

Press&Dakotan DAILY DOSE

Daily opinions from the P&D Sports Staff on local and national high school, college and professional sports.



BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK james.cimburek@yankton.net

One of the fun things about social media, particularly Twitter, is that you get to follow and/or participate in conversations that you might not have even known otherwise. One of those was Tuesday night, as media guys from Brookings and Mitchell were talking baseball. Steve Morgan, one of our radio friends from Mitchell, noted that Mitchell shortstop — and Mount Marty recruit — Jared Schmidt was not going to be available this week. Wondering why a prized baseball recruit would be sitting out, I asked what was going on. Morgan said that Schmidt was in Yankton for the week, taking a class to begin his studies in nursing.

Summers 'Off' Don't Happen For Many Student-Athletes

The note was another reminder of how much effort student-athletes put, not only into their athletic endeavors, but their academic exploits in the quest to balance the two aspects of their lives. Even for those student-athletes whose seasons don't involve summer, the summer is not a time to relax. For many, it's a time to work on their sports — from cross-training to lifting to individual and team skills. It also can be a time to just plain work, earn a little money because they don't have time to do it when school starts. It can also be a time for college student-athletes, like Schmidt, to take a class or two in order to take some of the pressure off their in-season academic demands. Student-athletes still have to take a full class load during the season, but getting a class or two out of the way could mean the difference between graduating in four years and graduating in five or six. However you look at it, summer is no longer "vacation" time for student-athletes.

77-Year-Old Shoots Hole-In-One

VERMILLION — Yankton's Don Casey wrote down a golfer's favorite number on his scorecard at The Bluffs Senior Tournament on Tuesday: 1. The 77-year-old Casey made a hole-in-one on Hole No. 17 during his round in the event, hitting the 163-yard shot with a 5-wood.

USD Third In Summit Commissioner's Cup

ELMHURST, Ill. — South Dakota State edged out Oakland and Kansas City for third in the Summit League Commissioner's Cup standings for the 2012-13 school year. USD earned its highest Commissioner's Cup finish after winning the men's indoor track & field title and placing second in men's and women's cross country, men's golf and men's and women's outdoor track & field. On the strength of first-place finishes in men's cross country, men's basketball and women's basketball, South Dakota State claimed the Commissioner's Cup with 94.5 points. Of the 18 championships in which the Jackrabbits compete, they finished in the top three in 10, while placing in the top five in all but two. The Jackrabbits finished in the top two in five

men's championship sports on their way to capturing the Dr. William Steinhilber Award. North Dakota State, last season's Commissioner's Cup recipient, took second with 87.0 points. The next three positions were separated by one point each with USD (78.5) taking third, followed by Oakland (77.5) and Kansas City (76.5). Western Illinois finished sixth with 65.5 points, while newcomer Omaha (64.0), Fort Wayne (59.5) and IUPUI (58.0) rounded out the standings. Brewers, Alexandria Lead Amateur Poll WATERTOWN — The Sioux Falls Brewers (Class A) and Alexandria (Class B) lead their respective divisions in the first South Dakota amateur baseball poll of the 2013 season. Here are the complete rankings: Class A — 1. Sioux Falls Brewers; 2. Sioux Falls Saints; 3. (Tie) Renner Monarchs and Yankton; 5. Pierre. Also receiving votes — Vermillion Red Sox. Class B — 1. Alexandria; 2. Parkston Mudcats; 3. Canova; 4. Crofton,

Nevada Judge Orders UFL Pay Dispute To Arbitration

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A Nevada state court judge is ordering third-party arbitration for a contract dispute between former United Football League players and league founder and chairman William Hambrecht. Clark County District Court Judge Rob Bare told attorneys for both sides Tuesday that he'll suspend proceedings in a civil lawsuit seeking millions of dollars in back pay, pending an arbitration ruling. A lawsuit filed March 1 claims 78 former players for the Omaha (Neb.) Nighthawks and Las Vegas Locomotives haven't been paid the \$3,500 per game they were promised in contracts or Hambrecht personal guarantees. The UFL folded in October because of financial problems, but league attorney Kristen Gallagher says the league is still viable even if it has no

games scheduled. It also had teams in Norfolk, Va., and Sacramento, Calif.

