

Double Dose Of March Madness For Local SDSU Fans

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

The anticipation to see where his two favorite teams would fall in the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament bracket quickly turned to silence as Todd Woods saw his Jackrabbits and Wolverines slotted together on Thursday night.

No. 4 Michigan (26-7) vs. No. 13 South Dakota State (25-9).

Who would he root for?
"When I saw the bracket, I thought, 'Of all the teams that make it, why do my two have to play in the first round?'" said Woods, a trust officer at First Dakota National Bank in Yankton.

"The good news is I'll have one of my teams move on, but the other will have to lose."

Woods, a 1995 SDSU graduate, is one of many local and area Jackrabbit fans who are again celebrating a double dose of

"You don't have to come from the East Coast or West Coast to be successful."

TODD WOODS, S.D. STATE ALUM

March Madness favor. For the fifth consecutive year, the SDSU women are headed to the NCAA Tournament (they play Saturday against South Carolina), while the men qualified for the second straight year.

Though he said he has always been a fan of the Michigan Wolverines, Woods made clear where his true support for Thursday night's men's game lies.

"I'll cheer for State, of course," he said, without hesitation. "I think there's a chance for an upset. I'm torn, though. Maybe I'll have a Jacks hat on and a Michigan jersey on."

As evidenced by the record crowds at

last week's Summit League Tournament, and by the fact that Yankton boasts the state's second-highest collection of SDSU alums (behind only Sioux Falls), support for the Jackrabbits continues to grow.

Watching the men's team under coach Scott Nagy rise to the level of the women's program has played a role in the ever-increasing fan base, Woods said.

"The women have set such a standard, that it's almost expected," he said. "But the men have developed such a great program, plus it's great to see just how the team is made up of people from our area. It's a wonderful thing to see."

That was a popular sentiment among local Jackrabbit fans, as it pertains to both SDSU teams.

• The Jackrabbit men boast three in-state players in its starting lineup, while the other two are from neighboring states. Brayden Carlson, Tony Fiegen and Chad White are all South Dakota products, while Jordan Dykstra (Rock Valley, Iowa) and Nate Wolters (St. Cloud, Minn.) are within 200 miles of Brookings.

• On the women's side, the entire roster is made up of South Dakota or Minnesota kids.

"Having local talent and being successful is great to show how strong local kids are," Woods said. "You don't have to come from the East Coast or West Coast to be successful."

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Wolters Back In National Spotlight

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — By his own admission, Nate Wolters wasn't much of a threat last season from the 3-point line.

The South Dakota State guard has sure turned things around. Wolters, whose evening routine includes taking hundreds of shots in an empty Frost Arena, said he worked hard this year to improve his outside shooting.

"I've shot a pretty good percentage this year, and I think that's made the defense honest," he said. "I think I've become a better passer, as well."

Wolters has always been a quiet Midwestern kid who leads by example, but the spotlight was on him earlier this season when he scored 53 points in a game, tops in Division I. And now he and the Jackrabbits are back on college basketball's biggest stage of all, facing No. 4 seed Michigan in the first round of the NCAA tournament on Thursday.

Wolters' high school coach says there's no player he'd rather see with the ball in the final seconds if the Jackrabbits have a chance against the Wolverines.

"When we needed a bucket, he definitely just seemed to always have the ball in his hands and make the right decision," said Randy Jordan, who led Wolters at St. Cloud (Minn.) Tech High School. "He's always been a competitor and always been a go-to guy down the stretch. He probably hit five, six game winners for us in the three years that he played."

Wolters, a 6-foot-4 senior whose only Division I scholarship offer came from South Dakota State, captured attention last year when the Jackrabbits made their first trip to the NCAA tournament, losing to Baylor 68-60. A CBS Sports blogger even gave him his own slogan — "Naters Gonna Nate" — which has spread to T-shirts, arena signs and a Twitter hashtag.

He became a sensation again in February when he scored that school-record 53 against IPFW and broke another mark with nine 3-pointers.

Jackrabbits coach Scott Nagy said he's heard people question Wolters' defense, but the guard plays 40 minutes and a lapse sometimes can be because he's tired. He said Wolters has great anticipation and is much more athletic than people think.

"Nate is a tremendous defender when he decides he's going to be a good defender," Nagy said.

Jordan said Wolters was a good student but always thinking about basketball — even in the geometry class Jordan taught. Jordan would often see his star player spending nights and weekends at the Whitney Center working on his shot.

