

Vermillion's Robinson Headed To Northern State



P&D FILE PHOTO

Vermillion's Valerie Robinson has signed a national letter of intent to attend Northern State and play women's tennis for the Wolves. The senior notched an 11-14 singles record this past season.

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

VERMILLION — Vermillion's top girls' tennis player of the past two years will continue her playing career at Northern State.

NSU announced earlier this week that Valerie Robinson would attend NSU and play for the Wolves, one of seven signees the program announced. She was the only one from the state of South Dakota.

Robinson had several options to continue her career, including programs in Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and the newly-formed program at Mount Marty, but connected with Wolves head coach Mark Lovrien.

"I really liked meeting the coach," she said. "He seemed really into helping me improve my abilities."

The education program at NSU and the size and feel of both NSU and Aberdeen, where it is located, also played a factor.

"I want to become a teacher, and Northern is a very good college for that," she said. "I also wanted a small-town feel, and it was a very friendly campus. I'm excited to see what a town bigger than Vermillion will be like."

Robinson has been a big part of the

Tanagers' squad the past two years, going 17-9 as a junior and 11-14 as a senior. She also went 13-10 in doubles play this past season. Robinson was named the Tanagers' Outstanding Contributor in 2011, awarded to the player who scores the most team points.

"Val has the ability to be a good listener. She practices and executes what she is taught," said Vermillion head coach Betsy Hughes. "She works hard and doesn't give up. She will go until she is ready to drop."

Lovrien also saw Robinson's work ethic on the court.

"Valerie is a hard worker and intense competitor on the court," he said. "She has a solid feel for the game and will be a great addition to our team."

Robinson also earned honorable mention all-Big 8 honors in basketball, helping the Tanagers to a state tournament berth in 2012. She earned academic all-state honors in both sports. Off the playing courts, Robinson is extensively involved in a variety of extra-curricular and community service activities.

Robinson plans to major in elementary and special education.

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/aceman904



P&D FILE PHOTO

Bloomfield senior Austin Hamm, a returning state champion in the Class D 3200-meter run, is one of eight area returning state placemen competing in the Nebraska State Track and Field Championships, which begin today (Friday) at Burke Stadium in Omaha, Neb. The meet runs through Saturday.

Eagles Sweep 4B Titles



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Viborg-Hurley's Trevor Jacobsen, center, sprints to the finish line during the boys' 100-meter dash at the Region 4B track meet Thursday in Centerville. Jacobsen won the event and two others on the day for the Cougars. Irene-Wakonda swept the boys' and girls' team titles.

Irene-Wakonda Girls Win Third Straight Crown; Blake Sets Record

BY JEREMY HOECK
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

CENTERVILLE — A year after suffering a leg injury in the state meet, Lauren Sokolowski is determined to make up for some lost ground.

The freshman from Irene-Wakonda swept the girls' hurdles events at the Region 4B Track Meet in Centerville, helping her team to its third consecutive region crown. The Irene-Wakonda boys also won the team crown, their second in three years.

"It was a really good day for all of

us," said Sokolowski, who won the 100-meter hurdles (15.8), 300 hurdles (48.9) and ran a leg in the winning 400 relay. "That was the best our relays ran all season; I'm really proud of them."

Sokolowski suffered a hamstring injury in the 300 hurdles and didn't advance out of preliminaries at the state meet last year in Sioux Falls, an injury she said was close to being a torn hamstring.

"I'm doing OK now, but I definitely don't want anything like that to happen again," she said. "I'm pretty excited to run the 100 out there, but

the 300 is slowly getting better."

The Irene-Wakonda girls also got individual titles from Lexy Schenk in the triple jump and Haley Hinseth in the shot put, helping the Eagles to first place with 144.66 total points. Parker was a distant second at 104.

"I think it speaks to the depth of the program," I-W coach Brent Mutchelknaus said. "We also got a lot of fourth and fifth places, and that's what helps you rack up the extra points."

