

Irritated Coach Zimmer Cuts Vikings Practice Short

MANKATO, Minn. (AP) — Adrian Peterson did not practice again on Thursday because of a bruised thigh.

To hear coach Mike Zimmer describe his team's final practice of training camp in Mankato, none of his other players did, either.

An angry Zimmer cut practice short on Thursday morning, had his whole team run a lap and then ripped their lackluster effort as the team broke camp and headed back to the Twin Cities.

"That was a terrible practice," Zimmer said. "It was not up to my standards and they better get better quickly or there's going to be a lot of heck going on."

The plain-speaking coach has

never been one to mince words, but his assessment of the day was blunt even by his standards.

What didn't he like?

"Everything."

Were there any positives today?

"Yeah. That we're going home."

What did he tell the team?

"I probably can't repeat it."

Since taking over before last season, Zimmer has constantly praised the team's collective work ethic and desire to improve. He has often said that he feels the Vikings have taken to his demanding ap-



Zimmer

proach and has been disciplined and diligent in putting forth the effort he deems necessary to be successful.

But that all went out the window on the team's last day in Mankato. With the players perhaps looking forward to making the 90-minute drive home to their own beds and their families, they delivered a lifeless performance that infuriated their coach.

Zimmer's father, Bill, died on Tuesday at the age of 84. Mike Zimmer took a page out of the long-time high school football coach's book when he made the entire team take a lap about 30 minutes into practice in an effort to get their attention. When that didn't

work, he cut the practice about 20 minutes short of its scheduled end and let the players have it at midfield.

"That's not what good teams do," Zimmer said. "Good teams don't do that. Good teams focus on the task at hand. They don't care what's happened the last 13 days, they worry about today and they worry about getting better. That's what good teams do."

The Vikings play their preseason home opener on Saturday night against Tampa Bay.

Veteran linebacker Chad Greenway said he thought the last time a coach made the team take a lap was when he was in high school.

"Late in camp you can't have

that mindset where you are just going to come out there and roll out the ball," quarterback Teddy Bridgewater said. "You've got to just continue to fight through everything. Coach Zimmer, he's a tough coach. He wants everything to be precise in practice and I think we didn't do a good job of that today."

When a coach isn't pleased with his team's work ethic, he often will lean on his veteran players to police the locker room and get everyone back on the same page.

Zimmer, though, said he was taking a different approach.

"I lean," he said, "on my size 10."

Season Preview | Yankton High School Soccer

Bucks, Gazelles Ready For Action



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton's Jack Wolfgram, center, pushes the ball up-field during a Bucks home game last fall against Huron. Wolfgram, now a sophomore, is back for Yankton, which opens its 2015 season tonight (Friday) at home against Watertown.

Youthful Bucks Looking 'Motivated' Gazelles Eyeing Playoffs To Push The Tempo

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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A year ago, a veteran Yankton boys' soccer team made an undefeated run through the Eastern South Dakota Conference before falling in the state semifinals.

This year a younger team will try to build on that success.

Yankton boasts just three seniors as it begins the 2015 season today (Friday) at home against Watertown.

"This year is going to be a little different from last year," said Yankton head coach Warren Brenner. "This year is going to be year of change."

Yankton will start the season with just 12 players who will be considered just varsity players, as well as four who will play both varsity and JV. While this year's squad does not have the depth of the 2014 team, they have plenty of talent.

"What I see from the players that are playing varsity is quality," Brenner said. "Those 12 players can all step up and play well and play together."

One major change from

a season ago will be in strategy. Last year's team won games by shutting down opposing offenses. This year's team is built on outscoring opponents.

"Normally we've been a defensive attacking team. We attack out of the backfield quite a bit, and we defend really well," Brenner said. "This year we're going to be offensive-heavy. We hope our midfield to produce a lot of shots and allow our strikers to be more open."

In order to better utilize their talent, much emphasis has been placed on short, sharp passing.

"We've been pinpointing on possession, keeping the ball, because if the other team doesn't have the ball they can't hurt you," said junior midfielder Treyson Slate. "We really try to play a simpler, small-sided style of play, not resort to anything that's long balls over the top. It's a smoother-looking style."

