

Krier Ready To Take Gazelles Hoops Helm

BY NICK ROBINSON
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For the first time in 22 years, the Yankton Gazelles varsity basketball team will have a new face running sideline. Trey Krier is starting his first season under the helm as Yankton coach and looks to revitalize a program that hasn't reached the state tournament in three years.

Krier spent three years in the Gayville-Volin school district, where he was head coach for the girl's for two years from 2011-2012.

"I was in Gayville for three years," Krier said. "I was an assistant and also coached baseball at Mount Marty, but my last two years, I was able to coach at the varsity level. Being a new coach, it doesn't matter at what level, has some headaches. I had to feel out my philosophy and put it into work during practice and games. I really learned a lot over those three years."

Although it was challenging, Krier felt his time at Gayville-Volin has helped him along the way.

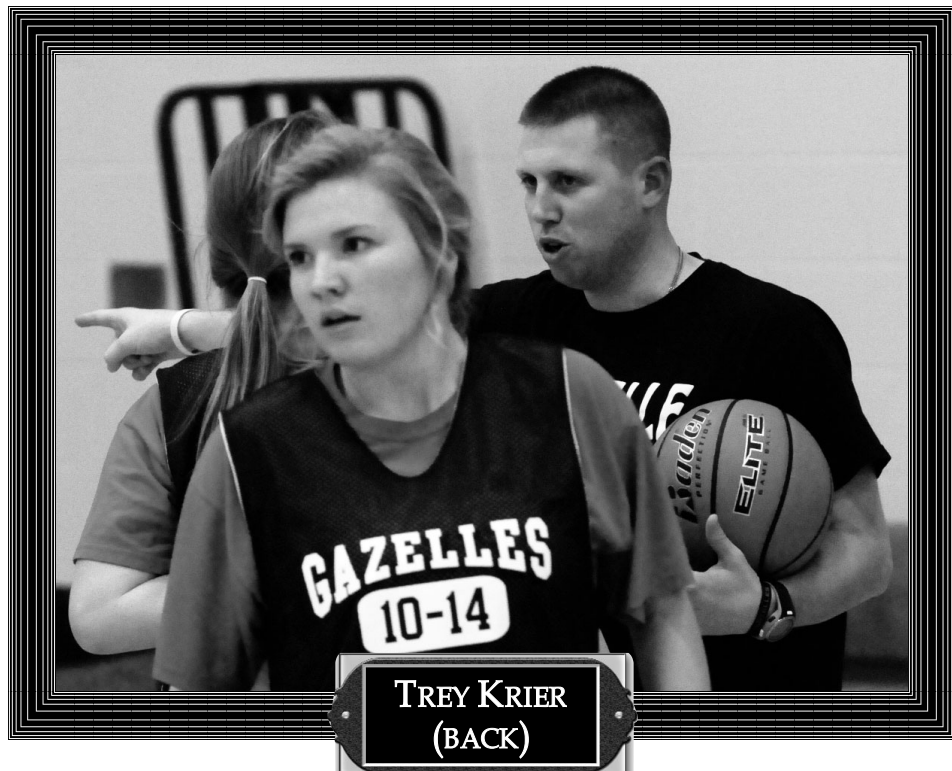
"I was at a smaller school that didn't have a boisterous athletic program," he said. "I really had to dig deep and get back to the fundamentals early on. As I learned, so did the girls, we had to build it together."

Last year, Krier spent the basketball season under boys coach Chris Haynes' wing on his staff.

"Chris (Haynes) has been a huge asset for me," he said. "Last year, when I was an assistant, he didn't hide anything from us and kept everything open."

When former coach Doug Pesicka decided to step down after last season, it took some thought, but Krier knew he was ready to make the jump.

"I felt ready for it," he said. "I had to think and talk to my support system. It was tough to leave the boys program, I had a great time and got a taste of the state tour-



TREY KRIER
(BACK)

namment. It was a tough decision, but in the end, I knew it was something I had to do."

