

Bracketologist: USD Projected As A 14-15 Seed In NCAA



University of South Dakota women's basketball players celebrate after winning the Summit League post-season tournament championship on Tuesday in Sioux Falls. The Coyotes now wait to find out who and where they will play, an announcement that will come on Monday. USD is projected to be either a 14th or 15th seed in the tournament, which begins March 23 at sites around the country.

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

The dust has settled — though the high still remains — on the Summit League championship for the University of South Dakota women's basketball program.

Next on the docket? Who, when and where do the Coyotes play in the NCAA Tournament?

All those questions will be answered next Monday night when the brackets are unveiled, but as it stands right now, USD (19-13) is likely to earn a rather low seed after winning the Summit League crown over Denver on Tuesday afternoon.

According to ESPN bracketologist Charlie Creme, in his 11th season projecting the women's bracket for the network, the Coyotes are any-

where from a 14-15 seed in the tournament.

"I think their seed is a 15; 14 at the max," Creme said during a Wednesday morning conference call. "But I think 15 is a pretty accurate place for South Dakota to go."

As of Monday, USD was slated as a No. 15 seed playing No. 2 Louisville in Ames, Iowa, according to ESPN's projected bracket.

Among the other locations for a No. 15 seed in ESPN's bracket would be Waco, Texas; Toledo, Ohio; and Durham, N.C.

The only other truly regional site for the first and second round games would be in Iowa City, Iowa. Otherwise, USD is likely to be sent across the country in either direction.

USD has to only look north at South Dakota State

to see how far it could potentially travel for the tournament.

Each of the past four years, SDSU has earned between a 13-15 seed, which meant trips to Norman, Okla. (2010); Cincinnati, Ohio (2011); West Lafayette, Ind. (2012) and Boulder, Colo. (2013).

In the Jackrabbits' first trip to the NCAA Tournament in 2009, they drew a No. 7 seed and played in Lubbock, Texas — where SDSU won a first-round game and lost in the second round on a last-second shot.

And so, for USD, it should expect to gear up for a long trip, according to projections.

"Beautiful job upsetting the top seed in the semi-

COYOTES | PAGE 8

Defense Powers Randolph Boys To State Tourn.

FROM P&D STAFF REPORTS

The Randolph Cardinals don't give up a lot of points, yet they survived giving up a season-high 60 points to earn their way to the Nebraska State Class D1 Boys' Basketball Tournament.

Sixth-seeded Randolph (20-4) plays Elm Creek (20-3) today (Thursday) in the opening round of Class D1 action at Lincoln East High School. Start time is 10:45 a.m.

Mark Anderson's Randolph squad averaged just 34 points allowed per game this season, holding its first four and five of its first six opponents under 30 points. But after allowed just 64 points in its two sub-district games, the Cardinals gave up 60 to Howells-Dodge, but still escaped with a 62-60 overtime victory.

Anchoring the Cardinals' offense are seniors Logan Nordhues (12.3 ppg, 4.2 rpg, 7.3 steals, 37 assists) and Garrett Watters (10.6 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 34 assists). Senior Luke Andrew (6.3 ppg, 4.1 rpg, 35 assists) is the only other player averaging better than five points a game for Randolph.

The Cardinals draw an Elm Creek Buffaloes squad that puts up 57.3 points per game, led by Nicolas Crowley (13.1 ppg, 6.3 rpg) and Zachary Johnson (12.7 ppg, 6 rpg) is also in double figures for Elm Creek, which claimed a wild card entry after losing to Overton.

Howells-Dodge (25-2) claimed the other wild card spot, and will be the top seed in the class. It will face Fullerton (11-7) in the 2 p.m. contest, followed by Overton (22-4) against Lourdes Central Catholic (20-6).

North Platte St. Patrick's (24-1) and Clearwater-Orchard (21-4) face off in the opening game, a 9 a.m. start.

