

Men's Basketball: Huskers Looking For More After Breakthrough Season

BY ERIC OLSON
AP Sports Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — These are heady days for the Nebraska basketball program. The Cornhuskers are coming off their highest conference finish and first NCAA tournament appearance since 1998, and played to sellout crowds in their first year at Pinnacle Bank Arena. Shavon Shields said when he and his teammates went out to lunch or to the movies during the offseason, well-wishers were quick to slap them on the back and urge them to keep the wins coming. There's even a waiting list for season-tickets now — almost

unimaginable for a program that hasn't won a conference championship since 1950. "I've had a blast. That's what it's supposed to be like," third-year coach Tim Miles said of the vibe around his program. "I think it's earned with these guys. But now staying there and continuing to elevate is sometimes more difficult than the innocent climb to get where they are now." All five starters, including Big Ten scoring leader Terran Petteway, return from the team that went 19-13 and won eight of its last nine regular-season games to finish fourth in the conference. Along the way they knocked off two top-10 opponents, Michigan State on the road

and Final Four participant Wisconsin at home. "Preseason hype is always based on the year-before's performance, and I think our guys finished so strong that naturally they're going to get attention because we return a large part of our team," Miles said. "But every year's different. Last year we got hot. I don't know that means you're exactly a good team." Shields said he appreciates the excitement surrounding the Huskers. Still, he and his teammates weren't satisfied with how last season ended because they fell short of their goals — winning a Big Ten regular-season title or a game in the

NCAA tournament (they lost 74-60 to Baylor). "Everybody is kind of hungry to build on some of the good things we did, but we need to push that farther," Shields said. Here are some things to watch for the coming season, which begins Nov. 16 against Northern Kentucky: PROMISING NEWCOMERS: Graduate transfer Moses Abraham and freshmen Tarin Smith and Jake Hammond are in line for significant playing time. The 6-foot-9, 252-pound Abraham will provide some bulk when Miles wants to go with a big lineup. Abraham blocked 23 shots while averaging 13 minutes a game for

Georgetown last season. Smith was a two-year starter at point guard in coach Bob Hurley's famed St. Anthony High program in Jersey City, New Jersey, while the 6-foot-10, 230-pound Hammond averaged 26 points and 15 rebounds at Comanche (Okla.) High last season. PRESEASON RANKING? The Huskers are ranked 21st in The Associated Press' preseason Top 25, making the listing for the second time, and first since 1992-93. Miles said he welcomed a ranking because it would show prospective recruits his program is recognized nationally. CHANGING HIS GAME: Miles

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Lancer Men Open Season Today

BY ROGELIO RODRIGUEZ
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The 2014-2015 men's basketball season looks destined to turn heads and silence the critics. With many new faces in the shape of freshmen and transfer students, the Mount Marty College men are looking to climb the ladder in the Great Plains Athletic Conference. The Lancers are looking to improve on last year's season, which ended in a 4-24 record. The goal? Making it to the conference tournament and being a national academic team. "I'm not big on setting specific goals, I'm a process guy," said second-year head coach Andrew Baker, whose team opens its season today (Saturday) against Grace University in Omaha, Nebraska. "We have a lot of new faces and a lot of returners that are accepting new roles," Baker added. He believes that this team's key to success will be how well the players work for each other. Baker and the Lancers will look to the leadership and performance of senior point guard, Bud Smith. Smith was an All-Conference player in the 2013-2014 season. "He had a solid year, but we all need to have a solid year," Baker said. To do that, the Lancers began early and kept it at, according to junior Alex Irvine. "I can see the team going far, we've worked hard throughout this beginning process," he said. Irvine is another player that the new players will be looking to for leadership this season. The Lancers have four seniors on their roster with a lot of experience between them; Smith, Tyler Payer, Chris Richardson and Lorenzo Davis. "I am very pleased with how we have been performing at practice, and I can see us making it far in the tournament this year," added Irvine. The Lancers have been putting in work in the form of pre-season conditioning and weight lifting since Sept. 2. They had their first official practice of the season on Sept. 29. This season has all of the right ingredients to erase the taste of last year's performance. All of the players are focused and their hearts are set on the rewards yet to come. "They have been working hard and they need someone to take it out on," Baker said.

