

State Class AA Girls' Championships Take Over Hillcrest Today

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Gazelles Set To Compete On Their Home Course

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Despite a quick season, the Gazelles are ready to perform at the State AA Golf Tournament. Yankton will face golfers from the 15 other big-school programs today (Monday) and Tuesday at Hillcrest Golf and Country Club.

Yankton head coach Brett Sime said although weather has prevented a lot of competitions this year, his team has been able to individualize practices and focus on improving.

"This year has been a tough year with the weather the way it's been, but we've used every opportunity the best we could to go out to the golf course and work on the things each individual girl needs to work on," he said. "It's not always the same thing that each person needs to work on, so it's a little different than other team sports."

Senior Whitney Specht also said weather affected the season, but that she and her teammates have been able to practice enough to be ready for the competition.

"In the beginning we didn't get to play much — our season really just started about a month ago. It's been quick, but we've definitely gotten some good practice in and the course is in good shape," she said. "With the few tournaments we have had, we've been able to figure some stuff out and see where other teams are and where they're at. It's been a good season — we'll be ready."

From those tournaments, Sime said he knows Sioux Falls O'Gorman will be a tough team to beat, as well as Pierre.

"With the competitions we've had we found that we can play with the best teams in the state," he said. "We know that Sioux Falls O'Gorman is going to be a tough team — on paper they're looking like the team to beat. Pierre is going to be tough too — in the times we've faced them they have beat us every time."

Although the Gazelles haven't been able to practice as much as they wanted because of weather, utilizing a home-course advantage throughout the season is a benefit Specht said the team has taken advantage of.

"We've really been practicing a lot of chipping and putting at Hillcrest especially. We've practiced at Hillcrest as much as they'll let us, and we've done a lot on the greens. We're hoping that will pay off," she said. "It's exciting to be at our home course — it'll be fun, it'll be a good time."

After Monday and Tuesday, the Gazelles will lose two seniors — Megan Mingo and Specht — to graduation. Sime said he is hoping the team can end on a high note and those seniors will have a good end to their golfing careers.

"Mingo has been one of the best players in the history of Gazelle golf, and I'm hoping she can finish strong. Specht has been a member of our team for the last few years, and she's been improving steadily over the last few years and been a big part of our varsity squad and a big part of our team this year," he said. "I'm hoping both of them can have a good state tournament and go out on a high note."

You can follow Emily Niebrugge on Twitter at twitter.com/ENiebrugge

Bucks Baseball Team Falls In Region Final

VALLEY SPRINGS — Brandon Valley got a first-inning home run from Jake Adams and made it stand up, beating Yankton 1-0 in the championship of the Region 1A baseball tournament on Saturday.

The loss ended Yankton's season at 11-12.

Adams had two of Brandon Valley's three hits. Lane Sawatzke, Andrew Hummel and Brad Ulmer had hits for Yankton.

Tanner Termansen went the distance in the loss, striking out seven.

Earlier in the day, Yankton advanced to the final with a 6-3 victory over Sioux Falls Washington.

Sam Wendte went 3-4 with a RBI and two runs scored to lead Yankton. Ulmer had two hits. Dustin Hopper had a hit, two runs scored and a RBI. Sawatzke had a double and a RBI. Kaleb Bromley also had a hit and a RBI. Mitch Gullikson had a hit and a run scored, and Hummel added a hit for Yankton.

Gullikson pitched the final three innings to pick up the win in relief of Zach Benjamin.

Three members of the Bucks were announced as all-region: Benjamin, Termansen and Sawatzke.

Aside from another loaded field, there is one other factor standing in the way of Sioux Falls O'Gorman potentially claiming its fourth consecutive state girls' golf title.

Weather. Capping off what has been an inconsistent and wet spring, the defending champion Knights begin their quest for another title at the South Dakota State Class AA Girls' Golf Tournament, which begins today (Monday) at Hillcrest Golf & Country Club in Yankton.

"With the playing time we've all had so far and the amount of rounds we've gotten in, no one has really reached their potential," head coach Rod Garrison said last Friday following a practice round at Hillcrest. "You could have three or four teams in the mix."

O'Gorman, with only senior (Claire Jansa) among its six golfers, figures to get a

significant challenge from Pierre, last year's runner-up by three strokes, and the hometown Yankton Gazelles — third last year.

