

WOKSAPE

Gazelles Able to Power Past Pierre in Recent Basketball Action



BY
MEGAN FORD

As the Gazelles took the court for a Friday night basketball game, they were able to power past Pierre. They battled off the Lady Govs 37-35. The Gazelles were able to play more physical and it worked.

“Our game plan was to work hard, be aggressive, and come out ready to get the win,” said starting guard/forward, Mikala Hora.

In the first half, the Gazelles were 9 for 20 from the field. Kelsey Fitzgerald led with seven points. Fitzgerald and sophomore Andi Sprakel together had a total of eight out of the nineteen rebounds to help the Gazelles keep a 21-14 lead at half.

“Rebounds are a key part to winning a game both on the defensive and offensive end, because giving up second chance shots can make a huge difference in the outcome of the game,” said Hora.

Pierre’s Stevi Claussen finished the half with a total of seven points and three rebounds for the Lady Govs. Kaitlyn Severyn added four points and two rebounds.

Up by seven points, the Gazelles did not waste any time taking shots in the second half, however, the Lady Govs were able to close the gap.

Although it was not enough to keep Hora and Fitzgerald from scoring a combined 21 points.

Sprakel contributed eight points. The Gazelles out-rebounded the Lady Govs 31 to 20 in the second half.

Jessica Wirth and Hora had the only three-pointers for the Gazelles in the second half. Wirth may not start the game, but she adds to the momentum of the game when she’s in.

“I brought a lot of energy to the court and just did what had to be done defensively,” said Wirth.

Severyn and Claussen each had nine points and a total of nine rebounds for Pierre in the second half.

Taylor Hyde had two three-pointers in the second half and contributed four rebounds.

The Gazelles were defeated by Aberdeen Central the following Saturday.

The Gazelles meet up with Brookings at home tomorrow evening with the varsity game starting at 7:30 p.m.

Is a New Home on the Horizon for Yankton Youth Soccer?



BY
NICK ROBINSON

The Yankton Bucks soccer team capped off a remarkable fall season and was crowned state champion in Rapid City. The Gazelles concluded their season with the sportsmanship award at the state tournament.

However, the future for two young teams with potential could come to a halt.

Previously, the state of South Dakota owned the property at the Human Services Center, along Highway 51 and Highway 80, where Yankton Youth Soccer would play. The six fields and surrounding areas are known as the Lewis and Clark Sports Complex. The state of South Dakota sold the land to the city of Yankton this past May.

Yankton Youth Soccer Association used to lease the land every five years from the state, and with the land being swapped from state to city, the Yankton Youth Soccer Association would have to negotiate a lease with the city.

Yankton Youth Soccer Association was given the right to appraise the land at value. The appraisal came back to both the city and Yankton Youth Soccer Association, and the entire parcel was appraised at \$1.9 million dollars. The land includes six soccer fields, land not used by Yankton Youth Soccer Association and land used by Mount Marty College and Yankton High School for cross country meets.

“Yankton Youth Soccer Association is a non-profit organization,” said president elect of Yankton Youth Soccer Association, Deb Lillie. “We don’t have enough funds available to purchase the land.”

The dilemma for this community is either keep the soccer fields the way they are or open the area for sale to developers.

“As of now, they are playing there (at HSC). Fully expect soccer to use land for at least one more season,” Yankton Mayor Nancy Wenande said, noting her comments reflect her opinion and the city council has the final say on all decisions made regarding the land.

The Yankton city council made a decision to hire a consultant to look at the needs of the community and decide what will fit better for the area. They will also address each organization’s facility needs.

“Soccer is very important for this city and we want to make sure that it gets taken care of,” Wenande said.

Yankton has formed a bid district to implement a hotel tax of

two dollars a night on people staying in hotels in Yankton. The bid district would bring an estimated \$145,000-\$150,000 dollars to the city of Yankton each year.

The consultant will also have suggestions to where the money from the hotel tax would go.

“The money from the district would promote facilities or events, not necessarily just sports,” said Director of Parks and Recreation, Todd Larson.

“The bid district is more interested to bring people to town, not just directed at sports.”

According to Lillie, the Yankton City Council is on record stating that the land would best fit Yankton for commercial use rather than athletic use.

The consultant will give the information he has gathered to the public within the next month. The proposals all depend on the master plan and what they deemed best for the community.

“The soccer fields have rose to the top because of the whole HSC situation,” Larson said.

High school club soccer teams are on the rise as the sport has never been more popular in the area. Hundreds of youth are involved from mini-kickers to varsity club soccer.

In the summer, Yankton Youth Soccer Association holds a tournament with approximately 64 teams from around the area.

“Soccer is the largest youth activity in Yankton right now,” Lillie said. “You can combine baseball and softball, and you still won’t match up to soccer.”

Yankton Youth Soccer Association has dumped an estimated one million dollars into the HSC grounds for the use of soccer fields, according to Lillie.

“To start, we had to level the land and irrigate it,” Lillie said. “We had to get a pump in, and it wasn’t city water, we had it through a well. The pump had to be replaced; we also had to put drainage tiles all around the fields, lights around the fields and the upkeep of the fields.”

The Yankton Youth Soccer Association is ready to find a permanent home for the long haul—whether the area is a new sports complex or just enough fields to host state tournaments.

Yankton Youth Soccer Association has made several attempts to look for new land to use for the upcoming seasons.

“We would have to buy the ground, move the dirt – it needs to be the right soil,” Larson said. “We need to plant the right grass, have drainage—and it would need to be irrigated. The turf needs to have two to three growing seasons, so it’s established before play begins. ”

That doesn’t touch the access to parking, lighting, bleachers, concessions, storage buildings, restrooms, water and sewage.

“You don’t buy a piece of ground today, and put a soccer ball out tomorrow,” Larson said.

According to Lillie, if the city of Yankton were to agree with a

developer that they and the Yankton Youth Soccer Association could come to an agreement. The developer would wait two to three years, so Yankton Youth Soccer Association could find and begin the process of having a new home.

“The bottom line is everyone can function as they are,” Lillie said. “But soccer is the only one that is in immediate jeopardy right now.”

“I don’t think soccer has a say in that,” Wenande said. “We wouldn’t stop a multimillion dollar operation for a soccer season, though, for example, it took Menards three years for negotiation. But, we are working more diligently with soccer.”

Yankton Youth Soccer Association has another dilemma on their hands. At the end of the 2014 school year, each school that participates in club soccer

will have to make the decision to either sanction the sport or be forced not to play.

On Dec. 3 and 4, the South Dakota Activities Director meetings were held in Pierre. A main topic of discussion was when the club teams would make soccer a part of the school.

“The consensus was that schools do not have enough funding from the state to add another sport like soccer,” Yankton Activities Director, Ryan Mors said. “It is a waiting game; we need more funding for education.”

Currently, only three schools have soccer as a sanctioned sport: Mitchell, Sioux Falls O’ Gorman and Aberdeen Central.

The process of sanctioning a new sport is all up to the school board. The school board has the final decision if it’s a part of the school or not.

“The school board won’t do that for Yankton, because we don’t have the funds available right now,” Mors said.

The school district would have to pay the coaches their salaries and the benefits, transportation costs, officials and uniforms.

When asked about adding soccer to the list of sanctioned sports, Mors was enthusiastic for soccer in the future.

“If we had the funds, it would be a great advantage,” Mors said. “Good numbers; we are dropping the state championship banner here soon. If we could afford it, we’d love to have them a part of athletics.”

As for the deadline set by South Dakota Soccer, it is up in the air.

“South Dakota Soccer Association can’t realistically set that date,” Mors said. “It’s just a stalemate.”



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