



BUCKS | ANTHONY WIENER

Yankton Boys' Hockey Program Makes Varsity Debut This Year

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally appeared in the Dec. 2 edition of the Press & Dakotan.

For the 14 boys that will be skating for the Yankton Bucks hockey team in 2011-12, it's going to be a busy winter.

With Yankton making its varsity hockey debut this season, those boys will be playing both a varsity and a junior varsity schedule, giving them plenty of nice time to hone their skills.

"I'm kinda excited, kinda nervous," said Mike Stoll, who coached the JV program from its infancy and will now serve as mentor for the varsity program. "We'll be playing at a different level. The teams we face will have more speed and more experience, and we're going in with a younger team."

Yankton made the jump to varsity at the same time as Sioux Center, giving South Dakota 10 teams in the highest division.

"We were waiting to see what Sioux Center was going to do," Stoll noted. "We went in knowing that we had a big group in Bantams that will be moving up next year."

"It will be hectic this year, but next year will be better."

Dawson Johnson, who spent his summer playing in North Dakota, highlights a quartet of seniors for the Bucks.

"Dawson played the summer on a select team, then had the opportunity to give up his senior year and play in Montana or Wyoming," Stoll noted. "He chose to come back and finish his senior year."

Johnson had two goals and two assists last season. Andrew Kotalik (2 assists), Lukas Tretfak and goalie Austin Davis also return as seniors for the Bucks.

Anthony Wiener (4 goals, 9 assists), the team's top returning scorer, highlights a strong junior class. Also back are Tyler Stoll (1 goal, 3 assists), Tyler Johnson (3 assists), Adam Spencer (1 goal), Austin Reining and Logan Van Winkle (1 goal).

"The junior class has a lot of kids that will benefit from this season," Coach Stoll noted. "They are going to get a lot of experience this year."

Sophomore Isaac Althoff, a goalie for the Bantam squad a year ago, Logan Megard and Landon Withrow move up to varsity from the Bantam level this season, as does freshman Mitch Vavra.

With only 14 players on the

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Veteran Squad Returns For Coyote Women

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

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VERMILLION — The University of South Dakota Coyote women have started the 2011-12 season better than most predicted.

The Coyotes, who are coached Ryan Williams in his fourth year back in Vermillion, have jumped out to a 5-1 start (through action as of Dec. 5). USD started the season by beating Northern Arizona and Creighton. Later came a win at Oakland on Dec. 3, the team's first victory in the Summit League.

USD, with all five starters back from last year's second-place finish in the Great West Conference, earned a post-season bid to the Women's Basketball Invitational.

"We've got a core group back that played some pretty good basketball last year," Williams said. "Our schedule is a whole lot different and we're in a much tougher league now, so that core group needs to have a big year."

"For our seniors, this is the fourth league they've been in, so they're used to change," Williams said of joining the Summit. "It's nice to know that these kids know how to adjust — it's a comforting feeling."

Back to lead the Coyotes is senior Amber Hegge, who leads the team in scoring (19.7) and rebounding (8.3). An all-around player, Hegge has also recorded 19 assists, 10 steals and six blocks. The 6-1 forward from Crofton, Neb. earned All-Great West honors for a second time last season.

"I thought Amber grew as far as being more assertive offensively," Williams said. "She had a really nice junior season and she'll have a nice senior season, but we're going to need the kids around her to have good years as well."

Hegge is again teamed with Jodie Boss (5.8 ppg, 6.3 rpg, 20 total blocks) this season.

Boss, a senior out of Columbus, Neb., was named the 2011 GWC Defensive Player of the Year as she blocked 106 shots — a single-season Coyote record.

"She's a very unique talent defensively as she's able to move her feet well for her size and she runs the floor extremely well," Williams said of Boss. "We're going to need Jodie to be more productive on the offensive end and she's capable of that."

Together, Boss and Hegge, who blocked 19 shots, made life difficult in the post for opposing



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teams, and their effect spread to the perimeter as the Coyotes held opponents to under 30-percent shooting from 3-point land and a GWC-leading 56 ppg.

Also returning for her senior season is hometown guard Annie Roche.

