



P&D FILE PHOTO

Mount Marty's Chris Richardson, 12, drives to the basket during a home game in the 2012-13 season. Richardson, who sat out the first semester due to a transfer issue, made his 2013-14 debut on Saturday, and will make his home debut tonight (Tuesday) against Oglala Lakota College.

Richardson Excited To Be Back In Lineup

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Chris Richardson felt like he was being punished.

The third-year guard for the Mount Marty College men's basketball team was forced to sit out the fall semester this year for the Lancers.

But not for grades or for conduct issues.

No, it had been previously deemed that Richardson, a native of Convent, La., had used up three semesters of eligibility at two schools in his native Louisiana before transferring to Mount Marty College.

The decision was ultimately made to sit him out for the fall semester and bring him back for the next three semesters — all with the idea that his return could potentially spark the Lancers (0-10, 0-6), who host Oglala Lakota College tonight (Tuesday).

"That was the tough thing, working hard all summer and then boom, you hit a wall," Richardson said Monday after a morning practice. "It was so hard."

Yet, as he and first-year head coach Andrew Baker both said, it was the smart move.

The NAIA allows athletes 10 semesters of full-time academic status, and by the time Richardson enrolled at Mount Marty, he had already used three of those semesters at Southern University in Baton Rouge, La., and then at River Parish Community College in Sorrento, La.

And so, he had seven semesters of eligibility for eight semesters (four years) in Yankton.

"For whatever reason, coach (Jim) Thorson never sat him, so we got to this point and had to make a decision," Baker said Monday. "Do you want to sit him out for half of his senior season?"

"Both of us were on the same page, with where we would be next year, trying to win some games, we would need him."

Richardson, a 6-foot-2 wing, made his return to the lineup last Saturday in a Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) loss at Concordia. Though he scored just one point on 0-of-4 shooting, he added four rebounds, two assists, four blocks and three steals.

Finally, nine months after his last game action, Richardson was back on the court.

"It's not as bad in practice, because all the guys can pick me up," he said. "But when it comes to the game, it's hard for me to pick them up. It'd be easier if I was out there helping."

"There's only so much you can do on the bench."

Now that Richardson — who saw time in 29 games last season — is not only

playing with his teammates in practice but in games, they realize just how much they missed him.

"He's the energizer, always has been," junior guard Tyler Payer said. "I know it was tough during games to see him over there on the bench, but we're all happy he's back."

While Richardson's offensive rhythm may need a little more time to return (he averaged 5.5 points last season), the Lancers say his biggest immediate influence will be felt on the defensive end of the court.

"He changes the game," Payer said. "We're back to full strength with him. He helps us out a ton on defense, with his length at any spot on the floor. He can guard any athletic dude in the conference."

"He'll impact our team a lot."

And that's good news for a team allowing opponents to score an average of 82 points a game — twice over 100 points.

"I think he's our best defender, when he's locked in, but I thought that last year too," Baker said. "He's long, really athletic, deflects a lot of balls, and he can guard multiple positions."

When 100 percent focused on the task, Richardson could be eventually challenge for the league's defensive player of the year award, Baker said.

"He helps us a lot on defense, for sure," the coach said.

Though one addition might not completely reverse those 20 to 30-point losses, but Richardson said the toughest part was watching his teammates lose close games. Mount Marty lost consecutive games in November by 6 and 3 points.

"Some of those games, I was thinking, 'If I was out there, maybe we win,'" Richardson said. "The close ones, those are the hardest."

And beyond basketball, as well.

"I was calling home, asking my mom for guidance and asking my cousin (who plays at Louisiana State University), and they told me, 'Your time will come,'" Richardson said.

"They both said, 'Sitting out is maybe the best thing for you.'"

And ultimately, maybe for the Lancers, Payer added. After all, the team does have half of its season remaining.

