

Minn. DOT: Stadium Road Upgrades To Cost \$131M

BY PATRICK CONDON
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — The Minnesota Vikings and Ramsey County face a \$131 million hole in their \$1.1 billion football stadium plan at the Capitol, the amount that state and county transportation officials agreed Wednesday it would cost to fix up roads near the proposed suburban site.

That's less than the \$175 million originally estimated by the state Department of Transportation, but still nearly half of the \$300 million that Gov. Mark Dayton and key legislators insist is the cap on the state's contribution to the stadium construction. The deal between the Vikings and Ramsey County officials initially assumed the state would contribute both \$300 million and whatever transportation improvements are necessary.

That wasn't the only obstacle facing the Vikings in their stadium push. Rep. Morrie Lanning, the bill's chief House sponsor, said no stadium bill would start moving through the legislative committee process until after Dayton and GOP legislative leaders reach a still-elusive deal on the state budget.

Those talks remained stalled Wednesday, and with lawmakers required to adjourn their regular session on Monday the prospects were increasing that both the budget and the stadium issue would get pushed into a special legislative session.

The initial disagreement over road improvement costs between

the Minnesota Department of Transportation and road officials in Ramsey County had slowed stadium talks in recent days. In a letter to Dayton, state Transportation Commissioner Tom Sorel said it would cost \$86 million for highway improvements and another \$45 million to improve adjoining roads and interchanges.

Team vice president Lester Bagley said he was glad the state and county settled on a final number for transportation costs and hoped it would mean the project would move forward at the Capitol. Bagley said team officials, lawmakers and others were brainstorming ways to raise the additional \$131 million; he said both the team and Ramsey County wouldn't go higher than their respective planned contributions of \$407 million and \$350 million.

"What's left is \$131 million," Bagley said. "We're trying to find creative financing solutions that fit the governor's criteria that the state not exceed \$300 million."

In a letter Wednesday to Vikings owners Zygi and Mark Wilf, Dayton, Lanning and Sen. Julie Rosen of Fairmont reaffirmed the state won't spend more than \$300 million — and that any road costs would fall under that cap.

The Democratic governor and the two Republican lawmakers have maintained a united front in recent days in their dealings with the stadium issue. But at a press conference Wednesday at the Capitol, two Republican senators

who have been working on the state transportation budget criticized the governor on the issue.

"They seem to be more focused on the Vikings stadium than they are on the budget," said Sen. Ted Lillie, R-Lake Elmo.

Dayton took issue with that charge. "It's just ridiculous," he said. "They're the ones who couldn't put a budget together."

The proposal from the Vikings and Ramsey County calls for a \$1.1 billion, 65,000-seat stadium with a retractable roof at the site of a former Army ammunition plant in Arden Hills, about 10 miles northeast of the team's current home at the Metrodome in downtown Minneapolis.

The team would kick in \$407 million of that cost, Ramsey County would pay \$350 million from a half-cent county sales tax increase, and the state would raise its \$300 million from new statewide sales taxes on sports memorabilia, luxury seats and digital video recorders as well as naming rights, a Vikings-themed lotto game and an income-tax surcharge on NFL players.

Despite the team's alliance with Ramsey County commissioners, some in the county are criticizing the venture. On Wednesday, top Democratic and Republican party leaders in the county teamed up to call the stadium a bad deal for their county.

In a joint statement, Ramsey County DFL Chairman Rod Halvorson and James Carson, the county GOP's 4th Congressional

STADIUM | PAGE 11

Bucks

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necki from Sioux Falls O'Gorman, will be returning to defend that

Tanagers

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be there to watch all of them in all their matches."

In doubles' play, Vermillion has McBride-Riazola (0-7) at flight one, Druin-Day (1-7) at flight two and May-Osborne (3-2) at flight three.

Finnegan

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what Finnegan will bring to both the Lancer volleyball and track and field teams.

"I hope she brings a strong work ethic," she said. "She'll push herself and her team. We have high expectations at Mount Marty and I know she'll work hard to achieve them."

