

Playoff Implications On Line For SDSU, USD



P&D FILE PHOTO
South Dakota head coach Joe Glenn, right, celebrates with defensive lineman Colin Mertlik after a fumble recovery during the Coyotes' game against Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. USD hosts South Dakota State today (Saturday) at 1 p.m.

Coyotes Aiming For Playoff Berth; Jacks Look For Top-8 Seed

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION – While talking about the Yankton Bucks playing in the state championship game, Kellen Soulek was quick to point out that he never got to play in the DakotaDome during his high school career.

He's played in two Division I playoff games, has beaten a Big 12 team (Kansas), but has yet to play a game on the DakotaDome turf.

That will change today (Saturday) for Soulek, when he takes the field for South Dakota State in a 1 p.m. rivalry game against the University of South Dakota.

"I'm really excited for it," Soulek, a sophomore defensive lineman, said this week. "I'm ready for the Dome atmosphere."

That atmosphere – which is likely to see a sellout crowd – is kicked up a notch this season now that the Coyotes (5-4, 3-3) are fighting for an FCS playoff spot and the fifth-ranked Jacks (7-2, 4-2) are fighting for a postseason seed.

In the last three meetings between the long-time rivals, SDSU has won by an average of 20 points and has gone on to win a playoff game.

Put another way: The Jacks have had more to play for than just bragging rights within the state border.

"Every game is a step closer to where we want to be, and this would definitely be a big one," said Soulek, who never reached the Dome during his

also

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when they lost every Missouri Valley Football Conference game. Their season has been highlighted to this point by the eye-opening win at North Dakota State.

And yes, that means the 2015 version of the Showdown Series brings a different feel.

"Good job by USD to put themselves in that situation, and we're in that situation," SDSU head coach John Stiegelmeier said. "It'll obviously add to the intensity of the game."

A potential win over the Jacks – something USD hasn't done since 2000 (six losses) – would help vault the Coyotes into the FCS playoff conversation, with the season finale at Illinois State looming next.

"They're obviously in a position where they want to get a seed, and of course we want to be part of that dance too," USD head coach Joe Glenn said.

"If we win a couple games here at the end, why wouldn't we think we belong?"

While USD's defense has been solid over the last four games, the Coyotes are going to need another solid offensive performance – like last week – to

high school career and redshirted the 2013 State/U game in Vermillion.

While the Jacks enter today's game with seven wins, the Coyotes have already seen a 3-win improvement from a year ago

crack through what has become another dominant SDSU defense.

Over their last five games, the Jacks have held teams to an average of 9.5 points, with a total of five touchdowns allowed.

What has keyed the recent hot streak?

"We use this term all the time; it's all about mastery," Stiegelmeier said. "If you understand your role in the defense, and just do it, good things should happen."

Soulek, a nose tackle, has recorded 0.5 sacks with one interception this season for a defensive unit that has produced 14 sacks and seven interceptions.

"We're playing with a lot of confidence right now, and that's a huge part of it," Soulek said. "We've just got to trust the game plan."

On the flip side, the USD defense has a unique challenge with the SDSU offense. Specifically, what quarterback they plan for?

Both, actually.

Zach Lujan has passed for 1,487 yards and 13 touchdowns in seven games for the Jacks, while freshman Taryn Christian has passed for 903 yards and has a combined nine touchdowns – he accounted for 372 yards and three scores in last week's win over Illinois State.

"If we see Lujan, I'll imagine we'll see a little more throwing, and if the other

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MMC

Mayville State Holds Off Lancer Men 69-67

BY ROGELIO RODRIGUEZ
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Laddie E. Cimpl Arena was full of commotion as the Mount Marty College Lancers hosted the Comets of Mayville State University. The Lancers were looking to earn their first win of the season against a Mayville team that was coming off of a 98-46 win of Oak Hills Christian College on Tuesday.

Ultimately, Mayville left town with a 69-67 victory.

The Lancers were fresh off of an 85-76 point loss to Bethany College. That game also saw the emergence of Alex Irvine as the definitive leader of this team. Mount Marty would need their senior captain to be as inspirational as he was in their previous match.

"I thought it was going to be a knock-out, drag-out like it was, they are a very defensive team and do a lot of the same things that we do," said Mount Marty College Head Coach Andrew Baker.

The first half started off slow but with the introduction of Irvine off the bench, the Lancers found their groove and kept the lead all half. Irvine went 5-5 for shots and had 11 points off the bench in the first half. He and KJ DeCristino were heavily involved in winning balls in the opposition's half.

"They have a solid athlete in the form of number 42 (Chuck Robinson) and I think we did a decent job boxing him out," said Irvine.

Robinson led the Comets in the first half with 10 points and 5-8 shots made. A missed free throw by Jamal Bronco in the dying minutes of the half kept the Lancers in the lead.

"I think we did a lot of things well, we shared

"We need to learn how to win. We're really close and we need to get over the hump."

ANDREW BAKER

the ball really well, took care of the ball really well, and did an alright job on the offensive boards," said Baker.

MMC led 32-31 at the break.

Mayville State dominated as the second half opened. Fouls by the Lancer defense cost them vital points that would haunt the home side in the dying seconds of the game.

Mayville built its biggest lead, 55-46, with 9:17 to play.

"We need to learn how to win. We're really close and we need to get over the hump," said Baker.