At 5-8, the speedy Roche has been a steadying backcourt force who has been a starter since redshirting her freshman season. Roche has averaged 10.5 points and 1.8 rebounds this season, to go along with a 10-of-17 effort on three-pointers.

"It seems like she's been around forever and I'm glad," Williams said. "She's just one of

those kids that you have to have out on the floor."

Alexis Yackley (Onida) returns for her second season as the primary Coyote point guard.

The 5-7 Yackley has averaged 7.3 points, 6 assists and 2.8 rebounds this season as a junior.

"Alexis and Annie were a nice tandem and you really saw their chemistry grow as the season went on," Williams said. "They are a little undersized a few nights, but they are real tough cookies and smart basketball players."

Tempestt Wilson, a 5-10 junior guard from Elk River, Minn., has averaged 7.7 points and 2.7 re-

bounds.

"Tempestt is a girl you really saw grow last year; you go back to the Idaho game and she hit some really big shots for us," Williams said. "Tempestt has looked really good in our preseason practices; she's another key for us and we've been very pleased with what we've seen from her so far."

Missing from last year's Coyote rotation is Stacia Robertson. The 6-1 Robertson scored 7.9 ppg off the bench in her sophomore season and was third on the team with 120 rebounds. Rober-

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excited to watch him progress over the next four years."

The Bucks will have a pair of eighth graders battling for the varsity spot at 106 pounds, both with YHS wrestling bloodlines: Spencer Huber and Noah Vetter. Spencer, whose brother Matt is a returning varsity wrestler for the Bucks, was an AAU state champion earlier in his career. Noah is the younger brother of 2011 Class A state champion Mark Vetter, who is now wrestling at NCAA Division II power Augustana.

"Spencer won a state championship at the youth level and looks to use that experience at the high school level," Hage said. "Noah is a talented wrestler, but a little underbigger. We look for him to get bigger and faster in the next year, and hopefully fit right in at 106 next year."

Senior Kam Kendall returns to the Bucks roster after two years away, and is the top choice to start the season at 113 pounds.

"We're a little thin at 113, and he is the only high school athlete at that weight class," Hage noted. "We have some eighth graders there, but we want them to gain experience at the JV level."

Junior Cole Dather and freshman Michael Montoya will battle for the varsity spot at 120 pounds. Dather wrestled on varsity match last season, earning a victory. Mason Strahl, a freshman, will wrestle at 126 for the Bucks this season.

Sophomore Casey Skillingstad, 26-14 last year and 43-30 in two varsity seasons, will compete at 132 pounds. Skillingstad placed seventh at state last season.

Another returning state qualifier, Matt Huber will compete at 138 pounds. Huber, a junior, went 14-19 last season and is 30-39 on his career.

"We look for him to move up another notch and earn a place this year," Hage said.

At 160, James Hisek will make his debut as a varsity regular. He won his lone varsity match a year ago by pin.

"He's done a nice job the last couple of years, filling in where we've needed him to," Hage

noted.

Junior C.J. Warren returns after qualifying for state a year ago. The 170-pounder went 11-14 a year ago, and is 13-17 on his career.

Junior Thomas Kruse will make his debut as a varsity regular, competing at 195 pounds for the Bucks. He went 5-3 with a pin last season.

Juniors Robbie Borgstrom and Royce Reisner will battle at heavyweight for the Bucks this season. Borgstrom split his two varsity matches last season. Reisner went 0-3 in varsity competition.

With the number of underclassmen the Bucks have this

year, Hage knows a challenging season awaits.

"The nice thing is, we're not going to lose a lot of seniors this year," he joked. "When you graduate big class after big class, and you're bringing in half as many freshmen, it's eventually going to catch up with you. This year it did."

The coaching staff that will be tasked with helping the young Bucks mature is familiar to the YHS wrestling room. Murray McGlone, who was head coach of the Bucks from 1999-2005, returns as an assistant for the program. Riley Smith, who went 79-29 as a Buck wrestler from

1999-2003 and has spent the past several years as an assistant at Class A power Rapid City Stevens, also returns to the YHS program.

"Murray's a former head coach and has been running our middle school program for the

past four, five years, so he is familiar with our kids," Hage noted. "Riley was a volunteer assistant for us for two, three years while he was in college. He made the decision to come back home, and he's a fantastic addition to the program."

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