"He was a person that just loved to be in the gym and he always had a basketball in his hands," said Jordan, who now coaches at Minnesota's Stillwater High School.

Wolters' role on the court was different in high school, as the Tigers used a two point-guard offense.

"I thought he was more effective of getting the ball up the floor on the wing and attacking the basket for us," Jordan said. "That's what we used him for. We wanted to get the ball in his hands."

Wolters was about 6-foot-1 as a high school sophomore, and he became even more effective under the boards as he added a few inches, Jordan added.

Wolters said his height has helped him lead South Dakota State's offense.

"Most point guards aren't as tall as 6-4, and I can definitely see over the defense a little better than smaller guards can," he said. "When you get into those pick-and-roll situations, it's a lot easier to throw across my body or make jump passes and see over the defense."

North Dakota State coach Saul Phillips, whose team lost to the Jackrabbits 73-67 in the Summit League tournament final, said Wolters' height and ability to find the open man make him tough to defend.

"With Nate, he is so good at creating passing angles with his long arms," Phillips said. "He makes passes that other guards just don't make."

Wolters said the Jackrabbits are a more talented and experienced team than last year, and knowing what to expect this year will help as they try to pull off an upset.

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YHS Wins Four Events In Opener



ABOVE: Yankton's Kelsey Fitzgerald competes in the finals of the girls' long jump at the Bob Prince Indoor track and field meet on Tuesday at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. The senior finished fourth in that event, then won the high jump.

RIGHT: Yankton's Nick Raab competes in the boys' shot put.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

VERMILLION — The Yankton Bucks and Gazelles each had two individual champions during the Bob Prince Early Bird Invitational indoor track and field meet on Tuesday at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

The Yankton girls were led by Kelsey Fitzgerald, who won the high jump (5-4) and finished fourth in the long jump (15-5). Annie Kruse won the 3,000-meter run in 11:04.89, with teammate Tristan Roy fifth (12:45.83).

Also in the girls' long jump, Lindsey Hale placed seventh (15-2).

The Gazelles also had three runner-up finishes, with teammates also claiming top-eight marks in those events. Whitlee Larson placed second in the 1600 (5:34.22), with Savannah Woods fifth (5:52.57). Elsie Kotalik finished second in the pole vault (8-0), with Meggie Steiner sixth (7-6) and Charlotte Ekeren tied for eighth (7-6). Clara Schild finished second in the shot put (36-8), with Allie Murphy eighth (32-11).

Also for Yankton, Hailey Luken placed fourth in the 60-meter hurdles (9.90) and Jessica Wirth placed seventh in the 60-meter dash (8.39). The Gazelles also finished fifth in the 3200 relay (10:42.52), sixth in the 800 relay (1:55.83) and eighth in the 1600 relay (4:34.90).

For the Yankton boys, Brice Cowman won the 3,000 (9:12.68) and James Hofer won the pole vault (11-6). Also for the Bucks, Casey Skillings placed fourth in the pole vault (11-0).

Also for Yankton, Ryan Olson finished fourth in the 800 (2:09.45). Justin Grode finished eighth in the 1600 (5:07.64), J.J. Hejna placed eighth in the long jump (19-0) and Matt Fitzgerald tied for eighth in the high jump (5-6). The Bucks also finished third in the 3200 relay (8:57.43) and fifth in the 800 relay (1:38.51).

Next up for Yankton is the Dan Lennon Relays, March 25 at the DakotaDome.

BOYS' DIVISION

60: 1, Nate Geary, Washington 6:58; 2, Anthony Dreeszen, S.C. East 7:07; 3, Zack Skibinski, Heelan 7:08; 4, Ronald Nash, S.C. East 7:10; 5, David Mulbah, Roosevelt 7:16; 6, Matt Vandenberg, Brandon Valley 7:19; 7, Tairn Christon, Roosevelt 7:24; 8, Anthony Pearson, S.C. West 7:31

