

Hard Work By Menno's Evenson Recognized

SDHSCA Names Wolves Coach As Girls' Sports Assistant Coach Of Year

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MENNO — When she arrived in Menno a decade and a half ago, Cindee Evenson had no visions of coaching. Teaching is where she thought her biggest impact could be felt.

"A lot of people go through college with coaching as their goal, but with me, I've always had a passion for running," said Evenson, the head cross country and assistant track coach for the Wolves.

"I never envisioned myself as a coach, but I've grown to love it."

And now the Freeman native and graduate of Freeman Academy is being honored for that impact.

Evenson was named Wednesday the Assistant Coach of the Year for Girls Sports by the South Dakota High School Coaches Association. She will be among the honorees recognized during the SDHSCA annual

awards banquet, July 16 in Aberdeen.

The story of her rise up the coaching ladder starts back in 1999 or 2000 (nobody is really sure) and with head cross country coach Ken Bruckner.

Bruckner, a long-time fixture in the Menno coaching scene, had to use some creative persuasion to convince Evenson to give coaching a try.

"Our previous coach had left, and I knew Cindee liked to run, so I asked if she was interested," he said Thursday. "I'm pretty sure she would say she struggled with it at first, but once she was in there working with the kids, she loved it."

Evenson, who teaches math and physical science in the Menno School District, said she was informed of her honor during a coaches clinic last July. And yes, it was hard to not tell everyone in sight.

"Sure, I told some close family and friends," she joked, "but you don't go around saying, 'I got this award, look at me.'"

Instead, she has chosen to focus on her kids and their progression through the varsity ranks, Bruckner said.

"She's there for the kids, she's not there for any personal glory," he said. "When I told her I nominated her, she gave me a look like, 'Why?'"

"Her hard work says it all."

Those around her realize that her impact on the Menno cross country and track programs goes well beyond conference titles and state qualifiers, according to activities director Jacque Liebl.

"She strives for the best and works hard with the kids to get them to excel," said Liebl, who called the coaching award "well-deserved."

"She resurrected our cross country program some years ago and she brings positive energy to the

program," Liebl added. "She has an upbeat and positive attitude and she instills that in the kids."

Even if it is difficult at times to keep that positive mentality when numbers are down, Evenson said.

Last fall, she had seven athletes between the girls' and boys' teams, but that figure has consistently fluctuated, she said.

"There were a few years where we didn't have enough interest to have a team," Even said. "With the younger kids, it's a big commitment to stay with it, because most are either doing volleyball or football."

Scheduling can also present problems, Evenson said. She pointed to the date of the Cornbelt Conference meet as falling after school lets out for the year, which requires kids to continue practicing and training.

"It's an extra challenge," Evenson said.

Such concerns aren't specific to

only Menno, however, as Bruckner pointed out.

"That's the bad thing about a small town, you need enough kids for cross country and volleyball, and some coaches don't want them to do both," he said. "She does a great job trying to recruit younger kids."

And in kind, Evenson was quick to reference Bruckner's influence.

"I really have to give him a lot of credit for getting me started," she said. "He's been a great mentor and has helped me out in so many ways."

Such responses would be typical of Evenson's personality, Liebl said.

"She would be the first to tell you that she doesn't coach for the awards, she coaches for the kids and that shows what a true coach is all about," Liebl said. "Coaches put in a lot of hours and it is nice for her to be recognized by her peers."

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

USD Escapes Matador Charge

Coyotes Let 15-Point Lead Slip Away, But Beat CS-Northridge

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VERMILLION — Joey James' fist pump and vocal yell after the buzzer told the whole story.

His team finally got over the hump.

Having lost their previous six games (and surrendering 98 points a game over the last three), the Coyotes made the big plays in the big moments down the stretch to edge Cal State Northridge 76-75 on Thursday night at the DakotaDome.

And so, there was just as much of a sense of relief as a sense of celebration for USD (4-9).

