

## Summit League Indoor Track

## Home Sweet Dome For USD Men

Coyotes Surge Late To Upend NDSU;  
Mettler, Nielsen, Gottsleben Honored

BY JEREMY HOECK

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VERMILLION — The home team could have simply ignored the final race and kick-started their celebration early.

They didn't however. Instead, the University of South Dakota men's track team gave the home crowd something extra to cheer about Monday afternoon.

Capping off what was a dominant finish to the day's final five events, the Coyotes went out and won the 1,600-meter relay anyway. The victory padded USD's lead for the men's team title at the Summit League Indoor Track & Field Championships — the first Summit title of any kind for USD.

"We knew we already had it won, but that was just the icing on the cake," said freshman Christian Nielsen, who anchored the winning 1,600 relay and went on to earn Men's Newcomer honors.

"That really pushed us to do well, knowing we could celebrate."

The win was extra sweet for USD, which upended conference powerhouse North Dakota State 190 points to 176.5.

"It's awesome," Nielsen said. "We just want to keep it rolling, to do this more often. Plus, it's about time NDSU was removed the throne."

That the Bison were, thanks to USD's depth — mostly by South Dakota kids — in the final five events. The Coyotes were down most of Monday, but out-scored the Bison 70-31 between the 200-meter dash, triple jump, shot put, 5,000-meter and 1600 relay.

"There's such an ebb and flow to a conference meet, and we knew there was going to be a lot of opportunities for us to score near the end," said USD's Dave Gottsleben, who was named Men's Coach of the Year.

"We told our kids, they'll (NDSU) get ahead because of the multi-events and some of the other early ones, but just keep doing do what we do."

The biggest boon to the Coyotes was a 1-2 finish in the shot put, with champion Kyle McKelvey of Beresford (58-8 3/4) and Cody Snyder of Andes Central (55-11).

"Me and Cody have been throwing against each other since junior year, so it's a lot of fun to kind of grow up in this event together," McKelvey said. "We've got two more years to-



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&amp;D

**South Dakota's Kyle McKelvey fires the shot put during the men's event at the Summit League Indoor Track and Field Championships on Monday at the DakotaDome. McKelvey and teammate Cody Snyder finished 1-2, helping the Coyotes to the men's league title.**

gether, maybe three, so hopefully we can tear it up."

The Coyotes also earned a total of 13 points in the 5,000, thanks to senior Jeff Mettler finishing strong to vault from third place to first in the final stretch.

"It was tough, but I knew our team needed that, so I dug as deep as I could to finish that off," said Mettler, who earned Men's Track Championship MVP honors.

USD had two other men win individual titles on Monday: Nielsen in the 400-meter dash (49.60, by one-hundredths of a second) and senior Michael Burrus in the 60-meter dash (6.83).

"It takes a pretty good team to score 190 points and an even better one to beat 190 points," Gottsleben said.

The USD women, meanwhile,

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&amp;D

**South Dakota's Bethany Buell clears the bar during the women's pole vault at the Summit League Indoor Track and Field Championship on Monday at the DakotaDome. Buell, a junior, set a DakotaDome and Summit League record by clearing 14-feet-5 1/2 in the event.**

## NDSU Women Claim Sixth Straight Crown

BY CHRIS RILEY

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VERMILLION — The North Dakota State Bison continued their conference dominance, using superior depth to claim their seventh consecutive league title in the Summit League Indoor Track and Field Championships which wrapped up on Monday at the DakotaDome.

NDSU's women won seven total events over the two-day meet, including a 1-2 finish in the 800 meter run and a 1-2-3 podium sweep for the Bison in the 400 meter dash.

"The depth factor has been something that we stress and talk to the athletes about a lot during the season — that everybody can con-

tribute to this and that is important when you're trying to win a team title," Bison head coach and Watertown-native Ryun Godfrey said. "Our girls pulled together this weekend and we had some individuals that really stepped up to get some big wins."

