

Coyotes, Leathernecks Looking For Traction In Missouri Valley

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Gaining traction in the nation's toughest FCS league is proving difficult for the University of South Dakota football program.

With three remaining games this season, the Coyotes have a combined 3-18 record in the Missouri Valley Football Conference since joining the league in 2012.

Winless in five games this season, the Coyotes (2-7, 0-5) begin a two-week homestand by hosting Western Illinois (3-6, 1-4) — another team looking for progress — on Saturday afternoon at the Dakota-Dome.

At this point a year ago, South Dakota had three league wins and

wasn't that far out of the playoff picture.

"I thought we might have gotten a toehold a year ago, but got a little dose of reality this year," USD head coach Joe Glenn said Tuesday. "We can't seem to finish off and get a win."

Part of the struggles have to do with the schedule, as Glenn pointed out. The Coyotes have played six ranked teams this season, including all three non-conference opponents — FBS Oregon, Montana (No. 11 this week) and Northern Arizona (No. 25).

And then you jump into conference games and see seven league foes ranked in the top 25.

South Dakota has played, statistically, the second-toughest sched-

ule in the FCS. The combined winning percentage of its opponents is .687, which is tied with Indiana State for No. 2 — Liberty (.741) has played the toughest.

The bottom of the Missouri Valley's pre-season poll is shaking out to be rather accurate, with the exception of last-place pick Indiana State (the Sycamores are 3-2).

South Dakota and Western Illinois were tabbed No. 8 and 9, respectively, but the Leathernecks have found a way to notch a conference win.

"They're a lot like us," WIU head coach Bob Nielson said Tuesday. "They've had games where they've played very well and just haven't been able to be on the winning side of the scoreboard."

Western Illinois played 2 FBS games this season, at top-25 Wisconsin and Northwestern, and beat Drake in its other non-conference game. The Leathernecks have since lost its four league games by an average of 10 points.

They did, though, take top-ranked North Dakota State down to the wire in a 7-point game and followed that up by beating Youngstown State the next week.

Much like USD experienced last season, Western Illinois is coming up short in close games.

"In this league, opportunities are one thing, taking advantage of them is another, and that's kind of where we're at in our building process," Nielson said.

The Coyotes also had a chance

to pick up a road win at Youngstown State last Saturday, but a 17-7 lead evaporated as the hometown Penguins rallied to beat USD.

"Going to Youngstown and getting a win speaks volumes about their team," Glenn said of WIU.

The Leathernecks are an improved team this season, regardless of what other people would say, Nielson said, but progress is being made.

"The more you win, the more confidence you build," Nielson said, "and that's what we're struggling with, getting more of those scores."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

USD To Host Hoops Kickoff Here Thursday

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Craig Smith, though admittedly not all that familiar with Yankton, has heard plenty about the community 25 miles west of Vermillion.

Now, the new head men's basketball coach at the University of South Dakota will get to see Yankton in person.

The Yankton chapter of the USD Howling Pack will host a 'Meet The Coaches' basketball kickoff event Thursday at 7 p.m. at Minerva's. Smith, who was hired in March, will be joined by women's head coach Amy Williams, and both will discuss their upcoming seasons.

Unlike Williams who attended last year's kickoff event, Smith is new to the Yankton Howling Pack scene. But, he's at least heard about Yankton, he said — Smith coached Yankton High School graduate Colton Iverson at Colorado State for one season.

"Colton always talked about Yankton and how much he loved it, and (father) Chuck always talked about USD," Smith said this week. "Chuck is a legend around here; a Hall of Famer."

"That year coaching him (Colton) really helped me learn about USD."

That is also the overall goal for tonight's event; to help Yankton-area supporters learn more about USD and the basketball programs, Smith said.

"It's important for us to branch out, to reach out to different communities, and win the state of South Dakota," he said.

Light appetizers and desserts will be served at the Minerva's banquet hall, which will also have a cash bar on hand.

"It's always an honor to get an invitation to speak over there, whether it's one of these or at (Yankton) Quarterback Club," said Williams, whose Coyote women won the Summit League tournament title last season.

"We're trying to do whatever we can to infuse more red into that community," she added with a chuckle.

Both basketball teams begin their seasons on Nov. 14, with the men at Utah Valley and the women at Drake.

"We've had several weeks now to get some things figured out, but we have a lot of things that still need to be determined," Williams said. "It really helps that you've had a couple weeks of practice and a scrimmage."

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YHS Advances To 2AA Final



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

The Yankton Gazelles celebrate their set two victory against Brandon Valley during Tuesday night's District 2AA Tournament first round match in Brandon. The Gazelles won 3-1, advancing to district final on Saturday at Harrisburg.

Gazelles Play At Harrisburg On Saturday

BY JEREMY HOECK

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BRANDON — A year ago, Yankton's post-season opener resulted in an early exit for the Gazelles.

