

# Crofton, Wynot Aim For Repeat Performances

## Top-Seeded Crofton Aims For 6th Title In 10 Years

BY JEREMY HOECK

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CROFTON, Neb. — Though it came in the fourth game of the season, a loss to Guardian Angels Central Catholic may have motivated the Crofton Lady Warriors even more.

And it's hard to be any more motivated after having won consecutive state titles.

Crofton (24-1), which begins play at the Nebraska State Girls Basketball Tournament in Lincoln tonight (Thursday) against Palymra,

has reeled off 21 straight wins since that 4-point loss on Dec. 14.

Did that help the Lady Warriors?

"Oh yeah, by far," senior Alex Allen said this week. "That's probably a good thing for our team. We know how good we are, but we weren't quite up to our potential yet."

The Lady Warriors, seeking their sixth state championship in 10 years, have used that defeat — their only loss in two seasons — as proof that anything can happen.

"It gave us a wakeup call," junior Allison Arens said. "I think we all got a little more aggressive and realistic about being beatable."

Since that loss, however, Crofton hasn't slowed down. Its closest game since was 13 points, and that includes wins by 71 and 51 in the sub-district, and 41 in the district final.

"It's one of those things where we haven't been tested in a while," Crofton head coach Aaron Losing

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## New-Look Wynot Looks For Fourth Straight Title

BY JEREMY HOECK

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WYNOT, Neb. — The quest for a fourth consecutive state championship is at hand for the Wynot Blue Devils.

But as head coach Steve Wieseler points out: It's not going to be an easy road for a team that lost eight seniors who were accustomed to success at the state's highest level.

Wynot (21-6), the fourth seed in Class D2, opens Nebraska State Girls Basketball

Tournament action today (Thursday) at 10:45 a.m. against Bancroft-Rosalie at Lincoln Southwest High School.

"The experience thing is tough to overcome, it takes some time," Wieseler said this week. "The skill development is something that comes with you."

"It doesn't happen overnight."

It did help that the expectations were high, said Wieseler, whose team has played in four consecutive state title games — Wynot

lost in the 2010 final.

"The younger kids want to do the same thing. It makes you work hard," he said. "Going back to last summer, they started this journey, and they've stuck with it."

Senior Maggie Schulte leads the team in scoring (18.1), rebounding (6.4), while sophomore Danielle Wieseler adds 10.4 points and 2.8 assists per game. Junior Jenna Heine averages 10.3 points and 3.0 assists,

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## Q&A | Chloe Cornemann

# Tourney Challenge Still The Same

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Chloe Cornemann and her South Dakota State teammates will have a different road if they are to capture their sixth consecutive Summit League women's basketball championship.

The challenge is still the same, the Yankton native and Jackrabbit sophomore said.

SDSU earned the No. 1 seed — and the bye that comes with it this year — and will face the winner between USD and Western Illinois next Monday at noon at the Sioux Falls Arena.

Following last Sunday's 99-88 win over the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, Cornemann talked to the *Press & Dakotan* about closing the regular season and looking ahead to this weekend's Summit League Tournament.

**P&D: How nice is it to be seeing more playing time down the stretch? (Cornemann averaged double-digit minutes in four of her final five games of the regular season. She played 19 minutes against USD).**

Cornemann: You know honestly, it depends on who we're playing, and what our team needs at the time. Tara (Heiser) kind of twisted her ankle during warmups (at USD), so that was a big factor in that. That's what's good about our bench, anyone can come in and help out.

**The Jacks had already locked up the No. 1 seed before playing the Coyotes in Vermillion last Sunday. Was there still a motivation to beat USD?**

When it's a rivalry game and everything, that puts a lot of pressure on you. You want to get yourself ready for the tournament, and end on a good note; get some steam rolling when the tournament comes up.



South Dakota State guard Chloe Cornemann, 22, guards South Dakota's Tia Hemiller during their Summit League women's basketball game on Sunday at the DakotaDome. Cornemann, a sophomore from Yankton, is in her second season with the Jackrabbits, who will be aiming for a sixth straight Summit League Tournament title when the event begins Saturday in Sioux Falls. SDSU, the top seed, plays either USD or Western Illinois in the semifinals on Monday.

