

Wausa, Wynot Boys Ready For Neb. State D2 Action

Vikings In First State Tourney Since 2003

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

WAUSA, Neb. — After a rude awakening in the district final, the Wausa Vikings are hoping to take full advantage of their second chance and make waves at state.

The Vikings (22-3) open play against Spalding-Spalding Academy (23-2) in the opening round of Class D2 play on Thursday at 10:45 a.m. at Lincoln North Star High School.

Wausa comes in on the heels of its worst setback of the season, a 48-30 loss at the hands of Lewis & Clark Conference rival Wynot, a team they had beaten earlier in the season.

“The boys had some pressure on their shoulders, and didn’t play with the same intensity and confidence they had all year. It happens sometimes at this time of year,” said Wausa head coach Tylor Fincher, a star on Wausa’s most recent trip to state, in 2003. “If they overcome that pressure and just play basketball, they’ll be fine.”

One thing that had helped the Vikings avoid slumps throughout the season — their previous scoring low on the season had been 50, and the team averages 60.1 points per game. — is balance. Wausa boasts three scorers in double figures, and three more averaging around five points a game or

better.

“If one of them is not having the best shooting night, someone else can pick up the slack,” Fincher said. “It makes it tougher to key on any one person.”

Marcus Claussen (14.7 ppg, 4.9 rpg, 2 spg, 2.6 apg, 59 three-pointers), Austin Conn (10.3 ppg, 2.5 rpg, 1.7 spg, 3.2 apg) and Trevor Wakeley (10.0 ppg, 6.2 rpg, 1.6 spg) have been regulars at the top of the scoring charts. Reid Friedrich (7.5 ppg, 3.0 rpg), Hunter Vanness (6.4 ppg, 5.6 rpg, 1.8 apg) and Spencer Rosberg (4.8 ppg, 2.9 rpg) have also been solid contributors.

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Blue Devils Looking To Exact Revenge On Giltner

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

WYNOT, Neb. — In back-to-back seasons the title hopes of the Wynot Blue Devils were derailed by Giltner in the state semifinals.

This year the teams meet in the opening round of the Nebraska State Boys’ Basketball Tournament, Thursday in Lincoln, and the Blue Devils hope to reverse that trend and sting the Hornets.

Wynot takes a 22-3 record and the second seed into the Class D2 field, rolling into Lincoln on the heels of a six-game win streak that saw the Blue Devils avenge both of their D2 losses.

“We’ve put it together,” said Wynot head coach Lee Heimes. “We’re sharing more on offense, and our defense has gotten after people.”

Defense has been the name of the game for the Blue Devils, who have allowed 41.5 points per game and allowed just two opponents to break 60 points this season. Wausa beat the Blue Devils 62-44 on Dec. 14, which Wynot avenged 48-30 in the district

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final. Bancroft-Rosalie topped Wynot 78-72 in the semifinals of the Lewis & Clark Conference Tournament, but needed four overtimes to score that many points.

“We put a lot of pressure on offenses,” Heimes said. “We try to keep people in front of us. Everybody’s doing their job, whether they start or come off the bench.”

Davis Wieseler (61 steals), Jackson Sudbeck (39 steals), Cody Stratman (31 steals) and Brady Stratman (29 steals) have powered the defense away from the basket, while 6-8 senior Nathan Wieseler has been the

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Bobcats Surge Past Bucks

YHS Ends First Season Under Haynes At 6-15

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

BROOKINGS — After his first season as head coach of the Yankton boys’ basketball team had come to an end, Chris Haynes’ message about the deciding factor in Brookings’ 64-47 victory over the Bucks on Tuesday in their Region 1AA qualifier was loud and clear.

Brookings worked harder. But that message did not refer to the 32 minutes of game time, or even the final 14 minutes, when the Bobcats turned a tie game into a 17-point victory.

“We were here a year ago,” Haynes said after the game, referring to the 2011-12 Yankton season also ending in a regional at Brookings. “The difference in tonight’s game wasn’t tonight. It was in the last 364 days. Brookings outworked us.”

The Bucks improved two victories from a year ago, going from 4-18 to 6-15, but the program has more to do, Haynes said.

“If we want to turn the corner, we have to put in more work in the off-season,” he said. “That’s the bottom line.”

But for a few minutes, the Bucks played well against a team that had led the Bucks 38-15 after three quarters in the first meeting, and 16-7 after one quarter in the second meeting.

The third go-around, though, started much the same way. Yankton scored the game’s first points on a Michael Rucker putback, but Brookings scored the next eight points. After a Kellen Soulek jumper ended that run, the Bobcats again scored eight straight points to lead 16-4 after one quarter.

Yankton rode freshman Reid Sawatzke to get back into the game. Back-to-back three-pointers capped an 8-0 run that pulled the Bucks within four, 21-17. Another triple by the freshman got Yankton to within three, and a three-point play by J.J. Hejna and free throws by Rucker got the Bucks within two at the break, 29-27.