At Ponca, Finnegan ran mainly mid and long distances, competing in the 800, 1600, and 3200-meter events. MMC track and field head coach Randy Fischer said Finnegan's endurance will make

title at this year's state tennis tournament.

First round singles matches begin at 9 a.m. with Flights 1 and 2 at McKennan Park, Flights 3 and 4 at Kuehn Park (Roosevelt High School), and Flights 5 and 6 at Washington High School. Dou-

bles matches will start at 1 p.m. with Flight 1 and McKennan Park, Flight 2 and Kuehn Park, and Flight 3 at Washington High School

Matches continue on Friday and Saturday at all three sites, starting at 9 a.m.

Of the three tandems in doubles, Hanson said he believes May and Osborne are the ones who could very well sneak up on opposing duos this weekend.

"James May has probably come on the strongest at the end of the year for us, and looking at number three doubles, they could surprise some people this weekend," Hanson said. "Tyler loves to get to the net, and with James' powerful ground stroke, they could do very well."

her a great addition to the relay teams.

"She's really going to help us in our relays and will help our team have a big impact in the conference," Fischer said. "Individually, I'm not sure how much impact she'll have in the GPAC since it is such a competitive conference. We don't want to put too much pressure on her yet. We'll see what happens once we're able to work with her a little more."

Her goals for track are not very different from volleyball, as Finnegan said she is just looking forward to being a member of the team and helping the Lancers out in any way she can.

"I'm hoping to help the team by working hard to get my times down," she said. "Coach Fischer

told me if I can bring down my times, our relay teams will have a good chance at qualifying for nationals, which I would really like to do. I'll just have to work hard with faster runners and try my hardest."

Being a student athlete, especially when competing in two sports, is not an easy task for anyone, but Fischer said Finnegan is strong in so many areas, he's not worried about her success at Mount Marty.

"Beth has a love for the sport and has had great success in high school. (Being a two-sport student athlete) won't be a problem for her," he said. "She's very good at multitasking and stays busy. She's a great kid and we're excited to have her."

Neb. Boys

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mann will also be competing in the 100-meter dash with a qualifying time of 12.1. Beckmann joins the 400 and 1600 relay squads as well for the Bees.

Dakota Burgerhoff will compete in the 110-meter high hurdles (17.0) as well as the 400 relay. Alec Wilson competes in the 110-meter high hurdles as well (17.7), along with the 1600 relay.

Dalton Cunningham competes in the long jump for the Bees with a qualifying jump of 18-11. Cunningham will also help the team in the 400 relay.

"A couple of our kids, as well as a couple of our relay teams have an outside chance of taking some points during the meet, it will all depend on how we handle the pressure, being a young team," Wilken said.

Maximilian David will throw the discus for the Bees, entering the state meet with a throw of 123-0. Freshman Adam Haigh will pole vault at the state meet, qualifying with a height of 9-10. Evan Koertje will run in the third heat of the 200-meter dash preliminary (24.3) as well as the 400 meter relay.

Dylan Wilson will compete in the 300-meter hurdles, entering the state meet with a time of 43.5. Wilson will also help out the Bees by running in the 1600 and 3200 relays.

Ty Alexander and Callen Koester will also be competing in the 3200 relay.

"Every competitor we are taking down there this year will be an underclassman, so we are hoping to gain some experience and come back next year and score more points," Wilken said.

Crofton

The Crofton Warriors will be led by senior Trent Arens at the state meet. Arens qualified in the 3200-meter run with a time of 10:23.7 and the 1600-meter run with a time of 4:48.9. The senior runner is making the trip back to Omaha after finishing sixth place in the 3200 and eighth in the 1600.

Senior Geoffrey Kleinschmit will also compete for the Warriors, coming into the state meet with a fifth-best mark of 21-1.5 in the long jump. Kleinschmit is looking to improve his mark in Omaha after placing 14th in state meet last year.



P&D FILE PHOTO

Clinton Lackas of Randolph tries to clear 6 feet, 4 inches during the boys' high jump at the Randolph Invitational. Lackas is one of the top qualifiers in the boys' high jump.

