Press&Dakotan DAILY DOSE

Daily opinions from the P&D Sports Staff on local and national high school, college and professional sports.



BY JEREMY HOECK

jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

VERMILLION — Minutes after the South Dakota men's basketball team watched Southern Utah walk out of the DakotaDome with an 81-75 overtime win Wednesday, I got the following reply on Twitter.

Nobody will debate that, especially the Coyotes who are now 0-3 in Summit League action as the conference

One question that came up in the post-game press conference was essentially if the team wants to get that first league win out of the way.

Though the answer was an emphatic no all the way around, Wednesday night was the perfect example of why you can't let up; not in the Summit League — quickly rising among Division I leagues in the nation.

With under six minutes to go in regulation, USD had a 10-point lead. The Coyotes had to hit another gear on both

ends of the court to build that cushion, yet they couldn't quite hang on to it.

Southern Utah, which came in with the lowest RPI among Summit League teams, methodically got back in the game and forced overtime. Then, of course, the Thunderbirds were helped by an 0-for-6 effort from the field by the votes in the extra session.

Though players and coaches won't say as much, you've got to think there's an extra sense of 'let's at least get that

With its last two league losses coming by a combined 11 points, the turning point may not be that far off for USD.

SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL SOUTH DAKOTA BOYS Kimball Christmas Tournament Jones County 55, Plankinton 36

Kimball/White Lake 83, Iroquois 19 Northern Classic Tournament Sunshine Bible Academy 52, Summit 43 SOUTH DAKOTA GIRLS

entral 53, Rapid City Central 46

Sterling Tournament
Hanover, Kan. 64, Parkview Christian 21
Sterling 41, College View Academy 21 Kimball Christmas Tournament Jones County 42, South Central 27 Kimball/White Lake 44. Plankinton 29 NEBRASKA BOYS

First Round
Ainsworth 40, North Central 33

Arapahoe Tournament First Round Hitchcock County 56, Arapahoe 50 Pleasanton 34, Sumner-Eddyville-Miller 31 Cabela's Holiday Shootout

First Round Sidney 56, Broken Bow 41 GNAC Tournament First Round
Hastings 65, Kearney 48
Norfolk 64, Lexington 32
North Platte 58, McCook 49 Scottsbluff 64, Columbus 57 **Howells Tournament** First Round Howells 53, Leigh 25 Humphrey 60, East Butler 47

Nebraska Christian Tournamen First Round
Dodge 55, Lindsay Holy Family 44
Nebraska Christian 37, St. Edward 22 Newman Grove Tournament Giltner 66. Heartland Lutheran 56 Newman Grove 43, Elba/North Loup Scotia

Ravenna Holiday Tournament First Round Overton 63, Centura 53 Ravenna 76, Loup City 54 Stanton Tournament (Holiday)

First Round Stanton 61, O'Neill 59 West Holt 43, Madison 31 Sterling Tournament
Hanover Kan. 54. Parkview Christian 44 Sterling 51, College View Academy 39 Stuart Tournament First Round North Central 50, Ainsworth 32

VisitMesa.Com Tournament South Sioux City 84, Tucson Amphitheater, Wisner-Pilger Tournament Lutheran High Northeast 45, Oakland-Craig Ponca 58, Tekamah-Herman 47

NEBRASKA GIRLS Arapahoe Tournament

First Round
Hitchcock County 51, Arapahoe 37
Pleasanton 54, Sumner-Eddyville-Miller 46, OT Cabela's Holiday Shootout

First Round Sidney 36, Broken Bow 26 **GNAC Tournament** First Round Columbus 47, Hastings 25

Lexington 36, Kearney 32 McCook 54, Norfolk 32 North Platte 59, Scottsbluff 40 Great Northeast Nebraska Tournament First Round Laurel-Concord 63, West Point-Beemer 27 Howells Tournament

First Round Howells 55, Leigh 22 Humphrey 51, East Butler 46 Nebraska Christian Tournament First Round Lindsay Holy Family 61, Dodge 23 St. Edward 46, Nebraska Christian 37

Newman Grove Tournament Giltner 71, Heartland Lutheran 25 Newman Grove 48, Elba/North Loup Scotia

