

Basketball | Nebraska State Girls' Tournament

Wynot, Crofton On Top Again

Schulte Powers Blue Devils To Fourth Straight Title



JEREMY HOECK/P&D
The Wynot Blue Devils hoist their Class D2 championship trophy after a Saturday night win over Sterling at the Nebraska State Girls' Basketball Tournament at Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb. Wynot beat the Jets 55-38 to claim the program's fourth consecutive state championship.

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

LINCOLN, Neb. — Maggie Schulte made sure to leave a lasting impression on high school girls' basketball in the state of Nebraska.

Four years, four championships.

"Not very many people get this, so we've been blessed," said Schulte, a Wynot senior who scored 29 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in Saturday night's 53-38 win over Sterling in the Class D2 final at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

"We couldn't ask for much more," she added. Schulte, a Wayne State College recruit, carried the

WYNOT | PAGE 8

Crofton Cruises To Third Straight Crown

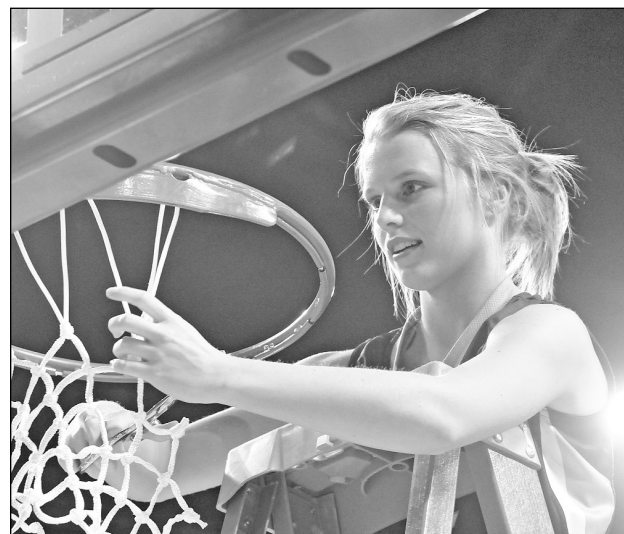
BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Crofton Lady Warriors stepped on to the floor in a new arena, yet the results were still the same.

A state championship. Make that, another state championship.

"It's unbelievable. Every senior wants their last game to be with a title," said Amy Mueller, one of two seniors for the Lady Warriors.

Crofton continued its dominance of Class C2 with a 62-40 rout of Hastings St. Cecilia in Saturday's title game at Pinnacle Bank Arena, the new home of the Nebraska State Girls' Bas-



JEREMY HOECK/P&D
Crofton senior Amy Mueller cuts off a piece of the net after the Lady Warriors beat Hastings St. Cecilia for the Class C2 championship of the Nebraska State Girls' Basketball Tournament on Saturday at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

CROFTON | PAGE 8

Summit League Semifinals Set



DAVE EGGEN/INERTIA
The University of South Dakota celebrates their game winning basket with 1.1 seconds left to defeat Western Illinois 96-94 in their semifinal game at the 2014 Summit League Tournament on Sunday in Sioux Falls.

Denver Ends USD's Season

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

SIOUX FALLS — An inability to get to make plays at key times ultimately brings about a crucial time for the University of South Dakota men's basketball program.

Namely, what now?

Making their second-ever appearance in the Summit League Championships, the Coyotes were dealt a 71-55 loss to newcomer Denver on Sunday night.

"A lot of guys in there that got emotional, and I bleed the same thing they do; red and white," said USD interim head coach Joey James, whose team finishes 12-18.

"It can be stressful for myself and my family, but nothing I couldn't handle."

Instead of making a deep run in the tournament as the No. 5 seed, the Coyotes are sent home to sort through a myriad of questions in the off-season.

Chief among those is the status of James.

"I have no idea, to be honest with you," he said, when asked later. "I hope they see that we made some improvements."

He later added, "I hope I'm able to stay around."

Not much went right in the final handful of games this season (USD lost its last three by double digits), and it was the same story Sunday.

With a chance to get closer than a 5-point deficit with 12:09 to play, the Coyotes instead found themselves by double figures within five minutes.

And that was that.

"You'd like to extend your season as a senior," senior Trevor Gruis said. "It's tough; it's emotional, but we left it all out on the floor."

Denver's lead in the second half was once four points, but the Coyotes were never really able to get things clicking on offense.

Brett Olson, a junior — whose father played for USD — for the Pioneers, certainly wasn't helping matters, either.

He scored a game-high 20 points, including seven straight in that crucial period when Denver out-distanced itself from USD.

"They hit some shots, and hats off to them," Gruis said. "We tried, but they made some shots down the stretch."

Conversely, the Coyotes had trouble getting anything going on offense. They were 7-of-20 for 35 percent in the second half, after shooting 58 percent in the first half.

"They're a great defensive team, their help defense is really good," said junior Brandon Bos, who had a team-high 13 points.

Gruis had 12 points, three rebounds and three assists in his final game, which senior Karim Rowson added nine points and sophomore Trey Norris had eight points.

On the flip side for the Pioneers, Bryant Rucker had 14 points and Jalen Love added 12 points. First team all-league post Chris Udofia was held to one point.

In its third conference in three years, Denver (16-14) advances to the semifinals where it meets top-seeded North Dakota State tonight (Monday) at 6 p.m.

