

Championship Weekend For USD

Coyote Women Lock Up Regular Season Title, Top Seed In Tourney

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — A season ago, the University of South Dakota women's basketball team won half of its conference games but surged to win the tournament championship.

One year later, the script has been flipped.

Thanks to a 78-75 victory over Western Illinois on Saturday afternoon at the DakotaDome, the Coyotes captured the Summit League regular season title — the first-ever, after winning the post-season title a year ago.

"It's a great accomplishment for our team," said senior Nicole Seekamp, who had 20 points, nine assists, six rebounds and four steals.

"It shows that we were consistent throughout the whole season, and I think this shows that."

In completing a perfect 14-0 record at home, the Coyotes (23-6, 13-3) will enter next weekend's post-season tournament as the No. 1 seed — a year after they won the title as the No. 4.

A consistent league slate, from start to finish, was the hope for a program using the 'One Team One Dream' motto.

"We feel like that's a pretty special thing to accomplish," head coach Amy Williams said. "It shows a willingness to come and work every single night out, for a very long season."

And the Coyotes had to do plenty of work to come out on top Saturday.

Despite an 11-2 run to start the second half, USD saw the Leathernecks (17-12, 9-7) reel off a 13-3 surge to get back in the game.

also

■ USD Men Beat SDSU To Finish Regular Season, Earn Fifth Seed.
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turnover later led to a Seekamp free throw. And even a basket with 10.2 seconds left wasn't enough for the Leathernecks.

"That's when you come together," said USD senior Raeshel Contreras, who scored 19 points. "Since we're so close, we already know we're going to come together, and I think we did that very well."

There had already been some memorable matchups between the two teams, including a win last year by Western Illinois in the DakotaDome and USD's last-second win over the 'Necks in the Summit League tournament.

"Every time we've played them, it's been a dog fight since I've been here," Williams said. "Tournament game, at our place, at their place, it doesn't really matter."

"It wasn't as easy as it looked."

Thankfully for the Coyotes, their three seniors — Seekamp (20), Contreras (19) and Lisa Loeffler (14) — combined for 53 points.

"We just took the shots we would regularly take, we just so happened to knock them down," Contreras joked.

So too did Western Illinois junior post Ashley Luke. The likely Summit

The Coyote lead was down to two, 75-73, with 66 seconds to play, but a Western Illinois



South Dakota's Raeshel Contreras drives past a Western Illinois defender during Saturday's Summit League women's basketball game at the DakotaDome. USD locked up a Summit League regular season title with a 78-75 victory.

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Parkston, Bon Homme-Scotland Finish 1-2 In 'B' Wrestling

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE
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RAPID CITY — Just moments after the chaos of the final wrestling match of his senior year, Turner Blasius's voice cracked as the reality hit him that he had just joined a long family history of placing first at the state competition.

"I've been wrestling against the same guys the whole season, and it feels amazing to finally peak at the end," said the 195-pound senior from Kimball-White Lake-Platte-Geddes.

"Everyone wants to be a basketball player, but the real glory comes in wrestling if you can stick with it," he said with 30 family members waiting for him in the stands. "Our program has been down for a while now, so this feels amazing."

Blasius's dream wasn't the only one to come true over

the last weekend in February in Rapid City. Parkston secured another first place finish with 151 points after last year's championship.

"This is what dreams are made of," said Parkston's head coach James Boehmer. "Every single one of our guys laid it all on the mat. They had experience from last year, and they earned it."

Sophomore Blake Bietz (145) and Wes Dvorak (170) took home first-place titles, while Austn Ripp (160) came in second place for Parkston. Logan Mahoney (120) took third for the Trojans, while Dawson Semmler (138) finished fourth. Austin Bertram (220) took second by default from injury, and Miles Semmler came in fifth in 195. Dylan Colt (120) also placed fifth.

Bon Homme-Scotland came in second overall with 136 points.



Bon Homme-Scotland's Duncan Stoebner puts a hold on Lemmon-McIntosh's Dirk Wolf during their 120-pound championship in the South Dakota State Class B Wrestling Tournament on Saturday at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City. Stoebner, an Augustana recruit, won 6-3 for his third state title with an undefeated 40-0 record. Teammate Dan Stibral (32-0) completed a second straight undefeated season at heavyweight, helping BH-S place second in the team standings.