“The Sawatzke kid came down and knocked down three threes on us. They were all uncontested,” said Brookings head coach Travis Engebretson. “We had to get out and contest the shots.”

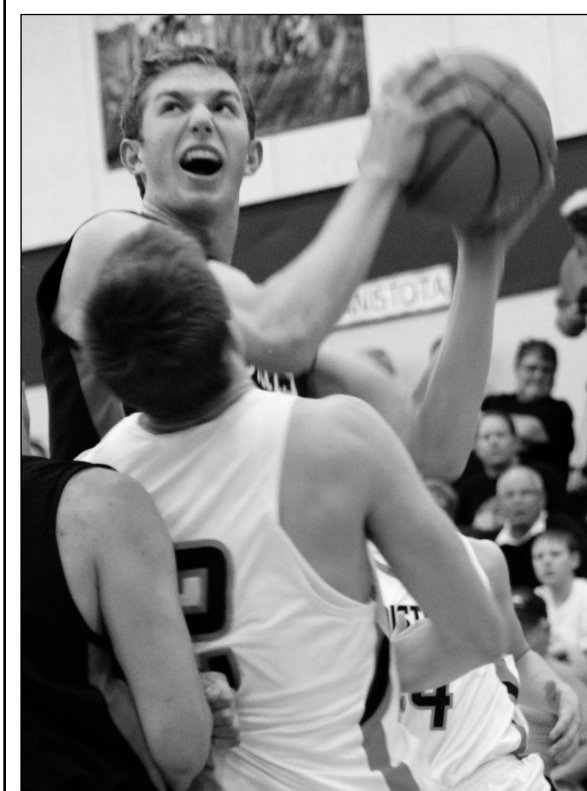
After Hejna’s jumper at the 6:22 mark tied the game, the Bucks had the ball and a chance to lead the game for the first time since the opening minutes. But Brookings stole the ball on three of four possessions, converting the turnovers into layups.

“We were flying around on defense,” Engebretson said. “We were playing Bobcat basketball.”

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Yankton's Kellen Soulek, left, Brookings' Mikey Daniel, Yankton's Andrew Hummel and Brookings' Kaleb Vig all go for a loose ball during the first half of their Region 1AA boys' basketball game on Tuesday in Brookings.



Emily Niebrugge/P&D
 Andrew Hora of Viborg-Hurley goes up over a Canistota defender for a shot during their Region 4B final Tuesday night in Tea.

Viborg-Hurley Clips Hawks

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE
 sports@yankton.net

TEA — The Viborg-Hurley Cougars were able to use experience and familiarity to claim the region 4B championship Tuesday night.

The Cougars faced the Canistota Hawks in Tea, taking a 50-44 win. Despite an earlier loss to Canistota, Viborg-Hurley head coach Galen Schoenfeld said facing the Hawks before helped his team pull off the win.

“It always helps to have familiarity with a team,” he said. “We’ve played them many times — not just this year, but over the past two years — in a lot of close games. Since their only loss was to White River, some people may have thought they would have been really tough to beat.”

But senior Seth Andersen said the pressure was on Canistota.

“I felt like all the pressure was on them since they had already beaten us,” he said. “We knew we had to play hard because we knew they were one of the best teams we have faced. I knew we had to keep playing strong defense and not let them score, and

we’d be alright.”

After coming out ahead 5-0 in the first quarter, Canistota led the Cougars 8-6 with 3:12 left. However, with 51 seconds remaining in the quarter, Viborg-Hurley took an 8-10 lead and managed to stay ahead the rest of the game.

Four minutes into the second quarter, the Cougars had increased their lead to 18-10, and by the end of the half led the Hawks 25-19.

The Hawks were able to close the gap, still trailing 35-31 at the end of the third quarter, and managed to come within one point with a 37-36 score with 5:52 left in the game. The Cougars gained control once again and put themselves ahead to win 50-44.

“Having the experience helped,” Schoenfeld said. “Playing the first time around, it was somewhat similar. The lead went back and forth a little bit more, but we had the lead for a while and then Canistota was able to take it back from us. Tonight our kids stayed poised and stayed aggressive defensively even with a couple of them hav-

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Titans Defeat Dakota Valley In Region 4A

BY CHRIS RILEY
 sports@yankton.net

HARRISBURG — Dakota Valley beat Tea Area twice by three-point margins during the 2012-13 regular season, but it was the Titans who rose up on the bigger stage in Harrisburg on Tuesday night, claiming the Region 4A title and punching their tickets to state. Playing behind almost the entire game, the Titans finally heated up in the fourth quarter and carried that momentum into overtime to defeat the Panthers by a final of 57-55 in an instant classic between the two Class A boys’ basketball powers.

Tea Area, 20-3 with the victory, has now reeled off 10 straight victories as the Titans are set to make their first-ever state basketball tournament appearance.

