



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Crofton's Quinn Wragge, left, gets past St. Thomas More's Moira Duffy for a basket during their matchup in the Hanson Classic on Saturday in Mitchell.

Crofton Clips Cavs At Classic

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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MITCHELL — For Crofton head girls' basketball coach Aaron Losing, Saturday's trip to the Hanson Corn Palace Classic was a bit of a homecoming.

After watching his Crofton Lady Warriors score a 55-39 victory over what is considered the best small-school team in South Dakota this season, St. Thomas More, he and Crofton may not get an invitation back any time soon.

Crofton overcame an early nine-point deficit, then put the game out of reach by hitting its final 13 free throws in the 16-point victory, Crofton's 13th on the season in 14 contests. STM, which came in averaging 72 points per game, dropped to 10-1 after a season-low in scoring.

Quinn Wragge scored a game-high 20 points to lead Crofton. Allison Arens had 13 points, including 8-8 from the line, and nine assists. Alex Allen scored nine points and Kelsey Sanger had seven rebounds off the bench. Alezys Swedlund led St. Thomas More with nine points. Ciara and Moira Duffy each had eight points.

Losing grew up in Alpena, located 48 miles from Mitchell, and began his coaching career at Ethan, just 10 miles away.

"I played a lot of my own games here," he said after the game. "This building, it's fun to come back to."

But things didn't look so "fun" early on. The Warriors did not score a field goal until more than four minutes into the game, and the Cavaliers were already up 11-2.

"It looked like we had some jitters," Losing said of the start. "We looked like we were back on our heels."

The Lady Warriors also had not been tested of late. Crofton came in with a nine-game win streak, and had outscored opponents by an average of 70-18 in the past five contests.

"We knew we had to play a lot better than we had of late," Wragge said. "I think we were mostly excited. We'd been looking forward to this game all week."

Allison Arens scored Crofton's first field goal with 3:21 left in the first quarter. Wragge scored twice in the final seven seconds of the quarter to close the gap to 11-8 after one period.

Crofton closed to within two, but a Dru Gylten three-point play and a Moira Duffy putback pushed St. Thomas More back up by seven, 17-10. But the Cavaliers would go the next five minutes without a field goal, as Crofton surged to a 26-21 lead. Monica and Allison Arens hit three-pointers on back-to-back possessions that put Crofton ahead for good.

Crofton led by as many as seven points in the third quarter, but it put the game out of reach in the fourth quarter. Sanger started the period by scoring all six of her points, and Allison Arens scored six points, all from the line, as the Lady Warriors went 11-11 from the line in the period.

"In the second, third and fourth quarters, we had a more aggressive mindset," Losing said. "I thought our depth as a difference — the energy that we brought to the defensive end, and the fact that we had nine players in and out without a drop-off."

"I think we got them a little tired."

While the Cavaliers scored 17 points inside the lane, they could not get the offense going like they had all season, according to head coach Brandon Kandolin.

"They did a great job of slowing us down," he said. "They forced us into some bad mistakes."

Both teams return to play against teams in their own state on Tuesday, Crofton at home against Wayne and St. Thomas More at Lead-Deadwood.

For Crofton, which has five games against teams with .500 records or better, not counting the Mid-State Conference Tournament, to finish the regular season, the challenge of a quality out-of-state opponent was much needed.

"They (St. Thomas More) are a good team. This makes us know that we're capable of beating this good team," Wragge said. "We know what we have to do in order to play like this."

The game provided lessons for the Cavaliers as well.

"It exposes some things we need to take care of," Kandolin said. "We need to take care of the ball and be more mentally strong."

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/JCimburek. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

College: Fort Wayne Outguns USD Women

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — Fort Wayne's Haley Seibert more than doubled her season average, scoring a career-high 35 points, to lead the Mastadons to a 96-78 victory over South Dakota in Summit League women's basketball action on Saturday.

Fort Wayne made its final six shots from the field and final four from the line, ending the game on a 19-3 run.

Seibert, who came in averaging 15 points a game, went 12-18 from the field, including 7-12 from three-point range. Amanda Hyde, the league's leading scorer, hit her season average with 23 points. Rachel Rinehart added 12 points for Fort Wayne (10-8, 3-1 Summit).

