

# Bucks Look To Build On Strong Junior Class

## Yankton Has No Seniors, 11 Juniors On Squad

BY JEREMY HOECK  
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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article originally appeared in the Dec. 6, 2014, edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been edited to reflect the ongoing season.

With no seniors on the roster, the Yankton High School wrestling team will lean on a group of 11 juniors to lead a young squad this season.

Three juniors in particular — Spencer Huber, Bashir Abd-Al-Kreem and Cody Vornhagen — will take on leadership roles coming off experience at the state tournament.

"We're a really young team, but we have a good group of juniors who have been around for a while, so it's going to be on their shoulders to be leaders," said head coach Ryan Hage, whose team opens its season Saturday at the Watertown Dual Tournament.

The combination of more quadrangulars, triangulars and tournaments, as well as Huber's continued assault on school records, have the Bucks excited for the season, Huber said.

Of the five wrestlers who qualified for the state tournament last season, Yankton returns three — one to graduation and another who didn't come out this season.

"That's a good boost," said Huber, whose career stands at 95-33 entering the season. He'll shortly become the 12th wrestler in YHS history to reach 100 victories.

"And for the guys that didn't get there, they can look up to us and hopefully they can place at state."

Huber, who set the school single-season wins record as a sophomore, finished sixth at 126 pounds at the state tournament last season. Vornhagen (106) and Abd-Al-Kreem (113) lost their first

WRESTLING	
Dec. 6	Watertown Dual Tourn. (0-4)
Dec. 9	Lennox/Wash./at Lincoln
Dec. 12	v. Verm./BVI/DV 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Washington Inv. 9 a.m.
Jan. 5	v. Brookings/Roos. 5 p.m.
Jan. 9	Mitchell/at Harrisburg 5 p.m.
Jan. 10	Brandon Valley Inv. 9 a.m.
Jan. 16	BVI/at Aberdeen 2 p.m.
Jan. 17	Harrisburg Inv. 10 a.m.
Jan. 23-24	Pentagon Tourn. 2 p.m./9 a.m.
Jan. 30	at Huron 7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Brookings Inv. 9 a.m.
Feb. 6	vs. Pierre/Tea Area 5 p.m.
Feb. 7	Yankton Inv. 9 a.m.
Feb. 14	Huron Inv. 10 a.m.
Feb. 19-20	Region 2A (Tea) 5/6 p.m.
Feb. 27-28	State AA (Sioux Falls) 10 a.m.

two matches in their weight class at state.

"It makes a bunch of us feel better, knowing we have some people who can get to state," Vornhagen said. "We told them how much fun it was, so that makes them want to get there."

The other juniors for the Bucks include Hiram Alvarez, Jamee Bruegman, Robbie Darcy, Skylar Elle, Javier Flores, Brock Folkers, Zach Hanzlik and Jordan Lucht.

There are also nine sophomores on the roster: Chase Erickson, J.C. Holton, Austin Keller, Victor Lacey, Luke Lammers, Ryan Lucht, Josh Rowell, Kyle Schmidt and Brady Skillingstad.

From there, the roster drops off to three freshmen — Reese Anderson, Cole Diedrichsen and Ray Wermers — who should all make an impact, according to Hage.

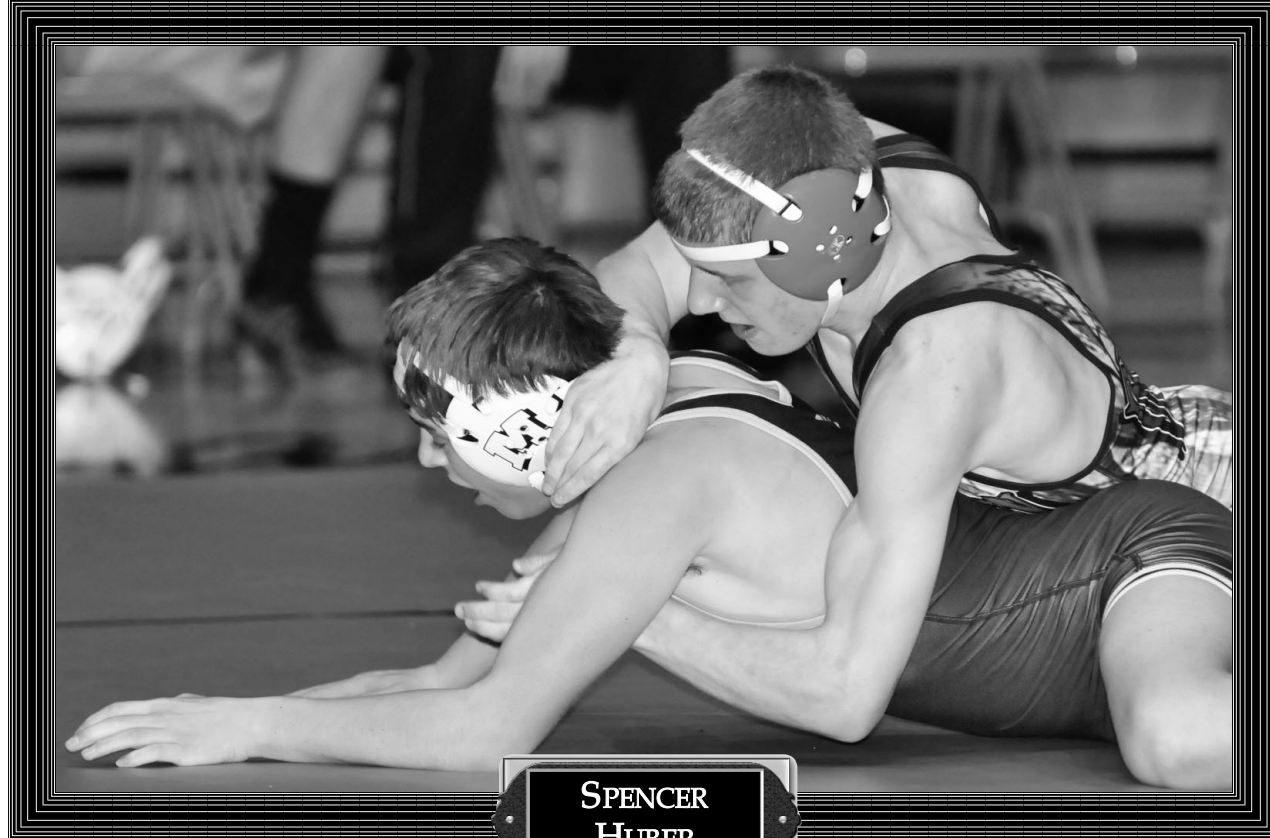
But it's up to the three state tournament returners to lead the way.

