

# S.D. State Boys' Basketball Begins Today

## Viborg-Hurley Looks To Build On Back-To-Back Runner-Up Finishes

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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ABERDEEN — After graduating key offensive weapons from state runner-up teams in consecutive years, some might have thought the Viborg-Hurley boys' basketball team might have to retool in order to make another run.

The Cougars did just that, and they're back in the state tournament once again.

Viborg-Hurley used a balanced attack to put together a 21-2 record and make a third consecutive state tournament appearance.

"Certainly record-wise, we've done as well as any other season," said Cougars head coach Galen Schoenefeld. "We certainly didn't expect to go undefeated, but we're happy with where the team is at."

The Cougars graduated Cory Jacobsen, one of the state's leading scorers, two years ago and big man Zach Kraning last year, leaving the team with several talented athletes but no true number one scorer.

"We stressed a team style, and our kids embraced that," Schoenefeld said. "The kids care about how the team does. Any one of our top four can lead us, even Seth Ander-

sen and Austin Bjerkaas have led or tied for leading scorer.

"It makes us tougher to prepare for."

Andrew Hora has led the Cougars in both scoring (13.6 ppg) and rebounding (8.5 ppg), as well as posting 1.9 assists and 1.5 blocks a game. Jack Huether (10.8 ppg, 30. rpg, 1.7 apg, 1.5 spg), Trevor Jacobsen (10.6 ppg, 1.7 rpg, 2.8 apg, 1.5 spg) and Tyler Gerdes (10.2 ppg, 2.5 rpg, 1.7 apg, 2.0 spg) have also averaged in double figures.

Andersen (5.4 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 1.5 apg, 2.1 spg), Bjerkaas (4.1 ppg, 3.9 rpg) and Tyler Novak (1.3 ppg, 1.2 rpg) have also been part of the regular rotation.

While the 6-6 Hora has grown into a force inside, he has also proven a valuable weapon outside, hitting 22 of 66 three-pointers.

"Andrew didn't come up playing inside," Hora said. "He's still a kid that can step outside. He gives us good balance."

Jacobsen has hit a team-high 42 three-pointers, with Huether (26) and Gerdes (20) also proving outside threats.

The Cougars have allowed just 43 points a game, something that has also been due to balance, according to Schoenefeld.

"It isn't one guy," he said. "It's a matter of

making the right rotation. We have pressed more this year than we have in the past, but we've forced quite a few turnovers in the half-court as well."

Viborg-Hurley avenged one of its losses, Canistota, to qualify for state. It has a chance to avenge the other, James Valley Christian (21-2), in the opening round, a 6 p.m. start tonight (Thursday) at the Barnett Center.

"The first time around they were very ready to play us. They got off to a quick start, and we didn't recover from that," Schoenefeld said of the Cougars' 53-35 loss to the Vikings on Jan. 19 at the Hanson Classic. "We were in shock after getting down 22-2."

JVC has a tough 1-2 punch, Schoenefeld said.

"They have two good athletes," he said. "Adam Hofer and Nathan Wedel are two excellent ball players. They're a team that works hard and executes."

Besides Viborg-Hurley and defending champion White River (22-1), Dupree (22-1) and Langford (19-4) were in the tournament field a year ago. None of the eight teams entered has more than four losses on the season.

"There are a lot of good teams throughout the state," Schoenefeld said. "There are some good ones staying home, like Canistota and Wolsey-Wessington."

For the Cougars to make a run, they will have to do what got them this far, according to Schoenefeld.

"We need to continue to do the stuff that made things successful, play together on both offense and defense," he said. "Defensively we need to contest shots. We need to try to force shots out of teams' third and fourth scorers, make it as tough as possible on teams' first and second scorers."

The Viborg-Hurley vs. James Valley Christian game is the first game of tonight's evening session. Dupree and Arlington (17-4) round out the day, a 7:45 p.m. start. The opening session features White River against Langford at noon, followed by Potter County (22-0) against South Central (21-2) at 1:45 p.m.

The championship game is set for 8 p.m. on Saturday at the Barnett Center.

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at [twitter.com/aceman904](https://twitter.com/aceman904)

## Platte-Geddes Headed To Class A Tourn.

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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RAPID CITY — A veteran and balanced lineup has the Platte-Geddes Black Panthers back in the state tournament for the first time since finishing first and second in 2008 and 2009.