Omaha finished second in its inaugural season of league competition with 118 points — 68 points behind NDSU's 186 points. USD placed third with 114 points while Kansas City (86) and South Dakota State (73) rounded out the top five.

"On the women's side we just never had that 'wow' moment all weekend," Jackrabbits coach Rod DeHaven said. "It's not that the kids aren't trying but we just have to get better."

One standout performance for SDSU on the second day was senior Tera Potts' second-place finish in the mile with a clocking of 5:02.89. Potts, a native of Sturgis, ran a strategic race according to her coach.

"Tera ran really smart," DeHaven said. "She fought hard to get back into second place. She's been a great athlete for us and we will certainly miss her."

On the men's side, the Coyotes claimed the team title with 190 points while NDSU finished runner-up with 176.50 points. Kansas City placed third (118) and SDSU was fourth (85.33). "Our men competed really hard," DeHaven

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## Gazelles Drop District Opener

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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STOUX FALLS — The Yankton Gazelles scored the game's first five points and held a strong Sioux Falls Lincoln squad to one field goal over the first six-plus minutes of their District 2AA girls' basketball game.

Six minutes later, though, the Patriots flipped the switch and sent the Gazelles one setback away from the off-season.

Lincoln used a 19-0 run to end the second quarter and start the third on the way to a 54-29 victory over Yankton in their opening round matchup on Monday at Lincoln High School.

The victory sent Lincoln (13-7) into the championship against top-seeded Sioux Falls Washington on Thursday. The Gazelles (4-15) will try to extend their season as they host Brandon Valley (4-17) on Thursday.

"We've got to put this behind us as quickly as possible and focus on the next game," said Yankton head coach Doug Pesicka. "The magic number is two. We need to win two before we lose two. We still have a chance to get to a region game, then we'll see what happens."

Lincoln opened the game in a compact defense, crunching in on Yankton senior post Kelsey Fitzgerald. The Gazelles, though, were able to take advantage early, as senior Kelsey Butler scored on a cut and a baseline jumper, and Mikala Hora scored a pair of baskets as Yankton claimed leads of 5-0 and 9-7.

"The main thing we wanted to do was make sure they didn't get the ball inside because they have some strength in there," said Lincoln head coach Lyle Pearson. "We wanted to take our chances with perimeter shots and that worked out pretty well."

Lincoln's Ellie Brecht scored back-to-back baskets to end the first quarter, but Fitzgerald and Becky Frick scored for Yankton to start the second period. After Whitlee Larson's runner at the 4:34 mark, the Gazelles led 15-14.

The next time the Gazelles would



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&amp;D

**Yankton's Andi Sprakel, center, runs into a screen by Lincoln's Cera Ledbetter as Lincoln's Shelby Merritt handles the ball during their opening round game in the District 2AA Girls' Basketball Tournament on Monday at Sioux Falls Lincoln High School.**

score was over seven minutes later, and that one-point lead had turned into an 18-point deficit.

"We started well. We were doing some nice things early," Pesicka said. "Then our shooting left us. Lincoln's too good an offensive team for us to have a drought like that."

Complicating matters was the fact that Hora and Fitzgerald picked up their second fouls in the first quarter, and Fitzgerald ended the first half with three fouls.

"We can't get in foul trouble like that. It forced us to be more timid against them," Pesicka said. "At the same time, you have to give Lincoln credit. They came right at us."

Lincoln led by as many as 29, 48-19, before the Yankton offense finally started to score again.

Cera Ledbetter scored 18 points and had eight rebounds to lead Lin-

coln. The senior post scored 12 of those in Lincoln's mid-game run.

Also for the Patriots, Ellie Brecht and Darby Hugunin had 10 points each. Hugunin, playing in her first game back from injury, also had six rebounds and three steals.

For Yankton, Hora finished with 12 points. Fitzgerald added six points.

The blowout also allowed Yankton to play seldom-used senior Abbie Mitchell, who went 1-2 from the line.

"Good for Abbie. She's a great kid," Pesicka said. "She's one of the better teammates we've ever had. She's a positive kid, and always comes to practice and works hard."

