

# Rivals Square Off With GWC Title At Stake

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VERMILLION — It all comes down to this. Two rivals, both ranked. Final game of the season. Conference championship up for grabs. There are plenty of story lines surrounding today's (Saturday) Great West Conference football game between No. 24-ranked South Dakota and No. 22 North Dakota, at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, N.D. For the Coyotes (6-4, 2-1), the magnitude has made this game one of the most anticipated in recent memory. "You couldn't really write a better script, could you?," senior receiver Dusty Nowotny said this week. "We've never won up there in their place and we haven't won a Great West championship. "It's a great story line for us."

## Game Coverage

■ Today's game will be broadcast on radio stations 1450 AM and 102.7 FM. The game will also be televised by Midco Sports, cable channel 21. The winner of today's 1 p.m. showdown clinches a share of the Great West crown, with Cal Poly. Making that accomplishment even more significant is that today could also mark the final football game in the series, as North Dakota bolts for the Big Sky Conference next fall and USD leaves for the Missouri Valley Football Conference. Yet for the 23 seniors on the USD side, it could be a fitting end to careers spent in the Division I transition

period. "We're pretty amped up, especially all of us seniors because it's our last football game ever," Potter said. "We couldn't ask for anything more." With the exception of a conference title. And for these two teams, getting to this point is saying something. USD finished 4-7 last year, with its only league win coming against the Sioux, while North Dakota was 3-8 a year ago. "This really is something," UND coach Chris Mussman said this week. "It says a lot about both programs that we have improved and are in position to be playing for a share of a Great West title." What hasn't improved is USD's record in games in Grand Forks. The Coyotes have not won a road game against North Dakota since 1985, a string of 11 straight games (Or put another way, before the current

seniors for USD were born). On the subject of the road record, USD coach Ed Meierkort joked briefly that maybe a change in routine would do the Coyotes some good. "We might walk to the game this year just to change it up," Meierkort said. "It's time for this team to win this game. You get tired of hearing about it." That record is something the players are aware of, but there's only loss they had control of, Nowotny said. "It's only been one loss for us there, so it's not really as big of a deal for us," said Nowotny, who has caught 26 passes this season for 291 yards and four touchdowns. "We're looking at that we have never beaten them in the Alerus Center. "That's what we want to do." In all, North Dakota has won 13 of