Another freshman girl won a pair of events, as Freeman's Cailey Roth finished first in the 1600-meter run

(5:44.8) and later won the 800 (2:30.0) — an event she won at the state meet last year.

"It took me forever to qualify in both of those. I was getting a little nervous there for a while," said Roth, who qualified in the 1600 last weekend and in the 800 a month ago.

As far as this year's state meet, does she relish the pressure of being a defending champion?

"Oh yeah," she said, smiling. "There's a seventh-grader from Ipswich who is doing better than I ever did, but we'll see what happens."

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Beresford Girls Capture Region 4A Crown

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

BERESFORD — With a strong start and a strong finish, the Beresford Watchdogs kept the girls' title of the Region 4A Track and Field Meet at home.

Beresford finished with 120.75 points to win the girls' title, five points better than Harrisburg and 5.25 points better than Canton. Canton won the boys' team title with 124 points, also a five-point victory (Tea Area 119).

The Watchdog girls won four of six field events and scored 75.75 points in five field events. (Beresford does not have pole vault.)

"When we get three into the finals of the triple jump and long jump, it gives us a nice kick-start," said Beresford head coach Scott Ebert.

Senior Alison Klostergaard sparked that effort, winning both the long (16-9) and triple (34-11) jumps. She also posted a state-qualifying time in finishing fifth in the 100 hurdles.

The wind played a factor in both jumping events, helping her

in the long jump and hindering her in the triple jump.

"In the long jump it helped me. I jumped a personal best," she said. "In the triple jump I ended up scratching on what would have been a school record jump. When there's so much wind behind you, it messes up your mind a lot."

Her focus on the day, though, was a strong finish in the hurdles.

"When I came in, I wasn't feeling the best, but one of my big goals was qualifying in the 100 hurdles," she said. "This was the fourth time I'd ever run them. With seven girls in our region qualified for state, I just wanted to stay with the pack."

With Harrisburg and Canton closing in late in the meet, the Watchdogs got a boost from a seventh grader, as Ashlynn Atwood clocked a 12:27.9 to beat out Elk Point-Jefferson's Josie Hereen (12:32.0) in the 3200.

"What Ashlynn did today was pretty special. This was her third or fourth varsity meet," Ebert said. "When it comes to this time of year, you put your trust in your po-

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Vermillion's Will Mart fires the discus during the finals of the boys' 4A Track and Field Meet on Thursday at Beresford. Mart finished second in the event.

Nebraska State Track: Thirteen Area Schools Represented In Omaha

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

Athletes from 13 area schools will be competing in the Nebraska State Track and Field Championships, today (Friday) and Saturday at Omaha's Burke High School Stadium.

Among those athletes are eight who earned medals in last year's event, highlighted by Bloomfield's Austin Hamm, who returns to defend his title in the Class D 3200-meter run. He also finished third in the 1600 last year.

Class D competition begins at 9 a.m. today, with Class C competition beginning at 3 p.m. Competition in all classes will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Here is a look at the area teams, listed in alphabetical order, and their entries.

Allen

The Eagles will make a quick trip to Omaha, as all three of their entries take place on Friday.

Allen is qualified in both the boys' and girls' 3200 relays. The Eagles also have Olivia Schneiders qualified in the 3200.

Bloomfield

This meet will mark the final prep outing for standout Austin Hamm before he heads to South Dakota State University.

Hamm, the defending state champion in the 3200 and a third place finisher in the 1600 a year ago, will compete in both events as well as the 800 and as part of the Bees' 3200 relay.

"Austin has been a tremendous asset to our program," said Bloomfield head coach Duane Wilken. "He is a gifted runner that has also done the work. Some gifted runners don't."

The Bees' 3200 relay actually placed fourth at districts, but the fast race allowed Bloomfield to earn a wild card spot.

"Before the season started I told people that our district was going to be tough in the distance events," Wilken noted. "I was thinking we would get three or four (state qualifiers) in that relay, and I was right on the mark."

