

Triple Threat: Three Bucks Headed To South Dakota State

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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Three of Yankton's main contributors to its 2014 Class 11AA football championship took different paths but arrived at the same conclusion:

They will spend the next portion of their lives in Brookings, attending South Dakota State University and playing football for the Jackrabbits.

Brady Hale, Matt Fitzgerald and Evan Greenway each committed to SDSU football on Wednesday, the first day of the NCAA's Signing Period for student-athletes in football and certain other sports.

online

■ Hear All Three Bucks Talk About Their Decisions. yankton.net

"It's pretty unique and kinda nice," said Yankton head coach Arlin Likness, who believed this was the first time in his long coaching career that three of his players committed to the same program in the same season. "We'll have five kids playing at state next year, so there

will be opportunities to go watch a game and see them all play."

Former Bucks Kellen Soulek and Lane Sawatzke are also on the current SDSU roster.

While each made the decision on his own, all three are happy to continue their playing careers with their friends and teammates.

"Knowing that we're all going up there, that we can rely on each other, will be a nice thing to have," said Greenway, the last of the three to commit. The 6-7 tight



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Yankton's Evan Greenway, left, Brady Hale and Matt Fitzgerald will attend South Dakota State and play football for the Jackrabbits. All three were key members of the Bucks' 2014 championship team.

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No. 1 Mustangs Escape MMC

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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The Mount Marty College women's basketball team gave top-ranked and unbeaten Morningside nearly all it could handle, but the Mustangs escaped Laddie E. Cimpl Arena with a 65-61 victory over the Lancers in Great Plains Athletic Conference action on Wednesday.

Morningside improved to 25-0 on the season, 15-0 in the GPAC, after one of its closest games of the season.

"Mount Marty was very physical defensively. We predominantly play matchup zone (on defense), and they are a good three-point shooting team," said Morningside head coach Jamie Sale after the victory. "We got enough stops at the end to win."

MMC fell to 16-9, 7-9 in the GPAC.

"I'm proud of our kids. They played hard," said MMC head coach Tom Schlinggen. "We made some defensive mistakes that hurt us."

Lexi Ackerman scored 13 points and Ashlynn Muhl had 11 points and 12 rebounds to lead Morningside. Taylor Bahensky had 10 points and Jordyn Wollenburg had five assists in the win.

For MMC, Alex Kneeland scored a game-high 20 points, her second straight 20-point offensive performance. April Winne scored 17 points. Cassidy Gebhart had four assists.

Morningside used its inside strength to build an early 8-3 lead, but MMC answered as it has all season, by launching from outside. The nation's third-ranked three-point shooting team went on a 12-2 run — all from long range — to turn a five-point deficit into a five-point lead.

"When we reversed the ball, when all five on the floor touched the ball, that's when we scored the most points," Winne said of the Lancer offense.

The Mustangs answered with a 9-2 run, six of which came in the paint, to regain the lead. Eight points from the line in the final five min-

utes of the first half helped Morningside maintain a 34-30 edge at the break.

Morningside built its largest lead, 42-31, with a surge to start the second half. As MMC did in the first half, the Lancers answered. Eight points from Winne and seven from Kneeland helped MMC tie the game at 46.

With eight minutes to play and the game tied at 51, Morningside forced their way back into the lead. Three-pointers by Taylor Bahensky and Sara Heywood combined with free throws to give the Mustangs a 62-56 lead with 3:14 to play.

MMC went for eight minutes without a field goal, a streak that stopped with a Raquel Sutera layup with 14 seconds left, but the Mustangs hit from the line to ice the win.

"We went through a couple of droughts when we couldn't get a stop, couldn't score a bucket," Kneeland said. "It came back to bite us in the butt."

Neither team gets a break on Saturday, with tough opponents.

Morningside travels to Midland, which is 10-15 but winners of three of four.

"They are like Mount Marty," Sale said. "They are a really talented team with some shooters. Our team is figuring out that, when you are number one, you have a target on your backs."

"These last five games we have to play really well."

MMC, which hosts No. 17 Hastings, a team that downed the Lancers 87-73 on Nov. 4. Hastings' Jamie Van Kirk got loose for 34 points in that game, something MMC can't let happen if it wants to avenge that setback.

"Hastings was our first conference game, and we are a completely different team," Kneeland said. "Our defense has improved inside and out."

With five games left — three at home — MMC is hoping to string together another run to end the season.

"When we were 7-6, we



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Mount Marty College senior April Winne, 15, is fouled on a jumper by Morningside defender Lexi Ackerman during their GPAC women's game Wednesday night at Cimpl Arena.

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Speed The Focus Of USD Recruiting

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — As the coaches talked about each of the 24 recruits and showed highlight footage, it didn't take long for University of South Dakota football fans to see a trend.

Speed. And more speed. It was also something the coaches addressed early in the recruiting process and they were more than anxious to show fans the fruits of the expanded geographic reach.

