

Summit League Tournament

Jacks, Coyotes Set For Final



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

The USD bench reacts to a score during the second half of their 82-72 victory over IUPUI in the semifinals of the Summit League Women's Basketball Tournament on Monday at Sioux Falls Arena.

Seekamp Lifts USD Past No. 2 Jaguars



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

South Dakota's Tempestt Wilson, left, battles with IUPUI's Dee-Dee Bellamy for possession during the second half of their Summit League women's basketball tournament semifinal game on Monday at Sioux Falls Arena.

BY CHRIS RILEY
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SIoux FALLS — For the second day in a row, the University of South Dakota women used a powerful second-half surge to take the lead and pull away for a Summit League Tournament victory. It was an 82-72 semifinal victory over IUPUI at the Sioux Falls Arena this time, propelling the Coyotes into an instant-classic clash with SDSU for the league title.

"This is what we've waited for and what the entire state has - an USD/SDSU matchup," Coyotes' senior and Onida native Alexis Yackley said. "We are really excited that we can be the first ones to give the state of South Dakota this matchup."

But first, USD had to beat a talented Jaguars squad (20-11) for the third time this season, and for the first 27 minutes, IUPUI gave

the Coyotes all that they could handle.

The Jaguars held USD to just 18 field-goal attempts and a 33 percent shooting percentage in the first half on the way to a 31-18 halftime lead.

"I thought that in the first half we stuck to our game plan and did what we needed to do," IUPUI coach Austin Parkinson said. "We talked about getting back in transition and boxing out. We did those things."

After a frustrating start to the second half that saw the Jaguars claim a 44-39 lead with 13:44 left to play, USD sophomore Nicole Seekamp sparked her teammates to a second-half comeback for the second day in a row.

"I think the whole team contributed in some way and I just fed off that and I fed off the crowd and made shots," Seekamp, who scored 23 of her 27 points in the

second half, said. "I wasn't really thinking about it, and if you don't think about it and shoot it, it usually goes in."

It was an 18-0 second-half run against NDSU on Sunday, and Monday, USD began a 27-11 run with 13 minutes left to play that took over eight minutes off the clock.

"Nicole Seekamp is a heck of a player and made some really tough shots and obviously made it difficult for us to win," Parkinson added.

Leading 66-55 after that run with five minutes to play, the Coyotes handled IUPUI's defensive pressure down the stretch and never let their lead slide to less than eight points.

"I certainly don't feel like we have put it together for 40 min-

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

South Dakota State's Tara Heiser pulls up for a shot during the first half of the Jackrabbits' 86-59 victory over Fort Wayne in the semifinals of the Summit League Women's Basketball Tournament.

Commentary: What's Old Is New Again For Women's Rivalry

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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SIoux FALLS — After a combined decade of transitions, the rivalry between the University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University is back where it was.

Playing each other late in the season with a conference title on the line.

That matchup will happen today (Tuesday), as USD earned a berth in the Summit League championship game with an 82-72 victory over IUPUI on Monday at Sioux Falls Arena. SDSU, which has yet to lose a Summit League Tournament game in now five trips around the league, rolled past Fort Wayne 86-59 for the other spot.

Toward the end of the Division II era for both of South Dakota's name institutions, the North Central Conference and North Central Region showdowns were a regular occurrence. When SDSU earned the Division II national title before leaving for D-I, it beat USD in the region final to move on to the national quarterfinals.

As SDSU played first on Monday, the Jackrabbits avoided the topic during its post-game press conference.

"We're not worried about tomorrow right now," said SDSU head coach Aaron Johnston. If (USD) is who we play, then we'll prepare for them."

While the Jackrabbits swept the regular season meetings with USD, Johnston said those wins have no bearing on what could happen today.

"We didn't win today because we swept IPFW during the regular season," he said. "Whoever plays better (today) is going to win."

Johnston did say that the Jackrabbits would approach the game differently, but because it was a post-season game, not because it was USD.

"In the season, you're trying to coach the season," he said. "In the tournament, you're



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SDSU Men Surge Late In Semis



DICK CARLSON/INERTIA

Nate Wolters, left, of South Dakota State drives into Pierre Bland of Fort Wayne during their semifinal game Monday at the Summit League Tournament in Sioux Falls.