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at [twitter.com/aceman904](https://twitter.com/aceman904)

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## Crofton Boys Play Way To State

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG

P&amp;D Correspondent

NORFOLK, Neb. — Not since the days when a team could board a train and enter themselves in the Nebraska State Basketball Tournament has Crofton sent a boys team to Lincoln.

For the first time since 1928, the Crofton Warriors have qualified for the Class C2 tourney as sophomore Brock Mueller made two free throws with 4.1 seconds to play to lift the upstarts to a 51-50 win over the Hartington Cedar Catholic Trojans and a District C2-4 championship Monday night in Norfolk.

Hartington Cedar Catholic's James Kaiser swished a 3-pointer from the corner to give the Trojans a 50-49 lead with 30 seconds to play in the game, but the Warriors turned to their rock in the middle and steady outside shooter in Mueller.

Mueller was able to draw a foul in the paint, and after a timeout, eased the free throws through the net to complete an improbable run through district play and into the school annals with their first district championship.

"They called a timeout, so I just caught my breath and stepped up and

knocked them down," said Mueller of the pressure-packed situation.

Mueller was the only Warrior who was having any luck against the Trojan defense in the first quarter.

The wide-bodied sophomore hit three of four free-throw attempts in the quarter and knocked down a pair of 15-foot jumpers as he scored Crofton's first seven points.

The Trojans' Taylor Kathol got the C2-7 champions going with a drive to the glass and a pull-up shot that kissed the glass and gave HCC an early 4-3 lead.

James Kaiser banked in a 3-pointer and Frank Herbolzheimer dropped in a lay-up for a 9-7 Trojan lead.

Eric Kleinschmit became the second Warrior to score by knocking down a jumper late in the frame, but the Trojans held an 11-9 lead after the first quarter.

Both teams opened it up in the second quarter as Hartington Cedar Catholic turned Crofton turnovers into points and the Warriors increased their range on their shots.

The Warriors tied the game at 14-all on a 3-pointer from Ben Hegge, but the

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## Hoops: Sutton Boys Headed To Lincoln

CRETE, Neb. — Sutton defeated Johnson County 55-47 in the District C2-1 boys' basketball championship to earn a bid to the Nebraska state tournament.

Austan Rath led Sutton (25-1) with 19 points and six assists. Cole Wiseman added 17 points and four assists in the victory.

Nathan Kuhl led Johnson County with 27 points, five rebounds, and four assists. Justin Damme added 10 points and eight rebounds in the loss.

Sutton advances to the state championship. Johnson County ended their season with a 22-4 record.

SUTTON (25-1)	11	21	41	55
JOHNSON COUNTY (22-4)	12	30	42	47

## District 3B

## De Smet 52, Lake Preston 34

LAKE PRESTON — De Smet defeated Lake Preston 52-34 in the opening round of District 3B play on Monday. Brad Penney led De Smet (8-13) with 14 points and

nine rebounds. Austin Janssen added 10 points and 16 rebounds in the victory.

Layne Jensen was the lone lead scorer for Lake Preston (7-14) with 11 points and seven rebounds.

De Smet will advance to the winners bracket of District 3B. Lake Preston drops to the losers bracket.

DE SMET (8-13)	12	27	38	52
LAKE PRESTON (7-14)	4	17	32	34

## Girls District 3AA

## Mitchell 59, Pierre 40

MITCHELL — The Mitchell Kernels defeated the Pierre Lady Gavs 59-50 in the opening round of District 3AA on Monday.

Macy Miller led the Kernels (19-2) with 19 points and three rebounds. Kerri Young posted 18 points and four assists in the victory.

Kristi Livermont led the Lady Gavs (10-11) with 14 points and three assists. Stevi Classen added 11 points and three rebounds in the loss.

Mitchell will travel to number-one ranked Aberdeen Central on Thursday for the District 3AA championship. Pierre will host Huron on Thursday as well.

MITCHELL (19-2)	27	33	43	59
PIERRE (10-11)	10	20	28	40