

S.F. Slugger Signs With Lancers

Sioux Falls Washington first baseman Jared Miller has committed to attend Mount Marty College and play baseball for the Lancers, the institution announced Friday.



Miller

Miller, who played summer baseball for Sioux Falls Post 15 East, batted .493 this past summer, recording 19 extra-base hits and 51 runs batted in. He struck out just nine times in over 150 plate appearances, and was honored as the team's offensive and defensive Most Valuable Player.

"Jared has a smooth left-handed swing. I was really impressed with the productivity he showed last spring at the High School level and summer at the Legion level," said Mount Marty head coach Andy Bernatow. "Jared put up some amazing offensive numbers while playing at a very high level defensively. The kid can flat out hit, which made him a priority for this recruiting class. He has the ability to make an immediate impact in our program and should develop into a solid middle of the line-up hitter."

Miller plans to major in business administration. The son of Jay and Julie Miller, he will receive a Mount Marty Trustee Academic Scholarship and a Baseball Scholarship at MMC.

Earnhardt Out Front Again, Wants To Stay There

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Here's something you haven't read in a while: Dale Earnhardt Jr. is in first place.

OK, so it was only two laps. And it was a rain-shortened practice at Daytona International Speedway — the place where Earnhardt is, well, kind of good.

Still, in a season in which Earnhardt is facing a new round of intensifying questions about his lack of on-track success, it's better to be fast than slow even if it doesn't count toward anything. Earnhardt led two of his Hendrick Motorsports teammates to the top of the speed chart in Friday's abbreviated practice session, and it could be the first sign that he's back on the right track after the worst season of his career.

"His heart really, really, really is" **■ NASCAR, Page 9A please**

ESD

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"We had a slow start waiting for the cheerleaders to go from cheer and dance to gymnastics," she said. "Since Christmas break, we have building momentum and hopefully we can keep that going."

Mitchell enters the ESD meet with no seniors on its roster, but Kernals head coach Audra Rew said she feels like the team has been improving a lot throughout the year.

"We have a young team and I feel like they are learning to compete and learning new skills every day," she said. "Having just a few sophomores and basically the rest seventh graders, it was a huge learning curve."

Seventh-grader Emily Paulson is Mitchell's lone state qualifier so far, and she earned a spot in the balance beam.

Rew said the key to the ESD's will be for her young team to be able to handle the pressure of competing in a big meet like this.

"It's kind of an unknown; Sometimes they don't realize it's a big deal," she said. "Hopefully they don't worry about what's happening around them and I hope they can stay relaxed and hit their stuff. You want everyone to hit everything and see how it comes out at the end of the day."

Yankton/Bon Homme also has a young team heading into the meet. Youmans said even though the team is probably not going to win the meet, he still is looking for his team to compete hard.

"The reality is we are not in the position to walk away as champs,



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Vermillion's Andrew McCann scores a late takedown to edge Crofton's Logan Schieffer 7-6 in their 152-pound match in a wrestling dual Friday in Crofton, Neb. Vermillion scored a 46-12 victory.

Wrestling: Tanagers Battle Past Crofton

CROFTON, Neb. — The Vermillion Tanagers defeated Crofton 46-12 in a prep wrestling dual on Friday night in Crofton, Neb.

The Tanagers jumped out to a 12-0 lead as 103-pound wrestler Brett Bye pinned his man and Joey Mueller won by forfeit at 112 pounds.

The Warriors battled back to tie the dual at 12-12 thanks to three consecutive match victories. They got wins from Dominic Peterson (119), Nate Merchen (125), and Dominic Miller (130). Merchen pinned Tony Hendersen in 1:11.

The Tanagers then proceeded to win the next seven matches. This included pins by

Dexter Melhalf (160) and Will Mart (285) and a major decision by Nick Mart (189) over Calan List 21-8.

VERMILLION 46, CROFTON 12: 103 — Brett Bye V pin Pete Hernandez C 3:37; 112 — Joey Mueller V by forfeit; 119 — Dominic Peterson C dec. Regan Bye V 7:5; 125 — Nate Merchen C pin Tony Hendersen V 1:11; 130 — Dominic Miller C dec. Earl Klitzner V 3:1; 135 — Lance Burkhardt V by forfeit; 140 — open; 145 — open; 152 — Andrew McCann V dec. Logan Schieffer C 7:6; 160 — Dexter Melhalf V pin Brady Stetten C 1:45; 171 — Chris Mart V by forfeit; 189 — Nick Mart V maj. dec. Calan List 21-8; 215 — Garret Henne V dec. Derik Wortmann 4-3; 285 — Will Mart V pin Rupert Aguilta 2:53.