400: 1, Cam Holmes, Brandon Valley 50.53; 2, Gerald Heiskell, S.C. West 52.43; 3, Philip Jacobson, Heelan 52.54; 4, Zach Tuschen, Roosevelt 52.80; 5, Carter Lilly, S.C. East 52.84; 6, Matt Evers, Harlan 53.53; 7, Tony Tobin, Heelan 53.79; 8, Jordan



dan Welering, Roosevelt 54.04

800: 1, Carter Lilly, S.C. East 2:01.17; 2, Cameron Sannes, Washington 2:04.32; 3, Jacob Green, Washington 2:08.66; 4, Ryan Olson, Yankton 2:09.45; 5, Collin Fligge, S.F. Christian 2:09.72; 6, Seth Bolon, Roosevelt 2:09.92; 7, Tyler Slaba, Roosevelt 2:10.84; 8, Tommy Thelen, Heelan 2:10.89

1600: 1, Tommy Thelen, Heelan 4:50.54; 2, Phillip Sciranko, Harlan 4:56.92; 3, Travis Kreuzmann, Roosevelt 4:57.34; 4, Ben Eastman, Heelan 4:59.53; 5, Brandon Geary, S.C. North 5:02.86; 6, Tyler Dobson, Lincoln 5:04.58; 7, Caleb DeWeerd, S.F. Christian 5:05.54; 8, Justin Grode, Yankton 5:07.64

3200: 1, Brice Cowman, Yankton 9:12.68; 2, Alec DeVries, Heelan 9:20.17; 3, Zach Van Edle, Brandon Valley 9:28.72; 4, Dreux Selzler, Lincoln 9:32.51; 5, Jesus Urtusastegui, Roosevelt 9:33.91; 6, Daniel Armstrong, Roosevelt 9:51.76; 7, Adam Kost, Roosevelt 10:01.33; 8, Phillip Sciranko, Harlan 10:07.09

60 HURDLES: 1, Brandon Gildemaster, Roosevelt 8.28; 2, Trey Etrheim, Brandon Valley 8.90; 3, Tony Dawson, Harlan 8.94; 4, Connor Clayton, Harlan 9:00; 5, Louis Noel, Heelan 9.32; 6, Austin Benson, Washington 9.47; 7, Skyler Bauer, S.C. West 9.54; 8, Alex Powell, Washington 9.59

800 RELAY: 1, S.C. East 1:36.67; 2, Brandon Valley 1:36.70; 3, Roosevelt 'D' 1:37.15; 4, Washington 1:37.55; 5, Yankton 1:38.51; 6, Harlan 1:38.69; 7, S.C. North 1:39.92; 8, Heelan 'B' 1:40.38

3200 RELAY: 1, Roosevelt 8:36.68; 2, Brandon Valley 8:57.15; 3, Yankton 8:57.43; 4, Heelan 8:57.69; 5, Washington 8:59.52; 6, Harlan 9:02.03; 7, Roosevelt 'B' 9:07.15; 8, Heelan 'B' 9:29.33

HIGH JUMP: 1, David Mulbah, Roosevelt 6-2; 2, Tony Dawson, Harlan 6-0; 3, Louis Noel, Heelan 5-10; 4, Matt Vandenberg, Brandon Valley; Sam Dolsen, S.C. North; Kyle Stengal, Roosevelt; 5-8; 7, Luke Reiter, Washington 5-8; 16, Joe Kayl, Heelan; Nolan Burchill, Lincoln; Denzel Hodges, Lincoln; Brayden Buller, Brandon Valley; Alex Wilde, Brandon Valley; Matt Fitzgerald, Yankton 5-6

LONG JUMP: 1, Anthony Pearson, S.C. West 20-8; 2, Anthony Dreeszen, S.C. East 20-6; 3, Keyvion Mayhen, Roosevelt 20-2; 4, Ronald Nash, S.C. East 20-1.5; 5, Isaac Van Essen, S.F. Christian 19-10; 6, Tyler Cropley, Heelan 19-4.5; 7, Alexander Aloysius, S.F. Christian 19-2; 8, J.J. Hejna, Yankton 19-0

POLE VAULT: 1, James Hofer, Yankton 11-6; 2, Alex Oddy, Brandon Valley 11-6; 3, Gavin DeHaai, S.F. Christian 11-0; 4, Casey Skillings, Yankton 11-0; 5, Cole Christiansen, Brandon Valley 10-6; 6, Austin Roemeling, Lincoln 10-6; 7, Zach Schliag, Roosevelt 10-0; 8, Dexter Herr, Roosevelt 9-6

SHOT PUT: 1, Jack Lemboke, Roosevelt 56-4.5; 2, Grant Lewis, Washington 49-0; 3, Kirby Hora, Roosevelt 46-11; 4, Nick Norton, S.C. North 46-10; 5, Zack Skibinski, Heelan 45-11; 6, Austin Langston, S.C. North 45-4; 7, Cale Stork, Harlan 45-0; 8, Nic Komick, Harlan 44-5