Polly Harrington scored a career-high 24 points to lead South Dakota. Raeschel Contreras finished with 17 points. Tia Hemmiller scored 13 points, and Lisa Loeffler had 10

points and eight rebounds for the Coyotes (9-9, 0-3 Summit).

USD, which is giving up 89 points per game in Summit League play, will open the home portion of its league schedule on Thursday against Western Illinois. Start time is 7 p.m. at the DakotaDome.

SOUTH DAKOTA (9-9)
Tia Hemmiller 5-11 1-2 13, Madeleine White 1-6 0-0 2, Raeschel Contreras 6-12 2-3 17, Polly Harrington 7-10 10-13 24, Lisa Loeffler 4-6 2-4 10, Kelly Stewart 0-4 0-2 0, Taylor Moore 0-3 0-0 0, Bridget Arens 2-3 2-4 6, Jaylah Jackson 0-1 2-2 2, Margaret McCloud 1-2 2-2 4. TOTALS: 26-58 21-32 78.

FORT WAYNE (10-8)
Rachel Mauk 3-8 0-0 8, Haley Seibert 12-18 4-4 35, Amanda Hyde 6-13 11-22 23, Mui Hageman 1-4 0-0 3, Rebecca Bruner 0-2 2-2 2, Stephanie Mauk 0-10-10, Ariana Simmons 2-4 2-2 6, Jessica Marwaning 0-0 0-0 0, Brett Green 0-0 0-0 0, Rachel Rinehart 4-7 2-2 12, Danielle Wilmoth 2-2 0-0 4, Courtney Ogle 1-0-1 3. TOTALS: 31-58 21-24 96.

At the half: FW 44, SD 43. Three-Pointers: FW 13-29 (Seibert 7-12, Rinehart 2-4, R. Mauk 2-5, Ogle 1-1, Hageman 1-2, S. Mauk 0-1, Simmons 0-1, Hyde 0-3), SD 5-22 (Contreras 3-7, Hemmiller 2-6, Loeffler 1-1, Stewart 0-1, Moore

Wrestling: Totino-Grace Edges Parkston At Opbroek Inv.

MITCHELL — Totino-Grace, a Minnesota wrestling power, edged Parkston 169.5-163 for top honors in the Jerry Opbroek Invitational on Saturday at Mitchell High School.

Walker Thiele (152), Kez Flomo (195) and Lance Benick (220) won titles for Totino-Grace. Benick, the top-ranked wrestler in the nation at 220 pounds, edged Parkston's Brady Reiff 7-3 in the final.

Mitch Heisinger won the 182-pound title for Parkston, which had nine wrestlers earn top-four finishes.

Bon Homme won three titles, with Duncan Stoebner (113), Austin Kaul (145) and Dan Stibral (285) claiming honors. Pierre and Rapid City Stevens each earned two titles. Winner, Wagner (David Kocer

at 170) and Howard each had one champion.

Harrisburg Inv.

HARRISBURG — Aberdeen Central won two titles and put all 14 wrestlers in the top-six of their weight classes in winning the Harrisburg Invitational wrestling tournament on Saturday.

Aberdeen Central finished at 257.5, followed by Sioux Falls Washington (205) and Sioux Falls Roosevelt (196.5). Beresford (180) and Vermillion (164.5), each with two champions, rounded out the first five.

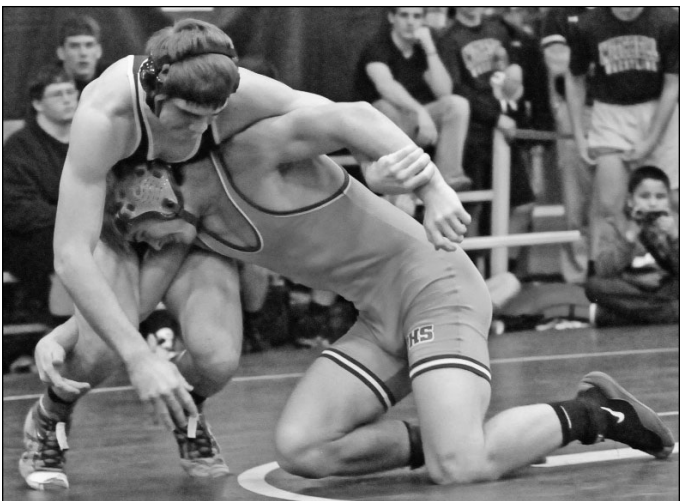
Justin Haneke (132) and Josh Casperson (182) won for Beresford. Regan (145) and Brett (152) Bye won for Vermillion, each remaining unbeaten on the season.

