

College Football I 2013 Openers

K-State Wary Of Lower Division North Dakota State

MANHATTAN, Kan. (AP) — Kansas State could have come up with an easier opponent for its opener.

The defending Big 12 champions lost just about everybody on defense from an 11-win Fiesta Bowl team a year ago. They'll be breaking in a new starting quarterback in Jake Waters along with newcomers at several positions on the two-deep when they step onto the field Friday night.

Indeed, perhaps the Wildcats should have come up with an easier opponent for their opener.

They'll instead face a North Dakota State program that has won the last two national titles in the Football Championship Subdivision, and that returns 18 starters from a

14-1 team.

There's no easing into this season for the Wildcats.

"They beat Minnesota, they beat Kansas and beat Colorado State in the last three years," Kansas State coach Bill Snyder said this week. "That's why I think they're a team that plays with a tremendous amount of confidence regardless of who they line up against."

The Wildcats have had trouble in season openers, too, even against FCS competition.

In Snyder's first season back from a brief retirement, Kansas State squeezed out a 21-17 victory over UMass. Two years ago, the Wildcats needed a late touchdown to beat

Eastern Kentucky 10-7 on their way to the Cotton Bowl. Last year, they struggled for a half against Missouri State before running away in the second half, eventually setting the tone for a dream season.

"You go back and look and we've struggled," Snyder acknowledged.

Still, this is the kind of game that a program the stature of Kansas State is supposed to win. For all their troubles against seemingly overmatched foes, the Wildcats still have won their last 10 regular-season game against nonconference opponents.

They've been to three straight bowl games since Snyder resurrected the program he first built to national prominence, winning at least 10

games each of the last two years.

North Dakota State coach Craig Bohl is plenty familiar with all that success. The longtime assistant coach at Nebraska matched wits with Snyder as the Huskers' defensive coordinator before taking the job in Fargo, N.D., following the 2002 season.

"For me personally understanding what type of program they have, without question it's the best program and best team we'll have faced," Bohl said.

Bohl is confident that the Bison won't be awed by stepping into Bill Snyder Family Stadium, which will dedicate a \$75 million renovation prior to

QB Smith Finding His Happiness At Wyoming

BY ERIC OLSON
AP College Football Writer

Brett Smith admits he was devastated when his home-state Oregon Ducks showed no interest in recruiting him.

Wyoming's junior quarterback clearly has gotten over it.

Smith will begin his third year as the starter when the Cowboys open at No. 18 Nebraska on Saturday night. If he's as productive this season as he was in the past two, he'll be the school's all-time total offense leader by December.

He'll also have continued to raise his NFL stock.

"Once I got here and played a little bit," he said, "kind of the animosity toward all the schools that didn't recruit me turned into me falling in love with this state and this school and wanting to play for this fan base and playing because I love the game."

The 6-foot-3, 206-pound Smith is right at home in coach Dave Christensen's spread offense. He's a pure passer who has the ability to run when a play breaks down.

He threw for 27 touchdowns against six interceptions last season, averaged 308 yards a game in total offense and led the Mountain West Conference in passing efficiency and points responsible for. He'll go into the Nebraska game with 174 consecutive pass attempts without an interception, tied with Central Florida's Blake Bortles for the NCAA's longest active streak.

Smith won't sneak up on the Cornhuskers. He threw for 166 yards and two touchdowns in a 38-14 loss in Laramie, Wyo., in 2011.

"I walked away from that thoroughly impressed," Nebraska defensive coordinator John Papuchis said. "I thought he was a tough, gritty competitor. He threw the ball well and was tougher to tackle than he looks like he would be. So he's certainly going to present some challenges."

For all his personal success, Smith is only 12-11 as the starter. He missed two games last season, both losses, because of concussions. Wyoming was 4-8 after going 8-5 with a bowl loss in 2011.

"I know that we have the capability of winning," Smith said. "Now it comes down to us executing and making sure we're mentally sharp each game. I want to win, go to a bowl game and win it. Those are the personal goals I have every year. I want to start winning again."

Smith's main targets are Robert Herron and Dominic Rufran. Herron, who missed four games because of injury, had 31 catches for 657 yards and, like Smith, is drawing interest from pro scouts.