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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SIoux FALLS — Just over three minutes into their Summit League men's semifinal with Fort Wayne, defending league champion South Dakota State found itself down 10-0 with Mastadons gunner Frank Gaines already on the board with a pair of three-pointers.

By halftime the tide had turned, and the 'Dons could not regain control.

South Dakota State outscored IPFW 18-9 to end the first half, briefly taking a lead just before half, then came out of the gates blazing on the way to a 72-56 victory on Monday at Sioux Falls Arena.

The victory sent SDSU (24-9) to the Summit League final for a second straight season. The game will be played at 8 p.m. today (Tuesday), and will air on ESPN2.

"It was a tale of two halves," said SDSU head coach Scott Nagy. "We were soft in the first half. We planned to get off to a better start, and not let Gaines get going, and those went out

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Fitzgerald, Tessier Earn All-ESD Nods For Gazelles

BY NICK ROBINSON
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The Yankton Gazelles basketball team posted two members that were apart of the 2012-2013 All-ESD Conference selections.

Senior post Kelsey Fitzgerald earned All-ESD first team honors, while junior Morgan Tessier received an honorable mention.

"It feels pretty awesome to be on first team all ESD," Fitzgerald said. "It's a big honor to be voted as that and recognized by all the other coaches."

Fitzgerald was a key component for the Gazelles (5-16) this past season, averaging 11 points and six rebounds per game.

"When your team moves the ball around like mine did, it creates openings

and I found those every once and awhile," she said. "Once you hit a good shot you're just feeling it and you get pumped up. You have to be confident and you can't second guess yourself."

Her best game came against the Brandon Valley Lynx in the elimination game in District 2AA this past season. Fitzgerald boasted 15 points, five rebounds, and four assists to help guide the Gazelles to a Region game against O'Gorman.

"Early on in the year, everyone doubted her," Yankton head coach Doug Pesicka said. "Teams had a lot of respect for her. All that being said, she had a good offensive numbers that added to her game."

Not only did Fitzgerald produce on the offensive end this season, she stepped up on the other side of the ball

as well.

"She did a lot of things for us, she's a terrific athlete," Pesicka said. "We asked her to guard the perimeter, and she guarded the best perimeter players in the state. She is very versatile player on the defensive end and was a tremendous asset."

She finished her career at Yankton with the most blocked shots in the school's history.

Fitzgerald will continue her basketball career at the collegiate level, playing at NCAA Division II University of Nebraska-Kearney on scholarship next season.

"We're going to miss her size and presence on the court next year,"

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SDSU Women Move To Fifth Title Game

BY CHRIS RILEY
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SIoux FALLS — South Dakota State University came one step closer to its fifth consecutive Summit League title with a dominating 86-59 victory over Fort Wayne on Monday afternoon in semi-final action at the Sioux Falls Arena.

The Jackrabbits went 18-for-20 on two-point field goals in the first half as they raced out to a 46-29 halftime lead.

SDSU senior standout Ashley Eide scored the game's first basket just 12 seconds into the contest and the Jacks never trailed. Eide, a first-team All-Summit League selection, led a balanced scoring attack for SDSU, finishing with 16 points on 80 percent shooting.

"Ashley was good today," Jackrabbits head coach Aaron Johnston said. "She was as good as anybody I've seen in the tournament so far."

A total of eight Jackrabbits scored eight or more points as SDSU shot 58 percent form the field for the game while also going 18-for-20 from the free-throw line.

"We had a great focus and intensity about us," Johnston added. "You watch our team and you see balance. Balance is great, but we have some really good players."

Sophomore Megan Stuart scored 11 points for the Jackrabbits, while Gabrielle Boever and Watertown-native Tara Heiser added 10 points apiece. SDSU senior Leah Dietel added eight points and a game-high seven rebounds.

"I think it worked into our favor that they played double overtime (in Fort Wayne's 106-101 victory over Western Illinois yesterday)," Boever said. "We went into the game wanting to play fast-paced like we always do."

South Dakota State, 24-7 overall with the win, grabbed 13 steals while forcing 17 Mastodon turnovers and held a 58-16

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