

Yost To Royals Fans: Come Watch Us Play

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Royals manager Ned Yost pleaded with fans on Wednesday to show up for their remaining home games, one night after Alex Gordon's walk-off homer gave Kansas City a dramatic win over Minnesota that was seen by just 13,847 at Kauffman Stadium.

Yost briefly mentioned the attendance in his postgame remarks, and expanded on his thoughts when he was asked a follow-up question about so many empty seats during a pennant race.

"We've been working hard to try to make our fans happy and make our fans proud of us for a lot of years," Yost said, "and we'd like them to enjoy a night like that."

Some took Yost's com-

ments out of context — they thought they were a dig at fans who have suffered for 29 years without a playoff appearance. But the skipper said Wednesday that he wasn't being critical of fans, rather he was simply asking them to join in the fun.

The Royals entered Wednesday with a 1 1/2-game lead over Detroit in the AL Central.

"The reason I do this job, there's two reasons: One is I've been to the World Series six times. I know that feeling. I know the excitement. I know what goes along with it," Yost said. "And one of my main things is I want these players to experience that, because it's very, very important. And the opportunities to do it are

far and few between.

"And the other thing is I want the fans to experienced that," he said. "It's a special time. It's been a long time since our fans have been able to enjoy a playoff run."

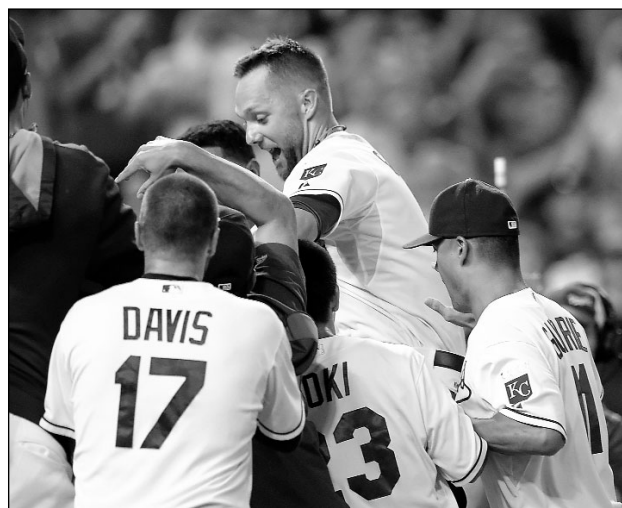
The Royals won 86 games last year, their best mark since 1989, but were never really in the division race. They were eliminated from wildcard contention with a week left in the season.

"To win a division, it's one of the toughest things to do in sports, and you don't know when this opportunity is going to come again," Yost said. "I just think it's extremely important that our fans get the opportunity to come out and enjoy this with us."

It wasn't just Yost who noticed the empty seats, though. Gordon also mentioned how light the crowd was one night after 31,758 turned out to see the Yankees — and shortstop Derek Jeter's last scheduled appearance in Kansas City.

"It wasn't the best," Gordon said, "but I think they've been pretty great all year long. I think they were a little tired after the Jeter night and cheering for him all night and taking a lot into that game. They took a night off and hopefully they'll come back out tomorrow."

There were several reasons for the paltry crowd. The Royals were playing the



JOHN SLEEZER/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT
Kansas City Royals' Alex Gordon (4) jumps into the crowd surrounding home plate after hitting a game-winning two-run home run for a 2-1 win over the Minnesota Twins on Tuesday at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Mo. Less than 14,000 fans were in attendance.

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MMC Golfers Open On Friday

Season-Opening Event Shortened To One Day

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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While it is not the start they hoped for, the Mount Marty College men's and women's golf teams will begin their season on Friday with an event at Hillcrest Golf and Country Club.

The season was originally supposed to begin today (Thursday) at Fox Run Golf Course, making it a two-day event. Featuring both courses was the trick, according to women's coach Tom Schlingmen.

"We've had this earmarked for a while," he said of the plan. Hillcrest has been very accommodating, as well as Fox Run."

MMC hosted the last events of the college regular season last spring, hosting the fourth Great Plains Athletic Conference meet for both the men and women. Without having a conference meet as a draw, MMC wanted to do something else that would draw opposing teams to an event in Yankton.

The ability to play two courses in a two-day event is a draw. Besides their home event, MMC will play in two men's and one women's tournament that will feature the two-course format this fall. (The spring schedule is not set.)

"It's a way to get a lot of teams," said MMC men's golf coach Todd Schlingmen. "It's something we're going to try to keep doing. The coaches enjoy it, playing two different courses on the same trip."

This will likely be the only home meet for the Lancer men and women this season.

"The kids take a lot more pride in playing at home," Tom Schlingmen said. "It's also a lot better on the budget, even though there's some work that comes with hosting."

Friday's round at Hillcrest Golf and Country Club will begin at 11 a.m.

Women's Preview

Coming off the team's best GPAC finish in school history,

the MMC women look to build on their success.

"We made a lot of strides last year," Tom Schlingmen said.

Sophomores Logan Wagner (Parkston) and Kellie Winckler (Lake Andes), the Lancers' top two a year ago, will again be expected to lead the team.

"We expected big years from them," Tom Schlingmen said. "They both had really good seasons as freshmen."

Two more locals — both from Vermillion — will also compete for varsity spots.

"I expect Kelly Amundson to be up there. She didn't get to play last spring because of a knee injury," Tom Schlingmen said. "One of her high school teammates, Elly Miller had a nice season last year."

Junior Kristen Shanahan (Burke), sophomore Azure Rodriguez (Rapid City) and freshman Chyenna Julia (Titonka, Iowa) will also compete for varsity spots.

