

# Gazelles Begin State Gymnastics Meet Today



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton's Haleigh Diede competes on the uneven parallel bars during a gymnastics triangular at Yankton earlier this season. Diede and the Gazelles will compete in the team event of the South Dakota State Gymnastics meet today (Friday) in Watertown. The sophomore is also the lone Gazelle all-arounder entered in Saturday's individual competition.

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK  
james.cimburek@yankton.net

After an up-and-down season, the Yankton Gazelles gymnastics team found just enough to push themselves to state. Today (Friday), they hope to find a little more.

Yankton begins competition in the South Dakota State Gymnastics Meet at the Watertown Civic Arena. Team competition begins today at 11 a.m., with individual competition set for Saturday, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The Gazelles qualified for state with a fifth place finish in the Eastern South Dakota Conference Championships, which doubled as the Region 2AA meet, last weekend in Pierre. Their score of 132.15 was three-tenths of a point better than 10th place Sioux Falls Lincoln.

"In my 10 years here, we've never had a year with as much of a roller coaster ride as this one," said Yankton head coach Luke Youmans. "The emotional ups and downs, the physical issues, the changes in the demographics of the kids in the program ... there was definitely a learning curve for our young kids."

"At the end of the day, the only thing that matters is that we are going as a team."

One of the things that

helped at ESD was a strong showing on balance beam.

"We came together as a team on beam," said sophomore Haleigh Diede, the lone all-around individual qualifier for the Gazelles. "We can still improve on bars, floor and vault, clean up the little things."

The Gazelles finished sixth at state a year ago with a score that ranks below Yankton's best score this season, but the competition has been tougher in 2014-15 and the Gazelles are missing several key components from that squad, Youmans said.

"We've adjusted our goals a lot so that we don't become too focused on where we finish as a team," he said. "There are still a lot of points left on the table."

The Gazelles have also had to battle injuries to two of its four sophomores — they started the season with no juniors or seniors. Kaitlin Guthmiller is expected to compete today, but Sophie Bisgard is questionable. The other sophomore, Morgan Mason, will compete. Freshmen Cameryn Specht and Lauren Vik, eighth grader Samantha Kortan and seventh graders Jaiden Boomsma and Trinity Goeman are also on the state tournament roster.

Since the Gazelles cannot

finish lower than their seed, they will give everything they've got to move up, Youmans said.

"We're going to take some chances, roll the dice," he said. "We need to put a complete meet together. That hasn't happened yet, but we're holding out hope that it will happen for us this weekend."

Saturday's individual competition will feature a limited number of Gazelles.

"It's a tough region, and when (top-seeded) Mitchell has six all-arounders at ESD and they all go, it eats up a lot of spots."

"We had some girls right on the bubble that just missed."

Diede will compete in all four events, and will be joined by Mason, Guthmiller and Boomsma on the balance beam. Boomsma and Specht are also qualified on the vault. Diede, who competed in the all-around at state as a freshman, is excited for the opportunity.

"It makes me feel good about myself, that the work has paid off," she said. "It's the one time to do the all-around individually without the pressure of worrying about the team score."

Youmans calls Saturday's

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## Three Area Teams Set For 'A' Field

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK  
james.cimburek@yankton.net

All three area programs are among the nine teams qualified for the team competition of the South Dakota State Class A Gymnastics Meet, scheduled for today (Friday) and Saturday at the Watertown Civic Arena.

First-year co-op Wagner-Bon Homme enters as the third seed at 133.7, trailing only defending champion Madison (138.35) and Deuel (134.95). First-year program Parkston-Ethan-Hanson is seeded sixth at 129.325. Vermillion grabbed the final tournament spot with a score of 124.625.

Only one individual champion returns in Class A, Madison's Jenni Giles in the floor exercise. Giles enters with the top score on the floor (9.55) and vault (9.15), shares the top score on the balance beam (8.975) and owns the top all-around score (36.2) from region competition.

Giles shares top honors on the beam with Jada Plastow of Parkston-Ethan-Hanson. Madison's Abby Christiansen has the top region score on the bars coming into state at 8.68.

Team competition will begin at 11 a.m. today, as the team event in both classes goes on at the same time. The individual competition for Class A begins at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Here is a look at the three area teams, listed in order of seed:

### Wagner-Bon Homme

The addition of a pair of gymnasts who competed in the Class AA state meet a year ago, as well as others that had been in the gym for the old Yankton-Bon Homme co-op, had a positive effect not just on the program but on the Wagner gymnasts as well, said Wagner-Bon Homme head coach Cherie Petry.

"Our girls from last year knew to earn a spot this season would be tough," she said. "They did a lot of preparation for the season, and they are jumping higher, dancing more gracefully."

