

The Press & Dakotan's



As the year 2011 winds down, we are taking a look at the year that was. On Dec. 24, we announced the South Dakota Sportswriters' year-end awards. On Dec. 26, we named our Prep Athletes of the Year, Kyle McKelvey of Beresford and Devon Brecke of Wagner. Today we look at the top stories of the year. We will recap the 'rare moments' of 2011 on Jan. 2.

SIX DEGREES OF DOMINATION



Containing a trend that started in 2006, the Crofton girls' cross country team claimed its sixth straight state title with a Class D victory at the state meet in October.

Only two programs in Nebraska prep cross country history have put together state title runs longer than Crofton's string of six straight. One of the two is Crofton, which won eight straight from 1981-88.

The Warriors this season were led by the fourth-place finish of Danielle Riesberg, followed by Tiffany Tramp (sixth) and Kendy Kube (15th).

STORY OF THE YEAR: KYLE MCKELVEY



A RETURN TO SIOUX CITY

For the second time in three seasons, the Mount Marty College women's basketball team played on the ultimate stage — the NAIA National Tournament in Sioux City, Iowa.

Yet, for the Lancers, the result was the same as their last trip in 2009.

Marian (Ind.) benefited from a cold shooting display from Mount Marty to claim a 75-52 opening round win on March 10.

Though they were once again sent home early from the national tournament, the Lancers reached the 20-win mark for the third straight season under head coach Tom Schlimgen.



For the Yankton High School cross country program, the tradition lives on.

The Yankton Gazelles won their seventh Class AA team championship in nine years — by a tiebreaker over Pierre — at the state meet in Sioux Falls in late October.

Jenna Grossenburg led the Gazelles with a fourth-place finish, followed by Whitlee Larson (ninth) and Annie Kruse (10th) in the top 10.

Though the Yankton Bucks finished eighth in the boys' team race, Yankton was able to claim the combined team title — an expressed goal for the program.

For what he accomplished in his senior year at Beresford High School would have been enough to warrant McKelvey significant attention.

But he was far from done.

After winning his third straight South Dakota state boys' shot put title and setting a new state record in the event, McKelvey went on to win two national titles and represented Team USA in another prestigious event.

McKelvey won national titles at the New Balance Outdoor Nationals and the USA Junior Championships, both in June. He then qualified for the Pan American Junior Athletics Championships in July down in Florida, where he finished second.

Now a freshman at the University of South Dakota, McKelvey said he has high expectations for his collegiate career.

YANKTON X-COUNTRY RETURNS TO THE TOP