"Kristen is a steady golfer," Tom Schlingmen said. "Azure improved nicely during last season. Chyenna is pretty good."

"They're all capable of being in the top five."

Overall, Schlingmen is excited about the squad.

"They're fun to work with, but they're serious about it," he said. "They're striving to get better."

Men's Preview

Coach Todd Schlingmen feels that this year's lineup is the best the Lancers have put together.

"This is probably the most talent we've had on the men's side," he said. "The exciting thing about it is that we only have one senior."

Junior Luke Loecker returns after earning team MVP honors a year ago. Sophomores Dylan Brende (Renner) and Robbie Neswick (Sioux City, Iowa), among the team's top golfers a year ago also return. One other returning



P&D FILE PHOTO
Mount Marty College golfer Logan Wagner putts during her round in the Great Plains Athletic Conference Championships this past May. Wagner and the Lancers open their season at home on Friday. The event was originally scheduled for two days, but today's (Thursday) action was called off due to expected poor weather conditions.

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Football: Jackrabbits Raise Expectations For 2014 Season

BY JEREMY HOECK
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BROOKINGS — John Stiegelmeier pulls no punches.

The veteran head coach is frank and to the point about his South Dakota State football program's goals for the 2014 season.

Following consecutive FCS playoff appearances and two trips to the second round, the Jackrabbits want a national seeding and a first-round bye.

"That's exactly what we're hoping for," said Stiegelmeier, whose team opens the season Saturday at Missouri.

By earning one of the top-8 seeds for the 24-team playoff field, the Jackrabbits would receive a first-round bye and would get a second-round home game at Coughlin Alumni Stadium.

"If you make the playoffs, it's great. You've got a chance to compete for a national championship," Stiegelmeier said. "But when you get a first-round bye, you're in the drivers seat for a week off."

The Jackrabbits, coming off a 9-5 season, were picked No. 10 in a pair of pre-season polls — still second in the Missouri Valley Football Conference, behind three-time defending national

North Dakota State.

Those outside expectations matter little to the Jacks, who have goals of their own after consecutive playoff appearances, Stiegelmeier said.

"The biggest thing after the last two years having some decent success is an improved belief in the program and the schemes and the system," he said.

"There's more of a confident feeling. And I think a little bit of tradition comes along with that."

There are significant holes to fill on both sides of the ball, but the Jacks boast three of the league's top weapons at their respective position.

Senior quarterback Austin Sumner (2999 yds, 19 TD, 8 INT), senior wide receiver Jason Schneider (78 rec., 1088 yds, 10 TD) and senior running back Zach Zenner (2015 yds, 23 TD) will be the focal point of the SDSU attack.

Zenner, in particular, is no stranger to the FCS landscape, having rushed for at least 2,000 yards in two seasons — the second player in FCS history to accomplish that feat.

"He's going to work tremendously hard. That's his nature," Stiegelmeier said. "He wants more than anything for us to win and

have a chance to compete for a national championship."

Then of course there's Zenner's off-the-field exploits.

"He gets more speaking invites than I do," Stiegelmeier joked. "And he should."

Zenner will be running behind an offensive line that returns only one starter, senior Trevor Greger from Wagner.

The defensive line is in the same situation, with only one returning starter, sophomore Cole Langer. The linebacker corp returns only junior T.J. Lally, while the secondary returns senior Jake Gentile and junior Je Ryan Butler.

One potential face that could see time at defensive line this season could be redshirt freshman Kellen Soulek, a Yankton High School graduate.

Soulek, who didn't play last season, certainly has the opportunity to see the field, Stiegelmeier said.

"He has played himself into a position to play this year," Stiegelmeier said. "He has a ton of ability, but at our level has zero experience."

Soulek will be making the trip to Missouri and should be able to quickly get himself up to speed on the pace of play, Stiegelmeier said.

"Once he does that, the game should slow down for him, and we should get a feel for how many reps he'll be getting," the coach said.

If Saturday's game doesn't slow down for the Jacks, they won't be alone.

Missouri, now a member of the Southeastern Conference, is coming off a 13-2 season that saw the Tigers lose in the SEC championship game but rebound for a Cotton Bowl victory.

"It'll be the fastest team we've played," Stiegelmeier said. "They have great tradition and the conference they play in is at such a high level of football."

"I don't want our guys to go down there and think we're playing a team in a different world."

On the other hand, is the veteran coach excited to see SEC football up close?

"I get excited about any football game, though," he said. "Especially when it's your opener. The guys have been running into each other for three weeks, but this one adds a little bit of spice, obviously."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

Missouri Opens Season With Veteran D-Line

BY JAKE KREINBERG
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Markus Golden isn't a conventional team captain. The senior defensive end transferred to Missouri from Hutchinson (Kansas) Community College two years ago, and has zero career starts with the Tigers.

He's not without experience, though. Golden backed up NFL draft picks Michael Sam and Kony Ealy last season, yet managed to record 55 tackles - including 13 for loss - and 6.5 sacks. He's set to start in No. 24 Missouri's opener Saturday against South Dakota State, and says he doesn't feel any pressure in taking over.

"Oh, no, not at all," Golden said. "Why would I be worried about filling any shoes? I'm the same person. I'm sticking to the same role I had last year, which was being myself out there and playing hard every play."

Golden highlights a defensive line that features three seniors and a junior atop the depth chart despite losing its star power from a year ago. Tackles Matt Hoch and Lucas Vincent have 34 combined starts while end Shane Ray played as a reserve in

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