Fritsche Leaves Midland For Creighton Women's Bench

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Creighton women's basketball coach Jim Flanery has announced the hiring of Matt Fritsche as an assistant. Fritsche joins the Bluejays' staff after serving as head coach at Midland University last season. Before that, he turned Bellevue West into a Nebraska high school girls basketball power, leading the Thunderbirds to three state championships between 2007 and 2010 and reaching the Class A finals in 2011. Fritsche coached current Creighton player Alexis Akin-Otiko and former Creighton player Kelsey Woodward at Bellevue West. He'll work mostly with top players. Fritsche replaces Steve Huber, who accepted the head coaching position at Drury University in late April.

Brett Back In Uniform For Royals

BY DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — George Brett was back in uniform at Kauffman Stadium with that familiar No. 5 stitched to the back of his jersey, hanging over the dugout railing Tuesday night and watching with a vested interest.



The Hall of Fame third baseman was appointed the Royals' interim hitting coach during their latest road trip, so their return to Kansas City for a nine-game homestand meant that Brett was back in the dugout for a game that truly mattered for the first time since his playing days. Brett has remained close to the Royals over the years, serving as a vice president and helping out in spring training. But he had always balked at the opportunity to a full-time coach. "I'm real excited today because I get to go out on the field," said Brett, whose first attempts at batting practice during the road trip were scuttled by the schedule and lousy weather. "This will be the first day of being out on the field with them, so I'm really looking forward to that."

The last time that Brett wore a Royals jersey at the K for a game that counted was Sept. 29, 1993, his last home game as a player. He drove in a run in a 3-2 win over Cleveland.

That's precisely the kind of production the Royals hope that Brett can help produce as a coach. The team ranked near the bottom of the league in just about every offensive category when hitting coaches Jack Maloof and Andre David were reassigned to the minor leagues last week. Young cornerstones such as Eric Hosmer and Mike Moustakas haven't been hitting, and the team had dropped to its familiar spot in the AL Central cellar after starting off the season on a 17-10 run.

Nobody seems to know whether Brett will be as good of a coach as he was a player — he went to 13 All-Star games, after all. In fact, even Brett has tempered expectations by saying that he'll evaluate where the team is after a month on the job and consider whether to continue all summer. "If everybody goes out there and does their job, we have a chance to be competitive," Brett said, "but if everybody goes out there and tries to be somebody they're not, we're going to struggle. I think that's what you see on a team that's never really won before when they go through streaks like this."

Brett said that he spoke to the team along with special assignment coach Pedro Grifol before Tuesday night's game against the

JOHN SLEEZER/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT Kansas City Royals hitting coach George Brett in the dugout during action against the Minnesota Twins on Tuesday at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Mo. Brett, who had a Hall of Fame playing career for the Royals, joined the team as its hitting coach last week. Tuesday was the first home game for the Royals since Brett joined the team.

Minnesota Twins, and "you could hear a pin drop."

"I'm not lecturing them," Brett added. "I'm just telling them to enjoy themselves and give a few pointers here and there. Once the game starts, see the ball and hit it."

If only it were that easy. Brett agreed that he was a natural hitter, one of the very best to ever play the game. His pursuit of the .400 mark during a memorable 1980 season came up just short, but the .390 batting average that he finished the year with is so iconic that a sports bar at the K is named for it. "I told the guys today, the old expression, 'Easier said than done?'" It's easier for me to do than say," Brett said. "I'm going to relate to you guys. I'm going to do my best to relate. But again, it's easier for me to do than talk about it."

Brett underscored his point by bringing up Red Sox Hall of Famer Ted Williams and Charlie Lau, a journeyman player who earned acclaim as one of baseball's best hitting coaches. "They said Ted Williams was the greatest hitter of all time. My

dad told me that my entire life," Brett said. "Ted Williams wasn't a very good hitting coach. Charlie Lau wasn't a very good player, but he was one heck of a really good hitting coach. You don't find many guys who were good hitters that are good coaches, but that doesn't mean I can't try when the organization has asked me."

