

Young But Talented Field Highlights SDGA Women's Amateur

51st Annual Event Begins At Fox Run Golf Course Today

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
james.cimburek@yankton.net

Based on the laws of probability, there is a pretty good chance that youth will be served when the South Dakota Golf Association's Women's Amateur Championships take to Fox Run Golf Course, beginning today (Friday).

Of the 30 entrants in the SDGA field, 25 are either currently on a collegiate golf roster or played in the SDGA Junior Championships two weeks ago. Of the five not on those first two lists, one is O'Gorman's Kelsey Johnson, the Greater Dakota Conference champion this past spring.

"We're seeing a trend. There are more and more young girls playing these events," said Fox Run PGA golf pro Kevin Doby. "They're golfing in

college more than ever before, and they need that tournament experience. Coaches want to know how they perform in tournament conditions."

A third of the field played in the SDGA Junior, July 28-29 in Watertown, led by champion Megan Mingo of Yankton. Six of the top 10 from the 16-18 year-old division in that event are entered here, as is Madison's Samantha Langford, who tied for second in the 14-15 year-old division.

Four golfers from the University of South Dakota women's golf team, including Courtney Lickteig, are entered in the event. Lickteig, who finished second in the Fox Run season pass tournament earlier this summer, is a Marion native and Freeman High School alum. The field also includes four who will be on the South Dakota State women's golf roster this

year, including Mingo, as well as two golfers each from Augustana, the University of Sioux Falls and Dakota Wesleyan, and one golfer each from St. Olaf (Minn.), Minnesota State-Mankato and Nebraska-Kearney.

Kristin Sabers of Mitchell, a DWU recruit, has won two tournaments in Yankton this year, the Eastern South Dakota Conference girls' golf tournament at Fox Run in May, and the Hillcrest Ladies Pro-Am last week.

Karla (Murra) Cotton is one of the others in the field, a 2010 champion in this event. She has placed third each of the past two years. Former Sioux Falls prep standouts Sydney Sturdevant, who played at SDSU, and Kelli Sinksen are also in the field.

While the field isn't as large as Doby had hoped, the quality of competitors is there.

"I was thinking it might be 40-plus

golfers, maybe even 50," he said. "That said, you look at the strength of the field a lot more than the size. (This weekend's) PGA Championship is a good example — it's not the biggest, but it is the strongest field year in, year out."

The golf course that greets the 30 challengers this weekend is in great shape, according to Doby.

"The SDGA was out here (Wednesday), and their comments were overwhelmingly positive. With the drought last year, they expected to see residual signs of it, and there were none," Doby said. "It was the same thing with the Thrivent Charity Pro-Am. The pros said that our greens were the best they'd seen on the Dakotas Tour."

Play begins at 9 a.m. today, with play scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

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

Groups To Watch

With only 10 threesomes and plenty of talent entered in the tournament, there are reasons to watch every group in the SDGA Women's Amateur Championship. But here are four to pay close attention to:

9:10 a.m.: The Veterans — With only five golfers who aren't in college or high school, there is only one group without a college or prep player: Karla (Murra) Cotton, the 2010 SDGA Women's champion, SDSU alum Sydney Sturdevant and Sioux Falls' Maggie Blaylock.

9:20 a.m.: Future Teammates — Current Jackrabbit Morgan Fitts, who finished fourth in this event last year, and recent Yankton alum and SDGA Junior champ Megan Mingo, a SDSU recruit, are joined by Clark's Kali Trautman, who finished third in the SDGA Junior.

9:30 a.m.: College Crowd — Despite all the current college golfers in the field, only two groups have three of them. This is the first: USD's Kylie Gaughenbaugh, Augustana's Katie Grevious and USF's Audrey Keliszewski.

10:30 a.m.: Home Course — USD's Courtney Lickteig is the only member of Fox Run competing in the event. She is joined by Nebraska-Kearney's Katelyn Haschke and Pierre grad and SDSU recruit Hallie Getz, who placed fifth in this event a year ago and is a two-time S.D. Class AA champion.



Lesterville fans celebrate and manager Kevin Bloch runs out of the dugout after the Broncos clinched a 4-3 victory over the Parkston Rock Bass in the first round of the South Dakota State Class B Amateur Baseball Tournament on Thursday in Sioux Falls. Lesterville, making its first state appearance since 1997, advances to face Winner-Colome in the second round on Sunday. It was the Broncos' first state tournament victory since 1993.

Broncos Win In Return To State



Lesterville's Cody Ulmer shows his excitement after his first-inning RBI triple in the Broncos' state amateur baseball tournament matchup with the Parkston Rock Bass on Thursday in Sioux Falls.

Lesterville Edges Parkston Rock Bass For First State Tourney Win In 20 Years

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
james.cimburek@yankton.net

SIoux FALLS — After waiting 16 years between state tournament appearances, the Lesterville Broncos made the most of their opportunity.

