

Peterson Pursues Rushing Record Against Texans

HOUSTON (AP) — Adrian Peterson chose No. 29 for his high school jersey because he idolized Eric Dickerson growing up in Palestine, Texas.

Peterson switched to No. 28 in college when 29 wasn't available. But he never stopped emulating Dickerson, and always hoped he could one day break his NFL single-season rushing record.

With two regular-season games left, Peterson, who is just under a year removed from reconstructive knee surgery, needs 294 yards surpass the 2,105 yards Dickerson gained in 1984.

"I was always compared to Eric Dickerson being from Texas and his upright style of running or whatnot. It would mean a lot," Peterson said of breaking the record. "He set a bar, something for running backs to chase and envision on breaking his record. It has inspired me to get there and

break it. I appreciate him."

The path won't be easy, with Peterson and the Vikings (8-6) traveling to face the AFC South champion Houston Texans on Sunday. The Texans have the league's fifth best run defense and are one win away from securing both a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

"That's one of our team goals we set at the beginning of the season," Houston's Andre Johnson said. "We're going to go out and try to get that accomplished on Sunday. It's better to have it done Sunday than try to do it the following week."

The Vikings still have a shot at a wild-card berth in the NFC, but would likely need to win both of their remaining games and get some help to secure a spot. Peterson said any personal goals he's shooting for are secondary to helping his team get

into the postseason.

"If I continue to play the way I've been playing, I'll be able to continue what I told myself earlier and help lead my team to a championship," Peterson said. "They kind of go hand-in-hand. If you rip off a 200-, 300-yard game, you get a 'W,' you're doing what you told yourself that you were going to do in the offseason."

Peterson needs 188 yards to become the seventh player in NFL history to rush for 2,000 yards and first since Chris Johnson did it in the 2009 season. He has a franchise-record eight straight 100-yard games and has ran for more than 200 yards in two of the last three weeks, making him a top candidate for the NFL's most valuable player.

What's perhaps most impressive is that he's had his best games in the five weeks since receiver Percy Harvin went down

with an injury and Minnesota's passing game fell to last in the NFL.

"It's not like we have a lot of things around him," Vikings coach Leslie Frazier said of Peterson. "We have an offensive line that is doing a great job, but this is a new offensive line for the most part ... for Adrian to be doing what he's doing with the pieces around him, he's comeback player, MVP for sure."

This week he'll face a defense allowing just 93.2 yards rushing a game. A big reason for Houston's stingy defense is star defensive end J.J. Watt. Like Peterson, Watt is also on the cusp of setting an NFL record. He needs 3 1/2 sacks to break Michael Strahan's NFL single-season sack record of 22 1/2.

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Vikings CB Cook To Play On Sunday

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Cornerback Chris Cook will play for the Minnesota Vikings at Houston on Sunday, following a six-game absence because of a broken right arm.

Coach Leslie Frazier said after Friday's practice that he's satisfied with Cook's progress and was in the process of determining how much to use him against the Texans, whether back in his starting spot or as the third cornerback in the nickel package.

Cook was placed on injured reserve with a designation to return after getting hurt trying to make a tackle on Oct. 25 against Tampa Bay, and this is the first week he's eligible to be reinstated to the active roster. The Vikings didn't immediately make a corresponding move to make room; they had until Saturday to do so.

This is the third straight season that Cook has missed significant time. He had problems with both knees his rookie year after being drafted in the second round out of Virginia. Then he ran into legal trouble last season following his arrest on felony assault charges he was later acquitted of, stemming from a fight with his girlfriend. He played in only six games in each of his first two years. Just when he was starting to hit his stride as the team's best player in outside pass coverage, Cook was knocked out of action again.

"He's got the ability to be a good corner in our league, but because of the injuries it's set him back some," Frazier said.

The initial fear was that his season was over, but playing in these final two games — or more, if the Vikings make the playoffs — will be important for his development.

"It'll be a big challenge for him. The downside is he hasn't had much build up to line up against guys who have been playing week in and week out," Frazier said. "So you have to take his play a little bit with a grain of salt."

Cook said he noted the games against Houston and Detroit when the schedule came out in April, excited about the opportunity to face star wide receivers Andre Johnson and Calvin Johnson. He missed the last meeting against Calvin Johnson and the Lions.

"I've been through a lot of adverse situations so this one was a little bit easier to deal with than my other two," Cook said, adding: "It's not like I haven't done it before. I can come in and still be able to perform in a situation like that."

Also, defensive end Brian Robison returned to practice Friday with his sprained right shoulder and was listed as questionable on the injury report to face the Texans. Frazier said he's improved this week, but whether he'll be cleared to play or not was another matter.

"He did enough in practice today that creates some encouragement amongst our staff and his teammates as well," Frazier said.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL | UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Among The Nation's Best

Coyote Men Third In D-I In Free Throw Percentage At 79.3

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VERMILLION — There may come a time later in the season where a free throw or two might mean the difference between win and loss for the University of South Dakota men's basketball team.