EMILY NIEBRUGGE/P&D

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A: Byes Complete Undefeated Seasons; Yankton's Huber Places Third

BY ALAN DALE & JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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SIoux FALLS — Led by the repeat performances of seniors Regan and Brett Bye, the Vermillion Tanagers finished seventh in the team standings at the South Dakota State Class A Wrestling Tournament, which concluded on Saturday at the Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls.

Pierre held off Eastern South Dakota Conference rival Aberdeen Central 161.5-159.5 for the team title, denying the Golden Eagles a repeat and earning the program's third title in four years. Sioux Falls Roosevelt was third at 151 points.

"One of our goals all year long was to get on the podium so seventh is good enough for me," Vermillion head coach Hazen Bye said. "We have been ranked around there all year long so I am happy with that."

Regan Bye, a University of Nebraska recruit, capped his career with a third consecutive title, defeating Rapid City Stevens' Kasey Klapprodt by injury default in the 160-pound final. He becomes the fourth Tanager to ever win three state titles — joining his father and coach Hazen, as well as his future coach, Nebraska head coach Mark Manning.



Yankton's Spencer Huber tries to turn Madison's Bailey Mennis during their 126-pound third place match at the S.D. State Class A Wrestling Tournament on Saturday in Sioux Falls.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

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Mount Marty, Waldorf Split Baseball Doubleheader On Sunday



Mount Marty's Jared Schmidt, right, avoids a tag attempt by Waldorf first baseman Dillon Schulz during the opening game of their baseball doubleheader on Sunday at Yankton's Riverside Field at Bob Tereshinski Stadium. Waldorf won the first game 15-9, but MMC came back to win the nightcap 9-3.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

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The possible final tune-up before their spring break trip did not go according to plan for the Mount Marty College baseball team, but the Lancers salvaged a split of a chilly non-league doubleheader with Waldorf on Sunday at Riverside Field at Bob Tereshinski Stadium.

Waldorf, which went 7-32 a season ago, used three big innings to blast past the Lancers 15-9 in the opener. In the nightcap, Mount Marty's Alex Mogensen struck out seven batters in 6 2/3 innings to claim a 9-3 victory.

"We're still a work in progress," said Mount Marty

USD Men Take Third Straight SL Indoor Title

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — As he discussed the previous day's championship, Dave Gottsleben paused and said, "We're rolling right now."

The veteran men's track coach at the University of South Dakota has a point.

His program captured its third consecutive Summit League indoor title, beating North Dakota State by 49.5 points on Saturday in Fargo. The 222 points scored by the Coyote men wasn't the most they've scored in their string of titles, but it was certainly more than Gottsleben estimated.

"We performed better than I think a lot of us thought we could," he said Sunday. "We were very excited. It was a phenomenal performance by our kids."

And it's been the same story for a while now.

Including the indoor and outdoor meets, the USD men have won three straight Summit League titles, and four of the last five — the one exception was a second-place finish in the 2013 outdoor meet in Fargo.

Since joining the Division I ranks in 2009, the Coyote men's program has finished first or second in 12 of the 13 conference meets, including USD's 3-year stay in the Great West Conference.

One of the main catalysts for the string of three indoor titles in a row may very well center on the 2013 indoor meet in Vermillion, Gottsleben said. There was understandably a sense of comfort, and from there, that confidence resulted in USD winning the 2014 indoor title out in Fort Wayne, Indiana — and then Saturday in Fargo.

"I have great respect for North Dakota State track program, it's always been phenomenal," Gottsleben said. "We've been fortunate to hang in there with them."

In all over the weekend, the Coyotes had the top time or mark in eight of the 17 events. Highlighting that effort was junior Teivaskie Lewin and sophomore Mach Dojiok, who each won two events.

Lewin, a junior college transfer, easily won the 60-meter hurdles and later won the 200-meter dash. He was honored as the Track Championship MVP.

"There was no one like him at the meet this weekend," said Gottsleben, who was again named Coach of the Year. "He's certainly a big-time Division I athlete."

Lewin is also in contention for a spot in the D-I National Indoor Meet, which takes the top 16 athletes in each event. As of Sunday evening, Lewin was sitting in a tie for 15th nationally in the 60-meter hurdles with his clocking of 7.79.

Dojiok, also a cross country runner for the Coyotes, won the mile run and later took first place in the 800-meter run.

Also winning individual events for USD were Kyle McKelvey in the shot put (breaking teammate Cody Snyder's school record from a week ago), Gawain Williams in the 60-meter dash (and was named Newcomer of the Championship), Tyler Frank in the high jump and Jeff O'Connell in the long jump (he was named Field Championship MVP).

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