Brenner expects to start juniors Cole Lewno and Gabe



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton's Brianna Benjamin, right, competes in a home game last fall against Huron. Benjamin, the top returning scorer, and the Gazelles open the 2015 season today (Friday) at home against Watertown.

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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A season ago the Yankton Gazelles fell just short of making the post-season falling in what ended up being a win-or-go-home match against Pierre in the regular season finale.

With that setback driving them, the Gazelles have worked to prepare for the 2015 season, which begins today (Friday) at home against Watertown.

"It's motivated us a lot, having that heartbreak at the end of last season," said senior striker Brianna Benjamin. "We've all stepped up a lot."

While the Gazelles took some graduation hits, they return six seniors and 10 juniors, many of which saw plenty of time on the field due to some key injuries. Yankton also returns senior Erin Luken, who missed part of last season due to injury.

"We gained a lot of experience last year," said Yankton head coach Tyler Schuring. "We're going to fill some spots with other talented players."

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Mount Marty Baseball Adds Two Transfers, Neb. Recruit

The Mount Marty College baseball program announced Thursday the additions of two players: Bo Howard (transfer from Century College, White Bear Lake, Minnesota), Osha Brewer (transfer from Itasca Community College, Minnesota) and Connor Martin (Papillion, Nebraska).

This past spring, under the direction of head coach Dwight Kotila and the guidance of Howard, Century College finished in 4th Place at the National Junior College D3 World Series. Howard had an outstanding season playing multiple positions on the field while posting a .389 batting average with 58 hits, 43 runs, 8 doubles, 2 triples, 4 home runs, 52 runs batted in and 11 stolen bases. He also posted a .385 batting average during his freshman season.

Howard came to Century College from Marshfield, Wisconsin with a decorated high school baseball

career. He was a three-time 1st Team All-Conference selection. In 2013, during his senior season, Howard was named 1st Team All-State, 1st Team All-Conference, 1st Team All-Region and was named both 2013 Wisconsin Valley Conference Player of the Year and Wisconsin District II Player of the Year while boasting a .517 batting average.

"I am excited that the baseball program and college landed a player the caliber of Bo Howard," MMC head coach Andy Bernatow said. "He is a very talented player in all facets of the game. He has the potential to be a middle of the order hitter for us while providing outstanding defense and has the athletic ability to play multiple posi-



Howard

tions on the field. I am eager to get fall practices started and Bo has the ability to make an immediate impact for us."

Howard plans to major in elementary education at Mount Marty College. The son of Todd and Bobbie Howard, he is the recipient of a Marty Scholarship in addition to his baseball scholarship.

Brewer plays middle infield and pitches. He is coming off an impressive career for Itasca where he was a two-year starter; Brewer guided Itasca to two MCAC Northern Division Championships in 2014 and 2015. This past season Brewer posted a .295 batting average with 33 hits, 22 runs, and 17 runs batted in. During his freshman campaign



Brewer

Brewer batted .373 with 28 hits, 25 runs, and 16 runs batted in. Brewer also had 11 pitching appearances for Itasca during his career.

"Over the years Mount Marty Baseball has had a strong relationship with Itasca Community College and I am happy to get another outstanding player from Coach Justin Lamppa and ICC," MMC's Bernatow said. "Osha put together a solid career for Itasca."

Osha plans to major in accounting at Mount Marty College and is the son of Bernadeth Brewer. Brewer is the recipient of a Marty Incentive Academic Scholarship in addition to his baseball award.

Martin will join the Lancer roster as an outfielder. He played his high



Martin

school baseball for Papillion-LaVista South which is regarded as one of the top programs in Nebraska. This past summer Martin played American Legion Baseball for Omaha Bryan Post 339 and posted a .362 batting average with 25 hits, 13 runs, 5 doubles and a triple.

"I am happy to announce the signing of Connor Martin to our baseball program," Bernatow said. "This past spring we had a huge graduation class which has created a major need for depth in the outfield. This signing is going to help the program and I am excited to get him to campus."

Connor plans to major in English/secondary education at Mount Marty College and is the son of Lyle and Jennifer Martin. He is the recipient of a Mount Marty College Incentive Scholarship for academic achievement in addition to his baseball award.