Ravenna Holiday Tournament

First Round Centura 63, Overton 28 Ravenna 54, Loup City 29 Rock Holiday Tournament ordia 51, Mandarin, Fla. 36 Stanton Tournament (Holiday)

First Round O'Neill 47, Stanton 39 West Holt 57, Madison 29 State Farm Holiday Hoops Invitational Helias Catholic, Mo. 62, Omaha Mercy 33

Stuart Tournament

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOC. EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division Pct

New Jersey .500 Toronto Philadelphia .000 .000 GB Miami 1.000

1/2

GB

1/2

1/2 1 1/2

1.000

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Pct GB

1.000

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.000 2

Pct GB

1.000

.500

.500

Atlanta 1.000 1 1/2 1 1/2 2 1/2 Orlando Washingtor .000 Pct Indiana Cleveland Chicago .500 .500 Milwaukee Detroit .000 WESTERN CONFERENCE New Orleans

Dallas Northwest Division Oklahoma City Denver Minnesota Pacific Division L.A. Clippers

San Antonio

Golden State Tuesday's Games Atlanta 106, New Jersey 70 Miami 115, Boston 107

Milwaukee 98, Minnesota 95 Portland 101, Sacramento 79 L.A. Lakers 96, Utah 71 Wednesday's Games Indiana 90, Toronto 85

Miami 96. Charlotte 95 New Orleans 97, Boston 78 Oklahoma City at Memphis, 8 p.m L.A. Clippers at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Utah at Denver, 9 p.m.
Philadelphia at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
New York at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games New Jersey at Orlando, 6 p.m. San Antonio at Houston, 7 p.m. Dallas at Oklahoma City, 7 p.m. Chicago at Sacramento, 9 p.m. Denver at Portland, 9 p.m. New York at L.A. Lakers, 9:30 p.m

Friday's Games Orlando at Charlotte, 6 p.m. Cleveland at Indiana, 6 p.m. Detroit at Boston, 6:30 n m New Jersey at Atlanta, 6:30 p.m. Phoenix at New Orleans, 7 p.m. Miami at Minnesota, 7 p.m.

Houston at Memphis, 7 p.m. Toronto at Dallas, 7:30 p.m. Washington at Milwaukee, 7:30 p.m Philadelphia at Utah, 8 p.m. Chicago at L.A. Clippers, 9:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NCAA FCS PLAYOFFS At Pizza Hut Park, Frisco, Texas Sam Houston State (14-0) vs. North Dakota State (13-1), noon FBS BOWL GLANCE

Saturday, Dec. 17 NEW MEXICO: Temple 37, Wyoming 15 FAMOUS IDAHO POTATO: Ohio 24, Utah NEW ORLEANS: Louisiana-Lafayette 32, Tuesday, Dec. 20 BEEF 'O'BRADY'S: Marshall 20, Florida In-Wednesday, Dec. 21 POINSETTIA: TCU 31, Louisiana Tech 24

Thursday, Dec. 22 MAACO: Boise State 56, Arizona State 24 Saturday, Dec. 24 HAWAII: Southern Mississippi 24, Nevada Monday, Dec. 26 INDEPENDENCE: Missouri 41, North Car-Tuesday, Dec. 27 LITTLE CAESARS PIZZA: Purdue 37, Dallas Philadelphia

BELK: North Carolina State 31. Louisville Wednesday, Dec. 28 MILITARY: Toledo 42, Air Force 41 HOLIDAY: Texas (7-5) vs. California (7-5), Thursday, Dec. 29
CHAMPS SPORTS: Florida State (8-4) vs.

