

COLLEGE RECRUITING | OVERCOMING INJURIES

Do Setbacks Slow Offers? Results Vary For Athletes

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second story in the Press & Dakotan's series on recruiting.

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

The sound of a bubble popping told Macy Miller that something not so good happened on her drive to the basket.

It was late July last year, and the 15-year-old from Mitchell was playing for the Dakota Schoolers in the North Tartan Meltdown, an AAU summer basketball tournament in suburban Minneapolis filled with potential college stars.

POP. The sound, turns out, was Miller's anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tearing in her left knee. "It all happened so fast," she said during an interview last week. Surgery followed on Aug. 3 in Sioux Falls, but there were other immediate concerns: Rehabilitation, missing high school volleyball and potential missing part of her sophomore season with the Mitchell girls' basketball team.

Somewhere down the line, days after the surgery, the issue of her NCAA Division I scholarship offer from South Dakota State rose to the surface. Would SDSU still be interested? What if something went wrong and she missed her entire junior season?

Those are all questions faced by high school players who suffer serious injuries, most of the time to their knees, legs or ankles. When the opportunity to play collegiate sports becomes a distinct possibility, the concern that scholarships will suddenly stop pouring in is a very real issue.

"Honestly, I wasn't really too nervous about college," Miller said. "SDSU said they were staying with me; that they weren't pulling my scholarship."

In other words, SDSU and head coach Aaron Johnston made it clear early on that, no, they weren't backing away from their interest. The 5-foot-10 point guard with two years of high school still remaining was high on their list for the 2014 recruiting class.

Every year there are dings and bruises, but the 13th-year coach has developed a philosophy that injuries — of the more serious variety — to high school players do not mean a scholarship is off the table.

"Our mindset is that we'll continue to recruit them regardless

of an injury," Johnston said. He could not comment directly on Miller until she signs her National Letter of Intent. "That's the way it should be. You're certainly bringing them in as a basketball player, but you're also recruiting a person.

"We wouldn't just walk away from one of our current players."

True to their word, the SDSU staff continued to monitor Miller's rehab process — during her first week post-surgery, she was bed-ridden for 23 hours a day. A week later, she was able to start moving around on both legs. By the winter months, returning to basketball became the focus.

"We were shooting for February if everything went OK, but it got better and better and I was able to come back earlier than we thought," she said. "We're very thankful there weren't any problems."

In Miller's first game back to the team, Jan. 2 at Sioux Falls Lincoln, Mitchell lost 71-63 — oddly enough, that was the Kernels' only defeat of the season. Miller went on to average 15 points, 4.4 rebounds, 2.0 assists and 2.0 steals per game as the Kernels won the Class AA state championship.

Three months later, in June, Miller — again playing for the Dakota Schoolers this summer —

RECRUITING | PAGE 9



ABOVE: Mitchell's Macy Miller, 23, defends Mikala Hora of Yankton during their Eastern South Dakota Conference (ESD) girls' basketball game this past January at the Summit Center in Yankton. Miller, an upcoming junior, came back from an ACL tear in her left knee to lead the Kernels to the Class AA state title. (P&D File Photo)

LEFT: Yankton's Abby Burbach shoots around the defense of Rapid City Central's Katie Ranta during their game during the 2008-09 season in Yankton. Burbach suffered from chronic injuries during her high school career and did not pursue college athletics. She is now a student at Nebraska in Lincoln, Neb., pursuing Nutrition and pre-physical therapy. (P&D File Photo)

Bypassed For Cain, Dickey Had Hoped To Start

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Owner of the best record in baseball, R.A. Dickey was hoping to become the first knuckleballer to start an All-Star game since Dutch Leonard in 1943.

A 12-1 record wasn't good enough. Tony La Russa picked San Francisco's Matt Cain to start for the National League on Tuesday night.

"I'm not going to break down in tears over it, but at the same time I'm a competitor. I want to pitch. I want to start," Dickey said Monday. "I feel like I had a good enough first half that I should be considered. But I'm not the boss. I don't necessarily have to agree with him, but I have to respect it. That's just the way it is."

Detroit's Justin Verlander will start for the American League as the All-Stars return to Kansas City for the first time since 1973.

La Russa, who retired after leading the St. Louis Cardinals to last year's World Series title, made the decision after consulting with his longtime pitching coach, Dave Duncan. Cain had the advantage of pitching a perfect game against Houston on June 13.

"We wanted to reward Matt Cain for a career of excellence that's getting better and better," La Russa said. "And he had a great example of that during the summer on one of his pitching days."

Cain also will be pitching to his regular catcher, Buster Posey. La Russa said Dickey likely will enter the game sometime in the first five innings, around the time Philadelphia's Carlos Ruiz replaces Posey behind the plate.

Dickey hopes he wasn't denied the start just because he throws knuckleballs.

"You're talking about the best players in the world, and you're asking about a pitch that's too nasty to handle?" Dickey said. "I hope that's not it. If that's the reason, that's a poor reason."

Cain is 9-3 with a 2.62 ERA. Dickey, a first-time All-Star at age 37, became the first major leaguer in 24 years to throw consecutive one-hitters.

"We have guys the last couple of years, whether it's spring training or even during the season, I don't play against Dickey," La Russa said. "He can spook you."

Verlander, 9-5 with a 2.58 ERA, is the first All-Star starter who has won Rookie of the Year, Cy Young and MVP.

