

Yankton Hosts 15-16 Minors Tourney This Weekend

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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After a season of competing mostly against teams older than them, Yankton is set to compete against teams its age as it hosts the state Class AA VFW 15-16 Minors baseball tournament, beginning today (Friday) at Bob Tereshinski Stadium at Riverside Field.

For Yankton (14-19) it is not only a chance to compete against other 15-year-olds, it is a chance to play in a state tournament at home, something Yankton coaches Nik Davis and Kory Bromley both experienced during their prep careers.

"We know what it's like to have the home fans behind you," Davis said. "Hopefully these kids get the opportunity to enjoy that."

While it is typically the shortstop that anchors the infield defense, Davis said that his team's "rock" has been second baseman Miles Carda (.208, 18 BB).

"He's a vacuum. Anything within arm's reach he knocks down and makes a great heads-up play," Davis said. "He's always around the bag, telling the others what they need to do."

With regular catcher Garrett Tennant sidelined for most of the season due to injury – he was cleared to play this week, but action may be limited – Trey Bakke (.250, 14 RBI) has stepped into the role.

"We had three different kids playing catcher," Davis said. "But Trey has come further in terms of blocking balls and framing pitches."

Jackson Somsen (.234, 7 RBI) and Jakob Larson (.233, 7 RBI) have shared duties at first base. Jack Schoenfelder (.231, 13 RBI) has anchored third base, hitting the first baseman's glove with uncanny precision.

"He's basically a robot over there," Davis said. "Every throw is right to the first baseman's chest."

Caid Koletzky (.254, 5 RBI) has grown into a solid shortstop for the squad, according to Davis.

"Caid's really grown over the off-season," he said. "His hands have gotten a lot quicker. He plays loose."

Carter Peterson (.208, 3 doubles), Nate Eihacker (.152) and Kellen Franzen (.250) have anchored the outfield, with Cole Brummer (.111) helping out both in the outfield and at third.

"Peterson has made some amazing highlight-reel catches. He's not afraid to dive, to sell out his body to make a play," Davis said. "Nate gets a great jump off the bat and has great speed in the outfield. Kellen has a good arm and gets a great jump off the bat. Cole has been a surprise at the plate – he hits the ball well the other way."

On the mound, Bakke (3-2, 4.91 ERA) leads the team in victories, while Schoenfelder (2-3, 6.80) leads the team with 33 1/3 innings pitched. Franzen (1-3, 5.88 ERA) has a team-best 21 strikeouts in 26 innings pitched. Peterson (1-2, 7.16 ERA) and Koletzky (0-4, 7.57 ERA) have also thrown over 20 innings on the season.

Because of the age restrictions, Yankton will play without four regulars from this summer: Chase Vogt (.376, 7 RBI), Nathan Hein (.375, 5 doubles, 14 RBI), Michael Heine (.328, 9 doubles, 16 RBI) and Justin Leader (.394, 2 doubles, 2 triples, 7 RBI, 23 runs). Leader was called up to the Legion varsity club for their state tournament, but the other three have continued to help their younger teammates prepare for state.



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton's Caid Koletzky sends a pitch home during a home game earlier this season. Yankton plays host to the 2015 South Dakota Class AA 15-16 Minors baseball tournament beginning today (Friday) at Bob Tereshinski Stadium at Riverside Field. The tournament runs through Sunday.

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Baseball | S.D. State Legion Tourney

Post 12 Rolls To 2-0 Start



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Yankton's Jordan Kathol races out of the box after laying down a bunt during Thursday's game against Rapid City Post 320 at the South Dakota State Class A American Legion Baseball Tournament in Brookings.

Offensive Explosion Continues For Yankton In 9-3 Victory

BY JEREMY HOECK
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BROOKINGS — What a change.

Earlier in the season, Yankton Post 12 was winning games by margins such as 4-3, 3-2 and 2-0.

As it showed again Thursday, however, its offense has turned a corner.

"We've woken up, I guess," smiled leadoff hitter Brad Ulmer.

"That's what we needed. It's the state tournament."

Yankton kept that momentum rolling Thursday night with a 9-3 victory over Rapid City Post 320 at the State Class A American Legion Baseball Tournament in Brookings.

Yankton (29-17), which has now scored 29 runs in the tournament, advances to face Rapid City Post 22, an 11-1 winner over Pierre, tonight (Friday) at 7 p.m.

Continuing its offensive surge from the region tournament, Yankton has been the story of the state tournament with its balanced attack at the plate.

"It eases everybody's mind up there," said catcher Adam Walter, who drove in three runs and hit his second home run of the tournament.

"You can play loose; you're not all tense and forcing runs."

