

Thorson Steps Down At MMC



Jim Thorson addresses the crowd during the Mount Marty College Year-End Athletic Awards Ceremony on Sunday. MMC announced on Monday that Thorson would step down as men's basketball coach after 18 seasons. He leaves with a career collegiate coaching record of 465-481, including 253-288 at MMC. His 1997-98 team, which was inducted in to the MMC Athletic Hall of Fame on Sunday, advanced to the national semifinals of the NAIA Division II Tournament, the highest finish by MMC in any sport.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Defensive-Minded Mentor Spent 18 Years At Helm Of Lancers

BY JEREMY HOECK
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For the first time in nearly 20 years, Mount Marty College will be in the market for a new head men's basketball coach.

Long-time coach Jim Thorson announced his resignation Monday in a short press release that said his final day will be June 30. Thorson, 67, will assume "other duties in athletics" beginning July 1, the release said, also pointing out that a search for a new coach is underway.

Though Thorson said he had no other comment on the announcement, his players were caught by surprise.

"It was definitely shocking," sophomore guard Tyler Payer said. "He's a great coach. All season we worked hard for him. He'll be missed, that's for sure."

Over his 31 seasons as a college head coach, Thorson amassed a record of 465-481, including a 253-288 mark in 18 seasons at Mount Marty. He entered last season ranked No. 10 on the NAIA Division II all-time coaching victories list.

Thorson's fundamental, defensive-strong system became a sta-

ple, according to Mount Marty athletic director Chuck Iverson.

"If you talk to anyone, not just players but coaches, he is considered one of the finest fundamental coaches in the Midwest," Iverson said Monday. "He can develop players, and we've seen that in a number of cases."

"We had some kids who didn't even start in high school and become all-Americans in college."

The Lancers finished last season with an 8-21 overall record and 4-16 in the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC), marking their seventh consecutive losing season dating back to 2006.

Even despite a handful of injuries over the past few seasons, Thorson wasn't one to let it slow him down, Iverson said.

"Luck has not been on his side, but there's no way he would quit on the team. He coaches until the end," Iverson said. "He coached them very hard all the way through."

Thorson, a Willow Lake native, coached at the high school level in Sisseton (1969-70), Gettysburg (1970-75) and Webster (1976-77) before arriving at South Dakota

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Iverson Gets Invite To NBA Draft Combine Next Week

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Colton Iverson's dream of playing in the NBA took a significant step forward Monday.



Iverson

The Yankton native received an invitation to the NBA Draft Combine later this month in Chicago, he told the *Press & Dakotan*.

"That's pretty huge for me," he said. "When I hired my agent,

that was one of our initial goals. We've both been working really hard, and obviously it's a good sign. Teams are the ones who do the voting."

Iverson, a 7-foot center from Colorado State University, had been training at the Impact Basketball Academy in Las Vegas since the Rams were eliminated from the third round of the NCAA Tournament last month.

The NBA Draft Combine will be held May 15-19 in Chicago and will be televised by the ESPN family of networks. While in Chicago, athletes will be tested in a number of areas, including wingspan, body fat, vertical jump, bench press and agility.

A total of 60 players were invited to the Combine, and Iverson said a good percentage of those are likely to hear their name called at the NBA Draft in June.

"We had a good feeling about it, but you just never know," he said. "We're really confident now that we got it official and on paper. It's more reassuring. Now I'm even more motivated to show them how much I have improved."

Iverson also has workouts planned with two NBA teams before the Combine, he said. Iverson will fly out to Los Angeles, Calif. today (Tuesday) for a Wednesday workout with the Lakers. From there, he will fly back to Las Vegas for more training before a flight Friday to work out for the Utah Jazz.

While staying and training in Las Vegas, Iverson said he has been working harder than he ever has before. A big focus was his offensive game — despite him leading Colorado State in scoring (14.2 ppg) and rebounding (9.8 rpg) last season.

"I'm in the best shape of my life, my body is changing and I have a more diversified offensive game than ever before," Iverson said. "Some of the feedback we got was like, 'We'd like to see him improve his jumper.'"

Following suit, Iverson has been working with a shooting coach every day while out in Vegas and said he feels like teams will notice the improvement.

South Dakota State senior Nate Wolters has also been invited to the NBA Draft Combine.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

Pierre Tops Gazelles For ESD Golf Title



Mitchell's Kristin Sabers putts on the No. 12 green during the Eastern South Dakota Conference girls' golf Championships, held on Monday at Fox Run Golf Course in Yankton.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE
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Despite facing Yankton on their home course, the Pierre Lady Governors were able to claim first place at the Eastern South Dakota Golf Tournament Monday at Fox Run.

Pierre took first with a score of 329, followed by Yankton in second place with 339 points and Watertown in third with 350.

"We knew it was going to be tough to beat Yankton here on the home course," Pierre head coach John Knox said. "The greens gave us a lot of trouble. Our course just opened a week ago and we haven't had much time to practice on the greens. Hopefully that will come around. Overall we're pretty happy."

Mitchell's Kristin Sabers took first place overall with a score of 69, her first time winning any golf tournament.

"When you're out there and you're playing you don't really feel like you're playing that well until you see that score card," she said. "At first I didn't really believe I did that well."

But to get to this point Sabers said she put in a lot of work, which included coming to Yankton to play the course over the weekend.

"My short game isn't really the best so I worked on that a lot this weekend," she said. "Playing the course Sunday definitely helped."

Happy with their second place position on the day, Yankton put



Yankton's Becky Frick watches her tee shot on Hole No. 14 during the Eastern South Dakota Conference girls' golf Championships, held on Monday at Fox Run Golf Course in Yankton.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

three players in the top 15: Whitney Specht in 12th place with an 89, Becky Frick in 5th place with a 79 and Megan Mingo in third place with a 74. Mingo said she was happy with the results both as a team and individually.

