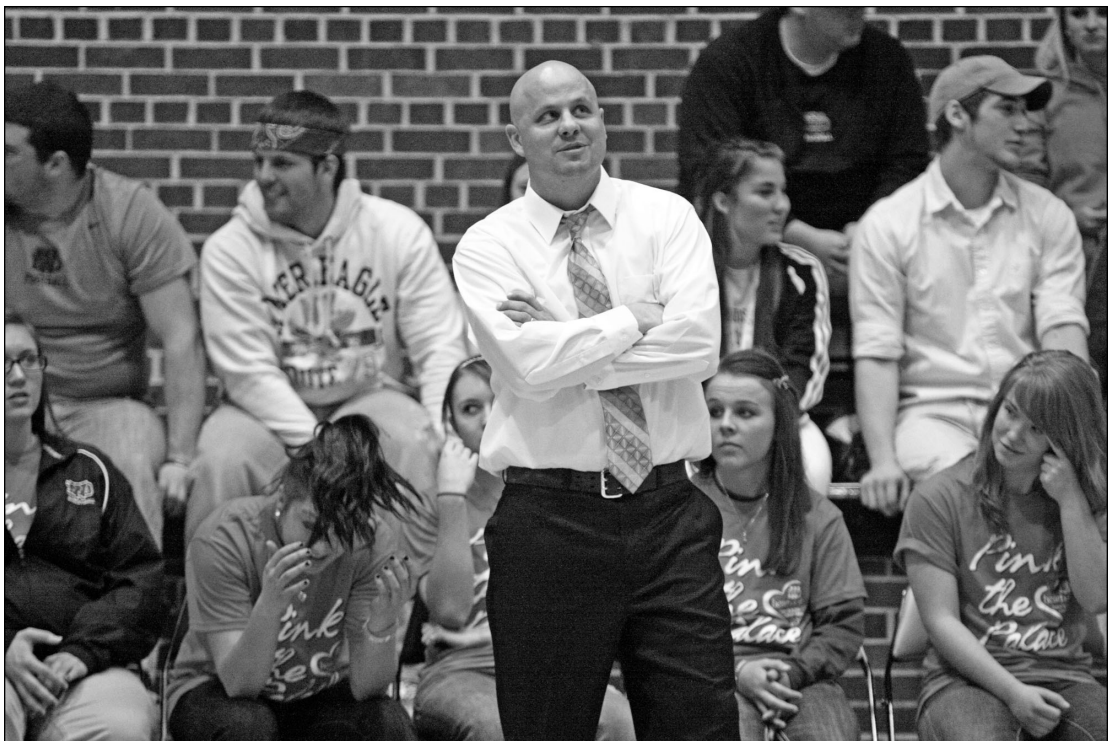


Competing No Longer Enough For DWU Women



MITCHELL DAILY REPUBLIC PHOTO

Dakota Wesleyan women's basketball coach Jason Christensen, center, looks up at the clock during a home game earlier this season. The former Wagner boys' basketball coach has turned the Tigers into a conference and national contender, off to an 8-4 start and receiving votes in the NAIA Division II poll. DWU is at Mount Marty on Wednesday, with the women's game at 6 p.m. and the men's game at 8 p.m.

Tigers Building On First Winning Season Since '08

BY JEREMY HOECK
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No longer is the Dakota Wesleyan University women's basketball team content with simply competing.

Times have changed in Mitchell. The Tigers have eyes on becoming a contender in arguably the nation's toughest NAIA league.

"Last year we would talk about, 'Oh, we only lost by 14 to the number five team,'" junior guard Amanda Hart said. "That really bothers us. That's not good enough for us anymore."

That was exactly the trend head coach Jason Christensen wanted to reverse when he took over the program in 2010. In the two full seasons since the Mitchell native came aboard, the Tigers have embraced a more aggressive recruiting approach, re-

lied more on offensive sets and an increased focus on internal structure.