The Lady Governors return defending champion Hallie Getz (Sr.) and won the Eastern South Dakota Conference title in Yankton two weeks ago. Each of the other top four finishers are back this year, and will be paired together for today's opening round — Mitchell's Kristin Sabers (Sr.), Watertown's Hallee Pieper (Sr.) and Yankton's Megan Mingo (Sr.).

The key to Pierre's success this spring has been its depth, according to head coach John Knox — who, like Garrison, pointed to the weather as a "but."

"We've been playing pretty good of late, though we started out slow like everyone did with the weather," Knox said. "Our four, five and six players are starting to get a little bit better; one of them has always stepped up to the plate."

The weather for state isn't all that promising. The forecast for today and Tuesday calls for temperatures in the low-to-mid 60s and a 30 percent chance of rain both days.

At this time last year, the Knights had played 12 rounds of 18 holes and four rounds of nine holes, Garrison said. By comparison, this year O'Gorman has played five rounds of 18 and only two of nine holes.

"There's been no consistency in anything," said Garrison, who added that O'Gorman's team average has varied from 298-345. "That's the biggest problem we're having, the girls haven't been able to work on their swings."

While other course across the state have been hit by wet weather (and ice, as was the case in Sioux Falls), Hillcrest is a "gem," Garrison said.

"This is already the best course we've been on all spring," he said last week. "The other courses have lost fareways and their

greens are slower.

"I would think maybe the Yankton girls have an advantage there, because they're used to this course."

Familiarity or not, the Knights are rather deep themselves, like Pierre. O'Gorman boasts Kelsey Johnson (So., qualifying score of 81), Myla Brown (Sr., 86), Jansa (Sr., 86), Meredith Turner (So., 86), Annie Simon (So., 92) and Jamie Benedict (Fr., 96).

The player with the top qualifying score, however, is Mitchell's Sabers at 69. Her off-season work has paid dividends this spring, according to Mitchell coach Rob Marchand — a 1974 Yankton High School graduate.

"It's been fun to watch her this season, because she put in all that work over the summer at those tournaments and now it's showing on the scorecards," Marchand said.

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Hartington Boys Win Class D



Neb. State Track: Crofton Girls Third In Class C

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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OMAHA, Neb. — Track and field is often a victim of "senior-itis," as young athletes who used the sport as training for the fall and winter no longer have those falls and winter sports to be concerned about. Kids often fail to go out as seniors, or they don't give their full effort.

But, when those seniors do, it can lead to something special. Just ask the Hartington boys' track and field team.

With seven seniors among the 11 athletes the Wildcats took to Omaha's Burke High School stadium, Hartington won its first state boys' track title since 1948 by beating out Paxton on Saturday. The Wildcats finished with 55 points, 8.5 better than the runner-up Tigers and nine better than third place Cambridge.

A pair of seniors also played a key role in the Crofton girls finishing third, just four points out of another trip to the awards stand for CHS' talented graduating class. Several other area seniors shined on the final day of competition as well, culminating their prep careers with performances to remember.

Here is a look at area teams' performances on Saturday.

Class D Boys

For 65 years, the 1948 Class C boys' track and field trophy has sat alone in the trophy case at Hartington High School. Saturday, it got some company.

"It's been a while, and don't think we didn't look at that trophy through the course of the year," Hartington head coach Blair Kalin said after his team picked up the 2013 Class D championship trophy. "I'm very excited for the kids and the community. It was a lot of hard work."

Hartington's second day started with junior Patrick Wortmann battling back from the injury that forced him to withdraw from Friday's 3200 and earn two individual medals, sixth in the 800 (2:02.69) and eighth in the 1600 (4:45.19).

"He's a warrior," Kalin said of the junior. "He gave us what he could. You get down here, every point is important. Every point is huge."

Teammate Adam Hochstein won that 1600 in 4:38.79, one year after finishing second in that race. He fought off a challenge from Kennesaw junior Lane Tibbs early in the race, then out-kicked Cody Kilgore's Jalen Grant to the finish.

"The blue jersey guy (Tibbs) tried to pass me a couple times and I fought him off. I think I made him mad," Hochstein noted. "The one time he passed me, I let him have five steps, then I passed him right back."

Hartington's victory in the 400 relay early in the day also helped build some momentum. The Wild-

ABOVE: Hartington's Alec Fuelberth gets the Wildcats off to a fast start in the Class C boys' 400-meter relay at the Nebraska State Track and Field Meet on Saturday. Hartington won that event and placed second in both of the other relays in the meet, helping the Wildcats earn their first state team title since 1948.

