



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

These Yankton High School football players stretch before a Wednesday afternoon practice at Crane-Youngworth Field. Yankton opens defense of its 2014 Class 11AA title against Brookings, a rematch of last year's championship game, on Friday, Aug. 28, in Brookings.

Football | Yankton Bucks

# Linemen ‘Heart And Soul Of This Team’

BY JEREMY HOECK

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There are no statistical leaderboards for a lineman. They tend not to garner much attention, nor do they seek it.

And as many coaches would jokingly tell you, about the only stat linemen get credit for are sacks: Either the good kind (you're getting to the quarterback) or the bad kind (someone gets to your quarterback).

At Yankton High School, however, linemen play a prominent role. Last year's undefeated run to a Class 11AA state championship proves it, according to senior Landon Binder.

"It was definitely a team effort, but the line had a big part of it," said Binder, whose blonde mowhawk ensures that he stands out in a crowd with his helmet off.

The Bucks, who open their 2015 season next Friday at Brookings, say they realize just how critical their offen-

sive and defensive lines were a year ago and will be this season.

"I think it's a huge part of our offense," said senior Bradey Sorenson, who returns to the line along with Binder and Alex Withrow. "It's where it all gets started."

Because of Yankton's historically dominant run game, mixed in recent years by prolific quarterbacks, the linemen have played even more of a larger role in the program's success.

And last year was no different, according to head coach Arlin Likness.

It all starts on the line?

"We definitely know that," said Likness, who will enter this season with a 245-84 career record. "Our line got better last year and that's how we got better."

"We need to have that happen again this year."

To that point, success this season could very well hinge on the line's performance.

Gone from last year is the starting quarterback. Gone

is the leading rusher. Gone is the leading receiver. Gone is the all-purpose yardage leader.

Although the Bucks return plenty of production to those positions, the line is key, according to Withrow.

"The line is where you win the game most of the time," he said. "If your line can get a four-yard push and your back can get another four, that's an eight-yard play right there."

For those guys carrying or catching the ball, they too realize how important is that the line carries over its momentum from a year ago.

"We had a great line last year and they were young," senior running back Sheldon Gant said. "This year, they'll be the heart and soul of this team."

"We're going to bank on them pretty much the whole time."

And in much the same way the linemen bank on each other.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Yankton High School football coach Arlin Likness, center, talks to his players before a Wednesday afternoon practice at Crane-Youngworth Field.

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Season Preview | USD Soccer

# Coyotes Hope Beefed Up Schedule Pays Off

BY JEREMY HOECK

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VERMILLION – In each of Mandy Green's first four seasons at the helm, the University of South Dakota soccer team has improved its win total. One. Two. Six. Nine.

Yet, in the games that have mattered – in the Summit League – the Coyotes haven't exactly progressed. One win. One win. One win. Two wins.

In an effort to hopefully spark improvement in conference action, Green has taken what she calls a "new approach" to scheduling non-conference games. The premise? No more exhibitions against NAIA schools. No more lower-level games in the regular season.

Last season, for example, USD opened with an exhibition against Viterbo, and then played consecutive home games against Northern State and Saint Mary (Neb.). The combined scores in those

games was 12-0.

"Last year was the first year where I felt like we dominated those games," Green said. "But I don't think it prepared us well."

With that in mind, Green went out and beefed up the early part of the non-conference schedule: USD had an exhibition with Nebraska, opens the season on Friday at Creighton, and then will host Iowa State on Sunday and Drake on Aug. 27. The other home non-conference games will be Green Bay, Northern Iowa and UC Riverside.

It might be a little daunting, especially early, for a team that includes 12 freshmen, but the Coyotes are looking for any kind of barometer they can find.

"This team needs to get whooped on a little bit," Green said. "We need to see what the gap is, and where we are right now."

It's all part of USD's larger plan to develop its soccer program into a regular com-

petitor inside and outside of the Summit League.

"I hope it doesn't backfire on us," Green said. "I think this group understands what we're trying to do; that it's great learning experience."

Picked to finish seventh out of nine teams in the Summit League this fall, the Coyotes return seven starters, including second team All-league forward Corey Strang (Jr., 5 goals). They also bring back offensive weapons Taylor Nivala (Sr., 8 goals), Rebecca Sparkman (Sr., 5 goals, 4 assists) and Danielle Anderson (Sr., 4 goals, 3 assists).

While USD set a school record with 42 assists last year, it scored only eight goals in eight Summit League games. It was when Green watched game film that she saw another area of improvement: Capitalizing.

"We saw so many games where we created so many



P&D FILE PHOTO

South Dakota's Taylor Nivala, left, is tripped up by South Dakota State's Dani Patterson during their Summit League game in the 2014 season. Nivala and hte Coyotes open the 2015 season at Creighton on Friday.

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# Bird Blasts Help Yankees Finish Sweep Of Twins

NEW YORK (AP) — Greg Bird shrugged his shoulders a few times, gave a bashful smile or two and talked about how he's just honored to be helping his Yankees teammates. Nothing seemed to faze this 22-year-old rookie.

Not even those two soaring homers he hit in his fourth big league start.

Bird hit a pair two-out, two-run drives Wednesday, supporting an overpowering effort by Nathan Eovaldi and leading the New York Yankees to a 4-3 victory over the Minnesota Twins for a three-game sweep.

"His composure. You feel like he's been here already six months," teammate Chase Headley said. "He's very calm."

Eovaldi (13-2) did not allow a baserunner until Chris Herrmann singled with one out in the sixth. Topping 100 mph on the scoreboard radar a handful of times, Eovaldi was touched for three runs in the inning when he lost command of his secondary pitches.

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# USD Cross Country Team Enjoys Change Of Pace



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

University of South Dakota cross country coach Dan Fitzsimmons, on bike, talks to some of his women's runners prior to a workout near Lewis & Clark Lake on Wednesday.

# Coyotes Work Out At Lewis & Clark Lake As They Begin Preparations For Season

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Campsites. Beaches. A marina. A lake.

The lists of sights and sounds that University of South Dakota cross country runners don't normally encounter on training runs could go on, but a short drive certainly provided a nice change of pace.

"It's definitely not Vermillion," senior Isaac Allen said, smiling.

As part of their pre-season workouts and the kickoff to a 3-day get-away, the Coyotes came to Yankton on Wednesday morning for an hour-long run along the shores of Lewis & Clark Lake – their original

plan was to traverse the horse trails, but muddy conditions prevented it. Rather than running along the streets of Vermillion or even at the Don Baker course across Highway 50, the Coyotes – who have two weeks before their first meet of the season – instead relished the scenic opportunities offered by Yankton.

"It's nice to be able to get out and run somewhere where you're not surrounded by buildings and concrete," senior Amber Eichkorn said. "Coming from a city, it gets

online

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boring where you have stoplights every half mile.

"It's nice not to have to wait for cars."

The 33-person group – 21 women, 12 men – began their run at the Gavins Point Recreation Area beaches and ran east along the lake, and eventually turned around at the marina. Because of the conditions at the horse trails, their new course wasn't exactly as hilly, but it was still a far cry from what they're used to, according to senior Katie Wetzstein.

"Vermillion is flat," she said later during a team brunch at the Yankton Hy-Vee. "So it's nice to go to a place where you have hills and scenery, and you can look around."

"For me, it feels like going home (Wisconsin) to run."

A change of scenery was exactly the point for teams that each has Summit League

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