

Soccer: Yankton Rebels Set For Region Tournament

BY JEREMY HOECK

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As a U-17 Yankton girls' soccer team prepares to leave for a prestigious tournament in Ohio, players say they have a mix of excitement and nerves.

After qualifying two weeks ago, the Yankton Rebels leave today (Thursday) for the U.S. Youth Soccer Region II Championships, which begin Saturday in Beavertown, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton.

Competing on such a stage — let alone for the first time — will understandably be an eye-opener for the Rebels.

"I'm kind of nervous, there are going to be some really good teams," senior Kendall Lillie said before a team practice this week.

"I'm excited to see where we fall between other teams and other states."

The Rebels, who qualified as a wild card out of the South Dakota

coming up

■ A preview of the 10th annual Yankton Soccer Invitational tourney. **FRIDAY**

day at 8 a.m. against a team from Illinois. From there, the semifinals will be held next Tuesday, with the U-17 championship next Wednesday.

The Region II tournament features boys' and girls' teams from U-13 to U-19 age groups, with those teams qualifying as champions or wild cards from 14 state associations — Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

State Cup, begin play at regionals Saturday at noon against SFCW Premier, a team from Wales, Wisconsin.

Yankton will then play Sunday at 2 p.m. against a team from Missouri, and Monday

"I'm pretty excited to see different teams, to see how they play," junior Amanda Gravholt said. "It'll be interesting to see that up close."

There are four groups of four teams — 16 total — in the U-17 division. Yankton is in Group B, while the other South Dakota squad, United Legacy, is in Group C.

Such a wide variety of styles will be a new experience for the Rebels, according to junior Autumn Barnett.

"I'm pretty excited and nervous at the same time," said Barnett of Vermillion.

"We'll see a lot of different teams we haven't seen before," she added. "We'll get to see how our skills and their skills match up."

While many of the teams the Rebels will see in Ohio will be more of an 'all-star' makeup, they are comprised mostly of Yankton players — Barnett and Cheyenne Mal-lory attend Vermillion.

Yankton's roster for the tournament includes:

- Seven incoming seniors (Danielle Beckmann, Raquel Cole, Janae Osborne, Elizabeth Rust, Taylor Ruter, Lillie),

- Seven juniors (Brianna Benjamin, Natalie Ferris, Erin Luken, Haley Schild, Amber Simek, Barnett, Gravholt) and

- Four sophomores (Haleigh Diede, Sophie Bisgard, Mallory, Rebecca Moser, Madason Tessier)

That chemistry, developed from many years playing together, has benefited the Rebels, according to Luken.

"It's very exciting," she said. "I grew up playing soccer with these girls, so we're more than ready to play."

All the players on the roster got an early look at top-level competition when the Rebels traveled to Kansas City, Missouri, earlier this season for a tournament.

"Kansas City was a huge eye-opener to what we normally play," senior Janae Osborne said. "That

helped us a lot, we came back and played so much better."

Asked whether that experience helped Yankton at the State Cup in Brookings on June 6-8, Osborne emphatically said yes.

Earning the wild card berth out of that tournament and making the trip to Ohio this weekend should also help soccer progress in Yankton, according to Rust.

"Hopefully this will start something and our teams can keep improving, and everyone else will want to try soccer," the senior said.

"I hope we can go year after year, or even not every single year, and play at a higher level."

How will the Rebels fare in Ohio?

"I think we'll do well; think we'll surprise some people," Lillie said. "They probably might not think we're all that good."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

CWS Homer Shortage Doesn't Put NCAA Brass In Panic Mode

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The top NCAA administrator who oversees the College World Series isn't as anxious about the dearth of home runs at the CWS as others in the baseball community.

NCAA managing director for championships and alliances Damani Leech told The Associated Press on Wednesday that a variety of factors came together to keep the ball from leaving TD Ameritrade Park before C.J. Hinojosa of Texas went deep Wednesday night in the seventh inning of the CWS' ninth game.

