

WOKSAPE

"The Wise Book"

Gazelle Gymnasts Deliver Outstanding State Performance Team Earns Well-Deserved Sixth Place Honors



BY
ABBEY
VANMEETEREN

The Yankton Gazelles Gymnastics team competed in the state meet this past weekend at Aberdeen Central.

The first competition day, Fri., Feb. 21, was team competition day, and the team placed sixth overall with a score of 133.35. The Gazelles have not received a combined team score that high at the state gymnastics meet in a decade.

"State and the whole season were exciting because our team had one of the best seasons that Yankton has had in a long time" said senior Ashtyn Haak. "Our hard work paid off."

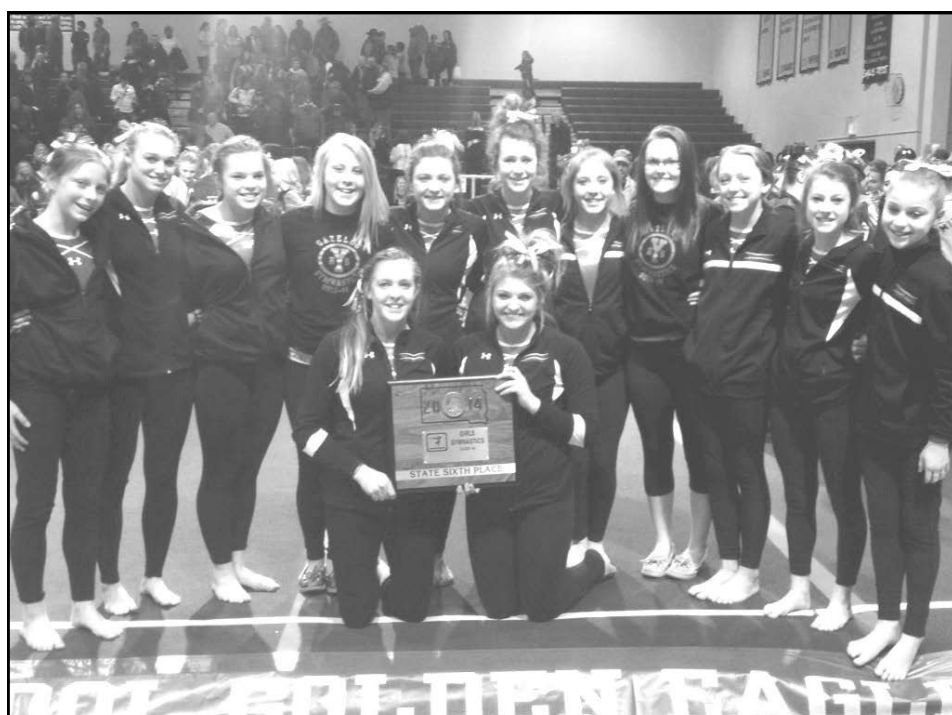
The individual competition was the next day, Sat., Feb. 22. Junior Chelsey Hesik and Freshman Kaitlin Guthmiller placed 16th and 19th on bars, respectively. Hesik and Guthmiller hit a milestone, becoming the first two individuals to place in the same event in over a decade.

Although it was emotional, seniors Elsie Kotalik and Ashtyn Haak both ended their gymnastics careers on a very positive note.

Kotalik persevered and placed 19th all around. Haak led the team placing 10th on beam, 19th on vault, and 15th all around. This was a personal record for Haak.

"With state being my last meet I just wanted to enjoy every moment competing and being with the team!" said Haak.

Kotalik became the first Gazelle to earn top 20 finishes consecutively in all around since 2003. "It's an honor to bring home any medal from state because it's so competitive," said Kotalik.



Above: The Gazelles gymnasts are shown with their sixth place plaque at the state competition hosted last week by Aberdeen Central High School.

PHOTO COURTESY OF COACH JUSTIN OLSON

Front row (L to R): Ashtyn Haak, Elsie Kotalik.

Back row (L to R): - Samantha Kortan, Chelsey Hisek, Morgan Mason, Nikole Knox, Haleigh Diede, Sophie Bisgard, Lauren Vik, Cheyenne Crisman, Cameron Specht, Kaitlin Guthmiller, Emily Duffek.

Top right: Uneven bars competitor, Emily Duffek, is shown high-fiving Coach Luke Youmans after her state performance.

Bottom right: Duffek, a Bon Homme 7th-grader, demonstrates what a gymnast's grip looks like. Competitors on the uneven bars must wear grips such as these on their palms and wrists in order to obtain a firm grip on the bars.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES CIMBUREK, P&D



PHOTO COURTESY OF COACH JUSTIN OLSON

Next year's team will improve even more. Head coach Luke Youmans and assistant coach Justin Olson

are pleased with sixth place, but they know it's not their best. They hope to keep developing the gymnastics

program so that next year's team will bring home as many, if not more, medals as this year's.

Bucks Basketball Team District Action Is Underway



BY
BEN
JENSEN

The Yankton Bucks basketball team has completed their regular season (12-8) and is now going to be focusing their efforts on the post-season. The Bucks are in District 2 of the regional tournament which also contains Sioux Falls Washington (11-9), Brandon Valley (12-8), Sioux Falls Lincoln (8-11), and Harrisburg (9-11).