Fortunately for the Coyotes, they rank among the nation's best in that category.

Coming off a school-record 43-of-50 performance on Wednesday, USD now ranks third in all of Division I in free throw percentage at 79.3. Only Central Connecticut State (83.3) and Lehigh (80.3) are better at the line than the Coyotes.

Translated into made free throws, USD — which plays at Green Bay today (Saturday) at 7 p.m. — ranks seventh nationally at 219-of-276.

"Coach preaches that free throws can win games," said Juevol Myles, the senior point guard who has consecutive games of 15-of-16 from the foul line.

"From the 12th man up to the first man or as a team as a whole, we go to the line, clear our minds and knock down free throws."

Though it may entail more than simply that, whatever goes into hoisting up foul shots has worked this season for the Coyotes. USD is nearly 10 percentage points better than last season's team total of 70 percent.

Myles leads this season at 90 percent (66-of-73), followed by Casey Kasperbauer (6-7), Brandon Bos (22-25), Karim Rowson (52-64), Steve Tecker (12-15), Trevor Gruis (39-57) and Tyler Flack (17-25).

The noticeable trend among those stats is that four of the seven are new to the Coyotes this season. Myles sat out last year as a redshirt, while Rowson is a transfer and Kasperbauer and Flack are both freshmen.

There is also a good reason why USD is so good at the line, Rowson said.

"In practice, we hack each other all day, so we get to the free throw line," the junior transfer from Western Oklahoma State said. "Everybody's used to



JILANNE DOOM/P&D
University of South Dakota guard Karim Rowson, 22, drives to the basket around the defense of Morehead State's Bakari Turner during their non-conference men's game Wednesday night at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. The Coyotes were 43-of-50 at the free throw line, setting a school record for makes at the line, in an 85-75 victory.

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Parkston Wrestlers Lead Farrand Invite

SIOUX FALLS — The Parkston Trojans advanced seven wrestlers to the semifinals and jumped out to the early team lead after day one of the Floyd Farrand Invitational Wrestling Tournament, that started Friday in Sioux Falls.

Parkston sits in first place with 96.5 total points, followed in the top five by Sturgis (84.5), Brookings (77), Canton (75) and Brandon Valley (71). Wagner is in eighth place with 63.5 points, while Vermillion sits in 14th overall with 26.5 points.

Advancing through to the semifinals in their respective weight class for Parkston were Blake Bietz (113), Myles Bialas (138), Weslee Dvorak (145), Mitch Heisinger (152), Miles Semmler (170), Brady Reiff (220) and Austin Bertram (285).

The Trojans have five others still alive in the wrestleback rounds — Logan Mahoney (106), Dawson Semmler (120), Ethan Murtha (126), Dillon Stadlman (160) and Andrew Semmler (195).

Wagner will have four wrestlers competing in the semifinal round, with Tyler Dion (138), Austin Soukup (145), David Kocer (160) and Dakota Zephier (182). The Red Raiders also have Sineway Marshall (132), Brady Soulek (152) and Trevor Lensing (170) alive in the wrestlebacks.

Vermillion's Brett Bye advanced to the 152-pound semifinals, while Carter Kratz (132) and Regan Bye (145) also remain alive in consolation action.

The final day of the tournament begins today (Saturday) at 10 a.m. at Sioux Falls Lincoln High School, with finals set to start around 2:15 p.m.

TEAM SCORES: Parkston 96.5, Sturgis 84.5, Brookings 77, Canton 75, Brandon Valley 71, Watertown 68, S.F. Roosevelt 66, Wagner 63.5, S.F. Washington 62, Howard 55.5, Garrettsville 40, Harrisburg 35, Milbank 27, Vermillion 26.5, S.F. Lincoln 23, S.F. O'Gorman 21, Lemnox 18.5, Tea Area 17.5, Sisseton 9

Prep Hoops: Graham Leads Hanson By Wagner 64-60

WAGNER — Hanson defeated Wagner 64-60 in South Dakota girls basketball action Friday night in Wagner.

Cassidy Graham led Hanson (6-0) with 26 points. Kynedi Cheeseman added 15 points and nine rebounds in the victory.

Nicole Weber led Wagner (4-2) with 20 points. Ali Kuca recorded 17 points and 10 rebounds in the loss.

Both teams will compete in the Parkston Classic on Dec. 28. Hanson will challenge Centerville and Wagner will compete against Tri-Valley.

HANSON (6-0)14 29 40 64
WAGNER (4-2)17 29 41 60

Watertown 43, Huron 39

HURON — The Watertown Arrows defeated the Huron Tigers 43-39 in Eastern South Dakota girls basketball action Friday night.

Emily Pengilly had 10 points to lead Watertown (2-2). Mandy Tetzlaff added eight points and five rebounds. Danielle Duncan and Shaylie Kirsch each recorded six points in the victory for the Arrows.

Jacey Hupp led Huron (1-4) with 12 points and two steals. Calla Rounds recorded 10 points and six rebounds. Jazmin Newton netted eight points and four rebounds in the loss for the Tigers.