At the same time, Leech said, he's hopeful the move from a raised-seam to flat-seam ball in 2015 will nudge offensive numbers upward. Leech said it will take two years to know if the ball has the intended effect.

"Until you get 295 teams using that ball throughout the year, you don't really know for sure what's going to happen," Leech said.

Since the CWS moved to TD Ameritrade Park from Rosenblatt Stadium, a total of 23 home runs have been hit — nine in 2011, 10 in 2012, three in 2013 and one this year.

Homers across Division I have declined to rates not seen since the wooden-bat era because of dialed-back bats that entered the game in 2011.

UC Irvine coach Mike Gillespie has called the bat change a "nightmare," and TCU coach Jim Schlossnagle said "it's just a travesty what we've done to college baseball."

Leech said this year's CWS shouldn't be defined by the lack of home runs.

"I think this can turn into a runaway train from a dialogue standpoint and really take away from the great performances of the student-athletes we've had," he said. "Just because there aren't any home runs doesn't mean it's not great baseball."

On paper, this year's CWS didn't figure to be a homer fest. Among the top 200 draft picks here, eight are pitchers and four are hitters. Mississippi, with 42, is among four teams here that have hit 29 homers this season. There were six such teams each of the previous three years, including Florida squads that hit 69 in 2011 and 75 in 2012.

Another factor has been weather. South winds prevail in Omaha this time of year, but they've been unusually gusty the last week, blowing up to 30 mph.

"You look at the Big Ten tournament here, and they had eight (homers) in a span of 13 games," Leech said. "So same ballpark, roughly same time of year, a different set of teams, but a completely different set of results in terms of home runs."

Before Hinojosa's homer, 115 innings had passed since Mississippi State's Hunter Renfroe hit the last CWS home run, on June 21, 2013.

Leech said if the flat-seam ball doesn't have the desired effect, it's possible the ball could be changed to have a harder core or bats could be tweaked again to make them more lively.

"The ball coming off the bat at increased speed," Leech said, "there are safety concerns everybody needs to be aware of if we move down

Baseball

Lakers Earn Home Sweep



Yankton Lakers third baseman Trey Bakke handles a sharp grounder during the first game of Wednesday's VFW Teener doubleheader against Sioux Falls West at Riverside Field.

Caid Koletzky totaled five hits and was the winning pitcher in game one to help lead the Yankton Lakers to a VFW Teener doubleheader sweep of Sioux Falls West on Wednesday at Riverside Field.

Yankton won by scores of 4-2 and 8-3.

In the first game, Koletzky, Garret Tennant and Jackson Somsen were all 2-3. Trey Bakke, Carter Peterson and Jack Schoenfelder all had one hit.

Koletzky pitched three innings and allowed one earned run with three strikeouts. Peterson pitched the final four innings.

In game two, Koletzky was 3-3 with a run scored. Oakley Palmer, Ben Wold, Bakke and Somsen all had two hits. Nate Eihacker and Wyatt Duncan both added one hit.

Palmer pitched three innings, while Somsen got the win in relief. Kellen Franzen came on for one inning.

Yankton will next play in the Monarch Classic this weekend.

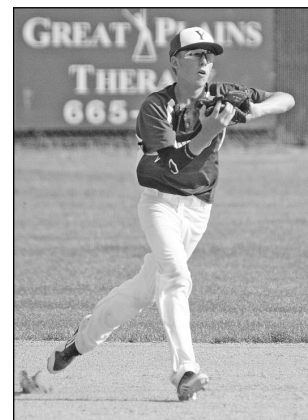
Legion

Tabor 13, Scotland 3

TABOR — Ross Kortan had three hits and Chase Kortan pitched six innings to lead Tabor past Scotland 13-3 in American Legion action Wednesday night.

Andrew Roland added two hits in the win for Tabor (6-3), while Austin Kaul tripled. Scott Wieseler pitched the final two innings.