"Everyone knows we're the underdogs, but with Chris back, it's a new start," Payer said. "You never know, maybe we can start winning games."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

S.D. Native Ellis Signs With Cardinals

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The St. Louis Cardinals signed free-agent second baseman Mark Ellis to a one-year, \$5.25 million contract, giving them insurance for rookie Kolten Wong.

In a conference call after the deal was announced Monday, the 36-year-old Ellis said he had some multiyear offers but chose the Cardinals because he wants to win a World Series. Ellis played for the Dodgers in the NL championship series last fall against St. Louis, which won the Series in 2011 and lost in six games to the Red Sox in 2013.

"I am fully fine with one-year deals at this point in my career," Ellis said. "There were some good opportunities, very good teams and very good organizations. I felt like this was the perfect place for myself and my family."

The contract calls for an additional \$125,000 at 250 plate appearances and for every 25 plate appearances after that up to 475 plate appearances.

"Nothing was promised," Ellis said. "I've pretty much been an everyday player my whole career. I'm going to prepare this offseason like I'm going to play 162 games."

Ellis is a lifetime .265 hitter for three teams. He hit .270 with six home runs and 48 RBIs for the Dodgers last season, and is considered a strong defensive second baseman. He's had only spot duty at other infield positions during his career, but was open to that option, noting he played third base two years in college and was a shortstop growing up.

"I'm not so stubborn I have a huge ego that I have to be the second baseman," Ellis said. "I don't care. I want to do whatever it takes to win a World Series."

Wong, a first-round pick in 2011, made his major league debut last year and is expected to get the starting shot at second base in 2014. Matt Carpenter moves to third base following the trade

of David Freese to the Angels and Ellis provides a right-handed hitting option, plus he's open to a mentor role.

Before learning of Carpenter's position switch, Ellis hadn't thought the Cardinals would be a good fit.

"Mark is a player we identified early on as being an ideal fit for our team," general manager John Mozeliak said in a statement. "His experience and steadiness, both in the field and at the plate, certainly enhances our overall roster makeup."

Ellis has appeared in 22 postseason games and batted .240 in the NLCS last fall with a double, triple and stolen base.

Ellis has hit 20 or more doubles nine of the past 10 years and is a career .276 hitter with a .348 on-base percentage against left-handed pitching. He was a ninth round pick of the Kansas City Royals in 1999.

Flyers Clip Cavs In OT



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Freeman's Brennan Schmidt, 12, tries to drive around Bon Homme's Scott Wieseler during their game Monday night in Tyndall. Schmidt posted a double-double and teammate Cole Paulson scored a game-high 42 points in an 86-83 overtime victory.

TYNDALL — The Freeman Flyers survived a 29-point fourth quarter by Bon Homme, outscoring the Cavaliers 14-11 in the extra period for an 86-83 victory in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Freeman led 54-43 after three quarters, but the Cavaliers tied the game at 72 at the end of regulation.

Cole Paulson had 43 points, five assists and six steals to lead Freeman. Brennan Schmidt posted 12 points and 13 rebounds. Thomas Kaufman added five assists in the victory.

For Bon Homme, Jon Barrett scored 23 points, and Scott Van Winkle, Mike Mesman and Scott Wieseler each had 18 points. Van Winkle also had seven rebounds and eight assists for the Cavaliers.

Freeman, 1-1, travels to Canistota on Thursday. Bon Homme, 0-1, hosts Scotland on Friday.

FREEMAN (1-1)	12	29	54	72	86
BON HOMME (0-1)	10	29	43	72	83

Viborg-Hurley 66, Scotland 52

SCOTLAND — Viborg-Hurley outscored Scotland 41-26 in the second half to beat the Highlanders 66-52 in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Jack Huether had 24 points and four steals, and Rusten Anderson had 16 points and seven rebounds for Viborg-Hurley. Austin Wurtz added 11 points and four steals in the victory.