While Wagner did not qualify for state as a team a year ago, it did return to state place-winning gymnasts from a season ago, senior Hannah Fleming (tied for 15th on bars) and junior Rachel Dion (15th on vault, 19th on beam). Senior Chelsey Hisek, who tied for 15th on bars in Class AA, and eighth grader Emily Duffek, a state meet competitor who just missed the awards stand, were among the gymnasts joining the program from Bon Homme.

The result was a veteran group — two seniors and three juniors — who pushed and supported each other to take the team to new heights, including a region title.

"We didn't expect to win regions," Petry said. "We just tried to beat our score from our previous meet. All year long we've told our girls just to be a little bit better than they were yesterday."

That infusion of talent also resulted in an internal "friendly rivalry."

"One girl would do a skill. The next would see it and say, 'If she can do it, I can do it, too,'" Petry said.

With the higher talent level also comes higher expectations, something Petry hopes do not weigh on her girls today.

"The nerves are definitely there," she said. "We're going to see if we can keep them under control."

"The main thing is to go out and have fun."

Fleming, Duffek and Hisek will compete in the all-around on Saturday. Junior Krista Dvorak will compete in three events, juniors Dion and Adrian Weber will compete in two events each, and sophomore Jensen Holzbauer and eighth grader Joanna Soukup will each compete in one event. That could change, as

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# Coyotes Crush Omaha

## Summit League Leaders Score 20th Victory Of '14-15 Season

BY JEREMY HOECK  
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

VERMILLION — The last time the University of South Dakota women's basketball program reached 20 wins, it wasn't eligible for the Summit League tournament.

This time, it's a whole different story.

Alone in first place and three weeks away from defending a league title.

"We want to stay there," a smiling head coach Amy Williams said after her Coyotes beat Omaha 83-69 on Thursday night at the Dakota Dome.

"And the only way to do that is focus on one game at a time, and try to get better."

There has been plenty of that this season for the Coyotes (20-5, 10-2), who reached 20 wins for the first time in three years — and they've still got three weeks, possibly more, left in the season.

It wasn't an overly-discussed goal for the program, as evidenced by it not being mentioned until being brought up in the press conference.

"The last two years we came up one short, so it's nice to get there this year and still have a few games to spare," said senior Nicole Seekamp, who credited the coaching staff.

To that end, the program won 19 games and reached the finals of the league tournament in Williams' first season, 2012-13.

"That's more of a credit to them, and them getting us prepared to play well," Seekamp said.

With six players — three reserves — in double figures, the Coyotes also eclipsed 80 points Thursday in league play for the eighth time.

And once again, they got a spark from their bench.

Freshman Kate Liveringhouse scored 12 points, junior Kelly Stewart had 11 points, seven rebounds and three assists, and sophomore Bridget Arens added 10 points and six rebounds.

"Any given night somebody can go off," Stewart said. "If you want to try to stop us, you're going to have to stop all five people on the court."

For the second game in a row, the Coyotes were without junior point guard Tia Hemiller (knee injury).

"If times get tough, she's the little bulldog that takes over and gets a few stops," Seekamp said. "She averages like seven rebounds, so we have to make up for those."

Junior Heidi Hoff again stepped into a starting role, and she responded with five points, five rebounds and three assists.

Even short a reserve, the Coyotes still managed to out-rebound the Mavericks 40-25 and get 35 points off the bench.

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

South Dakota's Kate Liveringhouse shoots over the top of Omaha's Taijhe Kelly during their Summit League women's basketball game on Thursday at the Dakota Dome.

# Gayville-Volin Girls Tie School Record With 16th Win

MARION — Megan Hirsch recorded a double-double, totaling 16 points and 17 rebounds, to lead the Gayville-Volin Raiders to a 44-31 victory over Marion on Thursday. With the win, Gayville-Volin has tied the school record in wins with 16.

Genny Clark added 12 points in the victory, and Kelia Barta had six points, six rebounds, and seven assists.

For Marion, Kaitlyn Engbrecht had 14 points, and Devin Nelson totaled 10 points and nine rebounds.

Gayville-Volin will face Centerville tonight (Friday) in Gayville, while Marion will take on Bridgewater-Emery tonight in Mitchell.

GAUVILLE-VOLIN (16-1).....16 22 31 44  
MARION (2-13).....16 20 22 31

### Crofton 68,

### Norfolk Catholic 47

CROFTON, Neb. — Monica Arens scored 21 points Thursday night to lead

Crofton to a 68-47 win against Norfolk Catholic in Crofton.

Allison Arens added 15 points and eight assists in the win, with Kelsey Sanger contributing 14 points, five rebounds and four steals.

Geena Piper scored 11 points for Norfolk Catholic, while Bailey Ehlers scored eight points.