After an 18-hit attack Wednesday, Yankton got going early Thursday, scoring five runs in the second inning — with the bottom of the order setting the table for the top of the order.

"We've been balanced all year, but we're seeing now that we can go nine deep and can rely on everyone," head coach Trey Krier said.

"We you can do that, it almost feels unreal."

Not only did Yankton's offensive onslaught continue in a big way, but it was matched this time by a dominating pitching performance.

The only starter to not record a hit, Mason Townsend pitched seven shutout innings, with six strikeouts and one walk.

"Mason keeps doing a nice job for us, especially for his age," Krier said. "He went out there and gave us exactly what we needed."

Townsend was relieved by Ben Cameron, who surrendered a pair of runs in the bottom of the ninth inning. Jordan Kathol finished it out.

Colin Muth and Ulmer both had three hits for Yankton, while Walter and Austin Johnson each had two. Sheldon Gant, Levi Schmidt, Kathol and Landon Withrow all added one hit.

"Balance is huge," Walter said. "No matter who's up there and no matter how many outs there are, we'll get the job done."

And now, Yankton has put itself in a nice position for the weekend.

"Everybody wants to be in the 2-0 game, but like we've been saying, it's just one game at a time," Krier said. "We're guaranteed to play on Saturday, and that's what we wanted."

Especially if that means playing Rapid City Post 22, which beat Yankton in last year's championship game.

"That's the team we want to see again," Walter said. "We want to show them what Yankton baseball is all about."

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Post 22 Rolls Past Pierre To Set Up Rematch With Yankton

BROOKINGS — Rapid City Post 22 set up a rematch of the 2014 championship game with an 11-1 victory over Pierre in the South Dakota State American Legion Baseball Tournament on Thursday.

Post 22 will face Yankton, which it beat in the 2014 title matchup, today (Friday) at 7 p.m. Pierre will play Sioux Falls West in an elimination game today at 3 p.m.

Erik Petry had two doubles

and two RBI to lead a balanced attack for Post 22. Tanner Simons doubled and singled, and Sam Haug and Matt Vickers each had two hits for the Hardhats.

Landon Badger doubled and singled, and Nate Zimmerman

had two hits for Pierre.

Cody Carlson went the distance for the win, striking out seven. Will Ellwanger took the loss, also going the distance.

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Lakers, Reds Begin State VFW Teener Tournaments Today

Hard-Hitting Reds Head To Sioux Falls



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton Reds' Matthew Mors bats during a home game earlier this season. The Reds play in the state 13-14 Minors state VFW baseball tournament beginning today (Friday) in Sioux Falls.

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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Typically when baseball players make the move to a full-sized diamond they face struggles all around.

No so for the Yankton Reds, especially on the offensive end.

The Reds take a 25-17 record into the South Dakota Class AA 13-14 VFW Baseball Tournament, which begins today (Friday) at Harmodon Park in Sioux Falls.

"It's been a blessing," said Reds coach Derrik Nelson. "Having to adjust to 90-foot bases there are usually struggles at the beginning. But they have never struggled with hitting."

As the team adjusted to the "big" field, Nelson and the other coaches put an emphasis on observation.

"We didn't know what to expect from them, so we stressed watching a lot of baseball," he said. "They took that to heart, and now they're hitting on all cylinders."

The Reds have hit a blistering .346 as a team with four batters hitting over .400 on the season. The squad also has recorded 194 stolen bases, with three different players notching 20 or more swipes.

"Singles turn into doubles for some of these kids, which is nice," Nelson said.

Leading the offensive attack has been first baseman Matthew Mors (24 SB), who

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Lakers Set For Another Post-Season Run

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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A season ago, the Yankton Reds took a .500 record into state, then made a run to the championship game of the 13-14 Minors state tournament.

This year, those same players hope to take things a step further.

The Yankton Lakers take a 25-15 record into the South Dakota Class AA 13-14 Majors VFW Baseball Tournament, which begins today (Friday) in Watertown. Part of what has helped the squad get off to a better start this season is maturity, according to head coach Drew Lawrence.

"Knowing bunt defenses, pickoffs ... that was easier to teach this year. They've gotten more used to me and vice versa," said Lawrence, who coached the same group as Reds a year ago. "The biggest part of that is maturity."

This year the squad won one tournament and played for the championship in two others.

"These kids can beat anybody at this age level," Lawrence said.

Defensively the Lakers have boasted two anchors up the middle, according to Lawrence.

"It helps to have Ethan Wishon (.415, 16 doubles, 5 triples, 1 HR, 19

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P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton Lakers pitcher Kieren Luellman sends the ball home during a home game earlier this season. The Lakers play in the State 13-14 Majors VFW baseball tournament beginning today (Wednesday) in Watertown.