

Big-Time Backs Kick Off Dome Weekend

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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For fans of old-school ground games, today's (Thursday) South Dakota Class 9A championship football game in the DakotaDome will be right up their alley.

Three of the state's top running backs will be on display as unbeaten Howard (11-0) and Wolsley-Wessington (11-0) square off in the first of seven state championships to be decided this weekend. Game time is set for 10:30 a.m. in Vermillion.

Howard features the state's all-time leading runner in nine-man history, senior Luke Loudenburg. The 5-5, 150-pounder has sliced through opponents for 2,458 yards and 50 touchdowns in this season alone. A host of other backs, including Jordan Kuhle (736 yards, 10 TD), Gunner Gilbertson (339 yards, 4 TD) and Ethan Kramer (312 yards, 2 TD) have the Tigers' rushing total at 4,320

yards on the season, an average of 392.7 yards per contest.

"Luke makes some crazy runs," said Howard head coach Pat Ruml. "We've been watching him do it for quite some time."

Wolsley-Wessington, though, has two backs who have combined for even more yards. Quarterback Lorenzo Williams, a South Dakota State commit, has rushed for 2,533 yards and 38 touchdowns, while back Hunter Johnson (27 TD) sits just two yards shy of 2,000 on the season. As a team, the Warbirds have ripped through defenses to the tune of 5,414 yards, nearly 500 yards a contest.

"We've been known as a running team," said Warbirds head coach Gordon Hooks, who noted that Johnson's older brother Ryne and Williams each finished near 2,000 yards apiece in 2013. "When you have Lorenzo's speed and Hunter, who had a 94-yarder earlier this

season, it made the stats look pretty big."

Williams has also been a weapon in the pass game, throwing for 650 yards and five scores. Bennett White has a team-best 12 catches, while Darian Ogunjemilusi has a team-best four touchdown catches.

Howard has also passed the ball on a limited basis, with Jordan Genzlinger completing 22 of 38 passes for 465 yards. As a team, the Tigers have 14 touchdown passes on the season, with three each for Adonis Ruml (8-162 yards), Gilbertson (5-127) and Thad Henkel (5-94).

"Howard is solid all the way around. They do everything well," Hooks said of the Tiges. "Their quarterback does a good job of controlling the game. Loudenburg is probably the best running back I've seen in a decade and, for

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CLASS 9A CHAMPIONSHIP

Wolsley-Wessington (11-0) vs. Howard (11-0)

10:30 a.m. • Radio: KJAM-FM, KMIT-FM, KQRN-FM • TV: SDPB

WARBIRDS OFFENSE				TIGERS OFFENSE			
Pos	No	Name	Yds	Pos	No	Name	Yds
QB	1	Lorenzo Williams	6-2 182 Sr	C	56	Dane Dornbusch	5-10 230 Jr
RB	6	Hunter Johnson	5-10 167 Jr	G	52	Kaleb Haas	5-10 190 Sr
LG	57	Cole McGehee	5-11 220 Sr	G	45	Bailey Neises	5-8 155 Sr
RG	44	Dylan Hines	5-11 235 So	TE	33	Adonis Ruml	5-10 185 Sr
TE	56	Brady Struck	6-0 245 Jr	TE	12	Tanner Henkel	6-0 180 Sr
C	89	Caleb Brandt	5-7 195 So	RB	21	Jordan Kuhle	6-0 175 Sr
FB	14	John Hamilton	5-10 162 Jr	RB	14	Gunner Gilbertson	5-10 180 Sr
WB	23	Darin Ogunjemilusi	6-1 169 So	FB	23	Luke Loudenburg	5-5 150 Sr
WR	9	Jerret Weber	6-0 180 Jr	QB	11	Jordan Genzlinger	5-11 155 Jr
RB	10	Carter Langbehn	5-11 185 Jr				