Notre Dame (8-4), 4:30 p.m. (ESPN) **ALAMO:** Baylor (9-3) vs. Washington (7-5), Friday, Dec. 30 ARMED FORCES: Tulsa (8-4) vs. BYU (9-11 a.m. (ESPN)
PINSTRIPE: Rutgers (8-4) vs. Iowa State (6-6), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)

MUSIC CITY: Mississippi State (6-6) vs. ike Forest (6-6), 5:40 p.m. (ESPN)
INSIGHT: Oklahoma (9-3) vs. lowa (7-5), 9 Saturday, Dec. 31 MEINEKE CAR CARE: Texas A&M (6-6) Northwestern (6-6), 11 a.m. (ESPN) SUN: Georgia Tech (8-4) vs. Utah (7-5), 1

LIBERTY: Vanderbilt (6-6) vs. Cincinnati (9-FIGHT HUNGER: UCLA (6-7) vs. Illinois (6-6), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN) **CHICK-FIL-A:** Virginia (8-4) vs. Auburn (7-

Monday, Jan. 2 TICKETCITY: Penn State (9-3) vs. Houston -1), 11 a.m. (ESPNU)

CAPITAL ONE: Nebraska (9-3) vs. South rolina (10-2), noon (ESPN)

OUTBACK: Georgia (10-3) vs. Michigan te (10-3), noon (ABC)

GATOR: Florida (6-6) vs. Ohio State (6-6),

ROSE: Oregon (11-2) vs. Wisconsin (11-2),

FIESTA: Stanford (11-1) vs. Oklahoma State (11-1), 7:30 p.m. (ESPN) Tuesday, Jan. 3 SUGAR: Michigan (10-2) vs. Virginia Tech (11-2), 7 p.m. (ESPN) Wednesday, Jan. 4 ORANGE: West Virginia (9-3) vs. Clemson

(10-3), 7 p.m. (ESPN) Friday, Jan. 6 COTTON: Kansas State (10-2) vs. Arkansas Saturday, Jan. 7 BBVA COMPASS: Pittsburgh (6-6) vs. SMU

(7-5), 11 a.m. (ESPN) Sunday, Jan. 8 GODADDY.COM: Arkansas State (10-2) vs.

Northern Illinois (10-3), 8 p.m. (ESPN) Monday, Jan. 9
BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP: LSU

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Pct PF .800 464 .533 360 .400 351 y-N. England N.Y. Jets Buffalo Miami .333 310 296
 Pct
 PF
 PA

 .667
 359
 255

 .533
 302
 295
 Tennessee Jacksonville .267 224 316 .133 230 411 Pct PF PA .733 354 250 x-Baltimore x-Pittsburgh

.733 312 218 .600 328 299 .267 209 294 Pct PF PA .533 306 383 .533 333 .467 368 .400 205 Kansas City 6 9 U ... NATIONAL CONFERENCE Florida **PF PA** 363 386 355 316 Pct PF Winnipeg N.Y. Giants .533

.333 278 333 Washington Pct y-New Orleans 12 .800 502 .600 357 322 326 x-Atlanta Carolina 400 389 384 .267 263 449 Pct PF PA .933 515 318 y-Green Bay .667 433 342 .467 336 328 .200 327 432 Pct PF PA **W** 12 v-San Fran. .800 346 202

.467 301 292 .467 289 328 .133 166 373 x-clinched playoff spot; y-clinched division Sunday, Jan. 1 Chicago at Minnesota, noon Carolina at New Orleans, noon Detroit at Green Bay, noon San Francisco at St. Louis, noon Tennessee at Houston, noon

Buffalo at New England, noon Tampa Bay at Atlanta, noon N.Y. Jets at Miami, noon ndianapolis at Jacksonville, noon Baltimore at Cincinnati, noon Pittsburgh at Cleveland, noon
Dallas at N.Y. Giants, noon
Washington at Philadelphia, noon San Diego at Oakland, 3:15 p.m. Kansas City at Denver, 3:15 p.m Seattle at Arizona, 3:15 p.m.