"Once again, we've been in this situation before," said James, the program's interim head coach. "I'm really happy for our guys that we came out on top this time."

That situation was a double-digit halftime lead that was quickly erased by a hot-shooting opponent that finished 21-5 in second-chance points.

Northridge, a Big West Conference member coached by Reggie Theus, used a 20-2 run early in the second half to lead by as many as eight points with 3:42 remaining. But it wasn't enough.

USD sophomore point guard Trey Norris hit a pair of free throws with 12 seconds left to push the Coyotes in front by one and the host team's defense stood tall in the final seconds.

"It's very big," Norris — who led with 20 points — said of the magnitude of the win. "We've been in so many close games at the end, just to finish one out at home is a good feeling."

"We needed this win very bad."

Not even just to end the long losing streak, but to help regain some confidence, according to junior Brandon Bos.

"It's huge for us, losing six straight hurts a lot," said Bos, who scored 13 points. "We definitely needed to come out here with good energy."

"Our focus was there tonight, which was what we needed. We were finally able to close out a game; we've been in so many close games lately."

And playing in the DakotaDome certainly helps, said James, whose team played nine of its first 12 games on the road.

"It makes a big difference when you're at home, you got the crowd behind you, you're comfortable, you're confident," he said.

"When you're on a 6-game losing streak and you're right there, and you feel like things start going wrong, being at home helps you get you over the hump."

Spurred by a 7-of-7 start from three-point range, the Coyotes wasted little time pouncing on the Matadors — leading 14-2 and by as many as 17 points in the first half.

The halftime cushion was 45-33, but again, USD let that slip away. The Coyotes were in front 47-33 with 19:31 to play, but within five minutes, Northridge had taken a 50-49 lead thanks to a surge on the



South Dakota forward Tyler Flack, 23, slams the ball home after splitting the Cal State-Northridge defense during the first half of their men's basketball game on Thursday at the DakotaDome. USD ended a six-game losing streak with a 76-75 victory.

No. 2 Irish Rout SDSU Women

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Kayla McBride got comfortable early and No. 2 Notre Dame jumped out fast.

The Irish led by double digits less than 5 minutes into their game against South Dakota State and hit 17 of their first 21 shots on the way to a 94-51 rout of the Jackrabbits on Thursday night.

McBride scored 18 points on 8-for-8 shooting from the field and 2 for 2 on free throws, and also had four steals.

"My teammates were finding me in open areas and I was just hitting shots," said McBride, who went 9 for 23 in Notre Dame's last game, a 70-58 win at Oregon State. "It was definitely good to be home."

Natalie Achonwa added 13 points, 13 rebounds and a career-high six assists for the Irish (12-0) and Jewell Loyd had 14 points in Notre Dame's final nonconference matchup before making its Atlantic Coast Conference debut.

Gabby Boever scored nine points to lead the Jackrabbits (9-7), who were facing their highest-ranked opponent in program history.

The Irish used a 12-0 run to take a 19-4 lead on Taya Reimer's layup 5 1/2 minutes into the game. Madison Cable hit two 3-pointers during another 12-0 run that pushed the lead to 57-21 in the final minute of the first half.

McBride grabbed a steal and took it the other way for an easy layup less than five minutes into the second half, then watched the rest of the game from the bench soon after that.

Loyd's layup with just under 15 minutes remaining made it 69-29, and Notre Dame's largest lead was 45

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Fort Wayne Holds Off Bowling Green 65-60

BOWLING GREEN, Ohio (AP) — Steve Forbes scored 15 points to lift Indiana Purdue Fort Worth to a 65-60 win over Bowling Green on Thursday.

After taking a 34-21 advantage into the break, the Mastadons (11-5) had to hold off two strong second half challenges. Bowling Green (6-7) drew to within a point on a Josh Gomez jumper to make it 44-43 with 10:43 left but couldn't take the lead, then again closed in with a Jehvon Clarke layup that made it 53-51 with 4:56 to go.

The last Bowling Green drive stalled after Forbes hit a layup that sparked a final IPFW run to the finish.