Lesterville jumped out to an early 2-0 lead, then took the lead for good on a wild pitch in the bottom of the eighth, claiming a 4-3 victory over the Parkston Rock Bass in the opening round of the South Dakota Class B Amateur Baseball Tournament on Thursday at Sioux Falls Stadium.

The Broncos had not been to state since 1997 and had not won a state tournament game since beating Lake Norden in 1993, manager Kevin Bloch's first year in charge of the team. The win sends Lesterville to the second round, where it will face Winner-Colome on Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

Tyler Edler and Macon

Oplinger, a pickup player from Menno, each had two hits at the top of the Lesterville batting order. Cody Ulmer had the team's lone extra-base hit on the day, a triple. Darrin Svacina scored the Broncos' final two runs despite not recording a hit on the day.

Dylan Mogck had two of Parkston's five hits. Trevor Salmonson doubled and drove in a run for the Rock Bass.

Jason Bierle struck out five and walked one in the complete game win. Tommy Murtha took the loss, striking out nine in eight innings.

Parkston went down in order, but it was a wild ride to get there. Broncos pitcher Jason Bierle started the first two batters with three straight balls before getting them out, then was down 2-0 before getting the third.

"In the first inning, the nerves were there," Bierle said. "I was lucky to get out of that inning."

The Lesterville offense gave Bierle a little breathing room in the bottom of the inning. After the Broncos manufactured a run with a walk, steal, bunt and groundout, a single by Cameron Schiltz and a triple by Ulmer plated another, giving Lesterville a 2-0 edge.

"We're usually a slow-starting team," Bloch said. "Everyone was so pumped up. The juices were flowing."

Parkston got a run back in the second, scoring on a Mogck single and a Salmonson double, then scored two unearned runs in the fourth on back-to-back errors, taking a 3-2 lead.

But after Murtha's leadoff single in the fifth, Bierle slammed the door on the Rock Bass, retiring 15 of the final 16 batters he faced.

"I was lucky to settle in, throw strikes and have my defense make plays," Bierle said. "When you get ahead 0-2, 1-2, you get batters swinging at a lot more of your pitches."

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Vermillion Red Sox Head West To Open State Amateur Play Today

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
james.cimburek@yankton.net

The Vermillion Red Sox did not have the season they are accustomed to, posting a 8-14 record, but the squad's chemistry helped them advance to state. Now that they're headed to Rapid City for the opening round of the South Dakota State Class A Amateur Baseball Tournament, the Red Sox hope that their chemistry will help keep them going.

Vermillion opens the tournament in Rapid City today (Friday) against Redfield Dairy Queen, a first-year Class A club with a strong history in Class B. Start time

is 6:30 p.m. Central.

The Red Sox have number of familiar names on the roster, something that veteran manager Kirk Sorensen is happy to have.

"We have three or four guys that have been with me a long time. We have another three or four that have been with me three to five years," he said. "That's a blessing. You know what they can do, and they show up to play."

Among those who have been regulars on the mound for the Red Sox in recent years are Derek Appley (3-2), Jeff Gacke (2-1) and Nick Weeter (2-3). Weeter, who has played for the Red Sox for three years, and Appley were

both juniors on the Morningside College baseball team last spring. Gacke finished his eligibility at Morningside in 2012.

"Those guys want to go out and throw nine innings every time out," Sorensen said. "I can't give them enough credit."

Another Morningside player, A.J. Staiert (.345), has been a key in the Red Sox lineup.

"A.J. Staiert and Tyler Candor (.320) have been very good," Sorensen. "Colby Lessman (.328), Robin Chute (.329) and Dan Hansen (.275) are veterans who have come up big."

Vermillion took the hard

way to state, dropping an 11-inning loss to Yankton before beating Mitchell and Yankton, both on Aug. 3 in Yankton, to earn the second spot out of the district.

"Apple tossed a one-hitter in the first game (against Mitchell), gave us everything we could ask. Then we were able to bunch enough hits together to beat Yankton," Sorensen said. "It was a great baseball weekend."

Sorensen sees a little bit of the Red Sox in Redfield, a team that is in its first season in Class A. The Red Sox were a dominant 'B' squad before making the jump to Class A in 2005. Vermillion won state in 2006.

"They are a veteran 'B' team that's picked up four or five guys from Aberdeen," Sorensen said. "Somehow we need to win one game out there without three of our better players."

The Red Sox picked up Yankton's Trey Krier — the last player to pitch a state tournament no-hitter before Akron's Jared Kirkeby did it on Wednesday — and Derrick Nelson — who got the win for Brandon Valley (now the Sioux Falls Brewers) in the Class A championship a year ago.

Six of the eight teams playing in the Class A field will advance past the first two rounds of the modified

double-elimination format (no "if" game for the championship). After Redfield, Vermillion will face either the top-ranked Renner Monarchs or the host Rapid City Angels.

"The one thing about Class A is that there aren't any easy games," Sorensen said.

After the first two rounds in Rapid City, the Class A field joins the Class B teams in Sioux Falls on the final four days of the event, with the championship set for Sunday, Aug. 18, at noon at Sioux Falls Stadium.

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