Watertown will travel to Marshall, MN to compete in the SMSU Holiday Classic on Dec. 29. Huron will travel

to Yankton on Jan. 3.
WATERTOWN (2-2)11 15 32 43
HURON (1-4)2 14 26 39

Harrisburg 65, Canton 48

HARRISBURG — Harrisburg continued their undefeated run with a 65-48 defeat of Canton in Harrisburg on Friday night.

Morgan Krier led the way for Harrisburg (6-0) with 16 points, five rebounds, five steals and three blocks. Morgan Beaner added 16 points in the victory.

Kacee Gaughenbaugh led the way for Canton (2-3) with 17 points. Jant Vandestreet added 12 points in the loss.

Harrisburg will travel to Sioux Falls to take on Sioux Falls O'Gorman on Dec. 28. Canton will travel to Minnesota to take on Pipestone on Dec. 29.

Thursday

Dakota Valley 61, Ponca 44

NORTH SIOUX CITY — McKenzie Mennenga and Jenna Kittler combined for 35 points and nine steals as Dakota Valley beat Ponca 61-44 in girls' action Thursday night.

Mennenga had 18 points and six steals, while Kittler added 17 points and three steals. Allison Sexton chipped in with six points and six rebounds.

No stats were reported for Ponca.

DAKOTA VALLEY19 34 44 61
PONCA4 14 25 44

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College: Eide Leads Jackrabbit Women Past Georgetown

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ashley Eide tied a career high with 27 points and added a career-high 13 rebounds as the South Dakota State University women's basketball team shook off a sluggish start to record a 64-58 win over Georgetown Friday afternoon.

The Jackrabbits, playing their final non-conference game of the season, improved to 8-5 overall. Georgetown dropped to 7-4 on the season.

Behind the play of national player of the year candidate Sugar Rodgers, Georgetown jumped out to an early double-digit lead. The Hoyas scored the first seven points and later built an 18-4 lead as Rodgers tallied 11 points in the early outburst.

The Jackrabbits chipped away at the deficit via the three-pointer and the free throw line. SDSU made its first eight free throw attempts and 11-of-14 tries in the first half, then knotted the game at 22-all

on Eide's second three-pointer of the opening stanza.

Georgetown recovered to take a 27-26 lead into intermission.

SDSU grabbed its first lead of the game 95 seconds into the second half on a three-pointer by Eide that made the score 31-29. Eide scored eight of the Jackrabbits' first 12 points in the second half as SDSU opened a 38-31 lead with 14:23 to play.

The Hoyas responded with an 8-0 spurt to regain a 39-38 advantage after a Rodgers three-pointer. However, the Georgetown lead lasted only a few seconds as Hannah Strop's putback gave SDSU the lead for good, sparking an 18-6 run that included two three-pointers by Eide which SDSU its largest lead of the game at 56-45 with 6:25 remaining.

Georgetown got back to within 58-56, but Eide ended the Hoya run with a basket with three minutes to play and Strop

scored the final four Jackrabbit points at the free throw line.

Eide canned a career-high seven three-pointers en route to her 27 points. Megan Waytashek added nine points and Leah Dietel chipped in with eight points and three steals.

The Jackrabbits finished the game 19-of-47 from the field, 40.4 percent, including 9-of-31 from three-point range against the Georgetown zone defense. SDSU made 17-of-24 free throw attempts, 70.8 percent.

SDSU won despite committing a season-high 26 turnovers; however, Georgetown was guilty of 24 miscues.

The Jackrabbits open Summit League play Dec. 30 against North Dakota State. Tipoff is slated for 2 p.m. at Frost Arena.

DAKOTA WESLEYAN 85, LAKELAND COLLEGE 60: WISCONSIN DELLS, Wis. — Dakota Wesleyan put five players in double figures in an 85-60 women's win

over NCAA Division III Lakeland College on Friday.

Celeste Beck had 17 points and six assists for the Tigers, while Kim Johnson added 14 points. Elizabeth Lamb, Amanda Hart and Brittany Hills all scored 12 points.

College Men

NORTH DAKOTA ST. 69, MOREHEAD ST. 49: FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Marshall Bjorklund scored 20 points to lead a balanced effort for North Dakota State in a 69-49 victory over Morehead State on Friday night.

Taylor Braun scored 19 points and Lawrence Alexander 12 for the Bison (10-3).

North Dakota State also had a 31-22 rebounding advantage, with Bjorklund getting nine and Braun seven. Accurate shooting also helped North Dakota State, which hit on 55.8 percent of its field-goal attempts.

The Bison hit just 4 of 16 attempts from 3-point range, and Morehead State (5-7) had even more difficulty, making just 1 of 13 of its shots from long range. Morehead State converted only 16 of 46 attempts from the floor (34.8 percent).

Chad Posthumus scored 14 points and had eight rebounds for Morehead State, and Angelo Warner scored 10.