For Scotland, Blake Konstanz singled twice and was the losing pitcher. Shayne Bloch doubled, and Josh Vaith pitched two innings.



Yankton Lakers shortstop Carter Peterson snags a line drive during the first game of Wednesday's VFW Teener doubleheader against Sioux Falls West at Riverside Field.

Tabor hosts Wagner next Monday night at 7 p.m.

Vermillion 15-11, Canton 1-1

CANTON — Vermillion Post 1 recorded 23 hits to sweep Canton in an American Legion baseball doubleheader Wednesday in Canton.

Vermillion won by scores of 15-1 and 11-1.

Jack Brown had three hits and four RBI to lead Vermillion in game one.

Post 1 scored nine runs in the top of the first inning and never looked back, pounding out 11 hits and benefiting from three errors.

Travis Weber added two hits and Ethan James drove in three runs, while Jake Odens struck out six batters in five innings for the win.

In the second game, Carter Kratz, Weber and Peter Haught all had two hits and three RBI. Collin Olson pitched four innings with seven strikeouts, and Kratz pitched two innings with four strikeouts.

Twins HR In 10th Doesn't Hold, Red Sox Win 2-1

BOSTON (AP) — The elation in the Minnesota dugout after Chris Parmelee broke a scoreless tie on a solo homer in the 10th inning didn't last long.

Seemingly on the verge of ending a four-game losing streak, the Twins instead lost their fifth in a row when Boston's David Ortiz and Mike Napoli delivered back-to-back homers off Casey Fien and the Red Sox won it 2-1 Wednesday.

"We finally break through and get a run, unfortunately Casey made a couple of bad pitches and they end up put-

ting both in the seats," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "Not a single, not a double, but homers. A tough way to lose it."

Tough, but fitting in a series when Minnesota pitched well but Boston put together just enough offense to win. The Twins scored just two runs on 11 hits in the series.

Boston's John Lackey and Minnesota's Kyle Gibson kept up the trend with strong pitching performances. Lackey gave up three singles over nine innings, striking out

World Cup: Spaniards Stunned By Elimination Loss

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — After watching Spain miss one chance after another and suffer a second straight humiliating loss at the World Cup, Victor Serra and other Spanish supporters walked out of Rio's Maracana stadium to hordes of Chilean fans yelling "It's over! It's over!"

It was, for both Spain's World Cup campaign and its era of dominance that lasted six years but ended with a 2-0 loss to Chile on Wednesday.

Serra shrugged off the jeers but other Spanish fans left the stadium in tears as huge crowds of Chileans danced in the street. Many Spaniards said they believed coach Vicente del Bosque erred badly by stacking his team with seasoned and overconfident veterans instead of choosing younger, more hungry players.

It was Spain's second loss in Brazil after a 5-1 rout by the Netherlands. And the result ended any hope the team has of advancing, a bitter end for a football dynasty that has been ranked No. 1 in the world for years and won the European Championship in 2008 and 2012 plus the 2010 World Cup.

"The problem is that Spain has already won everything and now there just wasn't the passion to make history again," said Serra, from the southern city of Valencia.

Using an expression in Spanish to describe how dead bulls are hauled out of the ring after being killed by matadors, he said Del Bosque "should have used younger players, the old guard needs to be dragged away."

Even more crushing for Spaniards is the fact that the country's football success has been one of the few joys that Spaniards have had following punishing years of recession and a near meltdown of the economy in 2012 that has left a staggering one out of every four Spaniards jobless.

The rate is double that for Spaniards under the age of 25, many of whom have emigrated elsewhere in Europe and to Latin America for jobs.

"It's almost like all of what we won before was a dream," said Beatriz Corral, who came to Rio from Madrid



Arturo Vidal of Chile, right, kicks the ball during the World Cup game against Spain in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Wednesday. Chile won 2-0.