Every position was represented in USD's 24-player recruiting class unveiled Wednesday, but running back and wide receiver were especially noteworthy for a program coming off a 2-win season — and second winless conference slate in three years.

"We had to change our footprint a little bit," head coach Joe Glenn said following a Signing Day event Wednesday night in Yankton.

"We needed more speed at the skill positions, we all knew that," he added. "We've got kids who can run it, we've just got to get more."

And so, the coaches — particularly receivers coach Matthew Middleton — went out and hit the state of Florida harder than they have in recent years.

The result was five commits from the Sunshine State: Shamar Jackson (RB), Jovanne Parkinson (CB), Luis Peguero (DE), Michael Fredrick (RB) and Eric Saintil (WR).

"I like what they did with the recruiting process," said Jackson, a 5-foot-8 speedster from Pahokee, Florida. "They got a bunch of Florida kids."

"It'll be pretty cool, I've got people from my area that are going up with me."

Signing Day excitement tends to lean toward flashy highlight tapes, and two other offensive recruits especially fit that mold.

Austin Simmons (QB, Council Bluffs, Iowa) and Calvin Strong (RB, Omaha, Nebraska) were both early commits and were both highly-regarded weapons with obvious upside.

Simmons, a 6-foot-1 dual threat quarterback, passed for 2,066 yards, ran for 1,194 yards and combined for 46 touchdowns as a senior.

Asked Wednesday afternoon about his decision to sign with USD, Simmons was clear that he wanted to help a program that's trying to climb the ladder in the Missouri Valley Football Conference.

"It wasn't the type of year they'd like to have, but I think it's on the rise," Simmons said.

"I'm just happy to be part of that."

In a position where yes, they need to turn things around in a hurry, the Coyote staff also needed immediate help at running back — especially with 40 percent of the carries gone from last season.

Gone are leading rusher Jasper Sanders and third-leading rusher Jordan Roberts, leaving Trevor Bouma (who missed 5 games) as the top returner.

Naturally, one of the key focuses was on finding not one, not two, but a handful of running backs who could also play another spot, Glenn said.

"We went after a lot of them," he said. "We lost two guys and Trevor's been banged up; too banged up to finish a season."

Along with Strong, Jackson and Fredrick, USD also

Morningside Men Surge Past MMC



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Mount Marty's K.J. DeCristino has the ball stripped away from him by Morningside's Ryan Tegmeier (left) and Tanner Miller during Great Plains Athletic Conference basketball action Wednesday night at Laddie E. Cimpl Arena in Yankton.

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
 P&D Correspondent

The 10th-ranked Morningside Mustangs began the second half with a 9-0 run and out-scored the Mount Marty Lancers 40-26 in the half to pick up their 20th win of the season — a 79-63 Great Plains Athletic Conference victory over the Lancers at Laddie E. Cimpl Arena Wednesday night.

"I tried calling an early timeout to try and get us out of that lull," Mount Marty head coach Andrew Baker said of the game-defining early moments of the second half. "We battled back a little later, but we couldn't get enough stops."

The Lancers opened with the hot hand against the GPAC's 3rd-place team, hitting their first three shots, a move-in jumper from Jake Anderson, a drive from Bud Smith, and a 3-pointer from Anderson on a dime from Smith for a 7-2 Lancer lead.

Morningside, with the help of Lancer turnovers, got five buckets from Kyle Nikkel to take a 32-25 lead.

The Lancers survived the turnover caused drought and came back to take a 33-32 lead with 3:50 to play as Bud Smith beat the shot clock with a long 3-pointer and Blake Bartscher scored on a scoop.

However, the Mustangs got a lift with both Blake and Brody Van Ginkel of Dakota Valley on the floor.

Brody Van Ginkel assisted Tanner Miller on a trey and Blake Van Ginkel scored off a turnover to put the Mustangs back in front 37-33.

The Lancers tied the game at 37-all with bench buckets from Jackson

Crofton Girls Scored 19th Victory

BATTLE CREEK, Neb. — Quinn Wragge and Monica Arens each scored 14 points as the Crofton Lady Warriors raced past Boone Central-Newman Grove 59-18 in the first round of the Mid-State Conference Girls' Tournament on Wednesday in Battle Creek.

Allison Arens added 11 points, Maria Wortmann grabbed six rebounds and Monica Arens also had four steals for Crofton (19-0).

The Lady Warriors built a 41-7 halftime lead.

In the loss for BG-NG (8-10), Tess Hedlund scored seven points.

Crofton plays Norfolk Catholic tonight (Thursday) in Norfolk. BG-NG plays Wayne tonight.

BOONE CENTRAL-NG (8-10).....4 7 12 18
 CROFTON (19-0).....27 41 51 59

Norfolk Catholic 50, Wayne 35

BATTLE CREEK, Neb. — Norfolk Catholic outscored Wayne 27-13 in the second half to pull away to a 50-35 victory over Wayne in the quarterfinals of the Mid-State Conference Girls' Basketball Tournament on Wednesday in Battle Creek.

Wayne led 15-11 after one

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