

# Hall Focus Next Year Turns To Griffey, Hoffman, Wagner

BY RONALD BLUM  
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Next January the Hall of Fame focus will turn to Ken Griffey Jr., Trevor Hoffman and Billy Wagner after an unprecedented dominance by starting pitchers over a two-year span. When Griffey left the Seattle Mariners in 2010, there was no farewell tour. The 40-year-old outfielder pretty much drove off into the night: Griffey got in his car, headed out of Seattle in the middle of a series against Minnesota and telephoned the Mariners with his retirement decision while en route to his home in Orlando, Florida. He started to get a feeling for

ceremonies when he was inducted into the Mariners' Hall of Fame in 2013 and then joined his father, Ken Griffey Sr., in the Cincinnati Reds' Hall last year. "The ultimate goal as an individual player is to be in the Hall of Fame when you grow up," Junior said then. "This is no different. To be in the Hall of Fame with my dad is special." Hoffman and Wagner will seek to join Dennis Eckersley, Rollie Fingers, Goose Gossage, Bruce Sutter and Hoyt Wilhelm as the only pitchers in the Hall who were primarily relievers. The top holdover on the 2016 ballot will be catcher Mike Piazza, who received 69.9 percent support on his third try this year, 28 votes shy of the 75 percent needed.

Hoffman held the career saves record with 601 before Mariano Rivera topped him with 652. While Wagner had 422 saves, his 2.31 ERA was far better than Hoffman's 2.87. Both were seven-time All-Stars. Gossage spent years arguing relievers were underappreciated — especially in his era, before closers were limited mainly to the final three outs. "The bullpen was kind of a junk pile where starters went that couldn't start anymore. It wasn't a glamorous place to be like it is today," he said prior to his election. "Now it takes three guys to do kind of what I used to do." Before Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine last year, the only starting

pitcher voted in by the writers since Nolan Ryan in 1999 had been Bert Blyleven, elected on his 14th try in 2011. Following the election of Randy Johnson, Pedro Martinez and John Smoltz on Tuesday, five pitchers who were for the most part starters were voted in during a two-year span, joined by offensive stars Frank Thomas in 2014 and Craig Biggio this year. The only other pitchers elected since Ryan had been a trio who made it for bullpen success: Eckersley (2004), Sutter (2006) and Gossage (2008). And the five pitchers in the last two elections all made it on their first try. Before that only starting pitchers elected on the first ballot

since Warren Spahn in 1973 had been Bob Gibson (1981), Jim Palmer (1990), Tom Seaver (1992), Steve Carlton (1994) and Ryan. After this year, no starting pitcher figures to get substantial support until Roy Halladay in 2019, when Rivera also will be eligible for the first time. Lee Smith, who received 30 percent support this year, maintains the evolution of baseball has put the priority on the bullpen over the rotation. "You see of any team in the last 10 years, if they don't have a good closer, they don't go anywhere," he said in 2006. "If I was going to start a ballclub, I think I would start with a closer and go back."

# Sidelined By Weather

## Schedules Upended By Pending Blizzard

An expected blizzard today (Thursday) has forced area schools to scramble their athletic schedules. The Yankton girls' basketball team, which was set to travel to Harrisburg today, will play on Friday at home as part of a doubleheader with the boys' basketball team. Here is the updated schedule: 3:30 p.m. — JV girls (main gym), sophomore boys (auxiliary gym middle court); 4:45 p.m. — JV boys (main gym), freshmen boys' 'A' (auxiliary gym); 6 p.m. — freshmen boys' 'B' (auxiliary gym); 6:15 p.m. — varsity girls (main gym); 8 p.m. — varsity boys (main gym). Sub-varsity games will have five-minute halftimes. Because of this change, Yankton's Feb. 5 girls' basketball game with Harrisburg will move to Harrisburg, also creating a doubleheader on that date. Full schedule for that date will be announced later.



