

Gazelles Come Up Just Short In District Play-In



Yankton's Andi Sprakel attacks the basket during the District 2AA opening round game against Brandon Valley on Friday in Brandon.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

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BRANDON — The Yankton Gazelles had not won in a month, and had not even lost by single digits during that stretch. But based on Friday's matchup with Brandon Valley in the District 2AA girls' basketball tournament play-in game, it was hard to tell.

Yankton fought back from an 11-point first-half deficit and a nine-point second-half deficit, but Brandon Valley held on to edge the Gazelles 53-52 on Friday at Brandon Valley High School.

The Gazelles saw their season end with a 3-18 record and with nine straight setbacks. The ninth of those, though, gave Yankton head coach Doug Pesicka optimism for the future.

"We got a glimpse of the future tonight," he said after the game. "We have a solid base coming up through the program. They'll be a big part of Yankton's future."

Junior Andi Sprakel scored a game-high 15 points for Yankton. Senior Morgan Tessier scored eight points, all from the line, and had a game-high 11 rebounds. Sophomores Becky Frick and Sophie Drotzmann each had six points.

For Brandon Valley, which takes a 6-15 record into its district semifinal game at Sioux Falls Washington on Monday, Lexi Hoover scored 14 points and Carley Kueter had 13 points, nine in the first half, to lead the way. Taylor Thorson added 12 points.

Yankton scored the game's first five points, but the Lynx outscored the Gazelles 19-3 over the next seven minutes to take their largest lead of the night, 19-8.

A Whitlee Larson free throw and a Sprakel three-pointer got the Gazelle offense back on track, and the defense did the rest. Brandon Valley had just one field goal in the final seven minutes of

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State Wrestling Huber Moves To Semifinals For Yankton

RAPID CITY — Yankton's Spencer Huber moved closer to an individual title on Friday's first day of action at the South Dakota State Class A Wrestling Tournament in Rapid City.

Huber, a sophomore, won twice Friday to advance to the semifinals at 126 pounds. He will face Chase O'Connor of Sioux Falls Washington in today's (Saturday) semifinals. Aberdeen Central leads the team race after day one, with 81.5 points. Sioux Falls Roosevelt (70.5), Pierre (64.5), Rapid City Central (64) and Sioux Falls Washington (60.5) round out the top five.

The Bucks, who sit in 21st place, had two other wrestlers remain alive in the wrestleback rounds — Cody Vornhagen (106) and Casey Skillingstad (145).

Also for Yankton, Bashir Abd-Al-Kreem lost both of his matches at 113 pounds. Ryan Sternhagen suffered the same fate at 160 pounds.

Earlier in the day, Yankton wrestlers went 1-4 in the first round, with Huber's 9-1 major decision over Madison's Bailey Mennis at 126 pounds being the lone victory.

The Vermillion Tangers — who sit in 10th place — have three wrestlers into the semifinal round, Trey Hage (106), Regan Bye (145) and Brett Bye (152).

Carter Kratz (132), Alex Osborne (170) and Seth Heine (182) are both alive in the wrestleback rounds.

Vermillion wrestlers went 6-2 in the opening round, with Hage (106), Regan Bye (145), Brett Bye (152) and Heine (182) all winning by pin. Kratz (132) drew a first-round forfeit, while Osborne (170) won by decision.

Dakota Valley's Blake Perryman advanced to the semifinals at 145 pounds, while teammate Brady Dam is the second round of wrestlebacks at 152.

The tournament concludes today (Saturday) at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

Class B

ABERDEEN — Defending champion Parkston has six wrestlers into the semifinal round and leads the team race after day one of the South Dakota State Class B Wrestling Tournament in Aberdeen.

The Trojans lead the team standings with 77 points after the first day, followed by Philip Area (62), Bon Homme-Scotland (49), Canton (49), Beresford (41) and Stanley County (41).

Parkston's wrestlers who advanced to the semifinals after two wins Friday were Dawson Semmler (126 pounds), Blake Bietz (132), Weslee Dvorak (152), Mitch Heisinger (182), Brady Reiff (220) and Austin Bertram (285).