“I’m just proud of the guys and proud of the effort,” Titans coach Chris Fechner said. “We have a great group of guy. They are resilient and play with a lot of heart.”

For the first three quarters, it was Dakota Valley and not the Titans who looked like they would be continuing on to state. The Panthers jumped out to a 13-4 first-quarter lead, and although Tea Area would tie the game early in the second quarter, the Titans did not lead the contest until there was just 1:50 left on the clock in the fourth quarter.

Down 42-35 entering the fourth quarter, Titans forward Riley Knutson took the game over. Knutson had just two points after three quarters but the 6-3 senior exploded for 10 in the fourth, hitting a three-pointer, a two-point jumper, and hitting three free throws.

“I just felt like I needed to take it over and help my team out,” Knutson said of his fourth-quarter heroics.

An 8-0 run pulled the Titans to within a point midway through the fourth quarter, but Dakota Valley’s Brody Van Ginkel nailed a three-pointer to put the Panthers back up by four with four minutes left. After a free throw put the

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South Central Boys Headed To ‘B’ Tourney

MITCHELL — Sam Hazen’s basket with eight seconds to play lifted South Central past Ethan 63-62 in the Region 6B boys’ final Tuesday night at the Corn Palace in Mitchell.

The victory sends the Cougars (21-2) to the Class B State Tournament in Aberdeen next week.

Tyler Frank led South Central with 19 points, while Dakota Votaw had 17 points and five assists. Hazen chipped in with 12 points, five rebounds and two blocks.

For Ethan, which ends its season 13-8, Blake Bartscher scored 21 points, grabbed six rebounds and dished out seven assists. Tyler Myers added 17 points and six rebounds.

Region 2AA

Huron 64, Sturgis 45
 HURON — Huron shot 56 percent from the field and rolled past Sturgis 64-45 in the Region 2AA final Tuesday night.

The victory sends the Tigers (16-7) to the Class AA Tournament in Sioux Falls.

Justin Decker led Huron with 15 points, while Caleb Carr added 10 points.

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Devaney Center Basketball Days Are Coming To End In Lincoln

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — It’s the end of an era for the house that cigarettes built.

The Devaney Sports Center will host its last college basketball game Wednesday night when Nebraska plays Minnesota, ending a 37-year run as the home of the Cornhuskers.

After a \$20 million facelift, it will reopen in the fall as the women’s volleyball venue. The basketball teams, which moved into a new practice facility in 2011, will play games in the Pinnacle Bank Arena just west of campus.

“We’re going to have state-of-the-art facilities for any major college basketball team or any professional franchise,” first-year coach Tim Miles said. “At the same time, it’s a

sentimental time because there is so much historical value to the Devaney.”

Nebraska certainly isn’t a bastion of basketball tradition. The Huskers haven’t won a conference championship since 1950 or any of their six all-time NCAA tournament games.

But on the Devaney court, Nebraska has won 75 percent of its games overall (446-148) and 60 percent of its conference games (166-111).

“A lot of good memories,” said Beau Reid, who provided a couple of the building’s highlights during his career from 1988-91. “It’s bitter-sweet. Sweet because our program is moving on and getting a new facility that will help make us relevant.

Bitter because it’s not like the Devaney is some dump people move out of. It’s still a really nice, clean arena, and I think the volleyball girls will like playing there.”

The building is named for Nebraska’s Hall of Fame football coach, Bob Devaney, who led the Huskers to national championships in 1970-71 and served as athletic director until 1992. Devaney in 1971 pushed for a new multi-sports facility to replace the Nebraska Coliseum. After much consternation, state lawmakers approved a 5-cent increase to the state cigarette tax to fund the construction.

The final cost was \$13.8 million for the 13,595-seat building that opened in March 1976 as the Nebraska Sports Complex. It was re-

named the Bob Devaney Sports Center in November 1978 and has been the Huskers’ home through the Big Eight and Big 12 years, and their first two seasons in the Big Ten.

The most exciting years were from 1986-2000 under coach Danny Nee, whose .572 winning percentage is best in program history. He led the Huskers to four straight NCAA tournaments (1991-94) and another in 1998, and coached future pros like Tyrone Lue, Eric Piatkowski, Erick Strickland and Mikki Moore.

Nee’s first visit to the Devaney was in 1980, when he was an assistant under Digger Phelps at Notre Dame. The Irish were in town and lost to Missouri in the NCAA tournament. The building hosted NCAA

first- and second-round games three times in the ‘80s.

“I was so impressed with how it was designed, and the size was really cool,” Nee said. “That coach Devaney could get that done with the cigarette tax at such an economical price just astounded me. I didn’t know that six years later I would come back to coach in that facility.”

Nebraska beat 33 ranked opponents at the Devaney, but maybe the most memorable win was against an unranked Kansas team led by Danny Manning in January 1988. Reid’s 18-foot shot at the buzzer beat the Jayhawks 70-68 — the last game “Danny and the Miracles” lost on their way to the national championship.