TRIPLE JUMP: 1, Romeo Zino, Lincoln 39-8; 2, Keyvion Mayhen, Roosevelt 39-4.5; 3, Taylor Bren, Roosevelt 37-9; 4, Austin Heins, Washington 37-1.5; 5, Quinton Johnson, Washington 36-11.5; 6, Grant DeHaai, S.F. Christian 36-10; 7, David Kolb, Roosevelt 36-4; 8, Hercules Harder, Roosevelt 34-4

GIRLS' DIVISION

60: 1, Ravan Kott, Lincoln 8:06; 2, Miranda Velgersdyk, S.F. Christian 8:16; 3, Stacy Smit, S.F. Christian 8:17; 4, Brittney Calvillo, S.C. East 8:24; 5, Yasmeen Rose, Heelan 8:31; 6, Elizabeth Bohmann, S.C. East 8:32; 7, Jessica Wirth, Yankton 8:39; 8, Emily Keane, Heelan 8:40

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CBH Sweeps All-Star Games

ALEXANDRIA — The Custer Battlefield High School Conference swept the Cornbelt Conference in the annual CBH-Cornbelt All-Star Basketball Games, held Tuesday night at the Hanson Activity Center.

Rachelle Moore of Sanborn Central-Woonsocket and Maria Nightingale of Kimball-White Lake combined for 45 points as the CBH girls won 66-55.

Moore had 24 points and Nightingale scored 21 points for the CBH squad. Hailey Mohnen of KWL added 15 points for the squad, which only had five players score.

Kelli Wenande of Hanson led the Cornbelt squad with 10 points. Also for the Cornbelt squad, Kathrin Luke (Marion) scored eight points, Kylie Hughes (Marion) and Dina Soulek (Free-

man) each had six points, and Ashton Diede (Menno) had one point.

KWL's Jesse Taylor scored 15 points to lead four players in double figures as the CBH won the boys' game 90-87.

Also for the CBH squad, Kellam Karst (Mount Vernon-Plankinton) scored 13 points, Adam Rasmussen (Mitchell Christian) had 12 points and Adam Bormann (Corsica-Stickney) added 11 points.

Canistota's Cody Bunger (18 points), Alex Robertson (10 points) and Jason Van Winkle (10 points) led the Cornbelt squad. Also for the Cornbelt team, Freeman's Shaun Becker and Caleb Lang each had eight points.

The annual event features the top senior players from the two conferences.

NFL To Loan Vikes \$200M For Stadium

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The National Football League team owners have approved a \$200 million loan to the Minnesota Vikings for the team's new \$975 million stadium in downtown Minneapolis.

The St. Paul Pioneer (http://bit.ly/WCjrxW) reports the loan will be part of the \$477 million the Vikings will contribute toward the stadium.

The loan is the maximum amount the league will give a team building a new stadium. It

will be paid back over the next 15 years, with some of the money coming through visiting teams' share of club seat revenue in the new stadium.

Vikings vice president Lester Bagley calls the loan "a big step forward."

The Vikings expect to break ground this fall on the new stadium, on the site of the Metrodome, and be in their new home by 2016.

NC A&T Eliminates Upstart Liberty

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — Jeremy Underwood came off the bench to score 19 points, leading North Carolina A&T past 21-loss Liberty 73-72 on Tuesday at the First Four, ending an NCAA winless streak at nine games.

The Flames — only the second team ever to make the NCAA tournament with 20 losses — had a chance to win it. John Caleb Sanders drove coast to coast and flipped up a left-handed layup in heavy congestion that just missed. A&T (20-16) rebounded and, while Sanders rolled in pain on the baseline, began to celebrate an end to more than 30 years of disappointment.

Underwood came in averaging just over 6 points, but was perfect from the field, hitting six field goals in as many attempts. Bruce Beckford added 16 points and Lamont Middleton 14.

The victory advanced the Aggies to a showdown with top-seeded Louisville (29-5) in Lexington, Ky., Thursday.

Davon Marshall had 22 points and Sanders 21 for Liberty (15-21).

AP: Butler, Creighton, Xavier To Big East

NEW YORK (AP) — A person with knowledge of the announcement says Butler, Creighton and Xavier will join the so-called Catholic 7 schools in the new Big East basketball conference.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the announcement will not take place until Wednesday, when it will be made in conjunction with a news conference on the league's broadcast deal with Fox.