Bon Homme-Scotland has five wrestlers still alive for an individual title, including Stas Sutera (106), Duncan Stoebner (113), Alex Caba (120), Austin Kaul (145) and Dan Stibral (285).

Elk Point-Jefferson, which stands in 11th place, has Jared Hueser (145) and Lukas Forsling (195) into the semifinals.

Beresford's Dakota Galt (106) and Josh Casperson (182) also won twice Friday, while Wagner's David Kocer moved to the 170-pound semifinal round.

The tournament concludes today (Saturday) at the Barnett Center.

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Wynot Headed To State

BY NICK ROBINSON
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WAUSA, Neb. — After being down by two points going into halftime, the Wynot Lady Blue Devils had to dig deep to fight for their right to defend their three consecutive state titles.

Wynot was able to overcome the Ewing Lady Tigers 40-34 on Friday evening in the D2-3 District final in Wausa, Neb.

In the opening two minutes, the Lady Blue Devils (17-5) were able to capitalize off of two three-pointers back-to-back, giving them an early 6-4 advantage.

"There was a lot of emotion in this game," Wynot head coach Steve Wieseler said. "I thought we played very tough and fast."

Both teams battled tough on the defensive end, but Wausa held stiff at the end of the first quarter 12-9.

Early on in the second quarter, both teams traded the first few baskets, going back and forth.

Senior Maggie Schulte of Wynot used a power move in the paint from Jenna Heine to cushion the Lady Blue Devils lead at 18-11.

After a time-out to readjust the troops, Ewing (15-9) responded positively. Junior Katie Koeing sunk a deep three-pointer, cutting the deficit to four.

"They played defense well, and their coach had them scouted perfectly against us and what we wanted to do," Wieseler said. "They seemed to know what we were going to do."

The Lady Tigers tied the contest at 18 a piece with a put-back from junior Lydia Fry with 1:45 remaining in the half.

Ewing took their first lead of the game, on two free-throws in the bonus, giving them a 20-18 advantage going into the locker room.

"We got after it on the defensive end," Wieseler said. "I don't think offensively we executed the half court very well, or our fast break. They did a very good job of breaking our press."

Coach Wieseler told his

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Wynot's Maggie Schulte, center, splits a pair of Ewing defenders for a layup during their District D2-3 final Friday night in Wausa, Neb.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Crofton Rolls In C2-5 Final, Returns To State Tourney

BY VANCE JANAK
P&D Correspondent

SPENCER, Neb. — Ainsworth girls' basketball coach Jeff Carr had seen Crofton's pressure defense in person and on film prior to Friday night's Class C2-5 District final.

Carr and his Bulldogs found out that playing against the Warriors' aggressive, relentless defense on the court is something completely different.

As they have throughout its postseason run toward a third straight Class C2 state championship, Crofton used its press to trap the Bulldogs, creating numerous turnovers that led to easy scoring opportunities. The end result was an easy 64-23 victory that will send the Warriors to state for the ninth time in the last 10 seasons.

"That's the M.O. of our team this year is to rotate a lot of girls and keep the press and keep the energy going and make it real difficult for the other team to create offense," Crofton coach Aaron Losing said after his team played a large part in creating 24 Ainsworth turnovers. "We were able to do that in the first half. We got a lot of tips, steals and opportunities for fastbreak points on the offensive end. We rely on our defense to do that kind of stuff for us."

It did again Friday night.

The Warriors won their 21st straight contest by scoring the game's first 12 points. They had another run of 16 straight points to go up 32-4 on a 3-pointers by senior guard Alexander

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Hoops: Gayville-Volin Girls Beat Cubs For 10B Crown

TEA — Fourth-seeded Gayville-Volin proved that District 10B was, in fact, rather balanced.

The Raiders beat Alcester-Hudson 56-44 in Friday night's 10B girls' basketball final in Tea.

Kelia Barta scored 17 points for the Raiders (14-7), while Rachel Haas has 13 points and Genny Clark added 11 points.

For the Cubs, who finish the season 15-7, Shenja Doering had 19 points and 11 rebounds. Courtney McKee added seven rebounds and four steals.