Brett said he's trying to get the Royals' young lineup to simplify their collective approaches, and that many of their slumps have been compounded by too many thoughts running through their heads. He wants just about everyone to get back to their fundamentals. "It's going to take some time," said Royals manager Ned Yost, who along with general manager Dayton Moore was instrumental in finally managing to convince Brett to come aboard. "I see little glimpses of improvement already," Yost said, "but it's going to take some time. We're not going to be able to flip the light switch and all of a sudden everything is going to be great. But I think in the long run with George everything is going to be great."

NCAA

From Page 8

ball, basketball, softball (last season) and now track and field.

On the men's side, top-ranked Texas A&M and second-ranked Arkansas are sending 20 entrants apiece. The Razorbacks, who are the defending champions outdoors, also won the indoor title this year.

Arkansas coach Chris Bucknam was direct about his team's intentions this week. "Contend for a title," he said. "I think we've got a good group going to Eugene. It's going to be a matter of executing and getting the job done. There's one intention, and that's to compete for a title."

The Aggies have excelled this season in the sprints, and send indoor 200 meter champ Amerer right-field bleachers for a three-run home run in the third inning and tacked on an RBI groundout in the seventh.

Ricketts got the night off in the circle after throwing a career-high 12 innings in Game 1 and moving to 35-1 on the season, but that just put the other half of her well-rounded game on display. She hit her 15th home run of the season and pushed her RBI total to 60.

Webb to Eugene. Arkansas pole vaulter Andrew Irvin is seeking his first outdoor title after repeating as the indoor champ. In the men's 1,500, defending champ Andy Bayer of Indiana will likely be challenged by Oklahoma's Patrick Casey. Arizona's Lawi Lalang is the favorite in the 10,000 meters and will also run the 5,000.

Southern California senior Bryshon Nellum won both the 200 and 400 meters at the Pac-12 championships and hopes to add at least one NCAA title to his list of achievements. Nellum redshirted his 2009 season for the Trojans after he was shot in the legs at a party by gang members who thought he was someone else. Told he might not ever reach an elite level on the track again, Nellum beat the odds and finished third at the U.S. Olympic trials in Eugene last year — earning a spot on the team for the London Games.

Nellum was part of the 4x400 relay team that won the silver medal and was selected by his U.S. teammates to carry the flag in the closing ceremonies. But an NCAA championship has eluded him. Oregon's Elijah Greer is the favorite in the men's 800. The third-ranked Duck men, winners of the Pac-12 championships, haven't won the outdoor title since 1984.

SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL

Table with NBA PLAYOFFS, CONFERENCE FINALS, and NBA FINALS results.

SOFTBALL

WOMEN'S COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

BASEBALL

COLLEGIATE BASEBALL POLL

Table with Record, Pts, and Pys columns for various baseball teams.

AREA CALENDAR

Table listing various events, dates, and locations across different regions.

Sooners Win NCAA Softball Title

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — National player of the year Keilani Ricketts homered and drove in four runs, Michelle Gascoigne pitched a three-hit shutout and top-seeded Oklahoma won the NCAA softball championship by beating Tennessee 4-0 on Tuesday night in Game 2 of the Women's College World Series finals. Ricketts drove a 2-1 pitch from Ivy Renfrore (22-5) halfway up the

right-field bleachers for a three-run home run in the third inning and tacked on an RBI groundout in the seventh. Ricketts got the night off in the circle after throwing a career-high 12 innings in Game 1 and moving to 35-1 on the season, but that just put the other half of her well-rounded game on display. She hit her 15th home run of the season and pushed her RBI total to 60.

Advertisement for Relay For Life featuring a question mark and text: 'Have you ever met our cat "River"? If so you've visited our business. See our ad in the June 11th edition of the Press & Dakotan'.

Large advertisement for YANKTON AREA RELAY FOR LIFE, JUNE 28-29, 2013, RIVERSIDE PARK SURVIVOR'S LAP. Includes registration times, contact info, and American Cancer Society logo.