If DWU — off to an 8-4 start this season — has its way, the ultimate end goal of all those doctrines would be to become a legitimate NAIA National Tournament contender.

"The key is that you have to have a group of kids who buy into your system," said Christensen, whose Tigers travel to Yankton on Wednesday night for a Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) women's contest with Mount Marty College.

"That first year, I didn't get much time to do much, so we tried to set things up for the future. Last year we were able to put that system into place.

"It seems to be working now." From where Dakota Wesleyan was when Christensen assumed his duties after coaching boys' basketball at Wagner High School, the rise has been significant. The Tigers won just six games — 6-25 overall, 2-16 in the GPAC — that first season, with a young roster.

Not much went right, but as

with many quick-risers, there had to be a valley.

"That first year, we were bad; really bad," Hart said. "We knew what it was like to be at rock bottom, and we knew it'd be a tough climb."

Climb the Tigers did.

A 10-win improvement to 16-15 overall last season — highlighted by a win over the No. 14-ranked team in the country — not only vaulted DWU into the GPAC Tournament as the eighth seed, but was the program's first winning season since 2008.

In the sense that the team had to experience lows before highs, that first season, "ground zero" as junior forward Kim Johnson called it, was the foundation for what the Tigers have accomplished since.

"We know what we went through and that experience actually helped," Johnson said. "Now that we're older, we can remember those tough times. We've had the experience of losing, and we learned a lot."

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Gazelles Top Wagner In Home Opener

BY CHRIS RILEY
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The Yankton-Bon Homme gymnastics duo of junior Elsie Kotalik and senior Charlotte Taggart led the Gazelles to a convincing 132.80-119.10 dual victory over the Wagner Red Raiders at the Summit Activities Center on Monday night. While both coaches talked about the team competition not being the main priority, Gazelles head coach Luke Youmans said that his team rose up to exceed the goals they had set before the meet.

"Tonight the team competition wasn't really our goal," Youmans said. "We set a goal of our JV to hit 100 points and our varsity, competition aside, to be a team over 130 tonight."

The Gazelles came through with the JV squad totaling 110.90 points while the varsity team scored 132.80.

"We were good tonight but not great," Youmans added. "Thus far we have improved every meet. It's good for our girls to get over that 130 mark and still know that there is a lot left out here that we are not taking advantage of."

Kotalik scored individual victories in the balance beam and floor exercise along with a first-place tie with Taggart in the vault to take the all-around crown with a score of 34.45. Taggart Dominated the uneven bars and was runner-up to Kotalik in the floor exercise along with that first-place tie in the vault to place second in the all-around (33.10).

Despite their overall youth, Youmans is hopeful that behind the experience of Taggart and Kotalik the Gazelles can continue to improve as the season wears on.

"We've got a really young team but our senior, Charlotte, has really come along this year," he said. "She's been a little inconsistent on the beam but once she starts hitting there she will be one of the top all-around girls in the state. We've also got Elsie who has been one of our top girls in all-around."

Meanwhile, Wagner coach Lorie Walery knew that while coming in as a Class B school to compete against the Class A Gazelles would be a struggle, she was looking for her girls to gain valuable competition time early in the season.

"We are just looking to get the experience," Walery said. "It is only our second meet of the season. The girls are looking really good on floor, improving on beam, struggling on bars a little bit but small lit-

tle adjustments are going to improve our scores."

Sophomore Hannah Fleming was the top Red Raider in the all-around competition, placing third on the strength of top-four individual finishes in the vault, uneven bars, and balance beam.

While the Red Raiders are looking for experience, Youmans is eyeing a much bigger prize on the horizon for his rapidly improving Gazelles team.

"We knew coming into the season that this would be the year we turned the corner," he said. "Nineteen ninety-eight was the last time we had a team on the podium - it's been a long dry spell. This is the year we can turn that around."

"I don't want to limit our expectations to just getting on the podium," Youmans added.

Yankton-Bon Homme competes at the Mitchell Invitational on Saturday. The Gazelles return home on January 17 to host Vermillion in a dual.