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State-Wide Tour



P&D FILE PHOTO

South Dakota's Nicole Seekamp is congratulated as she heads to the bench during the Coyotes' semifinal victory over IUPUI in the Summit League Women's Basketball Tournament last March in Sioux Falls. The USD women will play "home" games in both Sioux Falls and Rapid City, in addition to 13 home dates at the DakotaDome.

Home Games In Rapid City, Sioux Falls On Tap For Coyote Women In 2013-14

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — The USD women's basketball team will be taking its act on the road for a kind of cross-state tour.

Highlighting their 2013-14 schedule released Thursday, the Coyotes will host games in three cities across South Dakota next season.

In addition to 13 true home games in Vermillion, USD will play Drake at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls on Nov. 21 — because of conflicts with the DakotaDome — and S.D. School of Mines in Rapid City on Dec. 7.

Sure, the Coyotes will play the likes of Iowa State (Nov. 13), Creighton (Nov. 26) and Nebraska (Dec. 21), but the home schedule is sure interesting.

"Yeah, that's very unique, isn't it?" USD coach Amy Williams said Thursday.

"We're excited to have the opportunity to help spread our brand to the fans and alumni across the state. We're proud to be that flagship program."

The Coyotes, 19-16 last season in Williams' first year, open the season

with a pair of games in California — Nov. 8 at Cal State Fullerton and Nov. 10 at UC Irvine.

Non-conference home games in the DakotaDome include Boise State (Nov. 24), Wyoming (Nov. 30), Utah State (Dec. 5), Northern Iowa (Dec. 10), College of Saint Mary (Dec. 19) and Cleveland State (Jan. 4).

USD's Summit League season begins Jan. 12 at newcomer Denver. The Coyotes will host rivals North Dakota State on Feb. 27 and South Dakota State on March 2 to close out the regular season.

A Dec. 31 road game with Valparaiso was the last addition to the schedule, but the matchup with Drake took some extra back-and-forth.

The DakotaDome football turf will still be down by Nov. 21, so the Coyotes had to do some tweaking, according to athletic director David Herbster. Saying that USD got "caught between a rock and a hard place" with the contracted Drake home game, Herbster added that options for a neutral site game were limited.

Vermillion High School was not a feasible option, he said, but moving the

game to Sioux Falls allows USD to further its partnership with Sanford.

"We like it because it gives us a chance to expand our women's basketball brand that early in the season in Sioux Falls," Herbster said. "It made sense for a lot of reasons to do it; first, out of necessity."

The Coyotes will return three starters and four others who were out last season with injury to a team that came within three points of winning the Summit League tournament title.

Naturally, any early-season tests are a good primer for the league, Williams said.

"We feel like a challenging non-conference schedule puts us to the test early, before our league games," she said. "We're excited about some of the teams we bring in."

Not to mention some of the teams slated to come back. Williams pointed to UC Irvine, Cal State Fullerton, North Dakota and Valparaiso as teams scheduled to return to Vermillion in 2014-15.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

USD Women's BB			
10/26	Minn. State-Mankato (exhibition)	1 p.m.	
11/1	Sioux Falls (exh)	3:30 p.m.	
11/8	@ Cal State-Fullerton	9 p.m.	
11/10	@ UC-Irvine	4 p.m.	
11/13	@ Iowa State	7 p.m.	
11/21	Drake (in Sioux Falls)	7 p.m.	
11/24	Boise State	2 p.m.	
11/26	@ Creighton	7:05 p.m.	
11/30	Wyoming	5 p.m.	
12/5	Utah State	7 p.m.	
12/7	S.D. Mines (in Rapid City)	6 p.m.	
12/10	Northern Iowa	7 p.m.	
12/19	Coll. of St. Mary	7 p.m.	
12/21	@ Nebraska	2 p.m.	
12/31	@ Valparaiso	1:35 p.m.	
1/4	Cleveland State	2 p.m.	
1/12	@ Denver*	2 p.m.	
1/16	@ IUPUI*	6 p.m.	
1/23	Western Illinois*	7 p.m.	
1/25	Omaha*	2 p.m.	
1/30	@ N.D. State*	7 p.m.	
2/2	@ S.D. State*	1 p.m.	
2/7	Denver*	7 p.m.	
2/13	Fort Wayne*	7 p.m.	
2/15	IUPUI*	2 p.m.	
2/20	@ Omaha*	7 p.m.	
2/22	@ Western Illinois	4:30 p.m.	
2/27	N.D. State*	7 p.m.	
3/2	S.D. State*	2 p.m.	
Summit League Tournament March 8-11 at Sioux Falls			

Minnesota, UNLV Football To Meet In The Heat — Again

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — When Minnesota played at UNLV last year, the Gophers figured they had the summer weather in this series out of the way.

