

USD Track Has Strong Opening Day At Summit League Meet

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — The South Dakota track and field teams had several quality performances at the opening day of the Summit League Championships, which were held Friday in Fort Wayne, Ind. The Coyote women are in third after the opening day, just two points out of second, while the men are tied for fifth but are just nine points out of first as several teams are in contention.

For the Coyote women, freshman Analisa Huschle set a new school record in the 60-meter hurdles during the preliminaries (7.55), while several individuals qualified for the finals in their events. For the men, the distance medley relay's runner-up performance highlighted the competition.

The Coyote men's distance medley relay, which consisted of sophomore Travis Brenner (Yankton), freshman Tyler Sternhagen (Yankton), junior Casey Shade and junior Ethan Marquardt took second with a time of 9:59.91.

The Coyote men also had several top five finishes. Junior Kyle Ballew was third in the pole vault with an effort of 16-6. Freshman Jeff O'Connell was fourth in the long jump at 23-5 1/4, a personal best. Senior Kyle Wheeler was fourth in the men's weight throw at 56-6 3/4.

Sophomore Jeff Mettler was sixth in the 3,000 meters at 8:24.05.

The Coyote women were paced by senior Kenna Wolter, who was third in the long jump (18-10 3/4), with Huschle taking fourth at 18-6 1/2. Sophomore Tansha Clarke was third in the pentathlon with a season-best score of 895. South Dakota's women's distance medley relay was third at 9:59.91. That consisted of sophomore Ashleigh Giese, junior Ashley Sveum, (Wis.), freshman Rachel Weinandt (Yankton) and senior Emma Ladwig (Gayville).

Junior Jessica Brandli was fifth in the 3,000 meters with a personal-best time of 10:02.25.

Several Coyotes advanced to Saturday's finals in their respective events. Huschle's school record in the women's 60-meter dash highlighted the team's preliminary performances.

Two Coyotes — Huschle and junior Gabriel Williams each qualified for the finals of the 60-meter dash. Huschle ran the record-setting time of 7.55 in the prelims and followed with a 7.61 in the semifinals — winning both races to advance to Saturday's finals. Williams ran a 7.69 in the semis, taking fourth in that race.

Ladwig reached the finals of the women's 800, taking second in the prelims with a time of 2:17.14. Senior Natalie Newman also advanced, running a time of 2:16.95. In the women's 60-meter hurdles, senior Haley Juhnke and senior Alexa Duling both advanced to the finals. Juhnke was third in the prelims at 8.84 while Duling was fifth at 8.95. Duling also advanced to the finals in the 400-meter dash, taking third in the prelims at 56.72, and in the 200, where she ran a qualifying time of 25.43.

Saturday's final day of competition begins at 8:30 a.m. Central time with the men's heptathlon. Field events begin at 10:30 a.m. CT, followed by track events starting at noon CT.

Miracle

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said. "We've split a couple of games with Yankton this year and we lost the last time we were here, scoring three goals early was huge."

The Miracle regrouped and began playing hockey in the Ranger zone, putting goaltender Lexy Lynn to the test.

Alysha Watzel got off the first solid Miracle shot, but Lynn held firm and kept Yankton off the board.

In the Yankton zone, Renee Cross also settled in, keeping the Rangers out of the Miracle net and stoning Rennich on a 1-on-1 attempt at the 3-minute mark.

Kendra Nelson gave the Miracle an opportunity to score by beating two Rangers for a loose puck and lifting it for a shot on goal, but again, Lynn thwarted the Yankton attempt, and Brookings held a 3-0 lead after the first period.

The Rangers added to their lead with 12:18 to play as Rennich lifted a shot into the Miracle net. Ashley Rennich assisted on Brookings' fourth goal, and Bethany Rennich already had the hat-trick.

Watzel again looked to get Yankton on the board with some nifty stick-work, but her shot

Staying Cool: State Girls' JV Hockey

S.D. State Junior Varsity Girls' Hockey Tournament — February 24-26 At Yankton — Photos By Jeremy Hoeck & Justin Nelson



ABOVE: Signs of support, like this one from the Brookings Rangers, could be found all over Alcoa Arena during the first round of the S.D. State Girls' JV Hockey Tournament, which began Friday afternoon in Yankton. (Hoeck)

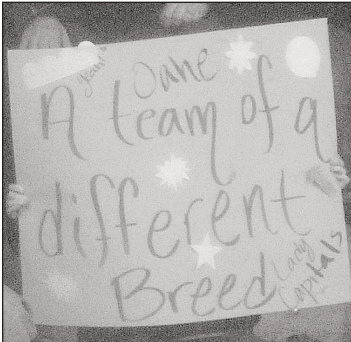
BELOW: A young Oahe fan holds up a sign to support the Capitals during their game Friday night against Watertown. (Hoeck)



ABOVE: Yankton's Alysha Watzel, right, fights off Ellie Hegdahl of Brookings for the puck during their opening round game Friday afternoon. (Hoeck)

TOP LEFT: Brookings Rangers' forward Jordynj Peterson pushes the puck up the ice during Friday afternoon's first round game against the Yankton Miracle at the S.D. State Girls' JV Hockey Tournament, which began Friday in Yankton. (Hoeck)

BOTTOM LEFT: Mitchell Marlins' Jacey Brunsen, right, attacks the puck against two Rushmore defenders during their opening round game Friday night at the S.D. State Girls' JV Hockey Tournament at Alcoa Arena. (Nelson)



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No. 2 Seed Mitchell Edges Rushmore Oahe

BY JILANNE DOOM
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After controlling the match from the opening face-off, the Mitchell Marlins defeated the Rushmore Thunder 2-1 in the first round of the S.D. State Girls' JV Hockey Tournament on Friday at the Yankton Alcoa Arena.