Wagner travels to Milbank on Saturday before getting a 14-day competition break for Christmas.

You can follow Chris Riley on Twitter at twitter.com/ChrisCRiley

VARSITY: Yankton-Bon Homme 132.80, Wagner 119.10

ALL-AROUND: Elsie Kotalik YBH 34.45, Charlotte Taggart YBH 33.10, Hannah Fleming W 32.00, Lindsay Larson YBH 31.65, Kaitlin Guthmiller YBH 31.50, Kylee Ligtberg W 31.25, Ashlyn Haak YBH 30.55 Krista Dvorak W 27.65, Rachel Dion W 25.05

VAULT: Elsie Kotalik YBH 8.75, Charlotte Taggart YBH 8.75, Lindsay Larson YBH 8.60, Hannah Fleming W 8.50, Chelsey Hisek YBH 8.50, Rachel Dion W 8.40, Ashlyn Haak YBH 8.30, Kylee Ligtberg W 8.15, Kaitlin Guthmiller YBH 8.00, Bobbi Jo Soukup W 8.00, Adrian Weber W 7.60, Krista Dvorak W 7.40, Megan Kocer W 7.30

UNEVEN PARALLEL BARS: Charlotte Taggart YBH 8.80, Chelsey Hisek YBH 8.25, Elsie Kotalik YBH 8.05, Hannah Fleming W 7.85, Kaitlin Guthmiller YBH 7.70, Ashlyn Haak YBH 7.65, Lindsay Larson YBH 7.40, Kylee Ligtberg W 7.20, Bobbi Jo Soukup W 7.15, Krista Dvorak W 5.20, Rachel Dion W 4.75

BALANCE BEAM: Elsie Kotalik YBH 8.95, Krista Dvorak W 8.35, Kylee Ligtberg W 8.20, Hannah Fleming W 8.10, Kaitlin Guthmiller YBH 8.05, Lindsay Larson YBH 8.00, Charlotte Taggart YBH 7.20, Ashlyn Haak YBH 6.80, Rachel Dion W 4.90, Alexis Dion W 4.90, Kelsey Barnett W 2.80

FLOOR EXERCISE: Elsie Kotalik YBH 8.70, Charlotte Taggart YBH 8.35, Sophie Bisgaard YBH 8.15, Ashlyn Haak YBH 8.00, Kaitlin Guthmiller YBH 7.75, Kylee Ligtberg W 7.70, Lindsay Larson YBH 7.65, Hannah Fleming W 7.55, Rachel Dion W 7.00, Megan Kocer W 6.85, Adrian Weber W 6.80, Krista Dvorak W 6.70, Justine Soukup W 6.50

JUNIOR VARSITY: Yankton-Bon Homme 110.90, Wagner 60.30

ALL-AROUND: Miranda Hallberg YBH 29.45, Cheyenne Crisman YBH 26.35, Bree Kotab W 18.45

VAULT: Sophie Bisgaard YBH 6.30, Miranda Hallberg YBH 6.00, Justine Soukup W 7.80, Hannah Vetter YBH 7.55, Cheyenne Crisman YBH 7.50, Maddie Nooney YBH 7.50, Bree Kotab W 7.30, Alexis Dion W 5.8

UNEVEN PARALLEL BARS: Miranda Hallberg YBH 7.35, Sophie Bisgaard YBH 6.60, Cheyenne Crisman YBH 5.80, Kobi Kennedy YBH 4.05, Chloe Noteboom W 3.75, Alexis Dion W 2.50, Bree Kotab W 2.00

BALANCE BEAM: Sophie Bisgaard YBH 8.20, Chelsey Hisek YBH 7.20, Miranda Hallberg YBH 7.00, Cheyenne Crisman YBH 6.30, Kobi Kennedy YBH 5.00, Chloe Noteboom W 4.10, Maddie Nooney YBH 4.00, Bree Kotab W 3.10, Justine Soukup W 1.80

FLOOR EXERCISE: Miranda Hallberg YBH 7.10, Chelsey Hisek YBH 6.90, Cheyenne Crisman YBH 6.75, Kobi Kennedy YBH 6.30, Bree Kotab W 6.05, Kelsey Barnett W 5.50, Alexis Dion W 5.35, Chloe Noteboom W 5.25, Maddie Nooney YBH 5.0



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Yankton-Bon Homme's Charlotte Taggart competes on the uneven parallel bars during the Gazelles' home dual with Wagner on Monday at the Summit Center.