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Mount Marty's Alex Irvine gets inside of Dakota Wesleyan's Luke Bamberg for a layup during their Great Plains Athletic Conference men's basketball game last season. MMC opens its 2014-15 campaign at Grace University in Omaha, Nebraska, today (Saturday). P&D FILE PHOTO

SPORTS DIGEST

Howling Pack: USD Basketball Kickoff In Yankton Nov. 6

The Yankton chapter of the University of South Dakota Howling Pack will host a basketball kickoff event on Thursday, Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. at Minerva's. USD men's basketball head coach Craig Smith and women's head coach Amy Williams will be in attendance to talk about their upcoming seasons. Appetizers and desserts will be served, and a cash bar will be available. The Howling Pack provides scholarships for all USD student-athletes.

Area Runners Honored

Several area cross country runners were recognized in recent days. Named to the girls' All-State "Top 25" award list were Yankton's Madison McClure, Ethan-Parkston's Lexy Leischner and Dakota Valley's Marisa Schulz. Named to the boys' "Top 25" list was Elk Point-Jefferson's Hunter Paulson. The list is based on the top 25 times, regardless of class. McClure, Leischner, Schulz and Paulson were also named to the All-State list in their respective classes. The Class B girls' list included Gayville-Volin's Laura Nelson, Freeman's Cailey Roth and Freeman Academy's Clara Koerner. Crofton's Haley Arens was named to the All-State team in Nebraska Class D. Several area runners were also named to the S.D. Academic All-State list, an award going to seniors who hold a 3.5 cumulative GPA or better and have participated for three years or more: YANKTON: Kyle Bergeson, Paul Fanta, Tristin Roy; BON HOMME: Cole Cahoy; DAKOTA VALLEY: Zach Grudem, Crystal Ochoa, Chris Pollema, Matt Solomon, Zane Treloar; ETHAN-PARKSTON: Nick Zolnowsky; FREEMAN: Cailey Roth; IRENE-WAKONDA: Adam Katrenak; PLATE-GEDDES: Josiah Brink; VIBORG-HURLEY: Layne Meyers.

Coyotes' Bergner Nets Second Fred Mitchell Award

VERMILLION — South Dakota sophomore Miles Bergner is one of 29 collegiate place kickers honored by the Fred Mitchell Award for his excellence on the football field and in the community for the month of October. It is the second consecutive month that Bergner has received the award. Bergner made all four field goals, including a career-long tying 47 yarder, in October. He has made 12 consecutive field goals to start this season, which is a program record, and has made 14 consecutive attempts dating back to last season. He is one of seven FCS kickers without a miss in 2014 and the only one with at least 11 attempts. Bergner leads the Coyotes in scoring with 49 points. He has averaged 39.5 yards on 42 punts with a long of 59 yards and with eight punts downed inside the 20. Off the field, Bergner has volunteered his last two summers to coach high school football in his hometown of Longmont, Colo. He also performed community service with his teammates throughout fall camp. Bergner helped hang two miles of orange construction fence for a hot rod show.

Yankton Booster Club Burger Fundraiser Underway

The Yankton High School Adult Athletic Booster Club has partnered with Upper Deck Sports Bar and Grill for a fundraiser during the month of November. Upper Deck will donate a portion of burger sales from 5-9 p.m. on Friday evenings in the month of November.

Orange Fever Reigns Over Drizzly Giants' Parade

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco became the Valley of the Giants for the third time in five years Friday as hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets for a confetti and rain-soaked parade honoring the city's World Series champions. Under gray skies where a steady drizzle mixed with clouds of orange, black and white confetti, players waved, snapped photos and mugged for the roaring crowds from the top of double-decker buses, a change from the classic convertibles and cable cars on wheels that had transported them along their now-familiar parade route in 2012 and 2010. "These guys play together, they believe in each other, they play as one and they never give up," baseball Hall of Famer Willie McCovey said as he waited to greet the young members of his former team for a post-parade rally at San Francisco City Hall, the end of the 2-mil route. "That's the way this team has been for years." Elated fans of all ages, some of whom staked out viewing spots hours before the spectacle's noon start time,