HOCKEY NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

GP W L OT Pts GF GA 35 22 9 4 48 103 76 35 21 10 4 46 119 104 36 21 11 4 46 118 93 N.Y. Rangers Philadelphia 36 20 15 1 41 100 104 s 34 11 17 6 28 77 111 Northeast Division GP W L OT Pts GF GA 33 23 9 1 47 119 63

GP w 2 33 23 9 1 47 119 00 36 18 14 4 40 113 118 128 17 15 5 39 113 128 37 17 15 5 39 113 128 36 17 16 3 37 97 106 37 14 16 7 35 94 103 GP W L OT Pts GF GA

AREA CALENDAR

Despite 0-3 Start, Turning Point May Not Be Far Off For USD

Thursday, December 29
BASKETBALL, WOMEN'S Oral Roberts at USD (7 p.m.,

BASKETBALL, BOYS' Creighton Holiday Tourn. (Hartington vs. Wausa, 4:15 p.m.; Creighton vs. West Boyd, 7:45 p.m.); Crofton Holiday Tourn. (Bloomfield vs. Wynot, 3:45 p.m.; Crofton vs. O'Neill St. Mary 5: 6:45 p.m.); East-West Classic at Chamberlain (Gayville-Volin, Platte-Geddes); Great Northeast Nebraska Shootout at Wayne (Hartington Cedar Catholic, Lau-Nebraska shobotur at wayne (Harmigton Cedar Canolic, Labrel-Concord-Coleridge); Randolph Holiday Tourn, (Plainview vs. Newcastle, 3:30 p.m.; Winside vs. Randolph, 6:30 p.m.); Shoobout on the Elkhorn at Wisner (Ponca); Verdigre Booster Club Tourn, (Osmond vs. Lych, 4:30 p.m.; Allen vs. Niobrara-Verdigre, 8 p.m.); Andes Central at Menno; Bon Homme at Elk Point-Jefferson: Parker at Garretson

BASKETBALL, GIRLS 'Creighton Holiday Tourn. (Harting-ton vs. Wausa, 2:30 p.m.; Creighton vs. West Boyd, 6 p.m.); Crofton Holiday Tourn. (Bloomfield vs. Wynot, 2 p.m.; Crofton vs. O'Neill St. Mary's 5 p.m.); Great Northeast Nebraska Shootout at Wayne (Hartington Cedar Catholic, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge); Northern State Classic (Menno vs. McIntosh, Order-Octangel, Northern State classis (Mentin vs. Michael 4 p.m.); Parkston Classis (Avon vs. Highmore-Harrold, 10 a.m.; Viborg-Hurley vs. Mitchell Christian, 11:30 a.m.; Hanson vs. Lennox, 1 p.m.; Dell Rapids vs. Sully Buttes, 2:30 p.m.; Elkton-Lake Benton vs. Clark-Willow Lake, 4 p.m., Centerville vs. Tri-Valley, 5:30 p.m.; Parkston vs. St. Thomas More, 7 p.m.; Beresford vs. Wagner, 8:30 p.m.); Randolph Holiday Tourn. (Plainview vs. Newcastle, 2 p.m.; Winside vs. Randolph, 5 p.m.); Shootout on the Elkhorn at Wisner (Ponca); Swiftel Clas-

37 19 11 7 45 99 101 36 17 14 5 39 100 105 35 18 15 2 38 104 106 35 15 17 3 33 95 117 38 12 20 6 30 97 127

GP W L OT Pts GF GA

36 9 22 5 23 87 123

19 18 1 39 101 15 17 3 33 96

GP W L OT Pts GF GA

33 19 11 3 41 97 80 35 20 14 1 41 95 101 36 18 15 3 39 95 96 36 17 14 5 39 80 88 35 10 19 6 26 83 115

88 88

36 23 9 4 50 122 36 23 12 1 47 118 36 21 11 4 46 94 37 19 14 4 42 98

Northwest Division

GP W L OT Pts GF

36 22 12 2 46 120

38 20 12 6 46 89

Pacific Division

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for

Tuesday's Games Calgary 2, Columbus 1, SO Pittsburgh 4, Carolina 2

Montreal 6. Ottawa 2

Detroit 3, St. Louis 2

Winnipeg 4, Colorado 1

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

St. Louis

Vancouver

Minnesota

Calgary Colorado

San Jose

Los Angeles

sic (Gayville-Volin vs. Lake Preston, 12:30 p.m.); Verdigre Booster Club Tourn. (Osmond vs. Lynch, 2:45 p.m.; Allen vs. Niobrara-Verdigre, 6:15 p.m.); Mount Vernon at Andes Central

GYMNASTICS, PREP Winter Wonderland Inv. at Vermil-(Vermillion, Wagner, 11:30 a.m.)
WRESTLING, PREP Floyd Farrand Inv. at Sioux Falls (Parkston, Vermillion, Wagner, 11 a.m.); Pierce Duals Tourn. (Hartington Cedar Catholic, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge, 10 a.m.)