While the Bees did not qualify a sprint relay, they will have plenty of sprinters in Omaha. Evan Koertje will compete in the 100 and 200, with Dakota Burgerhoff in the 100 dash and 110 hurdles and Chet Beckmann in the 200. The Bees also have Adam Haigh in the pole vault among their individual competitors.

"I think we have a chance to bring home several medals on the boys' side," Wilken said. "I think we can be in the top five, top six in the team standings."

On the girls' side, junior Autumn Luger is going to have a busy morning today, qualified in all three sprint prelims (100, 200, 400) and the long jump. The Bloomfield girls also have Dominique Swanson in the pole vault and Kylie Abbenhaus in the discus to start the day.

Swanson finished eighth in that event last year. Abbenhaus finished eighth in the shot put a year ago, and will compete in that event on Saturday.

"Our first day is very busy," Wilken said. "I wish for our kids sake, for my sake, it would be a little more spread out, but it isn't going to happen."

Creighton

The Bulldogs take two relays and three individual qualifiers on the boys' side, as well as a pair of individual qualifiers on the girls' side.

Creighton will compete in the boys' 400 and 1600 relays. Also qualified for the Bulldogs boys are Jacob Morrill in the 100, Henrik Daeter in the 400 and Bronson Pahl in the 800.

For the Creighton girls, Emily Boyle will compete in the pole vault and Rebecca Eggerling will compete in the triple jump.

Crofton

The Warriors sport one of the state's top Class C throwers going into the meet, as Tom Peitz owns the top seed in both the shot put and discus.

"Tom deserves everything that comes his way. He is a hard worker," said Crofton head coach Rod Hegge. "We've put him in the four-by-one. He'd even run the 300 hurdles if we asked him to. He just does a nice job."

Crofton also has Dakota Miller qualified in both throwing events, as well as the 110 hurdles. Evan Wockman also has a field event/hurdle double, qualifying in the pole vault and the 300 hurdles.

The Warriors boast two competitors in the 3200, Alex Janssen and Drew Eskins. Janssen is also qualified in the 1600. Crofton also has a 3200 relay squad competing this weekend.

Hegge is happy with the contingent he has going to Omaha, and expects them to score a few points there.

"I was very pleased with how districts went. We had a lot of kids on the bubble (to qualify) — some came through, some fell short," he said. "It would be nice to hang 30 to 40 points on the boys' side."

The Crofton girls boast a returning state placewinner in Danielle Riesberg, who finished sixth in the 400 a year ago. She is back in that event, as well as in the 200 and as part of the Lady Warriors' 400 and 1600 relays.

A pair of freshman earned two individual spots at state, Allison Arens in the 1600 and 3200, and Maria Wortmann in the shot put and discus. Wortmann is ranked in the top eight in both of those events. Two other freshmen, Morgan Schenkel and Vanessa McFarland, qualified as relay members.

Also making her first trip to state for Crofton is junior pole vaulter Olivia Monaghan.

As on the boys' side, Hegge expects the Crofton girls to score a few points at state.

"It would be nice to score 40-plus," he said. "I think we can do it. Our kids are hungry."

Hartington

With strength on the track, including an entry in all three relay races, the Wildcat boys are hoping for a top-five finish in Class D.

"Our boys have been pretty strong all year," said Wildcat coach Blair Kalin. "We have a lot of depth. The distance races are probably our strong suit."

Hartington has Patrick Wortmann in the 800 and 3200, as well as Adam Hochstein in the 1600. Hochstein is also qualified in the 400, along with Joe Noecker.

The Wildcats also have Alec Fuelberth in the 300 hurdles and Reece Pedersen in the pole vault.

With a few standout performances, Kalin thinks the Wildcats can make a run at a trophy, awarded to the state champion and runner-up.

"We've set a goal of being in the top five, which would be a good ac-

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