Yankton's Madason Tessier, left, Kami Cornemann and Brianna Benjamin wait to check in to Tuesday's home basketball game with Brookings. An expected blizzard today (Thursday) benched the Gazelles' game at Harrisburg. Yankton will now host Harrisburg on Friday as part of a doubleheader with the boys. The Feb. 5 matchup with Harrisburg, which was supposed to be in Yankton, will now be in Harrisburg, also as part of a doubleheader with the boys.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Here are other changes reported to the *Press & Dakotan* on Wednesday:

- The Elk Point-Jefferson at Bon Homme-Scotland wrestling dual, scheduled for today, has been postponed. No makeup date has been set. The JV game will begin at 6:30 p.m.
- The Centerville at Scot-

land boys' basketball game, postponed from Saturday, has been rescheduled for Thursday, Jan. 22.

- Andes Central at Parkston middle school boys' basketball, scheduled for today, has been postponed to Jan.

30. Start time will be 6:30 p.m.

- The Buena Vista at Dakota Wesleyan wrestling dual, scheduled for Wednesday, was postponed. No makeup date was announced.
- The Platte-Geddes vs.

Andes Central boys' basketball game, postponed from earlier this season, has been moved to Jan. 15 in Lake Andes as part of a doubleheader with the girls' programs. Play will begin at 5:15 p.m. with the JV girls' game.

To report a schedule change, coaches and/or athletic directors are encouraged to contact the *Press & Dakotan* at sports@yankton.net, by fax at 1-605-665-1721 or by phone at 1-605-665-7811, ext. 106.

# Ironman: NDSU's Dudzik Nears 61st Consecutive Start

BY DAVE KOLPACK  
Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota State free safety Christian Dudzik has started every game in his college career, a feat that's believed to be unmatched in Division I football and one that has earned him the run of his boss's office. "Every morning I go up to the office, I get done with the staff meeting or something, I come in, there's Christian sitting at my desk with his feet up, watching game film," said coach Chris Klieman, who considers the standout senior somewhat of an assistant coach. "I work around him." And Dudzik never misses a day of work. The 5-foot-10, 191-pounder from Omaha, Nebraska, is slated to start his 61st straight game Saturday in the Football Championship Subdivision title game against Illinois State. NDSU will be trying to become the first team to win four straight championships in what was formerly known as Division I-AA. "College football is a mentally and physically demanding sport, for

sure," said Mike Kern, associate commissioner for the Missouri Valley Football Conference, home to NDSU and Illinois State. "To play in that many games, let alone start all of them, is just unfathomable." No official records are kept for game participation, but to play 60 games over four years is challenging simply because of team schedules. Teams in the Bowl Subdivision rarely play 15 games in a season. Linebacker Pierre Banks played in a Division I-AA-record 62 games for Appalachian State, which was also afforded a lot of games by winning three straight titles, but started only 47 of them. Bison defensive end Kyle Emanuel has played in all 60 games, with 53 starts. NDSU has four other seniors who have played in at least 50 games. Dudzik shrugs his shoulders when he's asked about the secret to stability. "Luck, I guess," he said. "I have been healthy and fortunate not to have any major injuries to keep me out of the game." His willingness to adapt kept him

in the game his freshman year. His natural position is safety, which he played on the scout team during his redshirt year, but he was asked to fill a void at cornerback in his first year of eligibility. He was moved back to safety as a sophomore. "I had never played corner before that first season, but I just wanted to play so I was completely fine with it," Dudzik said. "There was a time when I was probably satisfied with just being a starter. As I grew as a player and a person I realized it was a competition with myself to just get better, and try to make the players around me better." Dudzik ranks third all-time at NDSU with 150 solo tackles. He has 253 total tackles, 13 interceptions, five fumble recoveries and four forced fumbles. He has returned 35 punts, two for touchdowns, and 14 kickoffs. Dudzik said he prefers this number: NDSU is 57-3 in his career. "We have never as a team talked about the (starting) streak. It was more about winning each game," he said.