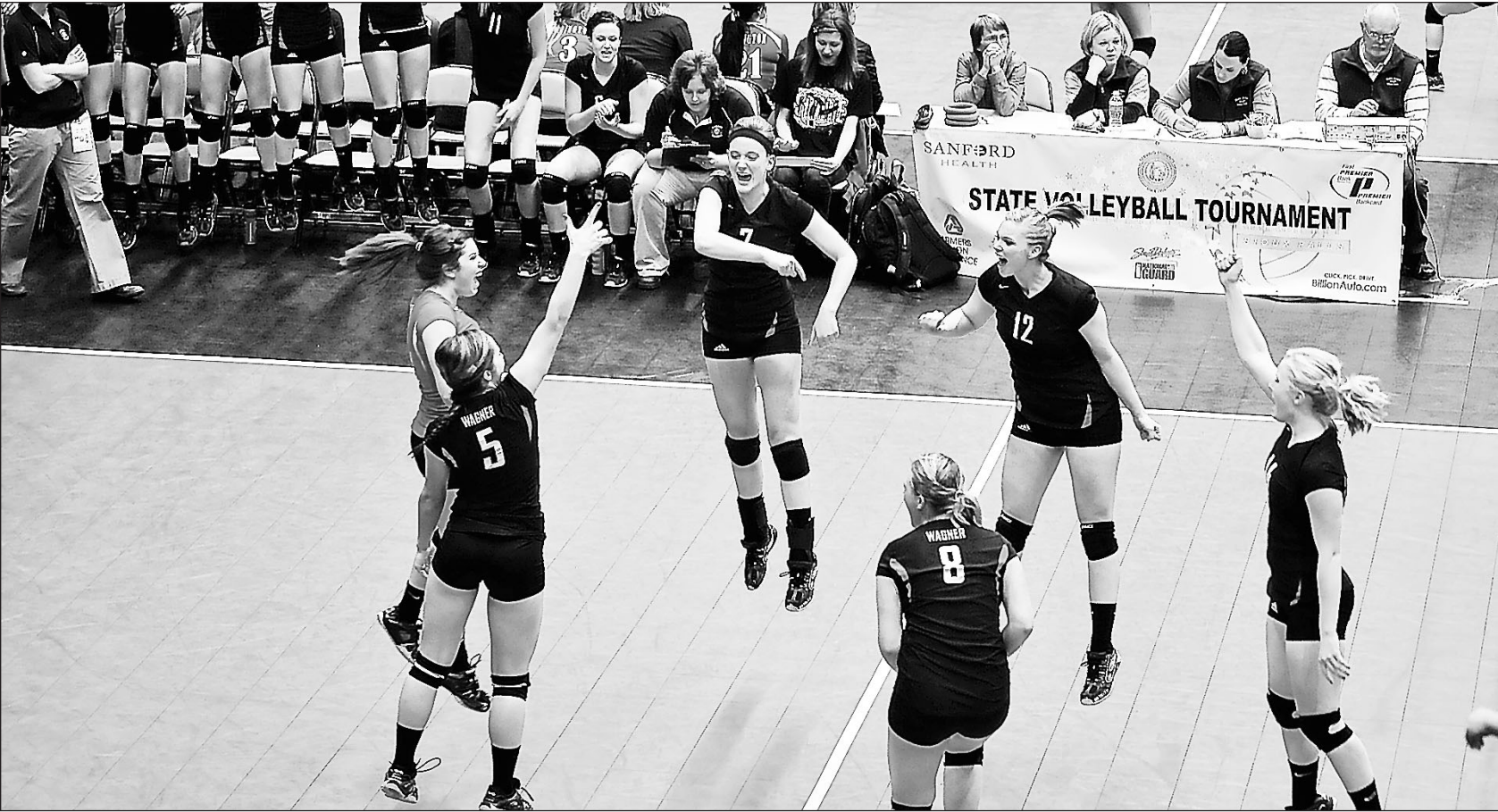
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DAVID LIAS/VERMILLION PLAIN TALK  
South Dakota point guard Alexis Yackley, left, drives around a Northern Arizona defender during their women's basketball game Friday night at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. Yackley had 12 assists in USD's 73-56 season-opening win.

## VOLLEYBALL | S.D. STATE TOURNAMENT

# Wagner One Win From Title



Wagner players celebrate an ace serve during the Red Raiders' matchup with Mobridge-Pollock in the Class A semifinals of the South Dakota State Volleyball Tournament, Friday at Sioux Falls Arena.

## Red Raiders Top Mobridge-Po., Will Face S.F. Christian In 'A' Finals

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK  
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ST. LOUIS — After a semifinal loss in the 2010 South Dakota State Volleyball Tournament, the Wagner Red Raiders were not about to take any chances with this year's tournament. Wagner bounced Mobridge-Pollock 25-13, 25-10, 25-23 Friday at Sioux Falls Arena to advance to the Class A finals of the 2011 state volleyball tournament.

ment. The title appearance will be the third in four years for the Red Raiders, who won titles in 2008 and 2009. "We want to win this whole thing," said junior setter Jessa Doom. "We knew we had to come out and get a good start." The Red Raiders did just that. After spotting Mobridge-Pollock an 8-5 edge, Wagner ran off eight straight points, including three on ace serves

by Nicole Weber. Three kills by Alexa Cimpl and ace serves by Devon Brecke and Breanna Cuka finished the run. Wagner again took control in the middle of the second set. Leading 9-7, the Red Raiders outscored the Tigers 16-3 down the stretch. Three Doom aces and kills from Weber, Brecke and Cimpl put Wagner ahead two sets to none. Mobridge-Pollock kept the third set close, but the Tigers never led

again after a five-point spread, including two Doom ace serves, turned a two-point Tiger edge into a three-point Raider advantage. "We got ourselves into trouble early," said Mobridge-Pollock head coach Keri Bolduan. "Our players tried to fight through but couldn't get out of it." The Raiders stayed aggressive on offense, something they did not do right away against Gregory in the quarterfinals, noted Wagner head