Battle Creek 39, Creighton-Verdigre 29

VERDIGRE, Neb. — Thanks to wins in five of the first six matches, the Battle Creek Braves defeated Creighton-Verdigre 39-29 in a Nebraska prep wrestling dual Friday night in Verdigré, Neb.

Battle Creek earned wins from Ross Podliska (103), Lake Thompson (112), Nic Young (119), Karl Bonner (130), Brad Lanman (135), Jaime Gray (145) and Travis Wright (160).

In the loss for the Bulldogs, Andy Doerr (125), Brennan Becker (140), Andrew Largen (152), Landon Pospisil (171), Nick York (189), Ross Volquardsen (215) and Kyle Berglund (285) all won their matches.

BATTLE CREEK 39, CREIGHTON-VERDIGRE 29: 103 — Ross Podliska BC by forfeit; 112 — Lake Thompson BC by forfeit; 119 — Nic Young BC pin. Owen Pavelka 3:10; 125 — Andy Doerr CV pin. Royal Tiedke 0:50; 130 — Karl Bonner BC pin. Ryan Volquardsen 1:22; 135 — Brad Lanman BC pin. Austin Baldwin 1:45; 140 — Brennan Becker CV by forfeit; 145 — Jaime Gray BC pin. Eli Schreier 2:52; 152 — Andrew Largen CV maj. dec. Austin Welke 17:4; 160 — Travis Wright BC dec. Spencer Frederick 11:5; 171 — Landon Pospisil CV dec. Matt Marx 8:6; 189 — Nick York CV maj. dec. Ryan Heller 10:0; 215 — Russ Volquardsen CV dec. Casey Johnson 6:1; 285 — Kyle Berglund CV dec. Taylor Wennekamp 8:2

Leischner Leads SDSU On Opening Day Of Frank Sevigne Invite

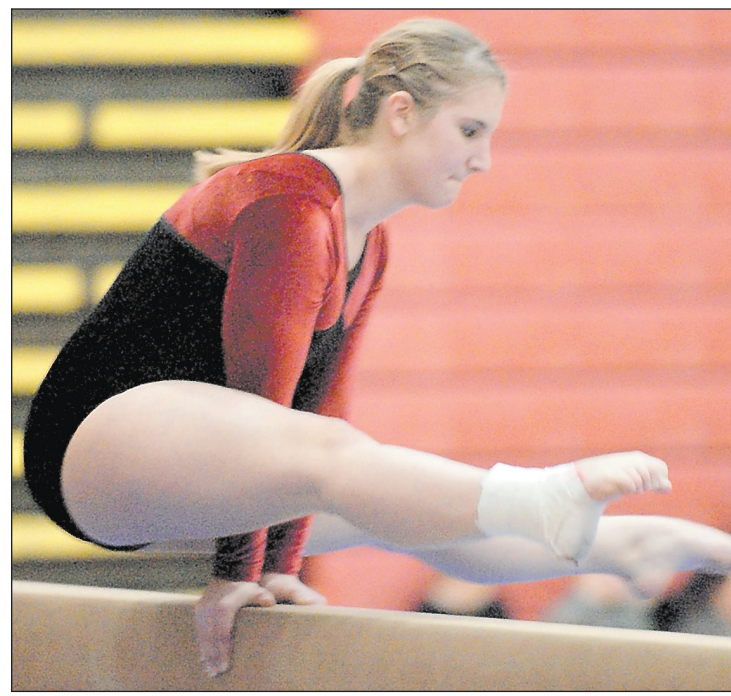
LINCOLN, Neb. — Parkston native Luke Leischner moved up South Dakota State's all-time top-10 list for the second straight week in the open 400-meter dash to lead the Jackrabbits at the first day of the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, hosted

by the University of Nebraska. Leischner, who set a personal record last week in the open 400 with a time of 49.09 seconds at the Bill Bergan Invite at Iowa State, bested his time again this week with a time of 48.92. His time was good enough for fourth on SDSU's all-time list, moving

ahead of Ervin Gebhart's time of 49.04 set in 1981.

South Dakota freshman Bethany Buell placed fifth in the women's pole vault, clearing 12-5.5. Nebraska's Natalie Miller won the event with a 13-9.25, with North Dakota State's Leslie Brost, a Watertown native, finish-

ing second at 13-5.25. The meet continues today (Saturday) at noon. USD and SDSU will also compete at the John Dalton Invitational today at the DakotaDome, beginning at 10 a.m.