Head coach Chris Haynes feels that the five seniors on the team is one of the Bucks' biggest strengths heading into the post-season. He also feels that "having played one of the toughest regular season schedules will have prepared us for post-season play."

We've all seen it throughout the sports world; teams that have a senior-driven team can be very successful, and having five seniors who have played all throughout their high school careers seems to really be in favor for the Bucks who haven't made it past the regional tournament the last few years.

But even with the level of play and games becoming more important than it has been all season, Coach Haynes doesn't want to prepare any differently for districts than any other game the team has played in all season. "We prepare for every game like it's the one to go to the state tournament, so our preparation for this game will be no different."

Lastly, when asked about the community, student body, and any other fans that have come to the games this season, Coach Haynes responded by saying, "The student section has been great all year. We want to thank the students for attending the games and being very active down in the end zone for our guys! We also think community support has been great. We told our guys if you play hard and play together people will come and watch as that is what they like to see on the basketball court. Our guys have done a nice job with that."



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HAUSER

"Today's Forecast: Hale Storm": Brady Hale is shown going for a layup. The Yankton Bucks Basketball team is currently preparing for district basketball action which began on Fri. Feb. 28. The results from that evening's play were not available at press time.

Yankton Wrestlers Complete Season With State Competition in Rapid City



BY
HAILEY
BAUGH

As the buck wrestling season comes to a close they have one weekend left; the State Wrestling tournament in Rapid City (Feb. 27th- Mar. 1st). The team competed in the Regional Wrestling tournament in Lennox this past weekend to qualify for state.

After it was all said and done, five bucks were left standing: Cody Vornhagen (Sophomore), Bashir Abd Al Kreem (Sophomore), Spencer Huber (Sophomore), Casey Skillingstad (Senior), and Ryan Sternhagen (Junior).

"The team to look out for is everybody," says Buck Wrestling coach Ryan Haag. "The top team in state by ranking is Aberdeen Central and SF Roosevelt. All we can do is stay healthy and wrestle well and we'll do just fine."

The boys were as excited as ever in their last week of training. Senior Casey Skillingstad says, "I'm looking forward to competing at the state tournament again! It'll be tough a

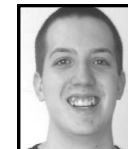
bracket for me personally, but I'm hoping for the best! As a team we have wrestled well and are looking forward to using the momentum we've built up so far this season."

There are a variety of years of "state experience" heading to Rapid City this year. First time state qualifier Cody Vornhagen is excited to compete at the state level. He says, "My greatest goal for the upcoming tournament is to beat one of the top ranked wrestlers in the state. It keeps me on my toes and pushes me to work harder knowing that it's possible." For sophomore Spencer Huber, state is about more than winning. "It will help redeem myself from last year getting taken out so early due to a major injury."

Although each wrestler had different hopes for state, they all have one goal in mind: taking home first place. You can follow the team and view stats on: South Dakota Public Broadcasting Network or thewrestlingnetwork.com.

This weekend's state results were unavailable at press time.

Bucks Hockey Team Is Preparing For State



BY
JACOB
SELGESTAD

Yankton Bucks hockey has had a miraculous turnaround season. They're going into this year's state tournament with high hopes and expectations.

Due to the team's continued success, it is guaranteed at least a number one or two seed going into the tournament. The team has been strong all season, and if they are able to carry that through the state tournament, they will no longer be the underdog team; they will be defending state champions.

This turnaround is due largely in part to their efficient offense that features four goal-scorers in double figures and a plethora of talent in the goal.

Yankton should have no trouble advancing throughout this tournament. They have easily beaten most every team except one, the Brookings Bobcats. Brookings handed Yankton two losses to end the season and serves as the main obstacle in their path heading into state.

That is not to say, however, that Brookings is the only team that can stop Yankton. They can not be complacent and forget that other teams want that title of state champion just as badly as they do.

The key to victory will be maintaining focus throughout the weekend and performing just as well as they have all year.

This team has been playing with a chip on their shoulder, and just because they have a top seed does not mean that they should stop now.

It's the underdog mentality that has served as proper inspiration for this team, and it is that same mentality that may earn them a title.

If they maintain that mindset, it simply becomes a matter of executing when they need to and stopping the other team from executing. Put in simple terms, they just need to go out on the ice and skate to win.

The state tournament will be held in Aberdeen, Mar. 7th-9th.

ATTENTION JUNIOR AND SENIOR PARENTS:

The mission for the After-Prom Party sponsored by the Parents for a Safe Prom Committee is to provide a safe drug-and-alcohol-free environment for our junior and senior students and their dates to continue their prom night celebration. We have asked the parents of each junior and senior for a \$25 donation, or whatever amount is appropriate for your family, and have had tremendous response. All monies are used to purchase game booth prizes and grand prizes, such as TVs, microwaves, dorm refrigerators, futons, fans, local business gift certificates, and Yankton Chamber Bucks!

If you're willing to contribute please send checks to: YHS attn. PFSP, 1801 Summit St., Yankton, SD 57078.

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