Crofton hits the road to face Randolph today (Friday).

NORFOLK CATHOLIC (17-5).....14 26 36 47  
CROFTON (22-0).....17 35 53 68

### Laurel-Concord-Col. 40,

### Wisner-Pilger 29

LAUREL, Neb. — The Laurel-Concord-Coleridge Bees defeated the Wisner-Pilger Gators by a score of 40-29 on Thursday night in Laurel.

The Bees were led by Ellie Arduser and Audra Corbit, who combined for 30 points. Arduser finished with 17 points and 12 rebounds, and Corbit totaled 13 points and nine rebounds.

Sydney Bradford led the way for the Gators scoring 11 points, while Lexi Knust added five points.

The Bees will travel to Bloomfield tonight (Friday) for a road game with the Bees. Wisner-Pilger finishes the regular

season with a record of 10-13.

WISNER-PILGER (10-13).....3 13 25 29  
LAUREL-CONCORD-COL (7-13).....12 16 28 40

### Allen 57, Bloomfield 39

ALLEN, Neb. — The Allen Eagles picked up a 57-39 victory over Bloomfield on parents night at Allen High School.

Lindsey Sullivan scored a team-high 21 points for the Eagles. Gabby Sullivan added 11 points and seven rebounds, while Bri Hingst scored 10.

No stats available for Bloomfield.

Allen finishes the regular season with a record of 7-13, while Bloomfield will play host to Laurel-Concord-Coleridge tonight (Friday).

BLOOMFIELD (7-13).....15 19 27 39  
ALLEN (7-13).....25 38 49 57

### Creighton 50,

### Lutheran High NE 41

CREIGHTON, Neb. — Emily Sorensen scored a total of 18 points and had six rebounds Thursday night to lead her team to a 50-41 victory against Lutheran High Northeast in Creighton.

Rebecca Eggerling scored 12 points and had five rebounds, while Jessica Gragert added another seven points and four rebounds.

No stats were reported for Lutheran High Northeast, who is done with their regular season. Creighton hits the road to face Plainview today (Friday).

LUTHERAN HIGH NORTHEAST (2-21).....8 25 33 41  
CREIGHTON (18-4).....13 21 38 50

### Harrisburg 34, Brookings 32

BROOKINGS — Jordan Beiswanger put up 11 points and three assists Thursday night, leading the Harrisburg Tigers to a two-point win against the Brookings Bobcats 34-32 in Brookings.

Sam Slaughter added nine points and six rebounds, with Danni Honner contributing seven points and three rebounds to the win.

Lauren Coughlin scored seven points and had seven rebounds for the Bobcats, with Kara McDougall and Maddy Reed each adding six points.

Harrisburg hosts Pierre T.F. Riggs Saturday, while the Bobcats host Watertown today (Friday).

HARRISBURG (6-9).....6 15 27 34  
BROOKINGS (9-6).....6 14 24 32

### Brandon Valley 47,

### Mitchell 40

MITCHELL — Brandon Valley defeated the Mitchell Kernels 47-40 on Thursday night in the Corn Palace.

The Lynx outscored the Kernels in bench points 33-0 on their way to victory. Ellie Zajicek had 14 points and seven rebounds, and Becca Koehn totaled 13 points for Brandon Valley.

The Kernels were led by Taylor Volesky, who scored a game-high 24 points. Hallie Misiasek added 12 points and nine rebounds.

Brandon Valley will travel to Huron tonight (Friday), while Mitchell will host the top ranked O'Gorman Knights on Monday night.

BRANDON VALLEY (7-9).....14 21 32 47  
MITCHELL (6-11).....8 19 28 40

### Sioux Falls Lincoln 84,

### Rapid City Central 41

SIoux FALLS — Sioux Falls' Anna Brecht scored 28 points and had five rebounds Thursday night to lead the Sioux Falls Lincoln Patriots to a 84-41 win against the Rapid City Central Cobblers in Sioux Falls.

Ellie Brecht scored 17 points and had four assists in the win, with Izzy VanVelthuisen added another 14 points and had seven rebounds.

Lacey Farley scored seven points for the Cobblers, with teammates Juneau Jones adding six points and six rebounds. Dania Lowe also added five points.

The Patriots face Rapid City Stevens today (Friday) at the Sanford Premier Center, while Rapid City Central faces Sioux Falls Washington at the Premier Center.

RAPID CITY CENTRAL (7-9).....2 14 30 41  
SIoux FALLS LINCOLN (12-3).....21 37 55 84

# LANCER BASKETBALL

MMC Lancers vs. Grace on Saturday, February 14th

WOMEN'S TIP-OFF - 2:00 PM | MEN'S TIP-OFF - 4:00 PM | CIMPL ARENA

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