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton-Bon Homme's Samantha Wampol competes on the balance beam during a home meet earlier this season.

but we know we can compete," he said. "We want to make sure we are competitive and not make the mistakes to take us out of it."

The main thing Youmans is looking for from his team is for them to be consistent. "We talk about consistency a lot and we have to be consistent," he said. "It's a young team and it will take a couple years before this group is where we want them to be, but even if we can't do the big things, we want to do what we do great and that has been our focus."

The Gazelles will be led by Sam Wampol, who is aiming for a score

of 33 Youmans said. "We are hoping for her to put it together and break that 33 barrier, which she has been stuck at," she said. "If she does that, she will set herself up and hopefully build some more confidence heading into the rest of the season." The competition for the ESD meet will start at 1:30 p.m.

Smith, Rice Frontrunners For Hall Of Fame

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — With Emmitt Smith and Jerry Rice all but shoo-ins for the Pro Football Hall of Fame, get ready for a little Canton Two-Step.

Smith ran for more yards than any NFL player. Rice caught more passes and scored more touchdowns than anyone else.

Sure seems fitting that they would enter the hall together, a slightly more significant honor than making the finals of "Dancing With The Stars." Or winning it, in Smith's case.

Voting by a panel of media members takes place Saturday at the Super Bowl. Inductions will be Aug. 7 in Canton.

Smith and Rice, in their first year of eligibility, are among 17 finalists.

The others are receivers Cris Carter, Tim Brown and Andre Reed; running back Roger Craig; center Dermontti Dawson; defensive ends Richard Dent and Charles Haley; defensive tackles Cortez Kennedy and John Randle; tight end Shannon Sharpe; linebacker Rickey Jackson; guard Russ Grimm; and coach Don Coryell.

Senior nominees are defensive back Dick LeBeau, now Pittsburgh's defensive coordinator, and running back Floyd Little. "It's not something I can say I

ever really dreamed about," Smith said. "I never said, 'I have to make the Hall of Fame.' If I could make steps that could set me apart in my career, then I've had a successful career."

"I feel I achieved every goal I had as a player, from Pop Warner to the NFL. My goals were winning championships and winning Super Bowls. When I thought I could reach Walter Payton's all-time rushing record, it became a goal."

By attaining all of those objectives, Smith might have made his

Parker Opens Scotland

PARKER — The Parker Pheasants defeated the ninth-ranked Scotland Lady Highlanders 59-55 Friday night in girls' basketball action in Parker.

Parker's Anna LeLoux and Scotland's April Winne battled back and forth on the night. LeLoux scored 27 points with nine rebounds and four assists. Winne scored 25 points with seven assists and five rebounds.

The Lady Highlanders had won seven straight games, including three consecutive over ranked teams.

In the win for Scotland (11-4), Haley Brunke added 10 points, while Morgan Iwan added seven points and six rebounds.

Also for Parker (6-8), Tessa Weeldreyer added seven points and six rebounds while teammate Katelyn Schaefer added five points and seven rebounds.

The Lady Pheasants outrebounded Scotland 45-24.

Parker hosts Sioux Valley today (Saturday) and Scotland hosts third-ranked Class A Parkston next Monday.

SCOTLAND (11-4) 12 23 36 55
PARKER (6-8) 12 23 38 59

Viborg 34, Freeman Academy 22

FREEMAN — The sixth-ranked Viborg Lady Vikings defeated the Freeman Academy Bobcats 34-22 on Friday night in Freeman.

The Vikings (13-2) found themselves down 10-8 at the end of the first quarter, but limited the Bobcats to just two points in the second quarter and found themselves with a 17-12 lead.

Jessie Lee had a strong contest with 16 points and 10 rebounds. Sage Knudsen dished out four assists.

Freeman Academy's Jaden Miller scored nine points while Lori Rensink secured 11 rebounds.

Viborg will travel to Avon on Tuesday, while Freeman Academy goes to Centerville on Monday.

VIBORG (13-2) 17 27 34
FREEMAN ACADEMY (6-8) 10 12 15 22

Elk Point-Jefferson 47, Dakota Valley 38

NORTH SIOUX CITY — The Elk Point-Jefferson Huskies defeated the Dakota Valley Lady Black Panthers 47-38 on Friday night in North Sioux City.

Chrissy Strassburg scored 19 points to lead all scorers. Tory McCreary scored 10 points while Haylee Erickson added nine points.

■ GIRLS, Page 9A please

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