

Bucks Ready For First Season Under Heine

YANKTON BASEBALL		
Date	Event	Time
April 3	vs. Vermillion	5 p.m.
April 6	at Sturgis	DH, 4 p.m. (CT)
April 7	at R.C. Stevens	DH, noon (CT)
April 11	vs. Mitchell	6 p.m.
April 13	vs. Watertown	DH, 2 p.m.
April 16	at S.F. Washington	5:30 p.m.
April 18	vs. Brandon Valley	6 p.m.
April 19	vs. Brookings	DH, 5 p.m.
April 23	at S.F. Roosevelt	6 p.m.
April 26	vs. S.F. Lincoln	5:30 p.m.
April 29	at S.F. Lincoln	5:30 p.m.
May 2	at Mitchell	6 p.m.
May 4	at Brandon Valley	1 p.m.
May 5	vs. R.C. Central	DH, 1 p.m.
May 10	vs. S.F. Washington	6 p.m.
May 12	at Brookings	DH, 3 p.m.
May 18	Regions	TBD
May 21	Wild Card Game	TBD
May 25	State A (Sioux Falls)	TBD
Home Games At Riverside Field		

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

When former Yankton High School and Mount Marty College standout Ross Heine decided to take over Yankton's prep baseball squad prior to this season, he tried to go into the season without any preconceived notions of what he would have in the Bucks.

Now that the preseason is well under way, he feels pretty good about the lineup he inherited.

The Bucks boast eight seniors and several individuals where were instrumental in Yankton's state runner-up finish in the 2011 S.D. American Legion Baseball Tournament.

"I went in with an open mind,"

Heine said. "But now I'm quite optimistic."

That optimism starts with the pitching staff. Seniors Zach Benjamin and Garrison Brockberg, and juniors Lane Sawatzke and Tanner Termanson give the Bucks a solid four-man rotation.

"We have a lot of guys that we can put in who can eat up innings," Heine said. "Mitch Gullikson (Jr.), Brady Hale (So.) and Austin Johnson (So.) may see some time in there, too."

That pitching staff will be handled by senior Kaleb Bromley, with sophomore Adam Walter backing him up. The rest of the middle of the defense is equally stout, according to Heine.

"Andrew Hummel (Sr., 2B) is a strong stick and a solid defender. Benjamin (CF) could run down

about anything," he said. "Mitch Gullikson or Sam Wendte (Sr.) could play any position."

A pair of juniors could lock down the corner infield spots.

"Lane Sawatzke at first can scoop up about anything," Heine said. "Termansen looks to be our third baseman, but there are always guys like Wendte or Mitch Mueller (Jr.) that can step in."

Two seniors and a junior are in the mix for the corner outfield positions.

"Dustin Hopper (Sr.) will play right. He can hit the ball a ton," Heine said. "Left will be Gullikson or Alex Rehurek (Sr.).

Seniors Tom Kellen and Brockberg, junior Alex Crandall and sophomores Hale and Johnson

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Vermillion Baseball Aims To Add To Resume

BY NICK ROBINSON
sports@yankton.net

VERMILLION — The Vermillion Tanagers baseball team is trying to continue what they started last year: Add another state championship to their resume.

The Tanagers ended their Cinderella season with a 18-3 record after they beat St. Thomas More in extra innings, in which they were crowned state 'B' champions.

The veteran Tanagers return five starters from last years team. Senior All-State pitcher Collin Bertram, senior All-Region third baseman Tanner Anderson will be asked to lead the squad. Senior shortstop Tanner Settles and outfielder Joe Mazour will also start, along with junior utility player Jayce Huska. Starting catcher last season and South Dakota State commit Chayse Meierkort moved away this past fall.

Other notable returners for Vermillion are senior outfielders Peter Haught and Collin Olson. Junior Ty Iverson will see time behind the dish.

Head coach Jason Gault, in his 14th season under the helm, is optimistic about the Tanagers having a successful season and competing for a state crown.