"Obviously right now, I'm pretty excited about it," he said. "Actually sitting here just looking over the lineup thinking about how I'm going to pitch these guys."

The AL's batting order has Derek Jeter leading off and playing shortstop, followed by Yankees teammate Robinson Cano at second base, Texas left fielder Josh Hamilton, Toronto right fielder Jose Bautista, Detroit first baseman Prince Fielder, Texas third baseman Adrian Beltre, Boston designated hitter David Ortiz, Texas catcher Mike Napoli and Yankees center fielder Curtis Granderson.

The NL has Colorado's Carlos Gonzalez leading off as the DH, followed by San Francisco center fielder Melky Cabrera, Milwaukee left fielder Ryan Braun, Cincinnati first baseman Joey Votto, St. Louis right fielder Carlos Beltran, Posey, Giants third baseman Pedro San-doval, Atlanta second baseman Dan Uggla and St. Louis shortstop Rafael Furcal.

Braun, who finished fourth in NL outfielder voting, takes the place of the Dodgers' Matt Kemp, on the disabled list because of a strained left hamstring.

Tabor Amateurs Tip Menno

TABOR — Jon Vavruska struck out 11 in a complete game effort at Tabor tipped Menno 5-4 in South Central League amateur baseball action on Sunday.

Jason Humpal had two hits and Brian Supik doubled for Tabor, which survived a six-error night to pick up the win.

For Menno, Macon Oplinger had a triple, double and single, scoring three runs to lead the way.

Vavruska allowed seven hits in picking up the win. Jeremy Wermers took the loss, going the distance.

Tabor hosts Yankton and Menno hosts Lesterville on Tuesday.

Menno 000 010 100 — 4 7 1
Tabor 000 120 010 10X — 5 6 6

Jeremy Wermers and Tate Bruckner, Jon Vavruska and Steve Fejfar

Scotland 10, Freeman 8

SCOTLAND — Four different players had at least two hits for Scotland in a 10-8 victory in SCL action Sunday night at home against Freeman.

Michael Kronaizl had three hits for Scotland (4-11), while Casey Comstock and Tom Heisinger each doubled and singled. Jordan Pravecek added a pair of hits.

Kraig Kronaizl pitched five innings in relief for the win, allowing three runs on five hits. Heisinger went the first four innings.

For Freeman (3-12), Mitch Woll-

Jackets Sweep Dakota Valley

NORTH SIOUX CITY — The Yankton Yellow Jackets finished the road portion of their regular season schedule with a sweep at Dakota Valley on Sunday.

In the opener, Becky Frick struck out eight over six innings and helped her cause with two hits in a 3-1 Yankton victory.

Bailey Kortan, Sophie Drotzmann and Ellen Andersen also had hits for Yankton.

In the nightcap, Yankton

claimed an 11-3 victory.

Abby Bartlett doubled and singled to lead Yankton. Darian Tramp and Drotzmann also had hits.

Andersen picked up the win, striking out three in the four-inning contest.

The Yellow Jackets play the Yankton Extreme on Tuesday to finish the regular season.

Attorney Says Charge Vs Vikings' Peterson A Lie

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota Vikings star Adrian Peterson was a victim, not the aggressor, during an altercation with authorities that led to his arrest at a Houston night club over the weekend, his attorney said Monday.

Peterson, a Texas native who makes his offseason home in Houston, was arrested and taken to jail early Saturday morning and charged with resisting arrest, a misdemeanor. Police said he pushed an off-duty police officer who was working security at the club. An initial court appearance is set for Friday.

Peterson's attorney, Rusty Hardin, called the charge and the allegation that he shoved the offi-

cer "a total fabrication."

"He, in fact, was struck at least twice in the face for absolutely no legitimate reason, and when all the evidence is impartially reviewed, it will clearly show Adrian was the victim, not the aggressor," Hardin said in a statement.

Houston police declined comment on the details.

"It's now a matter for the courts," police spokesman Kесе Smith said.

Hardin said the Bayou Club owes Peterson an apology after comments from a manager surfaced alleging that Peterson was drunk, unruly and disrespectful to security officers trying to get him to leave at closing time.

Fielder Wins Derby For Second Time

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Detroit's Prince Fielder became only the second player to win multiple titles in the All-Star Home Run Derby, thrilling the crowd at Kauffman Stadium with eight splash shots into the right-field fountain and beating Toronto's Jose Bautista 12-7 in the final Monday night.

On a night when the Yankees' Robinson Cano was repeatedly booed and went homerless, Fielder put on the most powerful display

among baseball's big boppers. Winner at St. Louis' Busch Stadium three years ago, Fielder hit a total of 28 home runs over three rounds to cap the main event on the eve of the All-Star game, hitting the long drive of the night at 476 feet into the water.

Ken Griffey Jr. won three titles, in 1994, 1998 and 1999.

While the ball stayed out of McCovey Cove during the 2007 Derby

DERBY | PAGE 9

conducting himself with dignity and representing the franchise in a positive light.

"Thank you for waiting for the facts," Peterson tweeted on Sunday. "Truth will surface."

Peterson has been one of the most dynamic players in the NFL over the last five years and is rehabbing a torn ACL in his left knee in hopes of being ready for the start of the upcoming season.

Hardin represented Roger Clemens in his recent perjury case. Clemens was charged with lying to Congress when he denied using performance-enhancing drugs. He was retried this year and found not guilty on all counts.