Beresford Girls Power Past Panthers In Big Sioux Showdown

NORTH SIOUX CITY — The Beresford Watchdogs improved to 3-0 on the season with a 55-45 victory over Dakota Valley in a matchup of Big Sioux Conference and District 8A girls' basketball rivals on Monday.

Alyson Johnsen posted 17 points and eight assists to lead Beresford, which led 20-6 after one quarter and by 15 points at halftime, 31-16. Taryn Twite posted 12 points and seven rebounds. Ashley Ostrem added 10 points in the victory.

Jayde Bergmann scored 15 points and Jenna Kittler had 14 points to lead Dakota

Valley. Mackenzie Mennenga netted 10 points and Allison Sexton added 12 rebounds for the Panthers.

Beresford, 3-0, hosts Harrisburg on Friday, Dakota Valley, 1-1, travels to Canton on Friday.

BERESFORD (3-0)20 31 41 55
DAKOTA VALLEY (1-1)6 16 30 45

Hanson 68, Parkston 59

ALEXANDRIA — The Hanson Beaverettes outscored Parkston 22-11 in the fourth quarter of Monday night's contest to take a 68-59 victory over the Lady Trojans in Alexandria.

Kandra Cheeseman scored 19 points to lead Hanson while Kynedi Cheeseman added 14 points and eight steals. Cassidy Graham was also in double figures for the Beaverettes, scoring 11.

Hanson, who improved to 3-0, shot over 50 percent from the field

and made 21 of 27 free-throw attempts. They trailed by two points entering the fourth period but exploded for 22 points in the last eight minutes of action.

Erica Herrold and Krista Radke scored 15 points apiece for Parkston while Sadie Schoenfelder added 12 points and Alexis Horstman chipped in 10.

Hanson also won the JV game, 49-19.

Hanson travels to Menno on Friday.

Parkston, 2-1, hosts Chamberlain on Friday.

PARKSTON (2-1)15 30 48 59
HANSON (3-0)34 28 46 68

Norfolk Catholic 61, Hartington Cedar Catholic 35

HARTINGTON, Neb. — Norfolk Catholic jumped out to a 36-16 halftime lead on the way to a 61-35 victory over Hartington Cedar Catholic in Mid-State Conference girls' basketball action on Monday.

Michaela Barry and Paige Marsden each had 14 points for Norfolk

Catholic. Marsden hit 4-4 from three-point range.

Also for the victorious Knights, Amy Miller had 12 points.

Emily Schrepp scored a game-high 17 points to lead Cedar Catholic.

Both teams are now 3-2. Norfolk Catholic faces cross-town rival Lutheran High Northeast in a Mid-State Conference matchup on Thursday. Cedar Catholic goes in to South Dakota to face Avon on Thursday.

NORFOLK CATHOLIC (3-2)15 36 46 61
CEDAR CATHOLIC (3-2)7 16 26 35

Wagner 60, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 37

ARMOUR — Wagner routed Tripp-Delmont-Armour 60-37 in girls South Dakota high school basketball action Monday night.

Ali Kuca led the way for Wagner (3-0), netting 21 points. Jessa

Wagner Claims Top Honors At Home Meet

WAGNER — The Wagner Red Raiders put two all-arounders in the top four to claim team honors at the Wagner Invitational gymnastics meet on Saturday.

Wagner finished at 122.75, 2.55 points better than Chamberlain. Stanley County finished third (115.0), followed by Vermillion (109.4) and West Central (103.55).

