. Cervelli, also tied in media reports to the Biogenesis case, is to be examined Aug. 5 by Dr. James Andrews.

"It's looking more and more like it's going to be unrealistic to see Cervelli," Cashman said.

# Baseball: Tappers One Win From State

The Yankton Tappers moved within one victory of a state berth with a 3-2, 11-inning victory over the Vermillion Red Sox in District 6A amateur baseball tournament action on Tuesday at Yankton's Riverside Field. Yankton scored in the fourth and sixth innings, but Vermillion pushed across two runs in the eighth to send the game into extras. Yankton scored the game-winner on a bases-loaded hit batsman.

Derrick Nelson had two hits, including a home run, and two runs scored to lead Yankton. Nik Davis also had two hits. Dave Schmidt and Jared Miller each doubled, and Ross Heine, Jesse Bailey and Tate Bruckner added hits in the victory.

A.J. Staiert had two hits and a RBI, and Robin Chute had two hits and a run scored to lead Vermillion. Tyler Candor also had two hits. Nate Muhlbauer, Reese Steckler and Aaron Fischer added hits for the Red Sox.

Jason Miller pitched three shutout innings of relief, allowing one hit, to pick up the win in relief of Trey Krier. Krier allowed two runs on eight hits, striking out seven. Jeff Gacke took the loss, going the distance and striking out seven. Yankton advances to the

final, playing the winner of Wednesday's Sioux Falls Saints-Mitchell Matchup on Saturday at 2 p.m. Vermillion faces the loser of that matchup on Friday at 8 p.m. in Yankton, with the winner of that game advancing to play the loser of Saturday's championship matchup for a state tourney berth.

VERMILLION RED SOX ...000 000 020 00—2 9 1  
YANKTON ...000 101 000 01—3 9 1  
Jeff Gacke and Colby Leeman; Trey Krier, Jason Miller (9) and Kory Bromley, Julian Cutolo (7)

## District 6B Crofton 5, Irene 1

SCOTLAND — Crofton's Rand Thygeson struck out 19 batters and allowed just two hits as the Bluejays downed Irene 5-1 in the semifinals of the District 6B Amateur Baseball Tournament on Tuesday in Scotland.

The victory advanced Crofton to Saturday's district title game, and secured a state tournament berth for the Bluejays, who have played for a state title each of the past three seasons.

Scott Donner, Nick Hegge and Carl Schieffer each had three hits for Crofton. Mike King had both Irene hits.

Josh Homme, who pitched the first five innings and al-

lowed three runs, took the loss. Crofton will face Tabor at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Irene plays Wynot today (Thursday) in an elimination game at 7:30 p.m. The winner of that game is headed to state, while the loser will play on Saturday at 5 p.m., with one more chance to qualify for state.

IRENE .....000 100 000—1 2 3  
CROFTON .....000 211 10X—5 12 3  
Josh Homme, Mike King (6) and Josh Wenander, Rand Thygeson and Carl Schieffer

## Tabor 10, Freeman 0

SCOTLAND — Tabor's Doug Vanecek held Freeman to one hit and struck out 11 as the Bluebirds punched a state tournament ticket with a 10-0 victory over Freeman on Tuesday in Scotland.

Tabor, which won the district tournament title last season, plays Crofton in the final on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Both teams have already secured berths at state.

Rob Keppen and Jon Vavruska each had three hits for Tabor. Jeff Honner added two hits.

Mitch Wollmann had the lone Freeman hit.

Austin Smidt took the loss. Freeman faces Lesterville today (Thursday) at 6 p.m., with the winner securing a state berth. The loser of that game will get one more chance to qualify for state, a 5 p.m. game on Saturday.

TABOR .....500 210 2—10 13 2  
FREEMAN .....000 000 0—0 1 2  
Doug Vanecek and Wes Kloucek; Austin Smidt and Mitch Wollmann

# NFL Abandons AFC-NFC Pro Bowl Format

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL Pro Bowl rosters for next year will be selected in a draft by team captains, with Deion Sanders and Jerry Rice assisting as alumni captains.

The NFL will abandon the AFC vs. NFC format that has been in place since 1971.

The league says Wednesday that fan voting will determine the players in the draft pool. The draft will be televised by the NFL Network on Jan. 22. The game will be played Jan. 26 at Aloha Stadium in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The ball will change hands at the end of each quarter, which could double the opportunities for two-minute drills. Kickoffs (and return specialists) will be eliminated — teams will start on their own 25-yard line. Defenses will be allowed to play cover-2 and press coverage in addition to man, and several clock tweaks have been instituted to speed up the game and prompt offensive play.

## City Champs



The Services Center Federal Credit Union team won the 11-13 year-old division of the Yankton Sertoma baseball league. Team members include (front) Parker Sandal, Gavin Raabe, Jordan Dahl, Cole Withrow, Kyle Withrow, (back) coach Tony Maibaum, coach Chad Kapla, Jace Kapla, Aydon Tramp, Tyler Odens, Evan Mueller, Matthew Kreitzinger, Dalton Maibaum and coach Dave Withrow. Not pictured is Trevor Hanson.