Friday, December 30

BASKETBALL, MEN'S Oral Roberts at USD (7 p.m.,

BASKETBALL, BOYS' Creighton Holiday Tourn. (Consolation — 4:15 p.m.; Championship — 7:45 p.m.); Crofton Holiday Tourn. (Consolation — 3:45 p.m.; Championship — 6:45 p.m.); Great Northeast Nebraska Shootout at Wayne (Hartington Cedar Catholic, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge); Parkston Classic (Corsica-Stickney vs. Wolsey-Wessington, 11 a.m.; S.F. Chris-tian vs. Wagner, 12:30 p.m.; Platte-Geddes vs. Groton Área, 2 p.m.; Sully Buttes vs. Mount Vernon, 3:30 p.m.; Parkston vs. Mitchell Christian, 5 p.m.; Miller vs. Clark-Willow Lake, 6:30 p.m.; Viborg-Hurley vs. James Valley Christian, 8 p.m.); Ran-dolph Holiday Tourn. (Consolation — 3:30 p.m; Championship — 6:30 p.m.); Shoolout on the Elkhorn at Wisner (Ponca); Verdigre Booster Club Tourn. (Consolation — 4:30 p.m.; Cham-pionship.— 8 p.m.); Alcaster-Hudson at Avon; Tea Area at Ver-million (7 p.m., KVTK-AM)

BASKETBALL, GIRLS' Creighton Holiday Tourn, (Consolation — 2:30 p.m.; Championship — 6 p.m.); Crofton Holiday Tourn. (Consolation — 2 p.m.; Championship — 5 p.m.); Great Northeast Nebraska Shootout at Wayne (Hartington Cedal

Catholic, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge); Randolph Holiday Tourn Consolation — 2 p.m; Championship — 5 p.m.); Shootout on the Elkhorn at Wisner (Ponca); Verdigre Booster Club Tourn. (Consolation — 2:45 p.m.; Championship — 6:15 p.m.); Alcester-Hudson at Avon; Bon Homme at Winner; Tea Area at Vermillion (5 p.m., KVTK-AM)

HOCKEY, BOYS' Yankton at Sioux Falls (8:45 p.m.) HOCKEY, BOYS' JV Yankton at Sloux Falls (6:45 p.m.)
HOCKEY, PEEWEE S.F. East at Yankton B (7 p.m.)
WRESTLING, PREP McCook Central-Montrose Tourn. (A

cester-Hudson, Bon Homme, Dakota Valley, Elk Point-Jefferson. Kimball-White Lake-Platte-Geddes. Marion-Freeman Parker, Scotland, 9 a.m.); Floyd Farrand Inv. at Sioux Falls (Parkston, Vermillion, Wagner, 10 a.m.) Saturday, December 31 BASKETBALL, WOMEN'S Southern Utah at USD (2 p.m.,

HOCKEY, GIRLS' JV Watertown at Yankton (DH, 11 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.) HOCKEY, BANTAM Yankton A at Sioux Falls (11:30 a.m.);

Yankton B at Sioux Falls (1:30 p.m.) HOCKEY, PEEWEE Watertown at Yankton A (2 p.m.); Wa-

own at Yankton B (12:30 p.m.)
Sunday, January 1
HOCKEY, BANTAM Yankton B at Sioux Falls (8 a.m.)
HOCKEY, PEEWEE Brookings at Yankton A (1 p.m);

Brookings at Yankton B (11 a.m.) Monday, January 2
No activities scheduled

Frontier League FLORENCE FREEDOM—Released RHP Jeff Frost, INF Kevin Haas and C Justin Holloway. Placed LHP Zeb Engle on the suspended BASKETBALL

NBA Development League
LOS ANGELES D-FENDERS—Signed Gerald Green and F Malcolm Thomas. Waived F Brian Hamilton and F Terrence Roberts, Ac

Los Angeles at Winnipeg, 7:30 p.m. Columbus at Dallas, 7:30 p.m. Phoenix at Colorado, 8 p.m. Vancouver at Anaheim, 9 p.m. FOOTBALL
National Football League
BUFFALO BILLS—Signed PK Brandon
Coutu. Placed PK Dave Rayner on injured reiday's Games Buffalo at Washington, 6 p.m.