### What do you expect heading into the tournament?

When it comes to this time of the year, you never know what you're going to get with any team. You just have to make the tough plays and just be ready on defense, and be ready to go in general.

**This year, with only seven teams in the Summit League field (Omaha is ineligible), the top seed earns a first-round bye. I imagine SDSU was anxious to secure the No. 1 seed?**

Yeah, that was a big motivation, we talked about that a

lot. We'd have to play only two games instead of three, and everyone else has to win three games, so that plays into our hand a lot. Then we'll be ready to go with who we have to play.

### How about the idea of potentially seeing USD again in the semifinals?

Just like last year, they're a really good team. They've been to the tournament, they know how it goes. It comes back to it being a rivalry game, so it'll be an intense game, no matter where we see them. They'll do great, I'm sure.

### How has the Summit League tournament become a home-court atmosphere for SDSU?

It's a very positive thing, that definitely helps us a lot. It gives State and USD fans a chance to be there. I'm just glad it's not leaving any time soon.

### When you're part of a program that wins all these Summit League titles, plays in all these NCAA tournaments and beats all these high-profile schools, how has it managed to continually improve?

Personally, for me, it's a

little intimidating, because you think, "Geez, how much better can we get?" We're getting better players and we're becoming more confident. Three of our freshmen are three of the first off the bench. It's a great program to be a part of, and I'm just so lucky to have a chance.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at [twitter.com/jhoeck](http://twitter.com/jhoeck). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## Track | NAIA

# Mount Marty Sends Four Entries To Nationals

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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The Mount Marty College women's track and field program will take one relay and two individuals to the NAIA Indoor Track and Field Championships, which begin today (Thursday) in Geneva, Ohio.

Junior

Abbey VanDenBerg, a returning All-American in the triple jump, is qualified in both the triple and long jumps. Freshman

Karen Mayfield is qualified in the 5,000-meter run. The Lancers also take the four-some of sophomore Jordyn Hudelson and freshmen Caitlin Davis, Berkley Reitveld and Mandy O'Malley in the 3200-meter relay. Sophomore Sadie Fedor and Mayfield will serve as alternates for the relay.

The Lancers come into nationals

off of one of their more successful finishes in the Great Plains Athletic Conference. The team finished eighth with 25.5 points, the second-highest team total at a conference indoor meet in GPAC history.

"It's been a successful indoor season. The girls had their best score since I've been here," said Mount Marty head coach Randy Fischer. "We didn't have any seniors that placed at conference."

VanDenBerg will be competing in her fourth national meet, including her second indoor nationals. While VanDenBerg is not seeded in the top eight in either event, Fischer has high hopes for the junior.

"Last year she was seeded 14th and got sixth," he said. "She could have a good enough day to place again. All you can do is your best, and hope you place."

The experience of three previous national meets will help take the jitters out of the equation, VanDenBerg said.

"Having gone to outdoor nationals twice and indoor nationals once, I know what the competition level is," she said. "Instead of being stressed out, I can focus on my jumps."

VanDenBerg will compete in the long jump on Friday and the triple jump on Saturday. While her greater collegiate success has been in triple jump, her prep success came in the long jump.

"In high school, the long jump is what I excelled at," she said. "It's nice to be back at that level. I'm hoping the long jump can be a confidence boost for me."

Mayfield is coming off a strong inaugural season. She won't have to wait long to get to compete, as the prelims of the 5,000 is the first event on the track today.

"We've never had a fresh-

## online

Video of interviews with MMC coach Randy Fischer and MMC athletes Abbey VanDenBerg and Karen Mayfield.

[yankton.net](http://yankton.net)

## Basketball | All-GPAC Teams

# Four From Mount Marty Honored

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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Three members of the Mount Marty College women's basketball team and one member of the MMC men's basketball team were recognized by the Great Plains Athletic Conference, as the league announced its post-season awards on Tuesday.

Sophomore Raquel Sutura earned second-team all-GPAC honors for the women's team. Sophomore Cassidy Gebhart and freshman Logan Wagner were honorable mention selections.

