

# Baseball

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"The camp basically depends on how many kids we can get out there, the teams and finally the weather," Hanson said. "We have had the teams' mascots do some stuff with the kids in the past. We just try to put out the best show we can. It helps having the players do this camp so they can get the kids excited about baseball."

The camp featured the kids fielding ground balls, hitting in the cage, playing catch and learning techniques.

"We were just teaching a ton of fundamentals," Yankton native and Canaries player Drew Heithoff said. "From throwing, to fly balls — just working through baseballs. It's also good to see some young kids have nice swings."

A packed crowd of approximately 800 came to watch both area squads compete in their first pre-season games of the season. Great weather also helped get the stands packed for the game.

In between innings, the Optimist Club donated various checks to different groups

around Yankton. But, specifically the area kids' groups.

Groups benefited by the donations are: Yankton Area Ice Association, Big Friend/Little Friend, Boys and Girls Club, Yankton Girl's Softball Association, and Youth Frontiers —YHS.

"These fundraisers go to great causes," Spencer said. "This couldn't happen without area businesses to get this going and to give back to these kids."

Hanson was also optimistic about the major event of the year for his group and the fundraisers.

"This allows a lot of youth to watch the Canaries and Explorers," he said. "But the main thing here is to be able to give back to youth programs in the area."

As the game continued to go on, the players worked the kinks out of their game.

The Canaries and Explorers each scored a run in the first inning. Sioux Falls broke the game open in the third with three runs, giving themselves a 4-1 lead. Sioux City marched right back in the sixth inning with two runs of their own, to cut the deficit to 4-3. In the seventh, the Canaries added an insurance run to nail the coffin on the Explorers.

In the seventh inning, Heithoff subbed into the game at second base.

He went hitless in his one at

bat in the contest.

"It was cool to be back," Heithoff said. "It's been a while since I've been home. But I'm impressed with the field, it looks great."

When asked, Heithoff wasn't quite nervous about his first game back at Riverside Field since he played for the previous amateur team, the Yankton Terry's.

"No, it (the jitters) weren't too bad," he said. "This is pretty fun. At the end of the day it's just baseball."

Heithoff also remembered the times as a youngster when he attended the Canaries versus Explorers games.

"I was always down here for the games," he said. "It meant a lot as a kid to come down, watch the games and do these camps. Looking forward it's great to give back for these area kids."

The Yankton Optimist Club would also like to thank every sponsor of the game.

"This is just great for Yankton," Spencer said. "Not only does it showcase Yankton, but it showcases Riverside Field. Luckily we had great weather tonight."

You can follow Nick Robinson on Twitter at [twitter.com/RobinsonNick2013](https://twitter.com/RobinsonNick2013)



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Sioux Falls Canaries pitcher Kirk Clark, left, watches as this youngster swings away during a youth clinic held before Monday night's exhibition game between the Canaries and Sioux City Explorers at Riverside Field.

# Thorson

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State in 1977 as an assistant coach.

He then served as athletic director and head men's basketball coach at Yankton College from 1979-84. Thorson then coached at SDSU from 1985-93, where he guided the Jackrabbits to the 1992 North Central Region title.

Thorson and his wife, Susan, then returned to Yankton in 1995.

It didn't take long for him to bring the Lancers to national prominence.

Thorson's resignation came a day after Mount Marty held its Hall of Fame ceremonies, including the induction of the 1997-98 Lancer men's basketball team that reached the NAIA National Tournament semifinals.

There were no indications then that Thorson would step aside, former player Aaron Kranz — who was in Yankton over the weekend — said Monday.

"It was a bit of a shock. My freshman year was his first year, so we started at the same time," said Kranz, an NAIA All-American in 1998-99. "And I guess you knew at some point it would come to an end, but it's still surprising when it happened."

That 1997-98 team put together arguably the greatest post-season run of any MMC team in history. The Lancers received an at-large bid — one of the last teams selected — to the NAIA Division II National Tournament.

There, MMC won three games to reach the national semifinals before losing to eventual champion Bethel (Ind.).

Kranz, a 1999 Mount Marty graduate, said Thorson's impact went beyond basketball and was a



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Jim Thorson stands at the podium and addresses the audience as his 1997-98 men's basketball team was inducted into the Mount Marty College Athletic Hall of Fame on Sunday. Thorson coached 31 years as a college head coach, including 18 at MMC. He also coached at Yankton College and South Dakota State, as well as with Sisseton, Gettysburg and Webster at the prep level.

big key to the success that season.

"Coach Thorson contributed a lot to my success to who am I today, and not just as a basketball player," Kranz said. "He cares about every player as a person."

As Kranz moved on and started a family, they now live in Aurora, Ill., he has kept a close eye on the MMC program — specifically when the Lancers have played in a holiday tourna-

ment in nearby Chicago.

"I know even in times where the wins and losses haven't added up to where he wants, there are still contributions he made to those teams," Kranz said.

Last season's team lost 13 of its final 15 games, missing out on the GPAC Tournament.

One of the highlights of Thorson's final season, however, was a 77-60 upset of No. 12 Dordt on

Jan. 16 in Yankton. Then, in the season finale, senior Joe Hieb scored 43 points in a win over Concordia.

