

Road Warrior 'Yotes Look To Finish Strong At Home

USD Men Have Eight Wins On Road, Finish With Four Straight At DakotaDome

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VERMILLION — Craig Smith and his staff like to joke that their University of South Dakota men's basketball players should stay in a hotel in Yankton the night before a home game, and then bus over to Vermillion hours before tip-off.

Why? The Coyotes (13-14), who won all of two road games last season, have now jumped up to eight road victories this season and rank among the nation's best in success away from home.

"It's a fighter's mentality," Smith said Monday night.

"Now we have to flip the script and have a fighting mentality whether we're home or away."

Exactly how they've found success on the road is something the coaches haven't been able to pinpoint, but luckily — or perhaps unfortunately — the Coyotes are done with road games. They kick off a 4-game homestand tonight (Tuesday) with a lower-level game against NAIA Avila University at 7 p.m. in Vermillion.

Though they stand 7-6 and in fifth place in the Summit League, the Coyotes have won five conference games away from the DakotaDome — including wins last week at Omaha and Oral Roberts.

In terms of the national picture, Albany leads all of Division I with 11 road victories. Three others have 10, four have nine, and then there's a 14-way tie — including the likes of Gonzaga, Northern Iowa, Wichita

State and USD — with eight road wins.

The Coyotes are 8-7 in true road games and 0-3 in neutral site games (two at a Fairfield tournament and one against UNLV in Sioux Falls).

And so, technically, USD is 8-10 in games played away from Vermillion, but considering the program won six road games over the previous two seasons, it's a drastic improvement. Not to mention an early rallying cry from the coaches.

"All summer and all fall, we probably talked about it too much to our guys," Smith said. "We challenged them and tested them with the fact we won two road games last year."

Again, it was a mentality, he added.

"To win on the road, you have to eliminate losing," Smith said.

Part of that play away from home was out of necessity.

With the overlap between football and basketball in the DakotaDome, the men's team had just three practices on its playing court before the home opener on Nov. 26. And by the time the Coyotes hosted Youngstown State nine days later, they had eight practices on their home floor.

And so, with only two of their first nine games of the season at the DakotaDome, the Coyotes had to develop some early momentum on the road — especially in league play, with five of the first seven away from Vermillion.

"As crazy as it sounds, there was a comfort level," said Smith, who joked that it was almost like playing on a neutral floor.

"It's been a bizarre schedule."

Before they resume their final three Summit League regular season games, the Coyotes will tonight host Avila, a 13-12 NAIA program out of Kansas City.

With an opening in the schedule (to reach the maximum number of 31 games), the USD staff searched all across the country for a team that could play a mid-week game during conference season, Smith said.

"Not knowing with a new team, we didn't want to have a week off and have the potential of losing your rhythm," he said.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

Eagles Outlast Flyers 72-67

FREEMAN — With four athletes in double digits, Irene-Wakonda downed Freeman 72-67 in Freeman Monday night.

Gabe King netted 21 points, grabbed 14 rebounds, had 10 blocks and had six assists for Irene-Wakonda. Trey King put up 18 points. Tate Gale totaled 17 points, and Levi Van Beek added 15 to the win.

For Freeman, Cole Paulson cashed 24 points, grabbed 13 rebounds, and had six assists. Brennan Schmidt added 23 points and 11 rebounds, and Chris Butkus snatched seven rebounds.

Irene-Wakonda travels to Bridgewater-Emery on Thursday, and Freeman hosts Avon on Friday.

IRENE-WAKONDA (13-5).....22 34 50 72 72
FREEMAN (8-9).....20 40 50 67

Platte-Geddes 56, Scotland 52

SCOTLAND — Platte-Geddes outscored Scotland 18-10 in the fourth quarter to rally to a 56-52 victory over the Highlanders in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Coby Johnson scored 19 points and Carter Dykstra had 16 points and eight rebounds for Platte-Geddes, which trailed 42-38 entering the fourth quarter. Alex Gerlach added 12 points in the victory.

For Scotland, Shaye Bloch had 14 points and nine rebounds, and Tanner Skorepa had 11 points and nine rebounds.