Calgary at Ottawa, 6:30 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Florida, 6:30 p.m. Nashville at St. Louis, 7 p.m. Detroit at Chicago, 7:30 p.m

Nashville 2, Minnesota 1, SO

New Jersey 3, Buffalo 1
Washington 4, N.Y. Rangers 1
Los Angeles at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Boston at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Vancouver at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

ursday's Games Calgary at N.Y. Islanders, 6 p.m.

Calgary at N.Y. Islanders, 6 p.m. Philadelphia at Pittsburgh, 6 p.m. Toronto at Carolina, 6 p.m. Montreal at Tampa Bay, 6:30 p.m.

Edmonton at Minnesota, 7 p.m

TRANSACTIONS BASEBALL

American League
NEW YORK YANKEES—Agreed to terms

with LHP Hideki Okajima on a minor league con-OAKLAND ATHLETICS—Traded RHP Andrew Bailey and OF Ryan Sweeney to Boston for OF Josh Reddick, 1B Miles Head and RHP

National League
WASHINGTON NATIONALS—Agreed to terms with UT Mark DeRosa on a one-year conAmerican Association
EL PASO DIABLOS—Signed OF Palmer

serve.
CHICAGO BEARS—Agreed to terms with

OL Edwin Williams on a two-year contract extension through the 2013 season.
CLEVELAND BROWNS—Signed WR Owen Spencer to the practice squad.

MIAMI DOLPHINS—Announced the retirement of LB Jason Taylor, effective at the end of the season. Placed OT Jake Long on injured re-serve. Signed RB Richard Medlin from the prac-

tice squad.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—Signed DE Aaron Lavarias and DB Ross Ventrone to the practice squad.

HOCKEY National Hockey League DALLAS STARS—Activated G Kari Lehtonen from injured reserve. Placed D Stephane

Robidas on injured reserve, retroactive to Dec.

DETROIT RED WINGS-Activated F Jan Mursak from injured reserve and assigned him to Grand Rapids (AHL) for conditioning.

LOS ANGELES KINGS—Placed F Simon

Gagne on injured reserve. NASHVILLE PREDATORS—Reassigned F Blake Geoffrion to Milwaukee (AHL).

American Hockey League BINGHAMTON SENATORS—Assigned G Brian Stewart to Elmira (AHL). CONNECTICUT WHALE—Announced G on Missiaen was assigned to the team from renville (ECHL).

MANCHESTER MONARCHS—Signed LW

Chris Cloud to a professional tryout agreement PROVIDENCE BRUINS—Signed C Bobby Robins to a professional tryout agreement ECHL
ELMIRA JACKALS—Signed D Jarrett Rush.
KALAMAZOO WINGS—Waived F Avery

Central Hockey League
WICHITA THUNDER—Announced D Andrew Martens was recalled by Oklahoma City SOCCER

Major League Soccer SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES—Signed D Victor Bernardez. Women's Professional Soccer SKY BLUE FC—Agreed to terms with D

COLLEGE SOUTH ALABAMA—Named Robert

Matthews offensive coordinator.

Versus Changes Name To NBC Sports Network

NEW YORK (AP) — The cable channel with three names in 5 1/2 years is getting its new identity from one of the most recognizable brands in sports broadcasting.

Once Outdoor Life Network, now Versus, it will become NBC Sports Network on Monday. What's in a name? Linking the channel to such a known quantity

could make an impact as simple as encouraging cable companies to stick it in a more high-profile spot on the dial. "In some areas we're not easy to find," NBC Sports Group Chair-

man Mark Lazarus told The Asso-

ciated Press. "But we think we will

give more value to distributors by

having that." The channel's parent company, Comcast, took over NBCUniversal in January 2011, and the

Happy New Year (CLOSED)

peacock's imprint quickly appeared on Versus. NBC announcers, NBC production, NBC cross-promotions.

