



P&D FILE PHOTO

South Dakota's Nicole Seekamp drives past a South Dakota State defender during the Summit League Tournament championship game last week. Seekamp, named tournament MVP, is one of three Coyote starters who will finish their college careers in the WNIT, beginning with tonight's (Thursday) matchup with Creighton. Start time is 7 p.m. at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

USD Faces Tough Test In WNIT Opener

Coyotes Host Creighton Tonight

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — If the University of South Dakota women are to keep their perfect home record intact, they'll have to beat a regional, mid-major power.

Creighton, a familiar opponent for the Coyotes, comes to Vermillion tonight (Thursday) at 7 p.m. for a first-round game in the WNIT at the DakotaDome.

After falling short of their goal of reaching the NCAA Tournament again, the Coyotes (25-7) had to recharge for the WNIT, but learned Monday night that they would be putting their 14-0 home record on the line in the first round.

"It definitely puts a little bit of confidence in our team," said senior Nicole Seekamp, a 2-time Summit League tournament MVP.

"Our fans were at the games in Sioux Falls, but having that home atmosphere and everything, that should help us."

It has in recent years, at least. Dating back to the start of last

season, USD is 25-2 in games played at the DakotaDome, but is 2-2 in Division I post-season home games since 2011.

Creighton (17-13), meanwhile, is a seasoned mid-major program that is in the WNIT for a second consecutive year — the Bluejays won an NCAA Tournament game in 2013.

Not only has Creighton found success in recent years, it has found success this season in ending long home winning streaks. Wins this season at South Dakota State and Seton Hall ended those program's 20-plus game streaks.

Once the Coyotes knew they would be in the WNIT field, they had a good sense that their first-round opponent would be a regional program (three years ago it was Drake). Once Creighton was announced, the players knew it would be a nice opportunity.

"We're excited, especially just to have a home game," junior Heidi Hoff said. "I think it can do a lot for our program if we can get a win against them."

Being paired with a mid-major program like Creighton might not have been the best-case scenario, USD coach Amy Williams joked, but having the game at home is no doubt what the Coyotes wanted.

"There's so much that goes into

hosting," Williams said. "And being part of that situation, it's outstanding that it worked out like that."

Prior to this season, Creighton and USD had played each of the previous four regular seasons, including a 63-48 victory by the Bluejays last season in Omaha.

"They have some tough players for us, matchup-wise," Williams said. "The last time we played Creighton, Marissa Janning went crazy on us and we only scored 48 points."

"Certainly, that was a rough night."

Janning, a junior guard who was the Big East Conference pre-season Player of the Year, had 20 points and seven rebounds in that last meeting with USD. She averages 15.7 points this season.

The Bluejays also boast senior Alexis Akin-Otiko (12.7 ppg, 6.3 rpg) and freshman Sydney Lamberty (10.1 ppg, 4.2 rpg) as threats the Coyotes will have to contend with.

"We have an opportunity in front of us," Williams said. "A new chance to write a different ending for ourselves. "And we'd sure like it to go better."

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Cornemann, Jacks Head West

BY JEREMY HOECK
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The last time the South Dakota State women's basketball team won a game at the NCAA Tournament, Chloe Cornemann was there to see it.

Now, the junior from Yankton wants to be out on the court for another signature victory.

"SDSU's done it before, so we know we can," Cornemann said Wednesday, on the team bus on the way to airport in Sioux Falls.

The Jackrabbits (24-8), the Summit League champions, earned the No. 14 seed in the NCAA Tournament and will face third-seeded Oregon State (26-4) on Friday in Corvallis.

The game on OSU's campus will tip off at 4:15 p.m. Central and will be televised on ESPN2.

It's on that stage where Cornemann and the Jacks — making their sixth NCAA Tournament appearance in seven years — are hoping to end a 4-game losing streak.

"(Coach Aaron Johnston) says we've been there before, we've done this," Cornemann said. "It's nothing new. We're just trying to get that next stage."

She was on hand when her older sister, Ketty, was a starter for the Jacks, who beat TCU by 35 points in the first round of the 2009 NCAA Tournament in Texas — SDSU then lost on a last-second shot to Baylor in the second round.

That was the last time the

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P&D FILE PHOTO

South Dakota State guard Chloe Cornemann, a junior from Yankton, passes inside against the defense of South Dakota's Kelly Stewart during the Summit League Tournament championship game last week. Cornemann will make her second trip to the NCAA Tournament as the Jacks travel to Oregon State on Friday.

Peitz Named Second-Team All-American

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Hartington, Nebraska, native Tracy Peitz was named to the NAIA Division II All-America second team, announced on Wednesday.

Peitz, a senior at Concordia University, averaged 11.9 points and 4.8 rebounds for the Bulldogs, helping them advance to the national championship game. The former Cedar Catholic standout finished her career with 1,277 points, 594 rebounds, 281 assists and 306 steals.

Peitz's teammate, Bailey Morris, was named the national Player of the Year for Division II. Morris was a two-time Great Plains Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

Other GPAC players earning first-team honors were Ashlyn Muhl of national and GPAC regular season champion Morningside, and Jamie Van Kirk of Hastings. Junior Deaundra Young of College of St. Mary, which joins the GPAC in the 2015-16 season, was also named to the first team.