Aberdeen Central's John Frisco also remained undefeated on the season with his 170-pound title. Dakota Valley placed ninth with 61 points. Yankton, led by fourth place finisher Spencer Huber (126), finished 11th. Crofton, also with a fourth place finisher, placed 14th in the 16-team event.

Tri-Valley Inv.

COLTON — Pipestone (Minn.) Area ran away

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Parkston's Mitch Heisinger shoots in on Wagner's Trevor Lensing during their 182-pound semifinal at the Jerry Opbroek Invitational wrestling tournament on Saturday in Mitchell.

USD Takes Summit Lead

Coyotes Down Fort Wayne, Now 3-0 In Summit League Play

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — Don't look now, but the team picked to finish seventh in the Summit League sits atop the standings.

Three conference games and now three wins for the University of South Dakota men.

The third of which was perhaps the most impressive, as the Coyotes led by as many as 21 points on the way to a 75-61 victory over Fort Wayne in Saturday afternoon's show-down of league unbeaten.

"I thought our guys went to war and won the battle," said USD interim coach Joey James, whose team now stands alone in first place.

In what was perhaps its best overall performance of the season, USD (8-9) overcame foul trouble to its frontcourt — Trevor Gruis and Tyler Flack both fouled out — to win its fifth straight game.

"I've always thought if we played this way, the Coyote basketball way, with effort and hustle for 40 minutes, I think we're tough to beat at home," James said.

On the other hand, the Coyotes have yet to play a league game away from home and still have 11 conference games remaining.

"It does boost us up in a certain way, but we don't want to get too high on it," said senior Karim Rowson, who scored a career-high 21 points and grabbed nine rebounds.

"It's a great feeling being first in the Summit League, but it's just another win for us."

Ranked No. 23 in the latest mid-major poll, the Mastodons (15-6, 3-1) boasted the nation's ninth best-shooting squad, but found trouble getting much of anything going Saturday.

Though it shot 50 percent in the second half, Fort Wayne made just 7-of-20 three-pointers and committed 15 turnovers.

"There aren't many teams you should lose to if you keep a team this game to that many points," said USD sophomore Adam Thoseby, who scored 11 points.

The Coyotes battled from a back-and-forth start to lead 33-23 at halftime, and things only got better for the home team from there.

USD used an 11-0 run early in the second half to lead 50-29, and Fort Wayne could only

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DAVID LIAS/VERMILLION PLAIN TALK
South Dakota senior forward Karim Rowson drives past Fort Wayne's Joe Reed (44) for a layup. Rowson scored a career-high 21 points and pulled down nine rebounds to lead the Coyotes to a 75-61 win against the Mastodons Saturday in the DakotaDome in a battle for first place in the Summit League standings.

Gazelles Fourth In Pierre Invite

PIERRE — The Yankton-Bon Homme gymnastics team placed fourth in the 12-team Pierre Invitational on Saturday.

Sioux Falls O'Gorman won the meet, which featured every Class AA program except top-ranked Mitchell, with a score of 143.075. Brookings finished second at 137.175, followed by Aberdeen Central (136.925) and the Gazelles (134.525).

Rapid City Central's Chelsey Christensen earned all-around honors, scoring a 38.1 to edge O'Gorman's Abby Thuringer (38.025). Christensen also won on the balance beam (9.65) and floor (9.725). Thuringer won on the vault (9.5). Watertown's Krisia Bramer, third in the all-around, won on the uneven parallel bars (9.65).

The Gazelles had two top-10 finishes, led by Emily Dufek's ninth place finish on the floor (9.15). Haleigh Diede finished tenth on the balance beam (8.625).

The Gazelles host Vermillion in a dual on Thursday.