"Obviously, no matter what league we're in, we're the experts on league tournaments," Denver coach Joe Scott joked. "Each one is the same in that

USD MEN | PAGE 8

USD Rallies To 96-94 Win Over Western Illinois

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

SIOUX FALLS — Welcome to the Summit League Championships, Raeshel Contreras.

A year ago, the San Francisco, Calif. native was playing for a junior college team. And Sunday, the University of South Dakota junior was hitting a game-winning three in a Division I tournament.

Contreras capped a crazy finish for the Coyote women with a 25-foot three-pointer with 1.1 seconds left, as USD rallied past Western Illinois 96-94 in the quarterfinals at the Sioux Falls Arena.

Had she ever hit such a shot?

"I did at my juco, but it was just a regular game, it wasn't like this; lose or go home," said Contreras, an All-League newcomer who finished with 22 points.

And so, the Coyotes (17-13) earn a semifinal date today (Monday) at noon with rival South Dakota State.

Getting to that point, though, was far from easy for USD. Western Illinois (14-16) started the game on a 23-8

spurt and built as much as a 17-point cushion.

Down 93-87 with 2:47 to play, the Coyotes got consecutive three-pointers from Polly Harrington and Tia Hemiller. USD then stole a pass with 24 seconds left and called a timeout at the 18.7 mark.

The designed play went to Seekamp, but the Leathernecks collapsed around the all-League first team player. Seekamp — who had 26 of her own points — got the ball to Contreras at the top of the key.

"I just threw it up there," Contreras said. "When I saw them collapse, the first thing I thought about was Polly."

"I was like, 'I can't let her senior year end.'"

Contreras was also thinking about the shot, which swished through the net with 1.1 seconds left. Western Illinois in-bounded the ball but was unable to put up much of a shot.

"She makes big shots all the time when we work situations in practice," head coach Amy Williams said of Contreras,

COYOTES | PAGE 8



DICK CARLSON/INERTIA
Tia Hemiller, right, from the University of South Dakota takes the ball to the basket against Tori Niemann from Western Illinois in the first half of their quarterfinal game Sunday afternoon during the 2014 Summit League Championship in Sioux Falls.

SDSU Men Open Title Defense With Rout Of Western Illinois

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

SIOUX FALLS — A return to the Sioux Falls Arena meant the same thing for the South Dakota State men's basketball team.

A victory in front of a record crowd.

The third-seeded Jackrabbits scratched and clawed their way to a 71-50 win over No. 6 Western Illinois in Sunday night's Summit League Championships men's quarterfinals.

With the win, the two-time defending champion Jackrabbits (19-11) advance to tonight's (Monday) 8:30 p.m. semifinal contest against Fort Wayne.

Sunday night's attendance

of 6,647 set a record for a men's quarterfinal evening session, and those in blue and yellow weren't disappointed.

The Jacks put four players in double figures, led by senior Brayden Carlson's 13 points. Senior Jordan Dykstra added 12 points and 10 rebounds, while seniors Marcus Heemstra and Chad White both scored 10 points.

SDSU forced 15 turnovers and turned those into 24 points.

In the start, at least, SDSU needed anything and everything it could get.

The Jacks found themselves down early, 11-5, but stormed back to lead 26-23 at halftime — thanks 10 points off the bench from Marcus

Heemstra.

Within four and a half minutes of the second half, the margin was in double figures. And that was about all the drama remaining.

Western Illinois (10-20) was led by freshman Garrett Covington who scored 14 points. Freshman guard Jabari Sandifer added 13 points.

The Jackrabbits, however, are the ones continuing action. They will face a Mastodons team that split the regular season series with SDSU — each home team won.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

DU Women Upend Fort Wayne

SIOUX FALLS — Summit League newcomer Denver claimed the first upset of the league post-season tournament, beating out third-seeded Fort Wayne 79-73 in the women's quarterfinals on Sunday at Sioux Falls Arena.

Paige Bradley scored 24 points and Kailey Edwards had 14 points for Denver (8-22). Morgan Van Riper-Rose netted 12 points and Alison Janecek had 12 rebounds in the victory.

For Fort Wayne (15-14), Summit League Player of the Year Amanda Hyde finished with 28 points. Haley Seibert posted 16 points and seven assists. Stefanie Mauck

added 10 points off the bench.

IUPUI 72, N.D. STATE 64: SIOUX FALLS — DeAira Goss scored a game-high 25 points, leading second-seeded IUPUI to a 72-64 victory over North Dakota State on Saturday.

Nevena Markovic had 11 points and 10 rebounds, and Dee-Dee Bellamy had 11 points for IUPUI (22-8). Shanika Maddox added 10 points for the Jaguars.

Kahla Becken and Brooke LeMar each had 16 points for NDSU (6-24). Marena Whittle finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Holly Johnson added 13 points.

Men

FORT WAYNE 65, IUPUI 47: SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Luis Jacobo scored 19 points and Steve Forbes added 11 with nine rebounds as No. 2 seed Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne rolled past seventh-seeded Indiana-Purdue Indianapolis 65-47 in the opening round of the Summit League tournament Saturday night.

IPFW (23-9) shot 57.4 percent from the field and outrebounded the Jaguars 39-23. Mo Evans finished with 13 points, Joe Edwards chipped in 10 and Jacobo had seven boards.