"That's really good for our team to have three of us place. I'm very happy with that," she said. "Pierre is a good team, and we just have to work on our

weaknesses. Individually, I need to work on my putting a little more, but it wasn't too bad. There were a couple of putts out there I left, but I'm very happy with the day."

Yankton's head coach Brett Sime was also happy with the end results, and will now focus on Yankton's last two competi-

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Golf: Chargers Claim Big Sioux Conference Girls' Title

NORTH SIOUX CITY — The Sioux Falls Christian Chargers had three golfers among the top five to easily claim the Big Sioux Conference girls' team title on Monday at Two Rivers Golf Course.

Christian carded a team score of 328, well in front of Dakota Valley at 368. Canton was third at 394.

Abby Perrenoud of Christian was the overall champion at 76. Dakota Valley's Mary High and

Kiersten Warkenthien of Christian tied for second at 81, while the Christian tandem of Mikaela Theobald and Anna Perrenoud tied at 85.

TEAM SCORES: Sioux Falls Christian 328, Dakota Valley 368, Canton 394, Beresford 413, Dell Rapids 426, Tea Area 472
TOP 15: 1, Abby Perrenoud, S.F. Christian 76; 2, Mary High, Dakota Valley 81; 3, Kiersten Warkenthien, S.F. Christian 81; 4, Mikaela Theobald, S.F. Christian 85; 5, Anna Perrenoud, S.F. Christian 85; 6, Tori Johnson, Elk Point-Jefferson 87; 7, Lindsay Sorlie, Canton 90; 8, Shylar Funck, Dakota Valley 92; 9, Kennedy Fossum, Canton 93; 10, Mikayla Christensen, S.F. Christian 95; 11, Natalie Renfro, Dakota Valley 97; 12, Sadie Jensen, Beresford 98; 13, Kacie Jacobsen, Canton 98; 14, Annie Long, Dakota Valley 98; 15, Aleza Kirschmeyer, Dell Rapids 99

Pre-Region 4B

MITCHELL — Andes Central golfers had themselves quite a day in Monday's Pre-Region 4B golf tournament at Lakeview Golf Course in Mitchell.

Platte-Geddes was first in the girls' division with a team score of 302, five shots in front of Andes Central.

The Winckler sisters of Andes Central went 1-2, with champion Kellie (88) and Krista (93). Sydney Benter of South Central was

third at 93, four shots in front of Scotland's Aisha Abbink.

Kimball rode Russell Pick's round of 73 to the boys' team title, edging Platte-Geddes 256-260 for first places. Andes Central was third at 264.

J.J. Cooney of Andes Central was the leader at 73, while Bobbi Beach-Pattison of Mount Vernon-Plankinton was third at 80, seven shots back.

The Region 4B girls' and boys' tournaments will be held Friday

in Mitchell.

GIRLS' DIVISION

TEAM SCORES: Platte-Geddes 302, South Central 307, Andes Central 315, Mount Vernon-Plankinton 323, Gregory 357, White Lake 371
TOP 10: 1, Kellie Winckler, Andes Central 88; 2, Krista Winckler, Andes Central 93; 3, Sydney Benter, South Central 93; 4, Aisha Abbink, Scotland 97; 5, Joslin Nelson, Platte-Geddes 99; 6, Cassidy Plooster, Platte-Geddes 101; 7, Niki Nelson, Platte-Geddes 102; 8, Teresa Oprobok, South Central 106; 9, Shelby Vissia, MV-Plankinton 106; 10, Elli Ringling, Platte-Geddes 106

BOYS' DIVISION

TEAM SCORES: Kimball 256, Platte-Geddes 260, Andes Central 264, Gregory 265, South Central 284, Mount Vernon-Plankinton 292, Avon 292, Corsica-Stickney 294, Ethan 322
TOP 10: 1, J.J. Cooney, Andes Central 73; 2, Russell Pick, Kimball 73; 3, Bobbi Beach-Pattison, MV-Plankinton 80; 4, Tate Van Zee, Platte-Geddes 85; 5, Colten Plooster, Platte-Geddes 87; 6, Jaden Bartling, Gregory 87; 7, Jon Blake, Gregory 88; 8, Connor Kuipers, Platte-Geddes 88; 9, Turner Serr, South Central 88; 10, Paul Taggart, Gregory 90

Canaries Top Explorers 5-3 In Annual Exhibition In Yankton

BY NICK ROBINSON
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A tradition that has been implemented since 1996 was continued on Monday night at Riverside Field in Yankton.

The Sioux Falls Canaries hosted and defeated the Sioux City Explorers 5-3 of the American Association on a beautiful spring evening during an exhibition game.

"The teams like to come here because they know we put on a good show," Yankton baseball activist and Yankton Optimist member Dave Spencer said. "It's becoming an every year expectation to have exhibition baseball."

The game wouldn't be possible for all the work behind-the-scenes that the Yankton Optimist Club does each year.

"Year in and year out we try to make sure to try and get and afford both teams," Optimist member Matt Hanson said. "We wouldn't be able to do it without members and people chipping in."

Around 40-50 members of the Optimist Club took time to volunteer for the event.

This year displayed something a little more special for the area kids — a youth camp instructed by the Sioux Falls Canaries players and staff.



Sioux City Explorers third baseman Bryan Pounds, left, can't handle the throw as Sioux Falls Canaries runner Nick Van Stratten slides in safely during their exhibition game Monday night at Riverside Field.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D

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