The Black Panthers (15-7) will open the 2013 South Dakota State Class A Boys' Basketball Tournament today (Thursday) at 1 p.m. Central time against top-seeded Clark-Willow Lake (21-0). The matchup will be played at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City.

After falling in the region final a year ago, Platte-Geddes had a strong lineup returning.

"I felt we had a good chance to be back in this position," said Platte-Geddes head coach Frank Cutler. "We lost the region championship to Tri-Valley but, with the returning players we had, we thought we had another chance this year."

All five Black Panther starters average better than six points per game, led by sophomore forward Coby Johnson (13.2 ppg, 6.4 rpg, 1.6 spg). Senior guards Matthew Randall (9.9 ppg, 3.9 rpg, 1.6 apg, 1.6 spg), Tate Van Zee (9.1 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 2.5 apg, 2.5 spg) and Richard Sternberg (9.0 ppg, 3.8 rpg, 3.0 spg, 2.3 apg) are all pushing double figures. Senior forward Hunter Johnson (6.0 ppg, 6.3 rpg, 1.5 apg) rounds out the first five.

"That's been key for us with this group," Cutler said of the team's balance. "We have different kids step up at different times. You cannot key on one or two, because all five starters have decent stats."

Junior Kole Heller (3.1 ppg, 1.4 rpg) and seniors Drew Turnis (1.4 ppg, 2.3 rpg) and Turner Antonsen (1.8 ppg, 1.8 rpg) are the first three off the bench.

Even before the Black Panthers beat McCook Central-Montrose for the Region 5A title, Cutler knew the team would have its hands full if it made it to state.

"We knew going in to regions we would be the last seed if we made it, but we're in," he said. "We're still playing, but obviously it's an uphill battle."

Platte-Geddes faces an unbeaten C-WL team that includes a victory over Class AA Sioux Falls Washington on its ledger.

"We played them a year ago. They're a great team," Cutler said. "Skyler Flatten (Sr., 6-5, G) has been able to back it up all year. Tyson Jenkins (So., 6-6, C) inside does a nice job. Lane Hoyde (Sr., 5-11, G) shoots well and Torry Kolden (Sr., 6-2, F) is a good athlete.

"Even though they're led by Flatten, you can't just key on him."

For the Black Panthers to make a run at state, they will need to play consistently and well, according to Cutler.

"We had a stretch this season where we had trouble scoring, but lately we've been more consistent on both offense and defense," he said. "We have to do the fundamental things very well: rebounding, shooting, making the easy pass."

The PG-CWL matchup is the first of four games in the Class A opening round today. Spearfish (18-5) faces Tea Area (20-3), making its first state tournament appearance, in the 2:45 p.m. game. The evening session pits Aberdeen Roncalli (16-4) against Mobridge-Pollock (18-5) at 7 p.m., followed by Madison (21-2) against Pine Ridge (14-8) at 8:45 p.m.

The tournament runs through Saturday.

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# USD 'Hopeful' Season Continues

## WNIT or WBI Could Be In Coyote Women's Future

BY JEREMY HOECK

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A day after the dust had settled and ears had stopped ringing, the University of South Dakota women's basketball team is waiting to see if its season will continue.

The Coyotes lost to rival South Dakota State by three points in Tuesday's Summit League women's championship game in Sioux Falls, a victory that sends the Jackrabbits to the NCAA Tournament for a fifth consecutive year.

USD (17-15), meanwhile, is holding out hope that it earns an invite to the WNIT or the Women's Basketball Invitational (WBI), both tournaments the Coyotes have played in since 2011.

"All I can really say is that we're hopeful," head coach Amy Williams said Wednesday. "Obviously after the way these kids battled and did in that tournament, I'd like nothing more than the opportunity to keep coaching this group.

"Certainly that would be nice."

The 64-team WNIT field, with 31



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

South Dakota guard Alexis Yackley, 5, directs her teammates during the Summit League women's basketball championship on Tuesday at Sioux Falls Arena. Yackley and the other seniors for the Coyotes are hoping to have their season extended by a berth in the WNIT or WBI.

