

Press&Dakotan DAILY DOSE

Daily opinions from the P&D Sports Staff on local and national high school, college and pro sports.



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If there's a 'Crofton of South Dakota,' it very well may be at St. Thomas More High School out in Rapid City.

Out there where we don't get to see them very much, the St. Thomas More girls' basketball team looks like it might just roll to a second straight Class A state title — and third in four years — this weekend up in Watertown.

The only loss this season for the Cavaliers (23-1) is to Crofton, and that was actually a game St. Thomas More led at halftime. Ultimately, though, Crofton came back to win 64-53 at the Hanson Classic in Mitchell.

Outside of that setback, St. Thomas More hasn't really been touched this season. The Cavaliers have wins on their schedule by scores of 86-7, 90-28, 89-26 and 81-34, and that was just in the reg-

USD's Smith Named Finalist For Top First-Year Coach

VERMILLION — University of South Dakota head men's basketball coach Craig Smith is one of 10 finalists for the Joe B. Hall award given annually to the top first-year coach in Division I college basketball.

Smith was named South Dakota's 17th head coach last March. He was one of 46 first-year head coaches in NCAA Division I and was one of 28 in their first season as a head coach at the Division I level.

Smith led the Coyotes to a 17-16 record for the program's first winning season in four years. South Dakota beat every team in the Summit League at least once and finished with a 9-7 mark in league play, good for fourth place. The Coyotes also won their first Summit League Tournament game in three tries.

South Dakota was the only Summit League team with a winning record on the road at 8-7. The Coyotes' eight road victories rank in the top 30 nationally. The team also had four winning streaks of three games or more.

The award is named in the honor of Joe B. Hall who was given the task of following the legendary Adolph Rupp. In his first season at the University of Kentucky, Hall finished 20-8, won the SEC and advanced to the NCAA Regional Finals.

The recipient of the 2015 award will be announced at the Collegiansider.com Awards Banquet on April 3 in Indianapolis, site of the 2015 men's division I basketball championship.

Two other Summit League coaches were also named finalists: Jon Coffman (Fort Wayne) and Dave Richman (North Dakota State).

Dendinger 17th At D2 Meet

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Hartington (Neb.) High

School graduate Michaela Dendinger, a sophomore at Wayne State College, placed 17th in the women's weight throw at the NCAA Division II Indoor Track & Field Championships on Friday in Alabama.

Dendinger recorded throws of 55-3, 53-1.5 and 55-11 in the prelims, but needed to throw at least 58-2 to qualify for the finals.

She will also compete today (Saturday) in the shot put at 2 p.m.

Golf: Jacks Capture Second D-I Title

ST. GEORGE, Utah — The South Dakota State women's golf team is on a roll. The Jackrabbits broke a pair of school records en route to the program's second Division I title Friday, winning the 14-team Thunderbird Invitational.

Sitting tied for fifth after the first round, SDSU shot a school record 295 in the second round for a school record 609 (314-295) on the par-72, 6,092-yard layout at the Pointe and Black Rock nines at the Sunbrook Golf Course. The Jackrabbits first D-I win was April 12, 2011, when they won the seven-team Creighton Classic in Omaha, Neb.

Junior Sydney MacDonald earned her third top-five finish, tying for fifth with a two-round 149 (76-73). Freshman Natach Srimeaneerung recorded her first career top-10 finish, placing seventh (79-71=150).

Sophomore Hallie Getz (Pierre) tied for 14th (78-76=154), classmate Megan Mingo (Yankton) tied for 20th (81-75=156) and junior Brianna Janu tied for 46th (81-80).

Golf: USD's Dufrane Records Runner-Up Finish In Utah

ST. GEORGE, Utah — Abby Dufrane shot six-over-par (78) to finish in a tie for second place as the South Dakota women's golf team wrapped up play at the Pizza Hut Lady Thunderbird Invitational on Friday. The 36-hole tournament was held at

St. Thomas More Starting To Take After Crofton

ular season.

And if you go back to their state championship run last year, the Cavaliers won games by 45, 32 and 29 on the way to the title.

Sound familiar?

That's what Crofton has done to teams over the last few years. The Lady Warriors have won four consecutive state titles down in Nebraska, but were actually given a challenge in the championship game — they needed a second-half rally to beat Hastings St. Cecilia.

Much like that Crofton team, St. Thomas More has some future college stars. Alexys Swedlund (6-foot wing) is headed to Washington State, while Ciara Duffy (6-1 forward) has a number of Division I schools interested in her.

We'll see what happens in tonight's (Saturday) Class A championship game up in Watertown, but if the first two games of the tournament — wins by 64-21 and 62-37 — are any indication, St. Thomas More will repeat as champions.

