

Press & Dakotan
Prep Male Athlete
Of The Year



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton senior J.J. Hejna, center, makes a catch between two Watertown defenders during their Class 11AA playoff game in November. Hejna shattered nearly every receiving record for Yankton, setting single-season and career records for both catches and receiving yards, as well as a single-season record for receiving touchdowns. The *Press & Dakotan* has named Hejna its Prep Male Athlete of the Year.

Hejna A Leader For Yankton

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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Prior to 2013, J.J. Hejna had been a star in training in the Yankton High School athletic programs. This past year, he not only became a star but a leader.

Hejna's rise to regional stardom and his leadership on and off the field have earned him the Press & Dakotan's Prep Male Athlete for 2013.

On the basketball court, Hejna went from role player to honorable mention all-Eastern South Dakota Conference performer. In track and field, he went from a one-event specialist to a three-event state placewinner.

But on the football field, he saw his greatest rise. Already an all-state defensive back, Hejna not only rose to the level of all-state receiver, but became the most prolific receiving threat ever to wear a Bucks uniform.

"He is the epitome of everything we want in a student-athlete," said Yankton boys' basketball coach Chris Haynes. "He does great at school. He's a great leader on and off the floor, and he's also very talented."

Hejna was already getting college looks before the 2013 season, but that didn't stop him from continuing to refine his skill set, including a camp

RECENT WINNERS

- 2012, Alex Kocer, Wagner
- 2011, Kyle McKelvey, Beresford
- 2010, Cory Jacobsen, Viborg
- 2009, Robert Kokesh, Wagner
- 2008, Earv Archangeau, Avon

at the University of Michigan.

"It opened doors to the little tricks that make people the athletes they are, learning to get in and out of my cuts, things like that," Hejna said of the camp.

While head football coach Arlin Likness expected a better offensive season out of Hejna, not even he could envision what the 6-4 senior would do.

In 10 games this past season, Hejna caught more passes (63) for more yards (1,205) than any other Buck had done in a career. His 10 receiving touchdowns was also a Yankton single-season record.

"We were hoping, but with rookie quarterbacks, we didn't know if they would find him often enough," Likness said. "All three of our quarterbacks were smart enough to see if they could find him. After that second game with Stevens, the light came on."

Not only was Hejna a record-breaker, he helped his

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P&D FILE PHOTOS

LEFT: Hejna was a honorable mention all-ESD selection in basketball, averaging 10 points and eight rebounds. He has missed the first part of the 2013-14 season due to injury. ABOVE: Hejna was a 2013 state placewinner in the high jump, long jump and triple jump.

Parkston Holds Off Panthers For Classic Victory

BY JEREMY HOECK

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PARKSTON — In the world of the Parkston blue and orange, Zach Scott is no secret weapon.

The 5-foot-11 senior guard has proven he can hit long-range shots.

In Monday night's finale of the Parkston Classic, Scott showcased that ability to a new opponent. He scored 22 points, thanks to five three-pointers, as the hometown Trojans edged Dakota Valley 64-62.

"Zach can do that," said Parkston head coach Craig Bruening, whose team improved to 4-0.

"He was our third leading scorer last year, so if you leave him alone, he can hit shots."

"That wasn't a shock to me."

Dakota Valley (2-2), meanwhile, seemed a little stunned by Scott's performance — particularly early, when he hit four threes in the first quarter.

"He wasn't even on our scouting report. It didn't seem like he had done much coming in, but he changed the game," Panthers head coach Jason Kleis said.

The Trojans led pretty much the entire way (including 33-27 at halftime), and by eight points heading into the fourth quarter. Parkston then led 53-45 with under six minutes remaining, only to see Dakota Valley get within 62-60 at the 1:27 mark.

The biggest weapon for the Panthers was the play inside of senior Jason Lupkes (22 points, 12 rebounds) and senior Isaac Faldmo (18 points).

Lupkes scored on a layup with 20.3 seconds left to get DV within 64-62. Parkston then missed a pair of free throws with 8.7 seconds left, but the Panthers missed a three-pointer at the buzzer.

"We missed a lot of shots that we'll make the rest of the way," Kleis said. "That, to me, is a function of Parkston's defense."

Especially its size in the paint.

Senior center Spencer Lucas finished with 11 points and 11 rebounds, and was aided by junior guard Ty Kinneberg's 11 points.

Not only because they were the hosts of the classic, the Trojans naturally wanted an early-season test, Bruening said.

"We wanted to find out where we are right now," said the coach, whose team hosts Winner on Saturday. "In our class, they're (DV) probably one of the elites."

"This is good for us, we need to keep building."

On the other side, Dakota Valley will look to snap a 2-game losing streak Friday night in Hartford against West Central. And even coming off of Monday's loss, Kleis wasn't too upset.

"To be honest, I'm not overly disappointed," he said. "I don't feel great about the loss, but I don't feel bad."

Why?
"It's just still so early in the season," Kleis added.

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



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Parkston's Dylan Thuringer drives to the basket during Monday night's game against Dakota Valley at the Parkston Classic.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Vermillion's Tyrell Harper, right, defends Deric Denning of Mount Vernon-Plankinton during their game Monday at the Parkston Classic.

Tanagers Rally Past MVP

BY JEREMY HOECK

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PARKSTON — Frustrated for three quarters against an unbeaten team, the Vermillion Tanagers finally got rolling when it mattered.

The result was an early-season confidence boost in a traditionally-strong tournament.

Down by 12 points heading into the fourth quarter, Vermillion rallied

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