Junior Bud Smith was an honorable mention selection for the MMC men.

## Women

After a season in which injuries forced a young team to go even younger, it was no surprise that two sophomores and a freshman were honored for the MMC women.

"I'm excited about that, and I think that the kids are excited as well," said MMC women's basketball coach Tom Schlinggen. "We were hoping that Raquel could get onto the team, and we had a couple of honorable mentions as well."

Sutura led Mount Marty in both scoring (13.9 ppg) and rebounding (6.9 rpg), and had 28 assists, 17 steals and five blocked shots on the season. She ranked second on the team with 54 three-pointers, shooting a team-best .435 from outside.

A versatile forward for the Lancers, the Tabor native and Bon Homme graduate showed her versatility, excelling both in-



Sutura

side and outside the lane. "Raquel can step out and shoot the three, and she can post up and rebound," Schlinggen said. "She's a very good defensive re-

bouncer."

Sutura credits the older players — both last season and this season — for helping her go from a reserve who averaged 5.4 points and 3.7 rebounds per game to a team leader in both categories.

"A lot of the older girls last year explained a lot of things to me. I couldn't have asked for a better group of seniors as a freshman," she said. "The older girls last year and this year really got me from here from there."

Gebhart (8.0 ppg, 3.1 rpg) led the Lancers in assists with 117. She led the Lancers in both free throws attempted (131) and made (89), and was one of only two Lancers to play in all 30 games.

"She came highly touted from a very good high school program," Schlinggen said of the transfer from the University of Sioux Falls. "Her quickness is good, and the kids really liked playing with her."

One thing Gebhart did for the Lancers was handle pressing defenses, an issue the team had



Wagner

the year before. "She's a hard kid to press," Schlinggen said. "We see so much pressure in our league."

While Gebhart did a good job of helping the offense of her teammates, Schlinggen feels she can score more herself as well.

"She can go a lot higher. I think she can become a lot better scorer," he said. "I look forward to working with her a couple more years."

Wagner worked her way into the starting lineup, starting the final 18 games. She averaged 12.8 points per game and hit a team-best 71 three-pointers. She also had 2.7 rebounds per game, as well as 42 assists and 22 steals.

"She had a great freshman year. She's a really good shooter, and kept getting better defensively," Schlinggen said of the freshman from Parkston. "By the end of the season, she was pretty hard for us to take off the floor."

All three will return for the Lancers next season, as will senior guard April Winne. Winne, a first-team all-GPAC selection a year ago, missed the 2013-14 season due to injury. Allison De Kam and Kelli Curtis will be the only players gone from this year's 13-17 squad.

"We have a good nucleus to build up," Schlinggen said. "We had a lot of kids with good expe-

# SDHSAA Might Change Its Ways For Selecting State Event Locations

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — A new panel might be created to recommend which South Dakota cities should host state competitions for high school students and teams.

The proposal from the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors Tuesday is patterned on North Dakota's system.

The South Dakota version would use five tournament directors and three of the association's directors. They would meet twice annually to review criteria and recommend locations for events.

The eight SDHSAA directors would make the final decisions. One of the directors, Pierre athletic director Dan Whalen, said it would be difficult for the board to vary from the site selection committee's choices.

Currently the association's staff privately adjusts the criteria and sets event locations three years into the future based on suitability and financial considerations.

There has been increasing friction among some of the association's member schools as Sioux Falls invests in facilities to be South Dakota's premier site. SDHSAA executive director Wayne Carney said he inquired about North Dakota's method. It involves 11 committee members who make recommendations. Carney and his staff offered a South Dakota version Wednesday to their directors.

"We're just throwing that out there for discussion today," Carney said. "This is quite a variation from what we're doing now."

The directors decided to further consider creating the special committee. The matter will be on the board's agenda for the April 22-23 meeting.

Five tournament directors whose names were tentatively offered by the staff were Gene Brownell of Aberdeen, Darren Paulson of Rapid City, Steve Moore of Watertown, Mark Meile of Sioux Falls and Terry Rotert of Huron.

"That's just a starting point, nothing etched in stone," said Jo Auch, an assistant executive director for the association.