The tournament runs through Saturday, with the finals to be played in Pinnacle Bank Arena, the new home of the University of Nebraska basketball teams.

Baseball: MMC Earns Sweep Of Olivet Nazarene

TUCSON, Ariz. — The Mount Marty College baseball team swept past Olivet Nazarene, 4-3 and 6-5, in a doubleheader that finished late Tuesday evening.

In the opener, Tyler Edler's double in the bottom of the seventh gave the Lancers the victory.

MMC rallied from deficits of 2-0 and 3-2 in the contest, scoring single runs in the third, fourth, sixth and seventh innings.

Edler finished with two hits and Michael O'Connell doubled for MMC. Zac Hollenback, Derrik Nelson, Jared Miller, Nik Davis, Julian Cutolo and Riley Stack had hits, with Stack's pinch-hit single in the seventh starting the final rally.

The rally made a winner of Dominic Wieseler, who pitched a scoreless seventh. Michael Sadler started, allowing three runs over five innings.

In the nightcap, MMC held on for victory as the Lancers outthrew Olivet Nazarene 11-8. Edler had three hits and

MMC | PAGE 7

Basketball | S.D. State Girls' Tournaments

Raiders Ready For Debut



Gayville-Volin head coach Matt Malloy, left, and the Raider bench celebrates after the team won the Region 5B championship with a 44-40 overtime victory over Freeman on March 6 at the Summit Center in Yankton. The Raiders make their state tournament debut today (Thursday) at noon in Huron against Sully Buttes.

Second-Half Surge Sends Gayville-Volin To Its First-Ever 'B' Girls' Tourney

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

The Gayville-Volin Raiders have ridden a second-half surge into the program's first-ever S.D. State Class B Girls' Basketball Tournament, beginning today (Thursday) at Huron Arena.

"We set goals at the beginning of the season, and we set state as a goal," said first-year head coach Matt Malloy, an assistant with the program a year ago. "It took a lot of hard work by the girls to reach that goal."

The Raiders (15-7) entered the season with momentum from a strong fall.

"We have a bunch of really good athletes," Malloy said. "Our volleyball team went 21-4, our cross country team was second in the state and nearly every kid we have was on one of those teams."

Gayville-Volin started off 3-0 and was 4-1 entering January. But four straight setbacks — including two to district opponents — left the squad 4-5. The Raiders responded with six

@state

Follow P&D Sports Editor James Cimburek On Twitter For Updates From The State 'B' Tourney.
twitter.com/JCimburek

been playing like juniors and seniors lately."

In the District 10B Tournament the Raiders avenged losses to top-seeded Viborg-Hurley and second-seeded Alcester-Hudson. In the Region 5B final, Gayville-Volin beat a quality Freeman squad in overtime.

The Raiders feature three players in double figures, but have had as many as eight different players reach double figures in a game this season.

"In our first five games, we had

four different leading scorers," Malloy said. "The girls are very team-oriented."

Junior guard Kelia Barta (12.7 ppg, 5.1 rpg, 4.9 apg), senior forward Rachel Haas (11.9 ppg, 4.8 rpg, 1.8 apg) and sophomore guard Genny Clark (11.6 ppg, 3.2 rpg, 2.8 apg) have all averaged in double figures. Senior forward Vanessa Ryken (3.4 ppg, 3.8 rpg, 1.1 apg) and freshman guard Laura Nelson (6.6 ppg, 3.5 rpg, 2.8 apg) round out the first five.

Sophomore guard Viola Ishmael (2.8 ppg, 1.9 rpg) and freshmen posts Megan Hirsch (2.9 ppg, 6.2 rpg) and Traia Hubbard have been regulars off the bench. Junior Adisson Bertrand, sophomore DaNeila Jensen and freshmen Grace Dangel and Tara Doty have also contributed this season.

"Basketball's a game where you can't just throw athletes out there. They have to have that skill set," Malloy said. "We really have honed those skills and played to our strengths. We get out and run, and get after teams defensively."