Kuca Powers Wagner Past S.F. Christian

MITCHELL — Ali Kuca scored 27 points on 10-of-15 shooting to lead Wagner past Sioux Falls Christian 58-48 on Saturday at the Hanson Classic in Mitchell's Corn Palace.

Kuca also grabbed 10 rebounds for the Red Raiders (4-6), who shot 50 percent from the field. Emily Brunings added 11 points and seven rebounds, while Alexis Medicine Horn had nine points.

For the Chargers (2-8), Kara Koth scored 17 points and Kiley Olson added 10 points.

Wagner hosts O'Neill, Neb., on Tuesday.

SIoux FALLS CHRISTIAN (2-8)11 18 31 48
WAGNER (4-6)13 25 42 58

Freeman 65, Howard 34

FREEMAN — The Freeman Flyers made quick work of Howard, jumping out to a 30-13 halftime lead on the way to a 65-34 rout of hile Tigers in girls' basketball action on Saturday.

Nicole Saarie scored 21 points and Erika Sage had 16 points to lead Freeman. Shelby Jensen netted 11 points and Cailey Roth added six rebounds in the victory.

For Howard, Macy Erikson led the way with nine points. Kelsey Dawson grabbed 12 rebounds.

Freeman, 9-2, travels to Viborg to face Viborg-Hurley tonight (Monday). Howard hosts Hanson tonight.
HOWARD4 13 23 34
FREEMAN (9-2)15 30 45 65

Canistota 65, Parker 49

PARKER — The Canistota Hawks used four players in double figures to defeat Parker 65-49 in girls'

baseball action on Saturday.
Jenny Hofer had 18 points and Chloe Nielsen had 16 points and 18 rebounds to lead Canistota. Kailli Orman netted 13 points and Morgan Larson finished with 12 points in the victory.

Rylie Christensen led Parker with 19 points. Lauren Hunstad posted 14 points. Shayna Burt posted 10 points and seven rebounds. Haley Holzwarth finished with five assists and three steals for the Pheasants.

Canistota hosts Hanson on Friday. Parker hosts Gayville-Volin on Tuesday.

CANISTOTA22 39 53 65
PARKER8 20 33 49

Friday's Games

Elk Point-Jefferson 67,
Ponca 53

PONCA, Neb. — Keely Bertram recorded 35

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Yankton Scores Weekend Sweep Of Sioux Falls

Five different players scored for Yankton as the Bucks completed a weekend sweep of Sioux Falls with a 5-2 decision over the Flyers in JV boys' hockey action on Sunday at Alcoa Arena.

Landon Withrow had a goal and two assists to lead the balanced Yankton attack. Jacob Hubbs, Mitchell Vavra, Colby Benson and Austin Barger also scored for the Bucks in the victory.

Thomas Becker had a goal and an assist, and Dallas Appeldord scored for Sioux Falls. Zach Kirsch and Cameron Nielson also had assists.

Tyler Wenande stopped 40 of 42 shots he faced for the win. Donovan Knott made 22 saves for the Flyers. Yankton, 8-3-1 and winners of five straight, makes a three-game weekend trip to face the Rushmore Thunder, Jan. 24-26.

YANKTON 7, SIOUX FALLS 4: Jacob Hubbs and Austin Barger each had two goals to lead Yankton to a 7-4 victory over Sioux Falls on Saturday.

Landon Withrow and Mitchell Vavra each had a goal and an assist. Patrick Weinand also scored a goal. Logan Megard had two assists in the victory.

Travis Janacek led Sioux Falls with a goal and an assist. Jacob Hoffman, Cameron Nielson and Thomas Erickson, Jr., also scored goals. Dallas Appeldord had an assist.

Cristian Slate stopped 19 shots for the victory in goal. Jacob Anderson made 15 saves for Sioux Falls.

Girls JV

SIOUX FALLS 4, YANKTON 0: Robin Hatcher scored twice and Taylor Dawley had a goal and an assist as Sioux



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Yankton's Colby Benson, left, is congratulated after scoring the game-tying goal in the second period of the Bucks' 5-2 victory over Sioux Falls in JV boys' hockey action on Sunday at Alcoa Arena.

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