The Marlins, seeded number two in the tournament, dominated on the offensive end with 47 shots on goal, compared to their opponent's eight.

But despite Mitchell's aggressive attacks throughout the night, the Thunder's goalie Anna Veazey kept her team in the game with 45 saves, racking up a save percentage of 96 percent.

"We kept up the passing and girls worked hard tonight," Mitchell's head coach Eric Hohn said. "We got 47 shots on goal but we only got two goals because their goalie played good."

The Marlins controlled the puck for much of the first period, despite a tripping penalty by Kyle Barington at 5:42. The Thunder's Veazey made several big saves until Mitchell's Alexandra Jones scored the first goal of the evening at the 10:54 mark. But Rushmore answered back quickly with a goal by Caitlin King to tie the game 1-1.

In similar fashion, Mitchell took over the beginning of the second period with a pair of close shots in the first minute. After several minutes of back-and-forth puck control, the Marlins yet again attacked Rushmore's net, forcing the de-



Mitchell's Alex Jones, right, has her shot blocked by Rushmore goalie Anna Veazey during their game Friday night at the S.D. State Girls' JV Hockey Tournament at Alcoa Arena.

fense to work. But a late penalty would slow down the Marlins' attack as the period closed still in a tie.

The third period opened up with a heightened intensity and urgency for both squads. Despite a third Mitchell penalty by Michelle Wyatt at 4:35, the power play did not up the door for Rushmore. The short-handed Marlins kept the Thunder on defense until they regained full strength. Soon after at the 9:26 mark, Mitchell's Bailey

Hohn scored the team's second goal of the night. The Thunder pulled their goalie after a 1:47 time-out, but were unable to capitalize as the final period ended 2-1.

For the second round of the tournament, Mitchell will move into the winners bracket and face the Oahe Capitals at 4 p.m. Rushmore will take on the Watertown Lakers for a chance to play for the consolation title.

"We play Pierre (Oahe) tomorrow and Pierre has got a really

tough goalie," Hohn said. "We thought Rushmore's goalie played good but Pierre's goalie plays like that all the time. So we've got to step it up and get another 50 shots and hopefully get two or three to go in."

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with the puck, we just weren't able to get a lot of those shots in the net," Oahe head coach Christy Hockett said. "Hopefully tomorrow we can execute those shots better, but overall, we played a good game."

"It was one of the better games we've played this year," Watertown coach Keith Muhl said. "We skated pretty well and our goalie had a really nice game."

The Capitals were able to hold the Lakers to 16 shots.

"We have a solid defense that breaks offensive plays down," Hockett said. "The defense did a great job and Tessa Singleton had a great game stopping their shots."

The tournament's third seed, Oahe moves on to play either Mitchell or Rushmore today at 4 p.m.

Watertown will play Mitchell/Rushmore at noon today in hopes of moving on to the consolation final.

"We're pretty young and it shows in games like these," Muhl said. "We're looking forward to the next one so that we can play again on Sunday."

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was deflected. Brookings took advantage of a powerplay as Marina Gerstner slipped the puck through the wickets for a 5-0 Ranger lead with 8:33 to play in the second period. Ellie Hegdahl was credited with the assist.

Watzel got off a shot at the end of the second period, but Brookings held the 5-0 lead with a period to play.

Needing to keep the Rangers in sight, Cross came up with a glove save to stop a Brookings shot early in the third period.

Watzel continued shooting, getting one as far as between Lynn's knees, but still, the Miracle was kept off the board.

Brookings put the game on ice as Peterson scored from the wing with an assist from Bethany Rennich at the 9:13 mark.

The Rangers scored their seventh and final goal with 5:05 to

play as Bethany Rennich netted an assist from McCarty. For Bethany Rennich, it was her fourth goal of the game.

The Rangers were able to stave off the Miracle the rest of the way and advanced with the 7-0 win.

The Miracle fired off 21 shots in the game, but Lynn passed every test.

"Lexy is a great goalie," Freeman said. "We had some good breakaways, but with a goalie like that, you have to be patient and pick your shot."

"We've got a veteran goalie," Peterson said. "She does a great job of standing up in there and kicking shots out."

The Miracle has a chance to close out the tournament on a positive note as they are set to play in the consolation final Sunday at 9 a.m.

"We might've lost this one, but we've got to come back on

Sunday," Freeman said. "First off, we've got to regroup and then get to focusing in on the game and focusing on playing positions better like we've done before."

In the second round, the Rangers will take on the tournament's top seed, the Sioux Falls Flyers today at 2 p.m.

"There's not a lot of teams in this tournament, and unfortunately, we've got to play number one in the Sioux Falls Flyers; we've got to get some rest and be ready," Peterson said. "We've got a super bunch of young girls, but we've got our work cut out for us."

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