South Dakota.

North Dakota State, the record seven-time defending Summit League Champions, finished atop the women's poll with seven first-place votes.

South Dakota was picked to finish second and collected the only other first-place votes after finishing in third place at the 2014 Summit League Outdoor Track & Field Championships. The Coyote women return two league champions: Amber Eichhorn (5,000 meters, 10,000 meters) and Hunter Wilkes (pole vault).

The regular season begins Thursday, March 19, as six league teams begin competition during the opening weekend. The season culminates with The Summit League Outdoor Track and Field Championships on Hanson Field on the campus of Western Illinois University May 13-15.

USD's Lewin Solidifies Spot In NCAA Finals

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — South Dakota junior Tevaskie Lewin broke his own school record in the 60-meter hurdles to advance to the finals of the event at the NCAA Indoor Championships in Fayetteville.

A native of Montego Bay, Jamaica, Lewin qualified for Saturday's finals by taking third in the second heat with a time of 7.77 seconds. After an ejection from a false start in the first heat, Lewin was patient out of the blocks and made up the time with long strides past the field. His preliminary time enters finals as the third-fastest overall with a clocking that is .001 seconds faster than the winner of the first heat. The top two finishers in each heat and the next four fastest times qualified for Saturday's finals and are guaranteed first-team All-America honors with their finish.

Lewin also bested his school record of 7.79 seconds by .02.

The 60-meter hurdle finals are set for today (Saturday) at 6:20 p.m. The championships are streamed live on ESPN3.com after 4:50 p.m. tomorrow.

Baseball: Jacks Drop Summit League Opener

OMAHA, Neb. — Omaha scored a pair of unearned runs as part of a three-run sixth inning to lift the Mavericks to a 6-4 victory over South Dakota State in the Summit League baseball opener for both teams Friday afternoon at The Ballpark at Boys Town.

UNO, which has won the last two Summit League regular season titles, improved to 8-8 overall. SDSU dropped to 7-7 on the season.

Jackrabbit starter Adam Bray finished the game with nine strikeouts and only one walk in a losing effort. The senior right-hander surrendered six runs — four earned — on eight hits in falling to 1-2 on the season.

Zach Coppola and Eric Danforth each were 2-for-4 to pace the Jackrabbits., with Danforth scoring twice. Tony Kjolving was 1-for-3 with three runs batted in.

The two teams are scheduled to play the middle game of their three-game series at 1 p.m. today (Saturday).

USD's Matthew Earns Weekly Honor

VERMILLION — South Dakota golfer Sam Matthew was named the Summit League's Male Golfer of the Week on Thursday after tying for 19th place at the Sacramento State Invitational. It's the fifth weekly league award he has received in his career.

The senior out of Roseville, Minn., carded a 54-hole total of three-over-par (221) at the tournament, which concluded on Tuesday. He opened with a round of 77, but rallied to card a 74 and a 70 to round out the tournament. As a team, South Dakota finished 11th out of 16 teams at the tournament.

SCOREBOARD

BOWLING

CROFTON, NEB.

MEN'S COMMERCIAL

HIGH TEAM GAME: Wiebelhaus Rec 888

HIGH TEAM SERIES: Wiebelhaus Rec 2467

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAME: Joe Wiebelhaus 247, Mike Johnson 237, Brian Wiebelhaus 233

HIGH INDIVIDUAL SERIES: Joe Wiebelhaus 688, Brian Wiebelhaus 658, Mike Johnson 633

A-STANDINGS: Leader Angus 79-41, Wiebelhaus Rec 70.5-49.5, Coor's Light 64-56, Bud Light 58.5-61.5

B-STANDINGS: Merkel Insulation 66.5-53.5, DSM Apts 57-63, ServiceMaster 43.5-76.5, Crofton Elevator 41-79

HIGHLIGHTS: Raymond Phillips — 56 over game avg., Bud Phillips — 109 over series avg.

BASKETBALL

YANKTON PARKS & REC

MEN'S COMPETITIVE LEAGUE

RESULTS: Ben's def. Indian Boys 101-66

STANDINGS: Ben's 9-0, Ball is Life 6-3, Indian Boys 4-5, The Reds 3-6, Warriors 1-9

S.D. STATE GIRLS' TOURN.

CLASS AA

March 12-14 at Brookings

First Round, Thursday

S.F. O'Gorman 76, Huron 32

Aberdeen Central 46, R.C. Stevens 43

Harrisburg 45, Pierre 36

S.F. Washington 67, S.F. Lincoln 55

Consolation Semifinals, Friday

R.C. Stevens 58, Huron 42

S.F. Lincoln 70, Pierre 66

Semifinals, Friday

S.F. O'Gorman 49, Aberdeen Central 42

S.F. Washington 50, Harrisburg 35

Seventh Place Game, Saturday

Huron (7-18) vs. Pierre (18-6), noon

Consolation Championship, Saturday

R.C. Stevens (17-7) vs. S.F. Lincoln (17-8), 1:45 p.m.