For Scotland, which led 15-7 after one quarter and 26-25 at the half, Shaye Bloch and Tanner Skorepa each had 14 points. Bloch also had four steals, while Skorepa added seven rebounds.

Viborg-Hurley, 2-0, hosts Irene-Wakonda on Friday in Viborg. Scotland, 1-1, travels to Bon Homme on Friday.

Scotland won the JV game, 28-24 in overtime.

VIBORG-HURLEY (2-0)	7	25	41	66
SCOTLAND (1-1)	15	26	34	52

Emerson-Hubbard 48, Hartington 40

HARTINGTON, Neb. — Travis Emmons scored 23 points to lead Emerson-Hubbard past Hartington 48-40 in boys' action Monday night in Hartington.

Nathan Hogan added 11 points for the Pirates (1-4), who led 24-16 at halftime.

For the hometown Wildcats (2-2), Riley Haug scored 14 points, while Ethan Morten had nine points and Kolby Jueden added eight points.

Hartington returns to action tonight (Tuesday) at Allen.

EMERSON-HUBBARD (1-4)	12	24	35	48
HARTINGTON (2-2)	2	16	32	40

Canistota 70, Irene-Wakonda 59

CANISTOTA — Shay Jolley scored a game-high 27 points and added four steals to lead Canistota to a 70-59 victory over Irene-Wakonda in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Mason Decker netted 13 points and Carson Hofer grabbed six rebounds for

Bison Bounce Blue Hens

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Taylor Braun poured in 33 points on 9-of-14 shooting and Marshall Bjorklund added 16 with nine rebounds as North Dakota State defeated Delaware 85-66 Monday night.

The Bison (8-4) broke a 28-all tie as Braun hit a 3-pointer to ignite a 15-5 run and close out the first half for a 43-33 advantage at the break. They opened the second half with a 12-2 run to extend their lead to 20. Delaware (5-5) couldn't pull

closer than 11 the rest of the way.

North Dakota State shot 52.9 percent from the field and outrebounded Delaware 38-29. Braun was 13 of 15 from the free throw line and Lawrence Alexander chipped in 11 points with four assists for the Bison.

The Blue Hens were 25 of 63 on field goal attempts. Devon Saddler scored a team-high 24 points and Carl Baptiste had 12 with nine boards.

Drake Promotes Assistant Head Coach To Run Football Program

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Drake always knew it might lose head coach Chris Creighton to a bigger program.

The Bulldogs also believed the perfect replacement was already on campus. Drake introduced Rick Fox as its 26th head coach on Monday in place of Creighton, who last week accepted the Eastern Michigan job.

Fox spent the past six seasons on Creighton's staff as the offensive line and special teams coach, and he also served as Creighton's assistant head

coach for the past three years.

"We could have scoured the entire country for the very best football coach. The very best fit for Drake University, and the very best man to add to our family, and I promise you this: I'm 100 percent confident that that search would have taken us right back here to Drake University and to ... Rick Fox," Drake athletic director Sandy Hatfield-Clubb said.

Drake went 44-22 under Creighton, including two titles in the FCS-affiliated Pioneer Football

League. In 2011, Creighton spearheaded efforts to have the non-scholarship Bulldogs compete in the first college football game played in Africa.

Fox said he and Creighton "beat with the same heartbeat" as far their vision for a program is concerned, so don't expect many changes off the field for the Bulldogs in 2014. Drake finished 6-5 last season after back-to-back shares of the PFL title in 2011 and 2012.

National Finals Rodeo May Move To Florida In 2015

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The National Finals Rodeo is expected to move to Florida in 2015 after spending 29 years in Las Vegas.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association board voted 6-3 Sunday to decline

Las Vegas' offer and pursue an agreement with Osceola (oh'-see-OH'-luh) County, south of Orlando.

Association commissioner Karl Stressman issued a statement to the Las Vegas Review-

Journal saying the association made its decision based on the content of the current offer, but continues to consider deals from other potential hosts.