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# Northwestern Upsets Parker



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D  
Parker's Amber Dysthe sets the ball during the Pheasants' Class B semifinal matchup with Northwestern at the South Dakota State Volleyball Tournament Friday at Sioux Falls Arena.

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ST. LOUIS — Northwestern's Jussy Tuscherer and Ashley Clemens combined for 44 kills to power the Wildcats to a 25-18, 25-17, 27-25 victory over Parker in the semifinals of the South Dakota State Class B Volleyball Tournament, Friday at Sioux Falls Arena. Parker led a back-and-forth opening set 16-14 when Northwestern got rolling. Riding the hot hand of Tuscherer, the Wildcats ended the set on an 11-2 run, including five kills from the senior. "I tell our setter to go with the hot hitter until it isn't working anymore," said Northwestern head coach Nora Groft. "When it's working, you go with it." The second set followed a similar track. Parker led 12-11 before a 6-0 run — including five Tuscherer kills — put the Wildcats in control. "We lost our composure in sets one and two," said Parker head coach Jill Christensen. "We haven't seen that much all year." In the third set, Parker jumped out to a 7-2 lead and stayed in the game. Trailing 22-20, Northwestern got three straight kills from Clemens to take a 23-22 lead. Parker fought back with a pair of Tessa Weeldreyer finishes, but Tuscherer finished three straight points to put an end to the Pheasants' title hopes. Besides her match-high 27 kills, Tuscherer also had nine digs, two assists,

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# EPJ Tops Gregory, Will Seek Fifth Place

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ST. LOUIS — After seeing their hopes of a second straight championship match berth derailed on the opening day, the Elk Point-Jefferson Huskies did the only thing they could do. Come back firing. Elk Point-Jefferson pounded out 44 kills and 10 ace serves in beating Gregory 25-13, 25-15, 24-26, 25-12 in the consolation semifinals of the South Dakota State Class A Volleyball Tournament, Friday at Sioux Falls Arena. After a tough 3-2 loss to Mobridge-Pollock Thursday, the Huskies looked within to get ready for their consolation match, according to sophomore outside hitter Keely Bertram. "We knew we were a better team than we showed (Thursday)," she said. "We had to get back in the mindset of wanting to win." The EPJ offense started with good play in the back row, according to head coach Traci Kollbaum. "We came out passing a little better today," she said. "Our defense makes our offense good." Trailing 9-6 in the opening stanza, EPJ used the hitting of Lexie Branson and Amy Zeller to get on track. Bertram and Haylee Erickson also contributed to the run as EPJ took the first set.



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D  
Elk Point-Jefferson's Amy Zeller, right, attacks the ball against Gregory's Courtney Petersen, right, during their consolation semifinal game in the South Dakota State Class A Volleyball Tournament, Friday at Sioux Falls Arena.

The second set saw a similar result. Leading 11-10, EPJ scored the next seven points — including three on Branson kills — to take control. In the third set, Gregory bounced back from deficits of 4-1 and 10-6 to take a 20-14 lead. EPJ bounced back to take a 23-22 lead, but the Spikers came back to take the third set. Gregory head coach Donna Schmitz noted that the team had

success when it sped up its attack. "When the speed of our game improved, then we played well," she said. "When we slowed down, we were in trouble, and that is exactly what happened." EPJ closed out the fourth and final set with a 12-2 run, earning a consolation semifinal match with St. Thomas More today (Saturday) at 9 a.m.

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