The difficulties of running a 'B' program to a 'AA' program is something he has been taking in stride.

"AA' is head and shoulders different than what I was accustomed to," Krier said. "As I am starting a new program, he (Haynes) continues to help. We started the Young Gazelles, which will mirror the Young Buck program that Chris has started."

Even though Krier is going through his first stint, he has great mentors helping him every step of the way. Former Mount Marty men's basketball coach Jim Thorson has been there for his former player.

"Jim Thorson has been helping me out through it all," Krier said. "He has been working with some of the middle school girls and emphasizing what we're trying to teach in our program."

Also, having Pesicka on his side will be a plus for years to come.

"Doug has been a huge

help to me," Krier said. "He is doing what Bob Winter did when he took over the program years ago. If I need anything, he is there, it's just really nice having his say in maintaining the girls' basketball tradition we have here at Yankton."

Krier added that his staff has been great and that they're all learning together in this process.

"I can't leave out people like Robb McClemmens, Amy Long and our new assistant Mallory Schmidt," he said. "I can trust all of them and know that they will support whatever decision I have to make."

This past summer, Krier, who also coaches Yankton Bucks and Post 12 baseball, re-emphasized off season training and touched base with his team.

"In the summer, we all got together and etched it out that it was going to be a process," he said. "There are going to be hiccups along the way and I'm not worried about that. We want to open a book and by the time the

season starts, we want to be on the same page."

Krier knows his team is young, but wants his girls to correct the mistakes they make this season.

"I know we will make mistakes, we are a young team, but we need to learn and correct them right away," Krier said. "So we are not constantly making the same ones over and over."

He also wants his team to continue to show improvement each time on the court.

"My philosophy, in any sport I coach, is every time we want to find something to improve on," Krier said. "There is no time for taking steps back."

The Gazelles opened the season and the Krier era on Tuesday on the road versus Eastern South Dakota foe Watertown.

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at twitter.com/RobinsonNick2013. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

Young Gazelles Basketball Team Preps For Season

BY NICK ROBINSON
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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally appeared in the Dec. 9, 2014, edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been edited to reflect the ongoing season.

After a 3-18 season a year ago, the Yankton Gazelles varsity basketball team is looking to turn a new leaf under first year coach Trey Krier.

"Practice has been going good so far," he said. "We started in November and are finished with week two. I am happy with where we are at and we're starting to see corrections made. So, I'd say that we are ahead of schedule. It's a good feeling knowing they're ready to get out there and play."

The Gazelles field a small number on the high school roster, with only 20 girls out for basketball. Krier and his staff aren't concerned about it, but are looking to make a positive out of it.

"There's not a lot we can do about numbers," he said. "The choices are so much broader in today's athletic scene than before. We are taking the kids and running, we go in one group. Everyone learns together and the younger girls are getting better by playing against older girls."

Yankton will be anchored by its lone two seniors this season: Andi Sprakel and Sarah Rockne.

"We will rely on our two seniors a lot this season," Krier said. "Andi Sprakel has played three years of varsity and will really be our leader this season. Sarah Rockne, who's had some injury issues, has done a great job as

GIRLS' B-BALL

Dec. 9	at Watertown	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	vs. Huron	6:15 p.m.
Dec. 19	vs. S.F. Washington	6:15 p.m.
Jan. 3	at Mitchell	4:30 p.m.
Jan. 6	vs. Brookings	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at Harrisburg	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	vs. Brandon Valley	4:15 p.m.
Jan. 13	at S.F. Lincoln	6 p.m.
Jan. 16	vs. Pierre	6:15 p.m.
Jan. 20	vs. O'Gorman	6:15 p.m.
Jan. 23	vs. Watertown	6:15 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Aberdeen Central	5 p.m.
Jan. 27	at Huron	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 30	vs. Mitchell	6:15 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Brookings	8 p.m.
Feb. 5	vs. Harrisburg	7 p.m.
Feb. 14	vs. Aberdeen Central	5 p.m.
Feb. 17	at S.F. Roosevelt	7 p.m.
Feb. 19	at Brandon Valley	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 21	at Pierre	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 27	District 2AA Play-In	7 p.m.
Mar. 2	District 2AA	7 p.m.
Mar. 5	District 2AA	7 p.m.
Mar. 7	Region 1AA	7 p.m.
Mar. 12-14	State AA (Brookings)	

well and has skills that are very beneficial to our team."