Deric Denning shone bright in Cimpl Arena with five three-pointers in the second half to

spark some life into a Lancer team that seemed all but finished. They took the lead 62-60 on Irvine's jumper with at the 5:11 mark.

The teams traded points from there, with Mayville holding a 68-64 lead with 30 seconds left. The Lancers cut it to one on Deric Denning's trey with 23 seconds remaining. But the Lancers could not overcome the deficit.

"I think we defended well, we rebounded well but in the end it wasn't enough," said Baker.

Denning ended his night leading the Lancers with 17 points and went 5-6 on three pointers. Irvine followed up with 15 points and Patrick Ciganovic recorded nine rebounds.

Robinson led Mayville State with 18 points and 11 rebounds. Jamal Branco followed with 17 points.

The Lancers will host Waldorf College on Saturday night.

You can follow Rogelio on Twitter: @Rogelio-UlisesR



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Mayville State's Aidan Quinn (13) knocks the ball away from Mount Marty's Taylor Millay (33) in men's basketball action Friday night at the Laddie E. Cimpl Arena.

S.D. Football Championships: Class 11B

Winner Takes It All With 45-6 Triumph

BY MICHAEL HAMMOND
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VERMILLION — The Winner Warriors took home the Class 11B Football Championship by defeating the Tri-Valley Mustangs 45-6 in the Dakota Dome in Vermillion on Friday.

This was the third time these teams faced off in the state title game with Winner winning in 12-6 in 2009 and 13-6 in 2012.

"It probably didn't play out the way I expected, I probably didn't think we would score 45 points, but defensively we could hold them to six," Winner coach Dan Aaker said. "Our guys played like they did all year and that's what you saw."

The Warriors came into the game plenty capable to score, outscoring their opponents 504 to 20 in 11 victories and no losses on their way to the state championship.

"We knew they were capable of putting up points like they have all year," Tri-Valley coach Steve Bazata said. "We thought we would be able to slow them down a little bit more, but they are a really good team and it's just what happened."

Winner came out and showed its ability to score right away, scoring on a Windsor Barry 31-yard run



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Winner's Drew Demers, 16, tries to knock the ball away from Tri-Valley's Landon Freeman during the Class 11B championship game on Friday at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. Freeman made the catch on the play.

on just its third play of the game, after they forced Tri-Valley to turn the ball over on downs at the Winner 25-yardline. In the second quarter, Winner added to the lead with a 13-yard pass from Drew Demers to Riley Frazier, who caught a jump ball between Tri-Valley defenders, a 29-yard field goal from Jonas Brill, and a 1-yard run from Barry to take a 24-0 lead into the locker room.

To start the second half Winner turned the ball over on downs, resulting in its only non-scoring drive in the game, but just two plays later, defensive lineman, Jordan Turgeon, intercepted a screen pass with one hand and took it 24 yards for a score.

"I was just thinking 'don't fall,'" Turgeon said.

Aaker was impressed with his player, but knew he

had the ability to make that type of play.

"That's always good to see a big guy do that, that's his second interception of the year," Aaker said. "Really good at reading screens and he sat right there and one-handed it and there he goes. "That's fun to watch."

The following drive, Tri-Valley put its only score of the day on the board with a 38-yard run by Brenton Hanisch.

Barry scored on the play of the game, a 67-yard pass from DeMers which Barry bobbled before he brought it in and out ran two defenders into the endzone, giving Winner a 38-6 lead.

"Don't drop it," Barry said about the catch.

Kayleb Brozik would score the final touchdown of the game in the fourth quarter on a seven yard run.

"This is number three for me and it feels as good as the first two," Aakers said. "Really proud of these guys, dominating season from start to finish."

Barry would take home the SD Sports Writers "Joe Robbie" MVP award along with the SD Coaches Association Outstanding Back Award after rushing for 80 yards on 11 carries and two TDs and one catch for 67 yards and a touchdown.

"Windsor has been a

motivated senior all year, really proud of him the way he's come on and played this year," Aakers said. "He's one of our big play guys, but the last two games he's really, really stood out."

Turgeon was ecstatic about the state title and took home the SD Coaches Association Outstanding Lineman Award in part due to his interception return for a touchdown.

"I've wanted this my whole life, we all have, and we worked every day for it, and it feels good to finally get it," Turgeon said. "It's an honor, I worked hard, and it feels great to finally get an accolade."

Winner was able to win the battle of the trenches and most of the one-on-one battles, according to Bazata, who thought Tri-Valley had a good season.

"Right now you don't feel good about it, but take the weekend to kind of get this out of your head a little bit," Bazata said. "We have had a successful season, but we are not happy ending here."

Frazier led the Warriors on the ground with 106 yards on 12 attempts, also leading the team with six total tackles. DeMers completed 8-of-10 passes for 198 yards and two touchdowns. Brozik caught three passes for 24 yards to go along with 54 rushing yards on seven carries.

For Tri-Valley, Hanisch led in rushing with 85 yards on 14 attempts and a touchdown. Noah Jewett completed 2-of-4 passes for 27 yards, both to Landon Freeman, and an interception.

Follow @michaelhammond_ on Twitter.

Lesterville Community Center
Annual Poultry Party
Saturday, Nov. 14
Serving from 4:30 - 7:30pm

Soup, Taverns, Hot Dogs, Pies & Desserts.
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EVERYONE WELCOME!