Platte-Geddes, 13-4, travels to Winner today (Tuesday). Scotland travels to Menno on Friday.

PLATTE-GEDDES (13-4).....13 27 38 56
SCOTLAND (8-10).....12 27 42 52

Centerville 60, Bridgewater-Emery 54

CENTERVILLE — Centerville edged out Bridgewater-Emery 60-54 Monday night in Centerville.

Rory O'Malley and Levi Gruschin each cashed 18 points for Centerville. Gruschin grabbed 10 rebounds, and O'Malley had seven. Tyrell Martz added 17 points and seven rebounds to the win.

For Bridgewater-Emery, Cole Gassman netted 18 points. Lucas Miller added 14 points, and Sam Arend totaled seven points and seven rebounds.

Centerville host Elk Point-Jefferson on Tuesday, and Bridgewater-Emery travels to Mitchell Christian the same day.

BRIDGEWATER-EMERY (8-9).....7 20 36 54
CENTERVILLE (13-5).....12 29 45 60

Viborg-Hurley 65, Flandreau Indian 51

FLANDREAU — Viborg-Hurley jumped out to a 21-4 lead after one quarter and held on for a 65-51 victory over Flandreau Indian School in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Lucas Jacobson led three Viborg-Hurley players in double figures with 16 points. Austin Wurtz netted 15 points. Rusten Anderson added 10 points, 14 rebounds and four assists.

For Flandreau Indian, Triston Young Bird led the way with 14 points and seven rebounds.

Viborg-Hurley, 11-8, hosts Menno today (Tuesday) in Viborg to conclude the regular season. Flandreau Indian travels to Colman-Egan on Friday.

VIBORG-HURLEY (11-8).....21 36 59 65
FLANDREAU INDIAN (6-12).....4 21 35 51



Freeman's Brennan Schmidt slams the ball home against the defense of Irene-Wakonda's Gabe King during their boys' basketball game on Monday in Freeman.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Avon Girls Cool Off Gayville-Volin 52-46

AVON — With 25 points from Heidi Cap, Avon took out Gayville-Volin 52-46 Monday night in Avon.

Cap also grabbed 14 rebounds for Avon. Amanda Reiff added nine points, and Cheylee Nagel snatched seven rebounds.

For Gayville-Volin, Genny Clark netted 22 points. Kelia Barta added 14 points, and Megan Hirsch grabbed 14 rebounds.

Avon finished its regular season with a 13-7 record and Gayville-Volin hosts Bon Homme on Thursday.

AVON (13-7).....9 23 32 46
GAYVILLE-VOLIN (17-2).....13 21 35 52

Marion 40, Freeman Academy 38

MARION — Marion edged Freeman Academy 40-38 in girls' basketball action on Monday.

Devin Nelson led Marion with 17 points. Kaitlyn Engbrecht had five assists and five steals in the victory.

For Freeman Academy, Clara Koerner had 14 points and nine rebounds. Hannah

Yoder netted 12 points. Tiana Schroeder and Darcie Eslinger each had nine rebounds, with Enslinger also recording six steals in the effort.

Marion travels Viborg-Hurley on Thursday. Freeman Academy hosts Canistota today (Tuesday).

FREEMAN ACADEMY.....7 16 26 38
MARION.....7 20 26 40

O'Gorman 60, Mitchell 28

MITCHELL — To remain undefeated, Sioux Falls O'Gorman slaughtered Mitchell 60-28 Monday night at the Corn Palace.

Rachel Townsend cashed 20 points for O'Gorman. Jessica Mieras totaled 11 points, and Kate Cartwright added nine to the win.

For Mitchell, Taylor Volesky totaled 15 points.

O'Gorman goes to Sioux Falls Lincoln on Saturday, and Mitchell hits the road for Watertown on Friday.

SIoux FALLS O'GORMAN (18-0).....17 28 45 60
MITCHELL (6-12).....7 13 19 28

MCM 53, Tri-Valley 49

SALEM — McCook Central-Montrose took out Tri-Valley 53-49 Monday night at Salem.

Morgan Koepsell cashed 18 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for MCM, and Danielle Hansen added 13 points to the win.