Another tool the Gazelles will pull out this season is junior post player Becky Frick.

"She has a lot of potential and things you can't teach," Krier said. "She will be another person we will have to rely on heavily."

Something Krier feels will be a strength of his team will be the athleticism.

"We are an athletic team and have the ability to run the floor," he said. "However, that could be a bad thing, too. We have to be able to convert offense from our defense."

A key concern for Yankton will be scoring points this season.

"We are not an offensive juggernaut," Krier said. "The ability to take care of the ball will be a huge key. We will have to maximize the chances we get when we touch the ball."

Krier, who's one of eight

Young But Talented Gazelles Ready For Season

YHS Opens With No Seniors, Juniors On Roster

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally appeared in the Dec. 1, 2014, edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been edited to reflect the ongoing season.

The Yankton Gazelles gymnastics team will have a young team this season, without a single senior or junior in the gym.

But that does not mean the squad is inexperienced as they opened the 2014-15 season on Dec. 1.

Yankton returns four gymnasts who competed on a Gazelles squad that finished sixth in the South Dakota State Class AA Gymnastics meet a year ago. Three of those — sophomores Sophie Bisgard, Haleigh Diede and Kaitlin Guthmiller — have two and three years of experience under their belts.

"We have a young team," said Yankton head coach Luke Youmans. "But the good thing about our sport is that young doesn't always equate to not having talented kids."

Diede was an all-around competitor for the Gazelles at state a year ago. Guthmiller tied for 19th on the uneven parallel bars, earning a spot

GYMNASTICS

Dec. 1	P-E/Hat Mitchell	
Dec. 5	Lolly Forseth Inv.	
Dec. 9	v. Lincoln/Mitchell	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 11	O'Gorman/At Roos.	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 15	vs. Wagner-BH	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	Mitchell Inv.	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Brookings Inv.	noon
Jan. 17	Pierre Inv.	noon
Jan. 22	at Vermillion	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 27	Wash./at O'Gorman	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	ESD at Pierre	noon
Feb. 13-14	State (Watertown)	4:30/5 pm

on the podium. Bisgard and freshman Lauren Vik also competed in both individual and team competitions.

But now, after looking up to last year's strong senior class, those sophomores are now the veterans.

"It's definitely a change," Guthmiller said. "We don't have anyone above us, and it will be like that for the next three years."

"I think we'll get used to it."

Other sophomores for the Gazelles include Cheyanne Crisman, Shanna Hill and Morgan Mason. Freshmen Ariel Hood, Cameryn Specht, Madison Stahly and Storm Yaggie are also on the roster.

"We're counting on the sophomores to take that leadership role up," Youmans said. "The nice thing is that it's not one sophomore that has to do it. We have a group that has been in the program and know the ins and outs of what it takes to be successful."

Younger athletes on the roster include eighth grader Samantha Kortan and seventh graders Jaiden Boomsma and Hailey Gokie.

Even the younger athletes have competitive experience through the River City Gymnastics club, noted Youmans.

"We've seen those kids start to filter into our program," he said. "We've also had a good program at the lower levels. Hopefully we'll keep moving those kids up."

Diede noted that the veterans are excited with what the younger athletes can bring to the team.

"We're a young team but with a lot of experience," she said. "It's going to take a lot of good attitudes and hard work, but I think we will have a good season."