"What an exciting season to be a VHS player and fan," he said. "Coming off the 2012 state championship, we return some experienced players. We are also looking forward to developing some of our younger guys who are looking to crack the starting line-up for the first time. Some young players who were very successful at the Teener and JV level last year will be asked to step up and make considerable contributions this season."

As they have in years' past,



TANAGERS: 2012 Class B High School Champions

the Tanagers will rely on consistent pitching and defense. Collin Bertram ended his season last year with an 8-0 record, 73 strikeouts, and a 0.79 ERA.

"Bertram will anchor the rotation with the promising addition of Olson and Mazour," Gault said. "We need to stick to our philosophy of throwing strikes and playing good defense to keep games close."

Gault raved about his defense, but mostly the base of the unit. The left side of the infield Ander-

son and Settles will serve as the foundation.

"Those two Tanners (Anderson and Settles) will anchor us defensively," Gault said. "The outfield is loaded with good speed and decent arms."

According to Gault, the Tanagers have no real power threats on this years' squad. But, that doesn't mean that Vermillion won't spray the ball around this spring.

Anderson led Vermillion last year with a .314 batting average

VERMILLION BASEBALL		
Date	Event	Time
March 27	at Harrisburg	—
April 3	at Yankton	5 p.m.
April 5	vs. Dakota Valley	5:30 p.m.
April 7	vs. Elk Point-Jefferson	DH, 1 p.m.
April 13	vs. Wagner/Avon/Lake Andes	2 p.m.
April 15	vs. Bon Homme	5:30 p.m.
April 17	at Beresford-Centerville	5:30 p.m.
April 19	at Bon Homme	5:30 p.m.
April 23	vs. Mount Vernon-Plankinton	—
April 24	-Woonsocket	7:30 p.m.
April 24	at Hanson (Emery)	6 p.m.
May 1	vs. Beresford	5:30 p.m.
May 2	at Dakota Valley	5 p.m.
May 5	at Parkston	4 p.m.
May 12-22	Playoffs	TBD
May 27	State (Sioux Falls)	TBD
Home Games At Prentiss Park		

and 20 RBIs. Settles posted a .264 batting average and 13 runs scored. The Tanagers as a whole stole 55 bases on 66 attempts.

"Team speed will be conducive to moving baserunner's into scoring position," Gault said. "We will likely rely on our small ball to put pressure on defenses."

The Tanagers, who compete in Region 1B, will have stiff competition as expected this season.

"Our region is very strong, having sent teams to the championship game the past four years," Gault said. "This year's region will be as tough as ever, so it could be anyone's to win. We will just keep focusing on our goal of taking one game at a time."

The Vermillion Tanagers opened their season on March 27 at Harrisburg. The Tanagers will then travel to Yankton to take on the Bucks on April 3, and will have their home opener against Dakota Valley on April 5.

"The coaching staff feels that with off-season workouts, and a year of growth with our younger players, VHS should be in the hunt for the region 1B title again," Gault said.

Playoffs will start on May 12-22, concluding for the state tournament, which will be held in Sioux Falls at the Bird Cage on May 27.

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at twitter.com/theFRANCHISE_9

VHS Track

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letic boosters. Billberg said the newly resurfaced track at the high school will make a difference in the team's training.

But one aspect of the season that is not new, Billberg said, is her team's hard-working attitude and drive to improve.

"One of our core precepts of our team or our core understanding is that our kids work hard," she said. "We start on the first day available while some teams start later and our kids have



TANAGERS: David Day

Veterans Look To Lead VHS

BY CHRIS RILEY
sports@yankton.net

VERMILLION — A trio of upperclassmen and a pair of sophomores will lead the way for the Vermillion Tanagers tennis program in 2013.

Seniors David Day, Will Card and Mark Helenurm and sophomores Jacob Ford and Kevin Helenurm will make up the 'Tanagers' varsity squad according to second-year coach Betsy Hughes.

The final varsity position will be filled by either sophomore Andrew Callahan or junior Joe Swanson. Card and Ford will serve as team captains this season.

A year ago, a young Tanagers squad placed 19th at the state championships with four points. Tennis is unique in South Dakota in that all schools that field a squad compete in one single division, putting smaller schools such as Vermillion up against their much larger Sioux Falls and Rapid City counterparts.