LEFT: Crofton sophomore Quinn Wragge, 31, pulls away from the field to win the Class C girls' 800-meter run on Saturday. She helped the Warriors place third in the team rankings.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D



Parkston Girls Look To Defend Class A Golf Title

FROM P&D STAFF REPORTS

MILBANK — The Parkston Lady Trojans have handled all comers as they prepared to defend their Class A girls' golf title.

And, by all comers, they mean all comers.

Parkston has won every event it has participated in, including wins over Class AA competition, as it heads to Milbank's Pine Hills Golf Course today (Monday) for the state championships.

The Lady Trojans mowed through their region competition, shooting a team score of 295.

Parkston's quintet consists of seniors Jordan Bormann, Taylor Bormann and Logan Wagner, and freshmen Sydney Bormann and Sydney Weber. Sydney Bormann is the defending state champion, while Jordan Bormann (5th), Wagner (10th) and Weber (11th) all finished in the top 20. Taylor Bormann just missed the top 20 a

year ago, finishing 21st.

Wagner is signed to play both golf and basketball at Mount Marty.

Vermillion is also qualified for the team competition after finishing second to Sioux Falls Christian in Region 2A. Seniors Brooke Schwasinger, Allison Heine and Elly Miiller are joined by freshmen Kayla Stammer and Kate Brock-evelt.

Beresford, Dakota Valley and Wagner each have three individuals qualified in Class A. Beresford will take senior Natalee Muhlenkott, sophomore Taylor Watkins and freshman Sadie Jensen. Dakota Valley features senior Shyler Funck, junior Natlaie Renfro and freshman Mary High. Wagner has senior Tristen Scherr, junior Kathleen Juffer and freshman Megan Zepher.

Funck placed 13th at state a year ago.

Also entered in Class A among

area athletes are Bon Homme senior Jody Kriz and Elk Point-Jefferson freshman Tori Johnson.

Class B Girls

Andes Central, Freeman and Irene-Wakonda will compete for team honors in the Class B Girls' Tournament, being held at Brookings' Edgebrook Golf Course.

Irene-Wakonda, which placed sixth a year ago, will send a veteran lineup to Brookings, senior Maggie Kriebell and juniors Sydney Nielsen, Makayla Mohr and Kassie Boese. Nielsen finished 12th for the Eagles in 2012.

Andes Central is led by senior twins Kellie and Krista Winckler, each of which will be continuing her golf career at the NAIA level. Kellie, who finished seventh a year ago, will participate in both golf and basketball at Mount Marty, while Krista will join their sister Jenna at Dakota Wesleyan. Also on

the Eagles' squad are sophomore Brooke Deurmier and seventh grader Aleacia Golus.

Freeman sends three golfers to state, senior Shelby Bauer (14th in 2012), junior Maranda Egan and sophomore Megan Egan.

Parker has two golfers headed to state, junior Kayla Preheim and sophomore Allison Sanner. Senior Joslin Nelson and sophomore Niki Nelson will represent Platte-Geddes. Seniors Ashia Abbink, who will golf at DWU next fall, and Lacey Bietz will compete for Scotland. Tripp-Delmont sophomore Payton Schaefers is also entered.

Class B Boys

Freeman senior Arron Lickteig will look to add to his already impressive resume as he heads to Brookings Country Club for his final state tournament.

Lickteig, who won the 2012 state title, has two other runner-up

finishes to his credit.

Platte-Geddes is the lone area squad to qualify a full team. The Black Panthers, who finished tenth in the 18-team field a year ago, will be represented by seniors Tate Van Zee, tied for 15th a year ago, and Connor Kuipers, sophomore Jayden Van Zee and freshman Colton Plooster.

Andes Central will be represented by junior Joe Evans and freshman J.J. Cooney. Irene-Wakonda also has two golfers entered, junior Justin Ostrem and freshman Landon Larsen. Scotland has junior Seth Ireland and freshman Tanner Iwan headed to state. Viborg-Hurley has a pair of sophomores qualified, Robert Jensen and Cody Thompson.

Also entered are Freeman senior Kurt Weber, Parker senior Patrick Gillespie, Gayville-Volin junior Steven Bergeson and Alcester-Hudson freshman Grant Johnson.

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