But when the two teams meet again Thursday night to open the season, it could feel a little bit like the desert. Temperatures have soared this week in the Twin Cities area, and forecasts have put the 6 p.m. kickoff right around 90 degrees.

So the Gophers will be substituting liberally to keep their guys as fresh as possible.

"If it's 91-plus, we'll go deep," Minnesota coach Jerry Kill said. "We'll have to."

In 2012, the 8 p.m. start in Nevada was 86 degrees.

The Rebels have seven opponents who played in 2012 bowl games on the schedule this year, including noncon-

ference foes Minnesota, Arizona and Central Michigan. Geography alone should make the Gophers the most difficult of those for UNLV. The Rebels have lost 22 straight games on the road, since a win Oct. 24, 2009, at New Mexico.

Here are five things to know about the season opener for these teams:

CLOSE CALL LAST FALL: Minnesota was a touchdown-plus favorite last year as only the third Big Ten team to visit Las Vegas, but the Rebels led in the fourth quarter and took them to three overtimes before falling 30-27.

This time, they've switched sites for the first season opener in TCF Bank Stadium history. Since their open-air facility opened on campus in 2009, the Gophers

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NFL To Pay \$765M To Settle Concussion Lawsuits

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The NFL has agreed to spend close to \$800 million to diagnose and compensate potentially thousands of retired players who develop dementia and other brain disorders they blame on the violent, bone-crunching collisions that pro football has long celebrated in its highlight reels.

The settlement, which is subject to approval by a federal judge, was announced Thursday after months of court-ordered mediation. It came just days before the first game of the 2013 season, removing a major legal and financial threat hanging over the NFL.

More than 4,500 former athletes — some suffering from dementia, depression or Alzheimer's that they blamed on blows to the head — have sued the NFL since the first case was filed in Philadelphia in 2011. They accused the league of concealing the long-term dangers of concussions and rushing injured players back onto the field, while glorifying and profiting from the game's violence.

The settlement would cover all 18,000 former NFL players and totals \$765 million, the vast majority of which would go to compensate athletes with certain neurological ailments. It would

also set aside \$75 million for medical exams and \$10 million for medical research.

Individual payouts would be capped at \$5 million for men with Alzheimer's disease; \$4 million for those diagnosed after their deaths with a brain condition called chronic traumatic encephalopathy; and \$3 million for players with dementia, said lead plaintiffs' lawyer Christopher Seeger.

The NFL has insisted that safety has always been a top priority, and in settling the thousands of cases it admitted no wrongdoing.

"This agreement lets us help those who need it most and continue our work to make the game safer for current and future players," NFL executive vice president Jeffrey Pash said in a statement. He added: "We thought it was critical to get more help to players and families who deserve it rather than spend many years and millions of dollars on litigation."

He said NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and the team owners told pro football's lawyers to "do the right thing for the game and for the men who played it."

The plaintiffs include Hall of Famer

Tony Dorsett, Super Bowl-winning quarterback Jim McMahon and the family of Pro Bowl selection Junior Seau, who committed suicide last year.

Kevin Turner, a former running back with the Patriots and Eagles who has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease, thanked the two sides for reaching an agreement that he thought most ex-players would support.

"Chances are ... I won't make it to 50 or 60," said Turner, now 44. "I have money now to put back for my children to go to college and for a little something to be there financially."

All former NFL players are eligible to seek care, screening or compensation. The amounts they receive will be based on their age, condition and years of play.

Players' lawyers said they expect the fund to cover the ex-athletes' expenses for 65 years. Current players are not covered.

The settlement most likely means the NFL won't have to disclose internal files about what it knew, and when, about concussion-linked brain problems. Some observers had warned that the lawsuits could cost the league \$1 billion or more if they were allowed to move forward in court.