Through it all, wins and losses, Thorson remained steady, according to Payer, who averaged 4.1 points in 22 games last season.

"He always tried to stay positive with us; always made us work hard," Payer said. "He always wanted us to play to the

best of our abilities. That made it a lot easier to play like that for him."

The traits he instilled in his players were ones Thorson also had himself, according to Jeff Larsen, who was a senior on last season's team.

"He loves the game and puts his utmost effort into it," Larsen said. "I learned a lot from him. In terms of basketball, nobody has been more influential to me. I thank him for the time he gave me."

Thorson's influence went beyond the court, as well, Larsen said.

This spring as Larsen was looking for jobs after graduation, Thorson was there to make some calls and write reference letters.

Eventually, Larsen was hired as a fourth grade teacher and freshman basketball coach in the Lennox School District.

"That's one thing people might not see with him, that aspect," Larsen said. "He cares about his players a lot. He always talked about preparing boys and turning them into men, and I can see that now. He does things the correct way."

As for what Thorson will do next, Iverson said he will remain on staff tackling some of the same duties as he has over the years. Thorson will be involved in event management, facility coordination, fundraising as well as remain on staff as an instructor, Iverson said.

The search for a replacement has already begun, Iverson said. The A.D. also said Thorson and his staff, with assistants Ted Quinn and Andrew Baker, will ensure a "smooth" transition, specifically in the recruiting process.

"Right now, we're advertising internally and seeing if there's interest on staff," Iverson said of the search. "We'll see what happens. Word gets around fast. I've already gotten a few emails outside the college with interested candidates."

As attention moves to who replaces Thorson, the cupboard isn't exactly bare as the Lancers will return three of their top six scorers from last season, Payer said.

"Any coach that wants to come in and wants to win right away, we'll be ready for that," Payer said. "We have great guard play coming back, and if we can get on a run, we should be able to win."

Energy and enthusiasm are likely to play big factors in that potential, Kranz said.

"Even at a smaller program, it takes a lot of effort to be successful, to put the right pieces in place," Kranz said. "As long as it's someone who is excited and wants to get involved in the community, it will work out."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at [twitter.com/jhoeck](https://twitter.com/jhoeck)

# Boys' Tennis: Knights Sweep Yankton 9-0

SIoux FALLS — Top-ranked Sioux Falls O'Gorman swept Yankton 9-0 in boys' tennis action on Monday in Sioux Falls.

The closest match of the day came at flight six singles, as O'Gorman's Ramzi Maluf edged Yankton's Paul Fanta 6-2, 6-4. The closest doubles match came at flight three, as Maluf and Jake Moran edged Yankton's John Fanta and Jason Shindler 6-1, 6-4.

Yankton continues on the road today (Tuesday), traveling

to Mitchell to face the Kernels and Brandon Valley in Yankton's regular season finale. Yankton heads Brookings for to the Eastern South Dakota Conference Championships on Friday.

**SINGLES:** Tommy Entwistle-Ben Czarnecocci def. Luke Rockne 6-1, 6-1; Ben Czarnecocci def. Ben Jensen 6-1, 6-1; Sam Heckman def. Brandon Frick 6-0, 6-0; Jake Moran def. Jason Shindler 6-3, 6-0; Philip Petrasko def. John Fanta 6-0, 6-2; Ramzi Maluf def. Paul Fanta 6-2, 6-4.

**DOUBLES:** Tommy Entwistle-Ben Czarnecocci def. Luke Rockne-Paul Fanta 6-1, 6-2; Sam Heckman-Philip Petrasko def. Ben Jensen-Brandon Frick 6-1, 6-0; Jake Moran-Ramzi Maluf def. John Fanta-Jason Shindler 6-1, 6-4.

**JV:** Austin Baudel def. Greg Hauer 6-1, 6-3; Chris Gaher def. Hunter Rockne 6-2, 6-4; Austin Baudel-Chris Gaher def. Greg Hauer-Hunter Rockne 6-2.

## Brookings Quad

**BROOKINGS** — The Yankton Bucks completed only one round of Saturday's scheduled boys' tennis quadrangular, beating Huron 7-2 in Brookings.

Brandon Frick, Jason Shindler and John Fanta each went 2-0 in the dual. Shindler and Fanta teamed up for a doubles win, while Frick teamed with Ben Jensen for a victory. Paul Fanta and Luke Rockne also won in sin-

gles play for the Bucks.

Yankton also got two victories from Greg Hauer in JV action.

**SINGLES:** Luke Rockne Y def. Logan Meyer H 10-1; Colin Claess H def. Ben Jensen Y 10-2; Brandon Frick Y def. Christian Olson H 10-6; Jason Shindler Y def. Devon Carroll H 10-2; John Fanta Y def. Blake Meyer H 11-10 (10-4); Paul Fanta Y def. Matt Johnson H 10-3.

**DOUBLES:** L. Meyer-Claess H def. Luke Rockne-Paul Fanta Y 10-5; Ben Jensen-Brandon Frick Y Olson-B. Meyer H 10-8; Jason Shindler-John Fanta Y def. D. Carroll-Tyler Sterrett H 10-3.

**JV:** Greg Hauer Y def. Henry Rubish H 10-5; Greg Hauer Y def. Matt Holland, Aberdeen 10-6.

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