For Tri-Valley, Sammy Kawsowski totaled 20 points. MCM travels to West Central on Friday, and Tri-Valley hosts Baltic on Monday.

TRI-VALLEY (11-7).....14 21 32 49
MCCOOK CENTRAL-MONT.(12-5).....16 28 41 53

Mt. Vernon-Plank. 61, Hanson 30

MT. VERNON — With 22 points from Megan Bultsman, Mt. Vernon-Plankinton thrashed Hanson 61-30 Monday night in Mt. Vernon.

Payleen O'Day put up 16 points and had nine assists for MVP, and Makaela Karst added 13 points and seven rebounds to the win.

For Hanson, Sarah Kayser scored eight points and had seven rebounds.

MVP travels to Bon

Homme on Tuesday, and Hanson ended its regular season with a record of 16-4.

HANSON (16-4).....4 7 19 30
MT. VERNON-PLANKINTON (16-2).....14 26 43 61

Road To Lincoln Begins For Area Girls' Hoops Teams

WISNER, Neb. — The Allen Eagles jumped out to a 30-9 halftime lead and cruised to a 51-22 victory over Walthill in the opening round of the Nebraska Sub-District D1-5 girls' basketball Tournament on Monday at Wisner-Pilger High School.

The victory advances Allen (12-11) to the semifinals today (Tuesday) against top-seeded Emerson-Hubbard (20-3), a 6:30 p.m. start. Pender and Omaha Nation will face off in the other semifinal at 8 p.m.

Gabby Sullivan had 14 points and Alexis Johnson scored 11 points for Allen. Bri Hingst pulled down eight rebounds, and Lexi Oswald and Kaylen Smith each had four steals in the victory.

No statistics were reported for Walthill, which finished with a 3-16 record.

WALTHILL (3-16).....5 9 18 22
ALLEN (12-11).....16 30 41 51

Sub-District D1-6

Bloomfield 66, Osmond 34

PIERCE, Neb. — Sarah Castaneda scored 21 points to lead Bloomfield past Osmond 66-34 in the opening round of the Sub-District D1-6 girls' basketball Tournament on Monday at Pierce High School.

Brittany Kerbel added 17 points for Bloomfield, which draws top-seeded Creighton in the semifinals today (Tuesday) at 6 p.m. Laurel-Concord-Coleridge and Randolph face off in the other semifinal, a 7:30 p.m. start.

Jordyn Albin led Osmond with eight points.

OSMOND.....7 12 26 34
BLOOMFIELD.....18 35 50 66

Sub-District C1-8

Boone Central-Newman Grove 61, Madison 37

NORFOLK, Neb. — In a Sub-District C1-8 tournament game, Boone Central-Newman Grove took down Madison 61-37 Monday night in Norfolk.

Eleven athletes scored for Boone Central-Newman Grove with the top scorer being Sadie Wallin with 14 points.

For Madison, Kateyln Bartak totaled 17 points, and Brittney Jurgens added 11.

Boone Central-Newman Grove advances to play Norfolk Catholic Tuesday, and Madison ended its season with a 4-18 record.

MADISON (4-18).....7 17 28 37
BOONE CENTRAL-NG (9-13).....18 38 54 61

Vegas Strip To Dim Lights To Remember Tarkanian

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The lights of the Las Vegas Strip are expected to dim this week for deceased University of Nevada, Las Vegas basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian.

The uniquely Vegas tribute has honored Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Ronald Reagan and John F. Kennedy.

Tarkanian, credited with elevating Las Vegas to the national stage for college basketball, died Feb. 11 at age 84. His family hosted a private funeral service Monday at Our Lady of Las Vegas.

Most Strip casinos have

agreed to dim their non-essential exterior bulbs for a few minutes starting at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday in a tribute to the Hall of Fame coach. The moment's timing is set to follow the end of a UNLV basketball home game against Boise State.

Casinos participating include all Caesars Entertainment Corp. and MGM Resorts properties on the Strip, The Cosmopolitan, Stratosphere, Tropicana and The Venetian and The Palazzo, according to the companies and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.