"With us three, I guess we'll be the go-to guys, we're all trying to be good role models," Abd-Al-Kreem said. "And hopefully we can get some new guys to come out."

In the meantime, the Bucks will have extra matches this season thanks to more tournaments, quadrangulars and triangulars.

Yankton will again compete at the Sanford Pentagon Invitational in Sioux Falls on Jan. 23-24, but a change in that date from last season allowed Yankton to put together its own home invitational — which the Bucks didn't have last season.

"When the Pentagon moved their date up in the calendar, that left a big hole



SPENCER  
HUBER

in February," Hage said. "And we jumped on board and let everyone know we would try to host our own invite."

Doing so produced 14-15 teams — from South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska — that agreed to come to the Yankton Invitational which is set for Feb. 7, Hage said.

For now, it's all about development for the Bucks, Vornhagen said.

"We'll be good pretty soon, we've got a lot of young kids coming up," he said.

Though numbers are down at the varsity level (Hage said the varsity numbers are about 20 shy of what he'd prefer), the middle school numbers are on the rise — 45 in grades 6-8 signed up this year.

What that means for the varsity team is that Yankton won't fill out all 14 weight classes, but that'll only become a factor in duals.

"This is a down year for us in numbers, but it goes in cycles," Hage said. "They'll improve, we know that."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at [twitter.com/jhoeck](https://twitter.com/jhoeck). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## Yankton's Huber Hopes To Add To Record-Setting Season

BY JEREMY HOECK  
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Spencer Huber has an outside chance to become the all-time winningest wrestler in Yankton High School history.

Just don't expect him to talk much about it.

Huber, a soft-spoken junior, set the program's single-season wins record (47) last season and will reach 100 career victories early this season.

With another two seasons like his last, Huber will mount a serious threat at the all-time record of 147 wins (set by Nick Smith in 2004), but Huber would rather let his technique do the talking.

"Yeah, he's pretty quiet, but he's a different guy on the mat," said junior teammate Bashir Abd-Al-Kreem.

"He's getting better and better. I go to touch him during our battles and makes his move, and boom I'm down."

That's when Huber flips a switch. Gone is that quiet demeanor and in its place is a record-setting, aggressive 126-pound wrestler who also tied the program record for fastest pin (6 seconds).

"He works his tail off, and the kids know he's the top dog in the room," head coach Ryan Hage said. "He's earned

that privilege, and he does a great job during the season, and also during the off-season."

Sure, there were more matches last season for Huber to set the record, but he was coming off a broken collarbone that cost him most of his freshman season. And he went on to not only qualify for state as a junior, but finished sixth.

"I knew I had an opportunity because of all of our matches," Huber said during a break at a pre-season practice. "And hoping for the same thing again this year, and taking advantage of it."

Huber finished last season with a 47-13 record and now stands at 95-33 for his career — with still full seasons to go.

"He came on strong last year, no doubt about it," Hage said. "He kept himself in shape, he was in a tough weight class."

Of all of Huber's teammates, perhaps nobody knows best his style than Cody Vornhagen, now a junior classmate. The two have wrestled together since elementary school.

"And he's gotten a lot better," Vornhagen said. "We worked together in the off-season to get better, and he's working hard to try to win state."