"We will mostly play larger schools including Sioux Falls," Hughes said. "The competition is tough and it takes a strong mind and heart to compete in this environment."

The Tanagers are scheduled to get their season officially underway with a pair of home meets again Luverne (April 2) and Brandon Valley (April 9). Vermillion will have two other home meets later in the season before finally closing out their year with the state tournament in Sioux Falls and Brandon in mid-May.

VERMILLION BOYS' TENNIS		
Date	Event	Time
April 2	vs. Luverne, Minn.	4 p.m.
April 9	vs. Brandon Valley	4 p.m.
April 12	at Mitchell	4 p.m.
April 16	vs. S.F. Washington	4 p.m.
April 23	vs. Yankton	4 p.m.
April 26	at S.F. Roosevelt	4 p.m.
May 2	at Yankton	4 p.m.
May 3	vs. S.C. East	4 p.m.
May 9	at S.F. Lincoln	4 p.m.
May 11	Madison Inv.	9 a.m.
May 16-18	State (Sioux Falls/Brandon)	9 a.m.
Home Meets At USD Tennis Courts		

The unseasonably cold weather this spring might cause concern for some teams, but not for these Tanagers according to Hughes.

"The cold weather has kept us inside a few days," Hughes said. "We have used the time inside to work on our service toss and contact point, strengthening and conditioning, and footwork."

The time inside is nothing new to the team, as Hughes mentioned that some athletes on her squad put up a tennis net at the Vermillion Armory to practice over and winter, and others participated in the men's tennis league in Yankton.

"With the work they have put in over the winter I have already seen a lot of growth in their play."

With 12 players on their roster either sophomores or younger, the Tanagers will continue to be a team on the rise.

You can follow Chris Riley on Twitter at twitter.com/ChrisCRiley

You can follow Jilanne Doom on Twitter at twitter.com/JilanneDoom

VHS Golf

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"We don't have anyone who's going to go fire something in the 70s. If that was going to happen it would be a day everything really fell into place," Hogen said. "But we do have some pretty good depth. We can go about eight or nine deep with girls who can be presentable golfers, and that's nice."

"It's sort of nice when you can put out your first two golfers and you're already 10 strokes up. That's a whole different program as compared to right now, where we do have to be a little bit careful. Whoever does play number one for us has to remember that they have to play their own game."

For senior Allison Heine, her main priority will be short game.

"We had a meeting at the very beginning of the year, and we talked about what we wanted to work on individually and as a

team for our scores," Heine said. "We really want to make sure we're taking smart shots this year, and that our shot selection is good. We're just trying to tweak and fine tune a few things."

And Heine knows only losing one senior from last year's team will be a major advantage, she said.

"We're trying to build back to what we were last year," she said. "It'll help that a lot of the girls are coming back — they have varsity experience and they know what it's like to play in the big leagues and play with other players who know what their doing and how to handle situations when it could be stressful."

Playing their own game is something the Tanagers will emphasize the most, Hogen said.

"That's just like in any competition," he said. "Sometimes you'll tend to play better when you're playing better competition, but sometimes in golf when you have so much time to think you have to be careful that you're not trying to keep up with somebody — then it's hurting your game. That's a concern of

mine, but these girls have been there and done that sort of thing — it's not a new thing."

So this year, the team will focus on getting back into the top five by concentrating just on themselves.

"With any kind of team, that makes for better practices, and if you want to be a part of it you have to work at it," Hogen said. "I'm not going to worry and lose a lot of sleep on what the other team is going to do — it's not like we can prepare our defense or change our offense to prepare to compete against the other teams. All we can do is get our kids to play the best they can and keep their focus, their composer and hopefully our depth will help us."

Ultimately, Heine is excited most for the sport of golf itself.

"I just love playing golf," she said. "This team has basically been together for quite a few years now, and it's so much fun to get out and play — it's a fun sport in general."

You can follow Emily Niebrugge on Twitter at twitter.com/ENiebrugge

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