Luis Jacobo contributed 13 points and six rebounds and Mo Evans added 11 points for the Mastadons, who shot just 39 percent from the field and were 18 of 36 from the foul line.

Clarke and Richaun Holmes scored 16 points apiece for Bowling Green.

IUPUI 112, JUDSON 50: INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Donovan Gibbs scored a career-high 32 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead IUPUI to a 112-50 victory over Judson on Thursday

O'Malley Leads Centerville Past Flyers

FREEMAN — The Centerville Trojans used a 23-9 edge in the second quarter to pull away and hang on for a 66-59 victory over Freeman in girls' basketball action on Thursday.

Shannon O'Malley scored a game-high 25 points to lead Centerville. Emily Snyder and Logan O'Toole each had 10 rebounds. Kristina Laska grabbed 12 rebounds and Carleigh Oster snagged 11 rebounds for the Trojans, who had a 39-17 edge on the boards in the win.

Taylor Hermesen scored 15 points and Erika Sage netted 14 points for Freeman. Nicole Saarie had nine points and Cailey Roth added seven rebounds for the Flyers.

Centerville, 2-5, travels to Canton on Tuesday. Freeman, 4-1, travels to Wakonda to face Irene-Wakonda on Monday.

CENTERVILLE (2-5)	19	42	55	66
FREEMAN (4-1)	18	27	42	59

Alcester-Hudson 45, Marion 24

ALCESTER — The Alcester-Hudson Cubs held Marion to nine first-half points on the way to a 45-24 victory over the Bears in girls' basketball action on Thursday.

Shenia Doering scored 12 points to lead a balanced Alcester-Hudson charge. Skylar McConnell and Jamie Jensen each had nine points. Courtney McKee had 10 rebounds in the win.

For Marion, Erica Schoenwald led the way with nine points and five rebounds. Alcester-Hudson, 4-0, travels to Avon today (Friday). Marion travels to Dell Rapids St. Mary today.

MARION (0-4)	8	9	13	24
ALCESTER-HUDSON (4-0)	16	25	33	45

Mt. Vernon-Plankinton 43, Dakota Christian 32

PLANKINTON — Megan Bultsma posted a double-double, recording 13 points and 11 rebounds, to lead Mount Vernon-Plankinton to a 43-32 victory over Dakota Christian in girls' basketball action on Thursday.

MVP outscored the Cadets 15-8 in the second quarter to take the lead.

Becca Glanzer scored 12 points, and Makaela Karst had 11 rebounds and six assists for MVP. Bultsma also had seven blocked shots in the victory.

Ahna Vander Pol led Dakota Christian with 15 points and four steals. Brooklyn Vander Pol had six rebounds.

MVP 3-2, hosts Gregory in Plankinton today (Friday). Dakota Christian, 4-2, hosts Kimball-White Lake on Tuesday.

DAKOTA CHRISTIAN (4-2)	10	15	22	32
MOUNT VERNON-PLANKINTON (3-2)	5	20	29	43

Ex-Vikings Punter: Coach Made Anti-Gay Remarks

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Former Minnesota punter Chris Kluge says his special teams coordinator made anti-gay comments while Kluge was with the Vikings, an allegation the coach "vehemently denies."

In an article posted Thursday on the website Deadspin, Kluge wrote that coach Mike Priefer made several anti-gay comments in objection to Kluge's outspoken opposition of an anti-gay marriage amendment in Minnesota.

Kluge also says former Vikings coach Leslie Frazier and current general manager Rick Spielman encouraged him to tone down his rhetoric in an effort to reduce distractions to the team. At the same time, Kluge said, Vikings owner Zygi Wilf expressed support for Kluge's championing of gay rights.

Hours later, Priefer issued a statement disputing Kluge's portrayal of the events.

"I want to be clear that I do not tolerate discrimination of any type and am respectful of all individuals," Priefer said. "I personally have gay family members who I love and support just as I do any family member."