Also named to the second was Northwestern's Karen Ettleman. Briar Cliff's Slone Masters and Morningside's Taylor Bahensky were third team selections. Honorable mention honorees from the GPAC included Celeste Beck of Dakota Wesleyan, Hannah Dostal of Doane, Michaela Barry of Hastings and Lexi Ackerman of Morningside. Presentation's Haley Froelich,

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NFLPA Picks Greenway For Community Service Award



Greenway

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) — Minnesota Vikings linebacker Chad Greenway has been chosen as the winner of the Byron "Whizzer" White Award, given annually by the NFL Players Association for exceptional community service.

The award was presented

Wednesday at the NFLPA's meetings in Maui. It came with a \$100,000 donation to Greenway's Lead the Way foundation, which has raised \$1.3 million since 2008 for ill and physically challenged children in the Twin Cities area.

The award was named after

White, the late Supreme Court justice who played briefly in the NFL.

The other finalists were Kansas City Chiefs punter Dustin Colquitt, Philadelphia Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins, New York Giants linebacker Jameel McClain, and Chicago Bears cornerback Charles Tillman.

Pheasants Keep Things In Balance

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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PARKER — The Parker Pheasants believe they have the winning formula to make a run at the South Dakota State Class B Boys' Basketball Tournament.

That formula: balance. "Most teams can shut down one player," said Parker (17-6) head coach Dave Fuller. "One game a team played a box-and-one on our best shooter, held him to three points, but we won the game. It's been somebody different stepping up every game. When we get everybody clicking, we're much tougher to beat."

Guards Zach O'Keefe (19 ppg, 4.5 rpg, 3.6 apg, 3.6 spg) and Landon Leberman (13 ppg, 4 rpg, 2.8 apg, 2.8 spg) have led the offense for Parker, but forward Zach Anderson (9.2 ppg, 7 rpg) and center Kelby Peters (9.1 ppg, 5 rpg, 2 apg, 2 spg) are just under double figures. Forward Ryan John (5.4 ppg, 3 rpg) and top reserve Cody Knock (5.3 ppg, 4.2 rpg) are also key contributors.

That balance has helped the Pheasants, making its first state tournament appearance since 1998,

compete this season. Of their six losses, two were to Class A opponents and two were to Chester, both by three points. Parker's most lop-sided setback came in the season opener, a 19-point affair with Class A McCook Central-Montrose and a loss the Pheasants avenged in the conference tournament.

"In our first game out we didn't know what we'd be like, and we were beaten soundly by McCook Central-Montrose," Fuller said. "The second time we played them, we beat them."

The Pheasants will be challenged in the opening round, drawing perennial power White River (21-2). The Tigers are in the tournament for a tenth straight season, but had their string of championship game appearances snapped at six last season.

"They are well coached, and they've been there 10 years in a row," Fuller said. "They have a little bit of a size advantage, but we've faced that all year."

While the Pheasants usually like to pick up the pace, that may not be the best idea against a team as athletic as White River, Fuller said. "We need to slow the

tempo a lot," he said. "We can't give up easy baskets, and we need to control their shooters."

Fuller feels his team is up for the challenge.

"These kids are not content just to be there," he said. "They're hoping they can slay Goliath there, and I think we have the kids to do it."

The Parker-White River matchup is the 6 p.m. contest today (Thursday) at the Barnett Center in Aberdeen, followed by local favorite Langford Area (22-1) against Gregory (18-5), which makes its first state tournament appearance since 1963, at 7:45 p.m. Play begins at noon with top-seeded Faith (22-1) against Hitchcock-Tulare (16-7), followed by undefeated Wolsey-Wessington (23-0) against Hanson (19-4) at 1:45 p.m.

The tournament runs through Saturday in Aberdeen, with the championship set for 8 p.m. All first-round games, as well as Friday and Saturday evening sessions, will be broadcast on SDPB-3.

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

Eight From MMC Earn Scholar Athlete Honors

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Eight members of the Mount Marty College women's basketball team were selected as NAIA All-America Scholar Athletes, announced earlier this week. Eight ties for the most selected from any one team nationally with fellow Great Plains Athletic Conference program Hastings.

Seniors

Holly Hegge, Cheyenne Lambley and Kelsey Schmidt were selected, as were juniors Samantha Blake, Brittini Bormann, Erica Dreckman, Cassidy Gebhart and Raquel Sutera.

Hegge, a forward from Crofton, Nebraska, was the Lancers' fourth-leading scorer in the 2014-15 season, averaging 9.6 points and 5.7 rebounds per game. She also blocked a team-best 20 shots and recorded a team-high 52 steals. Hegge was also recently named the Dr. Leroy Walker Champion of Character Award winner for the GPAC.

Lambley

was a key reserve for the Lancers, averaging 5.6 points and 4.0 rebounds per game. She also recorded 27 assists and 26 steals.

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P&D FILE PHOTO

Parker's Zach O'Keefe tries to split the defense of Irene-Wakonda's Trey King, left, and Tate Gale during their regular season boys' basketball game earlier this season in Wakonda. Parker, which also beat Irene-Wakonda in the Region 5B final, plays White River in the opening round of the South Dakota State Class B Boys' Basketball Tournament today (Thursday) in Aberdeen.