WARBIRDS DEFENSE				TIGERS DEFENSE			
Pos	No	Name	Tackles	Pos	No	Name	Tackles
DB	1	Lorenzo Williams	6-2 182 Sr	DE	56	Dane Dornbusch	5-10 230 Jr
DB	6	Hunter Johnson	5-10 167 Jr	DE	12	Tanner Henkel	6-0 180 Sr
LB	57	Cole McGehee	5-11 220 Sr	LB	45	Bailey Neises	5-8 155 Sr
LB	57	Cole McGehee	5-11 220 Sr	LB	21	Jordan Kuhle	6-0 175 Sr
DL	44	Dylan Hines	5-11 235 So	LB	14	Gunner Gilbertson	5-10 180 Sr
DL	56	Brady Struck	6-0 245 Jr	LB	52	Kaleb Haas	5-10 190 Sr
DL	89	Caleb Brandt	5-7 195 So	LB	11	Jordan Genzlinger	5-11 155 Jr
LB	14	John Hamilton	5-10 162 Jr	DB	23	Luke Loudenburg	5-5 150 Sr
DB	23	Darin Ogunjemilusi	6-1 169 So				
LB	10	Carter Langbehn	5-11 185 Jr				

TEAM LEADERS	
RUSHING:	Lorenzo Williams 175-2,533 yards, 37 TD; Hunter Johnson 140-1,998, 27 TD
PASSING:	Lorenzo Williams 26-47, 650 yards, 5 TD
RECEIVING:	Bennett White 12-208 yards; Darian Ogunjemilusi 9-295, 4 TD; Jerret Weber 8-147, 1 TD
DEFENSE:	Lorenzo Williams 134 tackles, 18 TFL, 1 INT, 2 FR; Cole McGehee 114 tackles, 18 TFL; Hunter Johnson 105 tackles, 8 TFL; Carter Langbehn 80 tackles, 5 TFL; Dylan Hines 16 sacks; Brady Struck 7 sacks



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D South Dakota women's basketball coach Amy Williams addresses the media during USD basketball media day on Monday. The Coyotes, who won the Summit League Tournament title this past March, open the 2014-15 season on Friday at Drake.

USD Women Look To Build On Summit League Title

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — The journey to the NCAA Tournament didn't start out all that smooth last season for the University of South Dakota women's basketball team.

The Coyotes had to dig out of an 0-4 league start and later battled through a late-season stretch where they gave up 87, 99 and 94 points in consecutive games.

And yet, it was the Coyotes who were hoisting the Summit League tournament trophy.

Even with eight of their top nine scorers back from that run, USD has two singular goals for the 2014-15 season, which begins Friday night at Drake.

"We've been talking about consistency, that we can't have that up and down roller coaster," said junior Kelly Stewart, one of eight players back who averaged at least 13 minutes a game.

"There will be ups and downs in the season, but now that we've seen where we can go, we want to come out with a bang."

The Coyotes, who lost to Stanford in the first round of the NCAA Tournament back in March, addressed the defensive issue early in pre-season practices last month. Over the first full week, head coach Amy Williams instituted what she called 'Camp Defense' — an intense series of drills with almost no offensive work.

The goal, she said, was to ensure a cleaner start to the season.

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Volleyball | Nebraska State Tournament

Crofton, Wynot Begin State Today

Warriors Take Top Seed, Unbeaten Record To Lincoln

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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Crofton ended 20 years away from the Nebraska State Volleyball Tournament a year ago. This year the Lady Warriors return, and hope to step into an even more familiar setting for its athletes.

Holding a championship trophy.

The Lady Warriors take a 27-0 record and the top seed in the the Class C2 bracket of the Nebraska State Volleyball Tournament, which begins today (Thursday) in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Not only will the state tournament atmosphere be familiar for Crofton, so will the surroundings. State volleyball was in Kearney, Nebraska, a year ago, but CHS has won three straight state basketball titles in Lincoln.

"I'm hoping that they are more familiar with Lincoln," said Crofton head coach Susan Johnson. "I think they were frustrated with the tournament last year. This year they get to go back and show their real nature."

The Lady Warriors responded to their 23-5 season a year ago by working even harder, Johnson said.

"This summer was competitive," she said. "Our direction was very good this summer."