pressed against metal barriers, stood on rooftops and climbed onto street lamps festooned with orange, black and white balloons, to cheer their hometown heroes. Many skipped work and pulled their children out of class against the pleas of local schools so they could catch what they described as a glimpse of history. "I'm going to send them to school on Monday saying they had 'orange fever,'" said Marcela Habash, 36, of San Francisco, who brought three of her four children to the plaza outside City Hall to see the celebration. While other players doubled up on the buses, the day's undisputed giant among Giants, pitching ace Madison Bumgarner, was given his own flatbed truck to ride. It was adorned with a sign indicating his Most Valuable Player honors from both the World Series and the National League championship. Deafening roars and chants of "M-V-P! M-V-P!" greeted the soft-spoken pitcher as he held both of his trophies aloft. A second pickup carried the Gi-

ants' World Series trophies from 2012 and 2010, while manager Bruce Bochy beamed from atop a double-decker bus bearing this year's trophy. Corporate sponsors livened up the parade with elaborately decked-out floats that included a panda-themed homage to slugger and 2012 World Series MVP Pablo Sandoval, whose nickname is Kung-Fu Panda. Former Journey lead singer Steve Perry stepped down from a float blaring his anthem "Don't Stop Believin'" to offer animated high-fives to fellow die-hard San Francisco fans. Dignitaries such as Giants legend Willie Mays, team president Larry Baer, U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Mayor Ed Lee and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, who was San Francisco's mayor when the Giants won the Series in 2010, rode in convertibles. Elsewhere along the route, teenage girls with cellphones held high shrieked as shortstop and team heart-throb Brandon Crawford rolled by. San Jose high school senior Jessica Earnshaw snapped off several pictures of Crawford.

IUPUI Stuffs Coyotes 4-1

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—Four Jaguar strikers scored as IUPUI handed the South Dakota women's soccer team a 4-1 loss at Michael A. Carroll Stadium Friday night. IUPUI (6-9-3, 4-3-0 Summit League) entered halftime with a 1-0 lead after a goal by Catherine Raster in the 23rd minute. Five minutes into the second half, IUPUI's Krissy Kirkoff dribbled into open space and knocked down a goal from 20 yards out. Jaguars Alyssa Fox and Taylor Heidorn each recorded a goal in the 69th and 76th minutes, respectively, to increase IUPUI's lead to 4-0.

South Dakota (9-7-2, 2-3-2 Summit League) fired off 16 shots in the second half to counter. Nine were off-target, six were saved by IUPUI goalkeeper Catherine Schmidt and one reached the back of the net. Senior Colleen Reeves prevented a shutout when she scored in the 77th minute off of an assist from junior Danielle Anderson. The goal was Reeves' fifth of the season. South Dakota will play its final regular season game Sunday at noon against Western Illinois in Macomb, Ill.

Funding Yankton Soccer



SUBMITTED PHOTO The Yankton Youth Soccer Association recently presented the Yankton School District with a check for \$29,000, part of YSSA's commitment of over \$100,000 over the next five years to help fund school-sponsored soccer in Yankton. The teams completed seasons in late September and early October. Pictured are Jeff Wolfram, YSSA sanctioning subcommittee member; Kathy Greenway, Yankton School Board member; Ryan Mors, YSD Activities Director; Sondra Jensen, YSSA sponsorship chair & sanctioning subcommittee member; and Wes Chambers, YSSA sanctioning subcommittee member.

USD VB

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In the 'Den', bleachers are situated on three ends and are as close as about 10 feet on two sides — the student section bleachers are probably 20 feet away. "They're so close, it's so different than people are used to," Williamson said. "When things aren't going so well, our girls have a sense that 'We're fine, we've got our support here.'"

The Coyotes, who have lost just once at home since the end of 2012, have three remaining Summit League matches in Vermillion, including showdowns with Denver and IUPUI, as well as South Dakota State. The atmosphere will no doubt help USD, according to Biltoft. "For me, I absolutely love it," she said. "I feel like it makes the intensity and everything else so much better. "They (crowd) let it get inside their (opposing team's) head, and can't really figure it out." Audrey Reeg and Sydney Dimke both added 11 kills for the Coyotes

in Friday's win, while Brittany Jessen had six kills and 52 set assists. Reeg led the defense with 17 digs. For Fort Wayne, Emily Spencer had 23 kills, Somer Johnson had 15 kills and Madison Spence recorded 46 assists. The Coyotes travel to North Dakota State on Sunday to face a Bison squad that has won four straight league matches — including a win last week over Denver. You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.



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