COYOTES | PAGE 10

## Colorado State Advances To MWC Semifinals

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Wes Eikmeier scored 18 points and second-seeded Colorado State held off Fresno State 67-61 Wednesday in the Mountain West Conference tournament quarterfinals.

The Rams (25-7), who next play UNLV in Friday night's semifinals, got contributions from Greg Smith with 11 points and Gerson Santo, who scored 10 in 11 minutes of play. Pierce Hornung grabbed a game-high nine rebounds.

Eikmeier's 3-pointer with just over a minute remaining gave Colorado

State a 61-55 lead, and the Rams sealed the win at the free-throw line. They were 25 of 37 in a game that saw 46 fouls called.

Also for CSU, Yankton native Colton Iverson finished with seven points.

Tyler Johnson led Fresno State (11-19) with 14 points. Jerry Brown and Marvelle Harris scored 12 and Allen Hudleston had 10 points for the Bulldogs, who were 13 of 23 at the foul line.

Neither team led by more than nine points in a game that featured eight ties and 12 lead changes.

## Big 12: Postseason Promise Or Upset Potential?

BY JEFF LATZKE

AP Sports Writer

NORMAN, Okla. (AP) — After months stuck in mediocrity, the Big 12 is starting to show a glimmer of promise as the NCAA tournament approaches.

Kansas State and Oklahoma State surged to finish the regular season, providing the conference a trio of teams that could be poised to make a deep postseason run. It's a positive development for a league that spent most of the season struggling to claim a place in the national dialogue.

Even with three teams now ranked in the top 15, the lasting image from Big 12 play may be perennial national powerhouse Kansas losing at lowly TCU.

There's still time to change that, if the Big 12's top teams can play up to their potential and avoid more con-

founding upset losses in the postseason.

"The Big 12 has gotten much better as the year has gone along because some young teams have put some things together," Baylor coach Scott Drew said. "The Big 12 is as tough as it gets this year. Our nonconference record might not have reflected that at the beginning. ... Traditionally, we've done real well in the NCAA tournament and hopefully that continues."

About half of the league figures to get into the NCAA bracket, and some of that could come down to this week's league tournament in Kansas City, Mo. Seventh-ranked Kansas, No. 11 Kansas State and No. 14 Oklahoma State are all locks to get in.

Oklahoma was distancing itself from the bubble before a stunning loss at TCU to finish the regular season, not long after Texas stormed back from a 22-point deficit in the final 8

minutes to beat the Sooners. Iowa State is also trying to cement its spot in the NCAAAs, and even sixth-place Baylor put itself back in the conversation with an 81-58 blowout in the regular season finale against Kansas — another of those upsets.

"I think Baylor should already be in, personally," said Oklahoma State coach Travis Ford, whose third-seeded Cowboys face the Bears on Thursday. "They've had so many big wins this year already. They've beaten Kentucky at Kentucky, and some people say Kentucky (is) in now. They beat us, they beat Kansas. They've won a lot of really good basketball games."

It's a huge question mark which version of the Big 12's best will show up in the most important time of the season.

BIG 12 | PAGE 10

# River City Gymnastics & Cheer Teams Shine Over Weekend

The River City Cheer & Gymnastics squad went in different directions this past weekend, but each had success.

Competing in the "Baby I'm A Rock Star" event in Sioux Falls on Saturday, the River City Cheer Cyclones (12-under) squad earned Grand Champion in their division, and received the "Best Entertainers" award for the event. Also earning team honors were the Chill (18-under) in second, the Flurries (5-under) in third and the Hurricanes (8-under) in fourth.

Individually, Elsie Kotalik placed first in both the 18-under jump and tumbling competitions, as well as competing as part of the Storm 18-under stunt group with Kaitlin Guthmiller, Cyndal Sathe, Britney Bradwisch and Emma Stewart. The Ice stunt group in the 18-under division was comprised of Cameryn Specht, Regan Specht, Logan Ramey, Jessica Popovich and Lexi Schrempp. Lindsay Larson also earned a first in the 18-under division for cheer performance.

In the 12-under division, Grace Gustad placed second in the jump contest and Trinity Goeman placed third in cheer performance. Gustad was also part of the Twisters and Heat stunt groups, along with Morgan Heine and Morgan Sundleaf. Abby and Ashley Emmick

completed the Twisters group, while Kylie Cwach and Halle Stephenson completed the Heat group.