Gayville-Volin advances to face Freeman, the champion of District 9B, in next Thursday's Region 5B matchup at a location yet to be determined.

GAYVILLE-VOLIN (14-7) 22 41 56
ALCESTER-HUDSON (15-7) 12 28 35 44

District 9B Freeman 51, Scot. 31

FREEMAN — Erika Sage scored 13 points and Nicole Saarie added 12 as the Freeman Flyers rolled past Scotland 51-31 for the District 9B crown on Friday night.

Taylor Hermsen added eight points and Cailey Roth grabbed seven rebounds for the Flyers, who advance to

next Tuesday's Region 5B game against Gayville-Volin.

In the loss for the Lady Highlanders, Carley Skorepa had 16 points and eight rebounds, while Amber Alvey had six points and four rebounds. Jessica Thum chipped in with six points and Shelby VanDriel dished out three assists.

District 12B Burke-South Central 51, Avon 49

MITCHELL — Sierra Votaw had an all-around strong game to rally Burke-South Central past Avon 51-49 in the finals of the District 12B Tournament on Friday night at the

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Behind Mettler, Sarekhani, USD Men Lead Summit League Indoor Track

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — Jeff Mettler defended his league 3,000-meter run title and Kevin Sarekhani recorded his first league pole vault title during the first day of the Summit League Indoor Track and Field Championships on Friday. The South Dakota men ended the day in first place in the team standings while the women will enter day two in third place.

Mettler finished the 3,000 in 8 minutes, 19.85 seconds, which was a second off the record he set during last year's league indoor championships (8:18.69). The win gave him his third career Summit League indoor championship title. The Coyotes also received points from

Brant Haase's fourth place finish in 8:26.88. Both runners will race again in the mile and the 5,000 on Saturday.

Kevin Sarekhani won a four-way tie in the men's pole vault at 16 feet, 40 inches, topping teammate Peter Chapman and North Dakota State's Grant Mjelstad and Andy Lillejord on attempts. Sarekhani did not miss until reaching the final height of 16-10. Chapman finished second by having his first miss at a higher height than Mjelstad and by clearing 16-4 on less attempts than Lillejord.

The men's team also recorded two more second place finishes. The distance medley team of Taylor Huseman, Jacob Roh, Mach Dojok

and Stephen Nielson placed second in 10:20.88, while Jeff O'Connell added a runner-up finish in the long jump (23-6) with Teivaskie Lewin placing third (23-10) and Connor Fitzsimmons placing seventh (21-9) in the same event.

Denton Stephens placed fourth (61-0) and Kyle McKelvey was eighth (55-7) in the men's weight throw to round out the men's scorers on Friday. In the men's heptathlon, Josh Petersen finished day one in second place with 2,710 points.

The USD women were led by second place finishes from Amber Eichkorn and Analisa Huschle. Eichkorn was the runner up in the 3,000 with a time of 9:44.59, while

Katie Wetzstein was third in that event in 9:50.97. Huschle was second in the women's long jump with a mark of 19-0.

In a lap shortened race, the USD women's distance medley team of Britni Waller, Lindsey Montileaux, DeAsia Garrett and Jilanne Doom added a fourth place finish in 11:34.98, while Briquelle Bowden rounded out the women's scorers on Friday with a seventh in the pentathlon (3,057 points).

Several Coyotes will compete for titles on the track on Saturday after making it past Friday's prelims. The men will have five in the men's 200 finals field (Brandon Kovash, Christian Nielsen, Erik Hill, Jack Thony and O'Connell), four in the 800 fi-

nals (Casey Shade, Huseman, Dojok, Neilson), three in the 60-meter finals (Kovash, Thony and Luke Worden), and two in the men's 60-meter hurdles final (Lewin and Hill).

The women will have four in the 60-meter hurdles final (Tansha Clarke, Ashley Thompson, Molly Ervin and Ali Meister) and two in both the 400 finals (Amber Ewers and Garrett) and 200 finals (Huschle and Ravan Kott). Huschle also qualified for the 60-meter finals.

In the team standings, the men will enter day two in the lead with 68 points, with North Dakota State in second at 65 points and SDSU in third with 26. The USD women will enter day two in third place with 30 points.