Chamberlain's Vanzi Knippling claimed all-around honors with a 33.9. She also posted top scores on the bars (8.45), floor (8.5) and vault (9.05).

Stanley County's Hailey Norman finished second in the all-around at 32.4, followed by Wagner's Kylee Lightenberg (32.15) and Hannah Fleming (31.45). Fleming won the beam with an 8.4.

Vermillion's Morgan Hower placed sixth in the all-around, scoring a 30.0.

TEAM SCORES: Wagner 122.75, Chamberlain 120.2, Stanley County 115.0, Vermillion 109.4, West Central 103.55

ALL-AROUND: Vanzi Knippling C 33.9, Hailey Norman SC 32.4, Kylee Lightenberg W 32.15, Hannah Fleming W 31.45, Shantel Bailey C 30.75, Morgan Hower V 30.0

BEAMS: Vanzi Knippling C 8.45, Shantel Bailey C 8.3, Kylee Lightenberg W 8.0, Hailey Norman SC 7.8, Hannah Fleming W 7.4, Morgan Hower V 7.4

BEAM: Hannah Fleming W 8.4, Hailey Norman SC 7.95, Vanzi Knippling C 7.9, Shantel Bailey C 7.8, Kylee Lightenberg W 7.45, Rory Tucker V 7.4

FLOOR: Vanzi Knippling C 8.5, Kylee Lightenberg W 8.4, Hailey Norman SC 8.35, Kelsey Van Den Hemel SC 8.3, Hannah Fleming W 8.15, Morgan Hower V 8.15

VAULT: Vanzi Knippling C 9.05, Kylee Lightenberg W 8.3, Hailey Norman SC 8.3, Sarah Knust C 8.2, Shantel Bailey C 8.2, Morgan Hower V 8.2, Cheyenne Mallory V 8.2, Taylor Sickler SC 8.2

USD Adds UC Davis To 2013 Football Schedule, Might Add 12th Game

BY JEREMY HOECK
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The addition of UC Davis to the University of South Dakota 2013 football schedule may not, in fact, be the final piece to the puzzle.

No, Monday's announcement of a home-and-home series with the California school keeps the door open for a possible 12th game for the Coyotes next fall. The next question now is, how does USD fill that vacancy?

"We do want to play 12 games in 2013," associate athletic director David Herbster said Monday. "We're just trying to fill one of those weeks. Right now, it'd be great to have another home game, but we still need home games in 2014 and 2015."

In other words, it could be hard to have it both ways — a home-loaded schedule in 2013 might mean a road-heavy schedule in 2014.

"If I have to start another series with someone, in order to get a home game that next year, we very well might go on the road next season," Herbster said.

UC Davis, a member of the Big Sky Conference for football, will come to Vermillion on Aug. 31, 2013 — the season opener for USD.

From there, the Coyotes travel to Kansas of the Big 12 Conference on Sept. 7 before a span of two open weeks before a Sept. 28 Missouri Valley Football Conference road game at Western Illinois.

Other home games next season for the Coyotes include Missouri State (Oct. 5), Indiana State (Oct. 12), Youngstown State (Nov. 2), Montana (Nov. 9) and South Dakota State (Nov. 16).

USD will also be on the road at Northern Iowa (Oct. 19), Illinois State (Oct. 26) and North Dakota State (Nov. 23).

Monday's addition to the schedule means the Coyotes will resume a series with UC Davis that was played when both programs were members of the Great West Conference from 2009-11.

"We've got a relationship with them because of our time in the Great West. We're two schools still in the same boat, looking for non-conference games," Herbster said. "We both know the travel to get to our games."

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TOMORROW NIGHT!
MMC vs. Dakota Wesleyan

WOMEN'S TIP-OFF: 6 PM | MEN'S TIP-OFF: 8 PM | CIMPL ARENA

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MMC welcomes Mrs. Koerner's 2nd grade class from Sacred Heart School and their families as our VIP guests--winners of the Livin' Large with the Lancers package!!

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