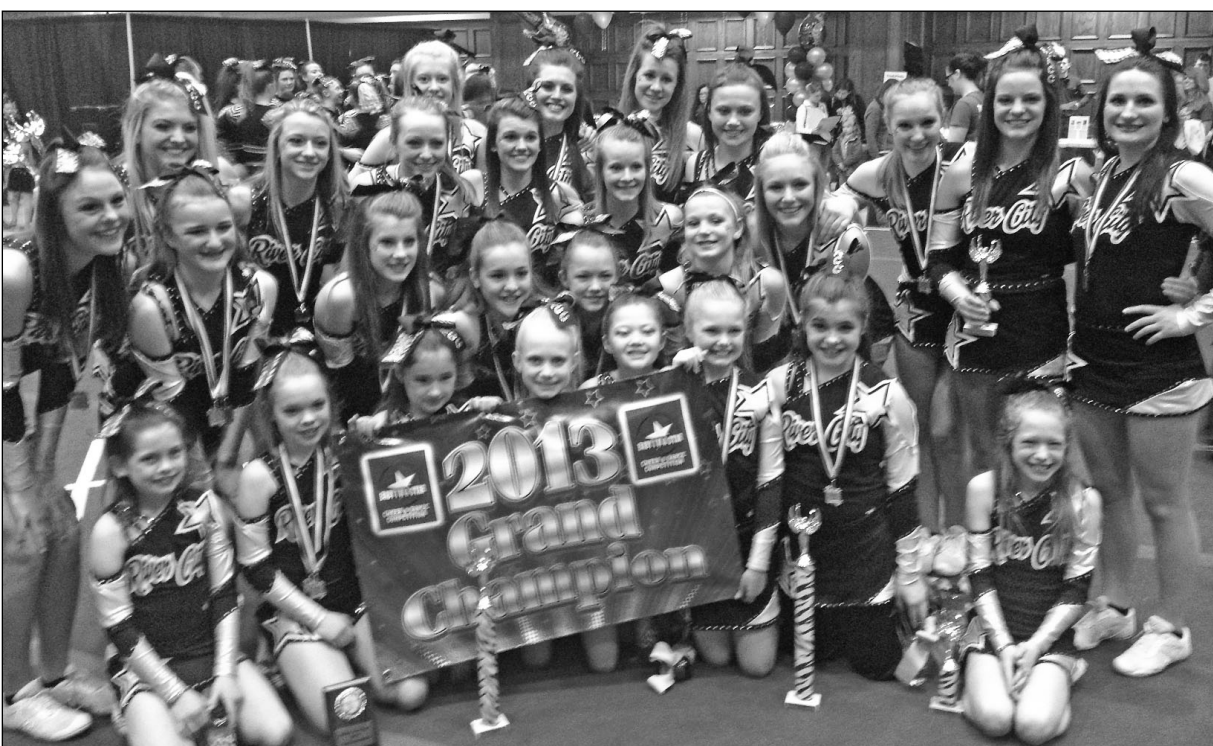
In the 8-under division, Burkley Olson placed first in the jump contest.

Next up for River City Cheer is the Mid-American Championships, April 6-7 in Kansas City.

River City Gymnastics competed at the Fremont, Neb., YMCA event on Saturday and Sunday, led by Emily Duffek's first place finish in the Level 8 all-around. She posted a score of 35.0, keyed by a 9.2 score on the uneven parallel bars.

Trinity Goeman finished second in the Intermediate Optional, 9-10 year-old division (35.1). Samantha Kortan placed third in the 11-year-old, Intermediate Optional division (34.24). In the 15-over Advanced Optional division, Chelsey Hisek placed fifth (35.9), with Miranda Hallberg finishing sixth (34.8).

In the level 4 divisions, Nykki Husman (34.1) placed eighth in the 10-year-old group, Morghan Hallberg (32.35) finished seventh in the 9-year-old group, Jenna Duffek (32.8) placed fourth and Mya Gilbertson (31.1) placed sixth in the 8-year-old group, and Jayna James (31.8) placed fourth and Jayce James (31.70) placed fifth in the 6-7 year-old group.



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