The Gazelles get off to a fast start, with six competitions — half of their season total — in the next 19 days.

"We are going to be busy. We have a front-loaded schedule, so the first half gets hectic," Youmans said. "The first half of the season is about staying healthy and conditioning. We're not going to have the opportunity to get better until Christmas when we can get back into the gym."

The Gazelles will see defending champion Mitchell in four of their first six events, including three times in the next eight days. Mitchell won the first two meetings, a tri-

angular with the Gazelles and gymnastics newcomer Parkston-Ethan-Hanson on Dec. 1, and the Lolly Forseth Invitational on Dec. 5 in Sioux Falls. (The Gazelles and Kernels also faced off on Dec. 9 in Yankton, a meet held after the publication deadline for this section.)

"We're going to walk into the Mitchell gym and compete against the best team in the state," Youmans said. "I like coming out of the gates and seeing the best. It gives us an opportunity to see where we fall."

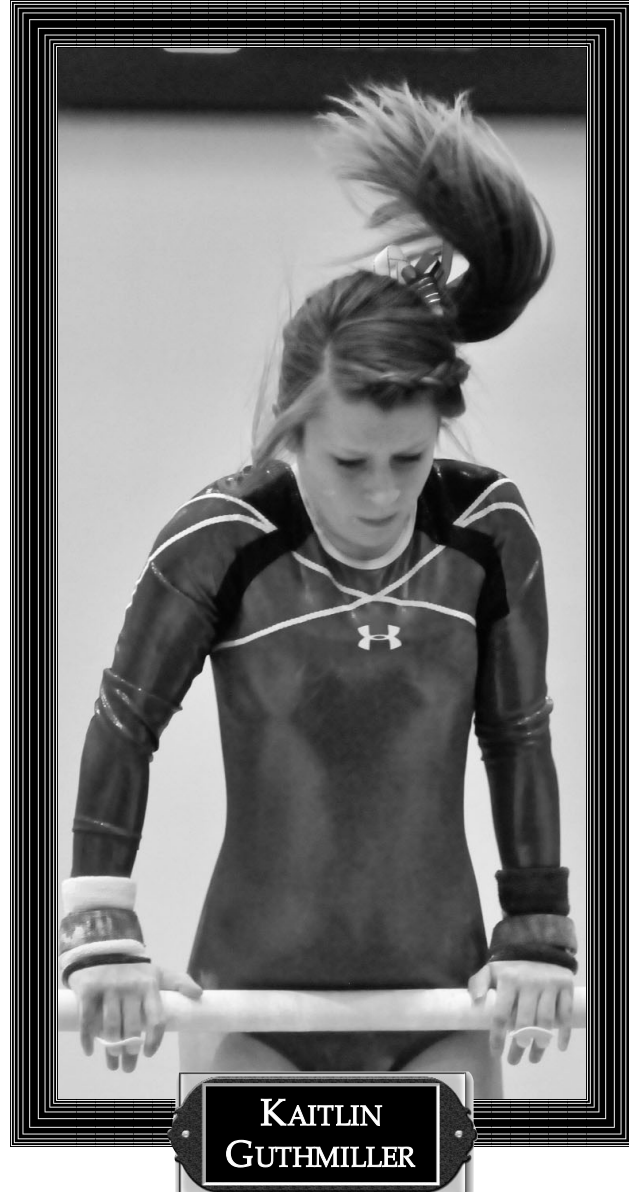
The athletes are excited about the challenge as well.

"It's good that we start with Mitchell," Bisgard said. "They are number one, so we will know what we need to do to improve."

After a sixth place finish last year and a seventh place finish the year before, the Gazelles would like to continue that climb and break into the top-five in the state. Yankton's best-ever state-meet finish was fourth, in 1984 and 1997.

"We should be able to place pretty high," Guthmiller said. "We have a lot of experienced girls, a lot of talent on the team."

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/JCimburek. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net



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