It's not that Dudzik hasn't played with pain. He suffered a deep thigh bruise against Iowa State and a shoulder sprain against Northern Iowa. Even after the long break from the team's Dec. 19 semifinal win over Sam Houston State, he is still feeling the wear and tear of a fourth straight long season. "You just don't feel as good as you did at the start of the season," he said. Dudzik has six credits left for a double major in sports management and philosophy, and he has thoughts of going to film school. First, however, he is going to North Carolina for six weeks to train for an NFL pro day. However that goes, he will always have the ironman streak to look back on. Much of Dudzik's durability is due to good conditioning and technique, said linebacker Carlton Littlejohn, a senior who has played in 58 games. "He plays the game the right way," Littlejohn said. "If you do that, you'll play 61 games."

## BC Men Surge Past Lancers

SIOUX CITY, Iowa — No. 18 Briar Cliff outscored Mount Marty 49-24 to end the game to claim an 87-62 victory over the Lancers in Great Plains Athletic Conference men's basketball action. The game was tied at 38-38 in the second half. Clay Harrel scored 19 points off the bench to lead Briar Cliff (15-4, 7-2 GPAC). Matt Berg and Ricky Williams each had 11 points in the victory. For MMC, Bud Smith was the lone player in double figures, scoring 12 points. Cody Willett and Jalen Hurley each

MEN | PAGE 8

## Burns Powers Wausa Past Falcons

WAUSA, Neb. — Jordan Burns scored a career-high 30 points and had 11 rebounds to lead Wausa to a 52-49 victory over Elkhorn Valley in boys' basketball action on Tuesday. Kyle Kleinschmit scored 15 points on 4-5 shooting from three-point range and grabbed eight rebounds for Wausa. Nick Story also had eight rebounds in the victory. For Elkhorn Valley, Kendall Albin scored 28 points. Jayson Larson had nine rebounds. Wausa is scheduled to host its post-holiday tournament beginning today (Thursday). Elkhorn Valley travels to West Holt on Saturday. ELKHORN VALLEY (2-8).....7 15 29 49 WAUSA (3-6).....15 27 37 52

**Creighton 54, Bloomfield 44**  
CREIGHTON, Neb. — The Creighton Bulldogs jumped out to a 28-19 halftime lead on the way to a 54-44 victory over the Bees in Lewis & Clark Conference boys' basketball action on Tuesday. For Creighton, Reid Liska led

the way with 26 points. Brandon Borgmann had nine points in the win. For Bloomfield, Cody Beckmann led the way with 15 points and nine rebounds. Conner Wilson added five steals. Creighton (4-3) travels to Randolph on Friday. Bloomfield plays in the Classic Tournament on Thursday and Friday. BLOOMFIELD (3-6).....10 19 29 44 CREIGHTON (4-3).....17 28 34 54

**Burke-South Central 64, Wagner 61**  
BURKE — Burke-South Central edged out Wagner 64-61 Tuesday night in Burke. Ethan Fernau cashed 18 points for Burke-South Central. Deil Drey totaled 17 point and eight rebounds. Tyson Vogt added 14 points. Zach Sebern put up 11 points and had seven rebounds, and Owen Andrews also had seven rebounds.

## Bulls Win Three Tournaments



The Yankton Bulls fourth grade boys' basketball team won three tournaments in the past month, the Perfect Practice X-Treme Hoops Tournament in Tea on Dec. 6, the Yankton Bulls Holiday Hoopfest Tournament on Dec. 21 and the Beresford Parks & Rec Watchdog Classic Tournament on Jan. 3. Team members include Michael Mors, Mac Ryken, Cooper Grotenhuis, Rugby Ryken, Drew Ryken, and Tyler Sohler. Not pictured are Cody Oswald and coaches Mark Ryken and James Grotenhuis.