One year later, they're determined to make a deep run. Spurred by dominant play in the front, the Gazelles beat Brandon Valley 3-1 (25-22, 25-22, 12-25, 25-18) in Tuesday night's District 2AA Tournament first round match in Brandon.

"It's fun," Yankton head coach Tiffany Beste said later, with a smile. "The girls are making it a fun year."

Having now tripled last year's win total, the Gazelles (9-12) are now one victory short of their first state tournament appearance since 2008.

Yankton will have two more chances to get in to the tournament it hosts, beginning with Saturday's 7 p.m. district final at Harrisburg — the same team that eliminated the Gazelles in last year's play-in match.

"It felt amazing," said Yankton junior Becky Frick, who recorded 16 kills, three blocks and 12 digs. "We all knew if we won this one, it'd be that much easier to get to state."

"That's been our goal all year, just get there."

Early in Tuesday's match with the Lynx, the Gazelles played like a team on a mission.

Yankton won the opening two sets in similar fashion: Controlling the final stretch, winning 25-22 in both occasions.

The key in the opening set, at least, was Frick who had nine kills. From that point forward, though, other player stepped up for the Gazelles.

Junior Hannah Bockholt added 10 kills and three blocks, while sophomore Josie Saylor posted seven kills and eight blocks.

"Becky's obviously been our go-to hitter, but we've talked a lot about other girls stepping up," Beste said. "And tonight we saw that, and more, from Josie and Hannah."

Brandon Valley dominated set three, but the Gazelles rebounded to control much of set four — a sign that they've indeed improved from 2013, Beste said.

"And there's been improvement in so many ways," she said. "It's almost like it's

Wagner, Parkston Advance In Region 5A

PARKSTON — Parkson swept passed McCook Central-Montrose in the first round of the Region 5A tournament with scores of 25-21, 25-13, 25-21.

Sadie Schoenfelder led Parkston with eight kills and two ace serves. Jessica Weber made 19 digs for the home side and Kenzie Lee added five kills, six blocks, 15 digs and five ace serves.

Danielle Hanson led for MCM with seven kills. Nicole Roth added six kills and one ace serve.

Parkston will travel to Wagner on Thursday night as the look to make it into the final round of the 5A Tournament.

PARKSTON25 25 25
MCCOOK CENTRAL-MONTROSE21 13 21

Tri-Valley 3, Bon Homme 1
PARKSTON — Tri-Valley brought down Bon Homme 18-2, 25-19, 25-21, and 25-17 Tuesday night in the Region 5A tournament in Parkston.

Emma Johnson pounded 21 kills and four blocks for Tri-Valley. Sammy Ka-

sowski had 18 kills. Sydney Haysmann set up 23 assists, and Mariah Swier set up 20. Morgan Haga dug up 21.

For Bon Homme, Morgan McAllister had 10 kills, and Jeni Schmidt recorded nine. Alie Adams set up 29 assists, and Morgan Rothscadl had 10 digs.

Tri-Valley takes on Mt. Vernon-Plankinton Thursday.

BON HOMME (20-9).....25 19 21 17
TRI-VALLEY (17-9).....18 25 25 25

Wagner 3, West Central 0

WAGNER — Wagner swept West Central 25-16, 25-15, and 25-14 Tuesday night in the Region 5A tournament in Wagner.

Emily Brunings pounded 13 kills and had five blocks for Wagner. Krista Dvorak set up 18 assists. Brooklyn Tolliver dug up 17, and Ali Kuca had 15 digs.

For West Central, Syd Goertel set up eight assists and nine digs.

Wagner will play in the next round Thursday at home.

WEST CENTRAL (12-15).....16 15 14
WAGNER (28-9).....25 25 25

Region 4A

Beresford 3, Lennox 1
BERESFORD — Jordanna Kruse to-

taled 9 kills and 7 digs to help the Beresford Watchdogs to a victory over Lennox. Set scores were 25-23, 25-18, 22-25, and 25-13.

Kayla Johnston also recorded 7 kills and 6 digs for the Watchdogs, while Haleigh Hagedorn added 16 assists and 14 digs.

For the Lennox Orioles, Katelyn Wilson led the way with 10 kills and 3 blocks. Morgan Klastergard totaled 7 kills and 5 blocks.

Lennox finished their season with a record of 5-22. Beresford advances to the semi-finals, where they will take on the top seeded Dakota Valley Panthers on Thursday in North Sioux City at 6 p.m.

LENNOX (5-22).....25 18 25 13
BERESFORD (12-17) 25 25 22 25

Elk Point-Jefferson 3, Canton 0

ELK POINT — Elk Point-Jefferson secured their place in the semi final round of the Region 4A Tournament on Tuesday night with a sweep over Canton; 25-22, 25-27, 25-26.

Miranda Stabe led EPJ with 10 kills, six digs and three ace serves. Allison Targonski provided 19 digs and five ace serves for EPJ. Drew Keuck contributed

six kills, seven digs and seven ace serves.

For Canton, Mary Kate Beachler led with five kills while Katie Glenn recorded nine digs.