Any records that come — or have come — along the way are only icing on the cake, Huber said.

"It was a really good feeling when I knew I got the record," he said. "And then the fastest pin, that just added to it for me. It really motivated me."

Yankton's first home action of the season is a Dec. 12 quadrangular, but by then the Bucks will have competed at two previous events for Huber to reach the 100-win mark.

"There's probably a good chance he'll do it at home in front of our fans," Hage said. "It'll be something we'll stop wrestling for, and he'll get the recognition he deserves."

Even if such recognition isn't exactly what Huber seeks — despite now being perhaps the most experienced wrestler for the Bucks as a junior.

"He's had a little bit of that (leadership) role for at least a year, and it might not be something he's super comfortable with," Hage said.

"But he's a guy that leads by example, not really by what he says."

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ANDI SPRAKEL

## YHS Girls

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new coaches in 'AA', feels this season is up for grabs.

"The whole state is a question mark," he said. "I haven't been around it and didn't pay much attention to other team's last season. There are eight new coaches in 'AA', so it's going to be a lot different."

At the end of the season, he wants his team to grow on and off the court.

"Success is measured in many ways, not just in the win column," Krier said. "I want these girls to grow on

and off the court and become better people from it. When you win games, you get more opportunity to grow and I think that's what the purpose of high school athletics is."

Yankton opened its season on Tuesday at Eastern

South Dakota rival Watertown.

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at [twitter.com/RobinsonNick2013](https://twitter.com/RobinsonNick2013). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net/](http://www.yankton.net/).

## Yankton Girls Optimistic As Season Begins

BY ADRIENNE KUSEK  
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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.

Yankton Miracle Girls' JV hockey team is looking to do one thing this season: To learn to play hockey smart and efficiently.

"Every year we want to improve where we finish at the state tournament," Coach Rob McClennen said.

Last year, Yankton finished sixth at the state tournament.

"I would like our girls to grow into a team that they can remember because they accomplished everything together," McClennen said.

This year's team has many strengths according to McClennen.

"Our defense and goal tending are major strengths this year," he said. "Another thing we have going is our speed."

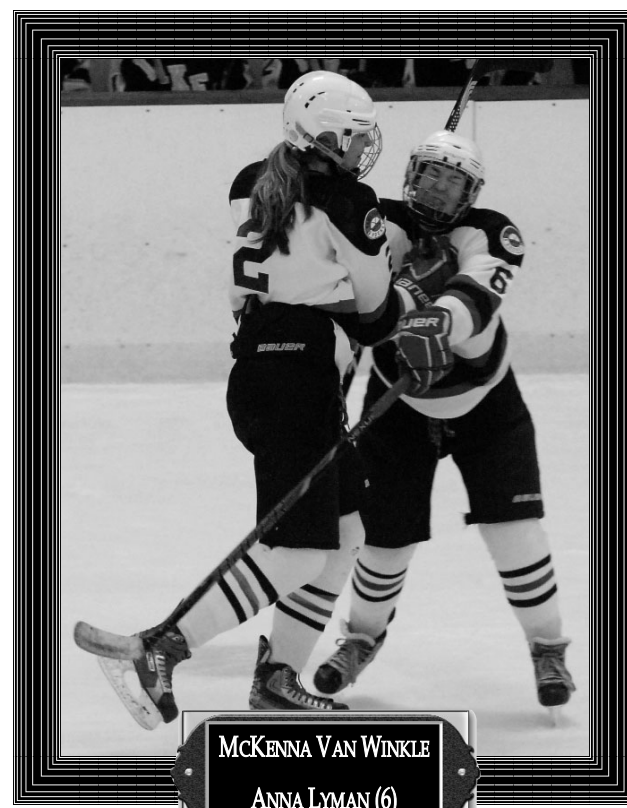
Leading the Yankton Miracle Girls' JV as captain is senior Erica Westerman.

"She is a determined young lady," McClennen said.

Westerman scored six goals last season and had five assists.

Other members of the team include Renee Cross, McKenna Vanwinkle, Hannah

MIRACLE | PAGE 7



MCKENNA VAN WINKLE  
ANNA LYMAN (6)

MIRACLE GIRLS' HOCKEY		
Nov. 30	vs. Watertown	W 7-2
Dec. 5	vs. Mitchell	L 0-2
Dec. 7	at Watertown	W 4-0
Dec. 12	at Sioux Center	8 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Mitchell	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	at Sioux Falls	11:15 a.m.
Jan. 9	vs. Sioux Falls	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Sioux Center	5 p.m.
Jan. 17	vs. Rushmore	4:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	vs. Rushmore	9:30 a.m.
Jan. 23	vs. Brookings	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Oahe	1 p.m.
Feb. 8	at Oahe	10 a.m.
Feb. 14	at Aberdeen	4 p.m.
Feb. 15	at Aberdeen	12:30 p.m.
Feb. 21	at Brookings	noon
Feb. 27-MI	State JV Tourn. (Pierre)	

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