"You saw that in districts and re-

gions."

The Raiders have the tough task of drawing top-seeded Sully Buttes (21-1) in the opener, a noon start today.

"They might be more athletic than us," Malloy said. "We've played teams that can press, that can shoot the three, that can run, and they can do all three. We've had a taste of it, but they just do it better."

Malloy is excited for the opportunity for his team.

"Anything can happen in girls' basketball," he said. "All you can do is give yourself a chance to win at the end."

Today's other afternoon game features Warner (21-2) against Lemmon (22-1) at 1:45 p.m. The evening session today features Hanson (21-2) against Lyman (15-8) at 6 p.m. and Sanborn Central-Woonsocket (22-1) against Kimball-White Lake (15-7) at 7:45 p.m.

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/JCimburek. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

A: Motivated Huskies Headed West As Second Seed

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

The Elk Point-Jefferson Huskies didn't like how their 2012-13 season ended. With many of them back this season, they were motivated to secure the state tournament berth they were denied a year ago.

The Huskies take a 20-2 record and the second seed into the S.D. State Class A Girls' Basketball Tournament, which begins today (Thursday) in Spearfish. EPJ rides an 11-game win streak into state.

"We knew we would have a nice ball club, especially when you bring six seniors and others with experience back," said EPJ head coach Gary Nebelsick. "The girls were very disappointed in their last game (last season). When you have that kind of drive and leadership, it makes things a lot easier."

Elk Point-Jefferson has been anchored by returning all-stater Keely Bertram (20.9 ppg, 7.5 rpg, 63 assists, 87 steals, leading EPJ in all those categories). The Huskies have learned to handle the senior, who will be playing the state tournament on her future college home court at Black Hills State, getting the attention on and off the court.

"She's going to get recognition, but we've still been playing a lot of good team basketball," Nebelsick said. "When she's drawn a crowd, she's found teammates and they've been able to convert. Everyone else has been feeding off that. It's been hard for teams to pick their spots."

Sophomore guard McKenzie Mennenga (15.4 ppg, 2.6 rpg, 43 assists, 48

steals) has been an outside threat, hitting 60 three-pointers. Brittany Hanson (6.9 ppg, 5.4 rpg, 38 assists, 36 steals), Skylore Curry (6.2 ppg, 4.1 rpg), Payton Donnelly (5.0 ppg, 37 assists, 38 steals) and Amy Zeller (4.8 ppg, 5.7 rpg) have all been key contributors for the Huskies. Miranda Stabe (0.8 ppg), Maria Corio (0.5 ppg), Josie Heeren (0.7 rpg), Morgan Flynn (0.6 ppg) and Jenny Dailey (1.1 ppg) have all contributed in more than half of EPJ's games.

"I've got two post players who could play for most anybody the whole game. They maybe play four minutes together and otherwise split time. Together they average 12 points, 12 rebounds and four assists a game," Nebelsick said. "Hanson has come on. We've got three guards who rotate in and keep us fresh."

The Huskies got off to a 4-0 start before a 65-41 loss to top-seeded St. Thomas More at the Parkston Classic in late December. Since then, EPJ has not lost to an in-state team, with their only setback coming against Sergeant Bluff-Luton of Iowa.

"They were much more prepared than we were for that game," Nebelsick said of the matchup with the Cavaliers. "We have to be consistent. I'd certainly like to see how much we've improved over the year."

One of those wins late in the season was against Homer, Neb., a state qualifier in Class C2 in Nebraska and a team similar to the Cavaliers in both length and defensive pressure.

"They don't lose often," Nebelsick said of Homer. "We learned how



Elk Point-Jefferson's Keely Bertram, 52, pulls up for a shot while surrounded by St. Thomas More defenders during the first half of their matchup in the Parkston Classic. Bertram and the Huskies take the second seed into the Class A Tournament, which begins today (Thursday) in Spearfish.

HUSKIES | PAGE 8