EPJ will play Tea Area on Thursday night in the semifinal round of the Region 4A Tournament.

ELK POINT-JEFFERSON.....25 25 25
CANTON.....22 27 6

Tea Area 3, Vermillion 0

TEA — The Tea Area swept passed Vermillion 25-15, 25-21, 25-18 on Tuesday night to punch their ticket into the semi final round of the Region 4A Tournament.

Katlyn Ameson and Ally Kacmarynski each recorded six kills for Tea and Lexi LeFave made 25 digs.

For Vermillion, Rachel Feinnegan led with six kills and 14 digs. Kayla Stammer contributed 15 assists.

Tea Area will next play Elk Point-Jefferson on Thursday night in the semi final round of the Region 4A Tournament.

TEA AREA.....25 25 25
VERMILLION.....15 21 18

Randolph Holds Off Creighton For Sub-District D1-6 Title



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Randolph's Elle Bermel attacks against a pair of Creighton blockers during the championship of the Sub-District D1-6 Volleyball Tournament on Tuesday in Hartington, Nebraska.

HARTINGTON, Neb. — The Randolph Cardinals defeated the Creighton Bulldogs in the D1-6 sub-district championship 25-18, 26-24, 6-25, 9-25, 15-11.

The Bulldogs got an outstanding performance from senior Rebecca Eggerling who totaled 31 kills, 14 digs, and 5 ace serves. Natalie Nielsen added 7 kills and 21 digs for Creighton.

No stats were available for Randolph.

Creighton finishes their season with a 15-7 record, while Randolph advances to a district championship game.

CREIGHTON (15-7).....18 24 25 25 11
RANDOLPH (15-11).....25 26 6 9 15

Randolph 3, LCC 0

HARTINGTON, Neb. — Randolph downed Laurel-Concord-Coleridge 25-21, 25-17, 25-19 in the semifinals of the Sub-District D1-6 Volleyball Tournament on

Monday.

No statistics were reported for Randolph.

For LCC, Ellie Arduser had 10 kills and 10 assists, and Audra Corbit had eight kills and five blocks to lead the way. Candice Rastede had 10 assists, Emily Hangman had three ace serves and Bryn Schutte had 13 digs for the Bears.

RANDOLPH.....25 25 25
LAUREL-CONCORD-COL (6-20).....21 17 19

Sub-District D2-3

Winside 3, Wausa 0

RANDOLPH, Neb. — Winside ended Wausa's season with a 25-17, 25-14, 25-11 decision in the Sub-District D2-3 Volleyball Tournament on Monday in Randolph, Nebraska.

No statistics were reported for Winside.

For Wausa, Tara Munter had five kills and nine digs, and Alli Bamey had 11 digs to lead the way. Tori Claussen and Regan Hennings each had two blocks for the Lady Vikings.

WAUSA (3-23).....17 14 11
WINSIDE.....25 25 25

Sub-District C2-7

Crofton 3, Ponca 0

LAUREL, Neb. — The Crofton Lady Warriors earned the Sub-District C2-7 volleyball title with a 25-19, 25-16, 25-13 victory over Ponca in the finals on Monday in Laurel, Nebraska.

Crofton (26-0) will face either Elgin Public-Pope John or Plainview on Friday, at a site to be announced, with the winner qualifying for state.

Kelsey Sanger and Maria Wortmann each had 12 kills, and Allison Arens had 10 kills to lead a balanced Crofton attack. Wortmann also had five ace serves and 15 digs. Allison Arens also had 14 digs. Brittany Guenther had 19 assists, and Allison Tramp added 14 assists and 10 digs in the victory.

Ponca finished with a 22-7 record.

CROFTON (26-0).....25 25 25
PONCA (22-7).....19 16 13

Crofton 3, Hartington Cedar Catholic 0

LAUREL, Neb. — Crofton swept Hartington Cedar Catholic Monday night 25-23, 25-11, 25-7 in the Sub-District C2-7 semifinals in Laurel.

Maria Wortmann had 13 kills, seven blocks (two solo) and 12 digs to lead Crofton. Allison Arens had five ace serves and 12 digs. Kelsey Sanger had four assisted blocks and 10 digs. Monica Arens had seven kills, Brittany Guenther had 15 assists and Allison Tramp had 12 assists in the win.

Brianna Lammers pounded four kills and dug up nine for Hartington Cedar Catholic. Emily Feilmeier set up nine assists and had nine digs.

HARTINGTON CEDAR CATHOLIC (9-22).....23 11 7
CROFTON (25-0).....25 25 25

Sub-District D1-5

Emerson-Hubbard 3, Allen 0

WAYNE, Neb. — Emerson-Hubbard defeated Allen in the championship of the Sub-District D1-5 championship. Set scores were 25-23, 25-15, 25-15.

Allen was led by Gabby Sullivan who totaled a team-high 12 kills and 14 digs. Bri Hingst also added 16 digs for the Eagles.

No stats were available for Emerson-Hubbard.