Monday was chosen as a natural fit for the name change because that's when the NHL Winter Classic airs on NBC, offering plenty of opportunities to trumpet the switch. Versus' biggest sports property is hockey, with the Comcast-NBC merger putting both of the NHL's U.S. national contracts under the same com-

At 4 p.m. EST, the new name will become official with the Winter Classic postgame show on the cable channel. Next come examples of the new programming NBC has added on Versus: a documentary from former HBO Sports President Ross Greenburg about

the 1972 Summit Series pitting Canadian and Russian hockey teams and the studio show "NBC SportsTalk.'

Lazarus hopes the familiarity of the NBC Sports name will lend the network credibility with potential viewers. But the biggest audience growth will come from adding more live sports, and that's not as instantaneous as a logo change.

"This is a five-year plan," Lazarus said. "This is going to take time."

NBC signed a deal with Major League Soccer earlier this year that will put games on the cable channel that first became known for its Tour de France coverage. But most other contracts for highprofile sports are at least a couple

of years from expiring.

Classic

From Page 8

ford or Viborg-Hurley. Of all the teams in the field, the Beresford Watchdogs advanced in the state tournament the furthest last season. Beresford lost to Sisseton in the Class A championship, but returns all five starters for

Saying that his team was not fully prepared to play the likes of Wagner at the Classic last year, Beresford coach Brent Palmer said it's a different story this season experience being the key differ-

"We are excited to play Wagner and I am sure they feel the same way," Palmer said. "It will definitely give us an evaluation of our progress and what we need to improve on through the rest of the

year.' Not only does the Beresford-Wagner matchup feature a pair of veteran-led squads, it will pit a pair of Class A standouts against each other. Wagner's Devon Brecke (23 ppg), a Northern State recruit, will again defend with Beresford senior Allison Klostergaard, who averages 14.5 points.

Defensively we are getting after people, which our girls take pride in. On the offensive end, we are doing a great job of distributing the basketball," said Wagner coach Michael Koupal, whose team has four players averaging eight or more points per game.

"We need to continue to play sound basketball and continue to get better each game.' There's also a serious scoring

showdown in the 7 p.m. contest between top-ranked St. Thomas More and fourth-ranked Parkston. St. Thomas More senior guard Caitlin Duffy (a Colorado State recruit) is averaging 23.4 points a game, while Parkston senior guard

versity of Sioux Falls) scores 27.8 points a game. 'Anybody who hasn't seen Duffy play needs to get up there (Parkston)," said Parish, who

coached Duffy while she was with

Marie Malloy (headed to the Uni-

the Dakota Schoolers in the sum-

'She's a very rare talent." Parish's Centerville Tornadoes boast their own scoring threat in junior guard Kieran O'Malley (18.2 ppg), who with Samantha Blake gives Centerville a potent 1-2 punch against Tri-Valley — a twotime state tournament representa-

Two other area teams will be facing squads coming off a state tournament appearance, Avon with Highmore-Harrold and Viborg-Hurley with Mitchell Christian. Viborg-Hurley's top scorer is Halev Jorgensen (14.3 ppg), who signed to play Division I volleyball at the

University of South Dakota. Yet, basketball will be the focus

With such a loaded field of teams, there are bound to be some classic matchups, Wagner's Koupal

"It's an honor to play in this classic," he said. "It has been at least 16 straight years for Wagner being able to play there. You are always going to see someone of your

Ice Arena Holiday Skate Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturda
Open Skate Hours for the Holiday Vacation			12/21 6–8:30 pm	12/22 1-4 pm	12/23 1-4 pm	12/24 10am-1 pm
12/25 Merry Christmas (CLOSED)	12/26 1-4 pm	12/27 1-4 pm	12/28 1-4 pm, 6-8:30 pm	12/29 1-4 pm	12/30 1-4 pm	12/31 6–9 pm, Free Ad
1/1/12	1/2/12	Normal Open Skate Hours Are: Wednesdays 6-8:30pm Admission: \$3.00				

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