Third Place Game, Saturday

Aberdeen Central (18-7) vs. Harrisburg (13-11), 6 p.m.

Championship, Saturday

S.F. O'Gorman (23-1) vs. S.F. Washington (14-11), 8 p.m.

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CLASS A

March 12-14 at Watertown

First Round, Thursday

St. Thomas More 64, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 21

Webster Area 65, Clark-Willow Lake 63, OT

Mount Vernon-Plankinton 55, Dell Rapids 36

Elk Point-Jefferson 69, Red Cloud 56

Consolation Semifinals, Friday

Clark-Willow Lake 67, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 50

Dell Rapids 79, Red Cloud 67

Semifinals, Friday

St. Thomas More 62, Webster Area 37

Elk Point-Jefferson 46, Mount Vernon-Plankinton 40, OT

Seventh Place Game, Saturday

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte (14-10) vs. Red Cloud (17-8), noon

Consolation Championship, Saturday

St. Thomas More (23-1) vs. Elk Point-Jefferson (21-3), 8 p.m.

March 12-14 at Huron

First Round, Thursday

Sully Buttes 69, Kimball-White Lake 44

De Smet 59, Jones County 40

Ethan 53, Viborg-Hurley 34

Summit 58, McLaughlin 47

Consolation Semifinals, Friday

Jones County 46, Kimball-White Lake 41

Viborg-Hurley 68, McLaughlin 54

Semifinals, Friday

Sully Buttes 45, De Smet 37

Ethan 41, Summit 26

Seventh Place Game, Saturday

Kimball-White Lake (15-10) vs. McLaughlin (17-7), noon

Consolation Championship, Saturday

Jones County (22-3) vs. Viborg-Hurley (20-5), 1:45 p.m.

Third Place Game, Saturday

De Smet (20-5) vs. Summit (21-4), 6 p.m.

Championship, Saturday

Sully Buttes (24-1) vs. Ethan (25-0), 8 p.m.

NEB. STATE BOYS

MARCH 12-14, LINCOLN, NEB.

Class A Tournament

Semifinal

Omaha South 61, Lincoln Northeast 38

Class B Tournament

Elkhorn South 59, Gretna 58

Sidney 51, Beatrice 48

Class C1 Tournament

Columbus Scotus 51, Bishop Neumann 42

Winnebago 69, Grand Island Central Catholic 63

Class C2 Tournament

Freeman 36, Archbishop Bergan 26

AREA CALENDAR

Saturday, March 14

BASKETBALL, MEN'S NAIA Division II National

Tour at Branson, Mo.

BASKETBALL, WOMEN'S NAIA Division II National

Tour at Sioux City

BASKETBALL, BOYS' Neb. State Tour. at Lincoln (Bloomfield, Hartington Cedar Catholic)

BASKETBALL, GIRLS' S.D. State Class AA

Tour at Brookings; S.D. State Class A Tour. at Watertown (Elk Point-Jefferson, KVHT-FM); S.D. State Class B Tour. at Huron (Viborg-Hurley, KVHT-FM)

HOCKEY, BOYS' S.D. State Tour. at Brookings

SOFTBALL, COLLEGE Rebel Spring Games at Winter Haven, Fla. (USD vs. Saint Peter's, DH, 9 a.m.)

Monday, March 16

BASKETBALL, COLLEGE MMC vs. Luther at Tucson, Ariz. (9 a.m.); MMC vs. Valley City State at Tucson, Ariz. (12:30 p.m.)

BASKETBALL, COLLEGE JV Tucson Inv. (MMC)

BASKETBALL, MEN'S NAIA Division II National

Tour. at Branson, Mo.

BASKETBALL, WOMEN'S NAIA Division II National

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HOCKEY, BOYS' S.D. State Tour. at Brookings

SOFTBALL, COLLEGE Rebel Spring Games at Winter Haven, Fla. (USD vs. Niagara, 9 a.m.; USD vs. Albany, 1:30 p.m.)

TRACK & FIELD, COLLEGE INDOOR NCAA

Championships at Fayetteville, Ark. (USD)

Sunday, March 15

BASEBALL, COLLEGE MMC vs. Dickinson State at Tucson, Ariz. (DH, 4 p.m.)

BASEBALL, COLLEGE JV Tucson Inv. (MMC)

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