Hartington

The Hartington Wildcats will be led by senior Neil Kramer, who qualified for four events in the state meet. Kramer will compete in the triple jump (41-1.5), the high jump (6-4), the 110 high hurdles (15.5), and the 300 hurdles (42.8).

"Kramer has been to the state meet before, he placed third in both of the hurdle events, and fifth in the high jump. But that was in class D, we have moved up a class to class C and that will make it harder," said Blair Kalin, head coach for the Wildcats. "Even with that his marks are right up there and he has a great opportunity to medal in any of his four events."

Sophomore Adam Hochstein qualified in three individual events as well as the 3200 relay. Hochstein will compete in the 400-meter dash (54.7), 800 (2:08.2), and the 1600 (4:47.0).

"Hochstein was third in the mile as a freshman last year. His best opportunity to score some

points is in the mile, but he is a heck of a good runner and we expect good things out of him down there," said Kalin.

Sophomore Alec Fuelberth will compete in the long jump (19-2), while freshman Patrick Wortmann will run in the 3200-meter run (10:35.0) and the 3200 relay.

"Wortmann could have a chance to score some points in the two mile, he is right in the hunt. He is pretty good for a freshman, so if he can deal with the pressure of the state meet he will do good," Kalin said. "He is pretty mature for a freshman, so we expect good things."

Cody Fischer and Taylor Fischer will also compete in the 3200 relay for the Wildcats.

Hartington Cedar Catholic

Though the Trojans qualified only junior Logan Weinandt in the discus for the state meet, his coach said he has worked the hardest.

"It's exciting for him, because

past as Hefner will attempt to bring home a second-straight Bears shot put title, which was won by Ezra Schantz last year. Junior Mitch Heikes is making first appearance at the state track meet in the 100-meter dash. Heikes qualified in district with a winning time of 11.4 seconds.

Newcastle

Tyler Mohr was the only runner to score points for the Raiders last season as he finished sixth in the 800-meter run (2:04.98). Mohr is back and he brought a few more friends with to score some points down at the state meet this year.

Mohr qualified for the 800 (2:05.5), long jump (19-1.5) and 3200-meter relay (8:29.7). Cody Kneiff qualified for two events the 1600-meter run (4:55.3) and 3200 relay, followed by Andrew Maskell in the 300 hurdles (43.4) and the 3200 relay.

Dylan Whelchel posted a qualifying jump in the triple jump (37-7.5), while Jacob Luiken is headed to the state meet with the 3200 relay team.

Niobrara-Verdigré

It marks the first season that the Niobrara-Verdigré Cougars will go down to the Omaha as a co-op. The two schools had multiple athletes attend the state meet last year, but weren't able to score any points.

Justin Jacot qualified for the 100 (11.2) and 200-meter dash (23.3), while Curtis Dather in the 400-meter dash (53.5) and the 300-meter hurdles (43.4).

Tyler Stark is making his second straight appearance in the

110 hurdles (16.5), while Vincent Filip will get his first taste of the state meet as he gets ready to throw the shot put (43-0) for the Cougars.

Randolph

The Randolph Cardinals had four athletes headed to the state meet. Senior Clinton Lackas leads the charge qualifying for three events including the 400-meter dash (54.8), the high jump (6-2) and the 1600-meter relay (3:43.1). Lackas has found silver at the state meet last year when he jump 6-foot-5 in the high jump to take second place.

Following Clinton (Lackas) down to the state is brother Levi Lackas, Jared Korth and Nick Schmit, who are all on the 1600 relay team.

The Cardinals will need some solid performances out of all their athletes to make some noise down at the state meet.

Wynot

Chad Boeckman had the benefit of throwing with his brother, Ryan Boeckman, at the state meet last year and it should make for a quality showing in Omaha.

Boeckman is making his second straight showing in the shot put (46-10) and discus (131-2). Boeckman did medal in the discus a year ago taking home eighth. Kyle Gartner will be making his first appearance at the state meet as he qualified for the 1600-meter run (4:54.2).

Davis Wieseler looks improve from his district performance to grab a medal in the high jump (5-6).

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