Crofton boasts just two seniors, Wayne State commit Maria Wortmann (5-11, MH; 386 kills, 288 digs, 23 ace serves, 79 blocks) and South Dakota basketball commit Allison Arens (5-9, OH, 222 kills, 272 digs, 54 ace serves, 31 blocks). Sophomores Kelsey Sanger (5-6, OH; 170 kills, 234 digs, 40 ace serves, 30 blocks) and Monica Arens (5-10, MH; 139 kills, 49 blocks) have also been key contributors at the net.

"We have a lot of good hitters and some really good defense," Johnson said. "Our serving has been very aggressive."

Juniors Brittany Guenther (5-1; 421 assists, 126 digs) and Allison Tramp (5-4; 413 assists, 195 digs, 22 blocks, 18 ace serves, 69 kills) have shared setting duties.

Junior Breanna Allen (5-4) has anchored the libero position, posting 147 digs and 22 ace serves.

"Our libero never shows up big in the stats, but she gets some critical digs," Johnson said. "She is very good at communicating with our blocks. She's a big asset to our team."

Crofton opens with a Southern Valley team (25-8) that the Lady Warriors got a glimpse of this summer at a team camp.

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P&D FILE PHOTO Crofton senior Maria Wortmann, 11, serves the ball during a Lady Warriors match earlier this season. The Lady Warriors take a 27-0 record and the top seed into the Class C2 portion of the Nebraska State Volleyball Tournament, which begins today (Thursday) in Lincoln.

Blue Devils Ride Late Surge To State

BY JEREMY HOECK
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The Wynot Blue Devils hit their stride late in the season and the result was a first trip to the state volleyball tournament since 2011.

It was almost as if the script went according to plan, said head coach Tammy Wieseler.

"That's one of the things you really hope, but you never know," Wieseler said. "I would definitely say we peaked later in the season, which is an advantage for us."

Wynot, the winner of District D2-2, will play Exeter-Milligan in the first round of the Nebraska Class D2 State Tournament today (Thursday) at 3:30 p.m. at Lincoln Southeast High School.

The Blue Devils (21-9), the No. 6 seed, once again fought through a schedule filled with opponents from other classes. But once they found their groove, there was no turning back — Wynot swept its way through sub-district play and upset top-ranked Stuart in districts.

"It's frustrating at first because we lost some five-setters we could win now," Wieseler said. "It was always a little bit of a missing piece."

What was never lacking, though, was confidence.

The volleyball roster is filled with girls who helped Wynot win its fourth straight state basketball championship in March, and many of those players went on to compete at the state track meet.

Among those players are seniors Kristi Bruening (193 kills, 62 blocks) and Jenna Heine (527 set assists, 76 kills, 318 digs), juniors Danielle Wieseler (529 digs) and Olivia Wieseler (297 digs), and sophomores Carissa Kuchta (121 kills and 36 blocks) and Cortney Arkfeld (285 kills, 84 blocks, leads the team in both).

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Norfolk Standout Hagedorn Signs With USD Men

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Tyler Hagedorn has been waiting a month to make it official. And in that time, his commitment has not wavered.

It's only gotten stronger.

After committing in mid-October, Hagedorn, a 6-foot-9 forward at Norfolk (Nebraska) High School, signed

Wednesday to play basketball at the University of South Dakota.

"It was the right fit. I think that's the best way to describe it," he said after his.

Hagedorn, who is coached in Norfolk by former Coyote standout Ben Ries, averaged 16.8 points, 7.5 rebounds, 2.4 assists and 1.6 blocks per game last season for the Panthers. He earned second team Class A honors

after leading Norfolk to the state semifinals.

Curiously, it was USD that entered the recruiting process latest on Hagedorn, he said.

"I actually had to call (Smith) at one point, to make sure he was still interested in me," Hagedorn said. "Then going on my visit and talking with the guys, it was a place that fits what I wanted."

Ultimately, Hagedorn chose USD over another Summit League school: Denver.

"Denver has a pretty stable ground with a solid coaching staff, but USD has something new," he said. "New players, new coaches, new upgrades."

"That was something I wanted to be part of."

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