Georgetown, St. John's, Villanova, Seton

Hall, Providence, Marquette and DePaul are taking the Big East name with them as they form a new league for next season.

Meanwhile, members of the more football-oriented conference growing from the old Big East announced a broadcasting deal with ESPN on Tuesday. The contract for football, basketball and other sports runs through the 2019-20 season and pays about \$20 million a year. That conference still is unnamed.

Louisville Assistant Hired By Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Rick Pitino will be losing one of his top lieutenants after the NCAA tournament.

Louisville assistant Kareem Richardson was hired Tuesday as the new coach at Missouri-Kansas City, where he'll be rebuilding a program that has never qualified for the NCAA postseason and is leaving the Summit League for the Western Athletic Conference next season.

Richardson will be introduced at a news conference Monday, though he'll remain with the top-seeded Cardinals throughout the NCAA tournament. Louisville opens against North Carolina A&T or Liberty on Thursday in the Midwest Regional in Lexington, Ky.

"It is an honor and privilege to be named the next head coach at UMKC," Richardson said in a statement issued by the school. "It had to take a special situation for me to leave."

Richardson has agreed to a five-year deal that will pay him \$250,000 a year. The 38-year-old coach was an assistant at UMKC from 2007-08, and has also been an assistant at Xavier, Drake, Indiana State, Wright State and his alma mater, Evansville.

He takes over for Matt Brown, who was fired after one winning season in five years.

The Roos have struggled to gain traction in Kansas City over the years, dwarfed by mighty Kansas just a short drive to the west. They transitioned from NCAA Division I basketball in the late 1980s, but have had just one 20-win season since 1985.

Foster Out As Ohio State Women's Coach After 11 Years

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Jim Foster, who won 783 games at Saint Joseph's, Vanderbilt and the last 11 years at Ohio State, will not return as women's basketball head coach next season, Ohio State has announced.

Foster, reached by phone, declined to offer any comment.

Ohio State did not specify if he had been fired or was retiring. He compiled a record of 279-82 (.722) in his tenure with the Buckeyes, departing as the program's winningest coach in victories and percentage.

This season his team went 18-13 and tied for eighth in

the Big Ten with a 7-9 mark. Passed over by the NCAA except for Ohio State's first, and second-round games this weekend, the Buckeyes declined to accept an offer to play in the WNIT.

Women's NCAA Teams Post Strong Grad Numbers

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The 64 schools in the women's NCAA basketball tournament combined to graduate 90 percent of their players.

The findings are part of the annual report released Tuesday by the University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport.

The study also shows the gap between graduation rates of white and African-American players shrank to 6 percentage points. While athletes graduated at a 94 percent rate, African-Americans at 88 percent.

The graduation rates for the women's teams in this year's NCAA postseason are significantly higher than those of the men — 90 percent to 70 percent. Twenty-five of 64 teams have a 100 percent graduation rate.

Only one women's team — Tennessee-Martin — falls below the NCAA's new benchmark for academic progress, and that could lead to penalties.

Richard Lapchick, the study's primary author, was pleased that the gap between white and African-American graduation rates continues to decline among female players.

The gap was 8 percentage points last year.

"The women's teams always give us good news to report each year," Lapchick said. "It has historically been clear that student-athletes on women's basketball teams graduate at a higher rate than student-athletes on men's basketball teams. Additionally, the disparity gap between white and African-American student-athletes has always been significantly smaller on women's teams compared to men's teams."

There was a 25 percent gap in graduation rates in the men's NCAA tournament field — 90 percent for white players and 65 percent for black players.

All of the team's in this year's women's NCAA tournament field graduated at least 60 percent of their players except for Hampton.

The NCAA recently voted to increase its Academic Progress Rate cutoff line for Division I schools from 925 to 930, which is roughly equivalent to a 50 percent graduation rate. The new standard is being phased into the NCAA's average starting this year. Programs that do not meet the new standard could receive penalties, including the loss of scholarships or a postseason ban.

"Women's basketball student-athletes are a truly representative of the balance that is needed to be a student-athlete in today's collegiate environment," Lapchick said. "Hopefully, in the future, women's basketball student-athletes will continue to succeed, the men will continue to do better, and we will see a further decrease in the disparity between white and African-American student-athletes."