



Coyotes Face No. 6 Illinois State In Finale

Dual Threat QB Roberson The Latest Challenge For USD Defense

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VERMILLION – Tre Roberson is far from a secret in FCS circles. The Illinois State quarterback, who was previously at Indiana, guided the Redbirds to last season's national championship game. And he hasn't slowed down this season.

Roberson, a senior, will enter today's (Saturday) game against the University of South Dakota as one of the top dual threat quarterbacks in the country – just as much of a big-play threat with his arm as he is with his feet.

Thing is, the Coyotes (5-5, 3-4) have a pretty good quarterback – junior Ryan Saeger – in their own right, Illinois State coach Brock Spack pointed out this week.

"It's just excellent coaching on their part," Spack said. "He's really done a good job of managing the offense and understanding what the defense is giving them."

Saeger, for his part as a dual threat option, has seen his production through the air steadily increase over the last month. He has passed for at least 200 yards in four of the last five games, and needs 40 yards to become the fourth quarterback in program history to reach 2,000 for a season.

While he's certainly capable of long gains with his feat, Saeger hasn't necessarily needed to rush as much this season – the Coyotes, even with the loss of Trevor Bouma, have relied on Michael Fredrick.

On the season, Saeger has completed 162-of-280 passes for 1,960 yards and 12 touchdowns, with seven interceptions. He has also rushed for 351 yards and three scores.

"He'll be one of the better players in the league as he continues to get more experience," Spack said.

Experience, on the other hand, favors Roberson in today's matchup.

He saw action in all three



P&D FILE PHOTO

South Dakota's Drew Potter, 41, and Michael Fredrick, 14, celebrate after teammate Ryan Saeger finds the endzone on a 1-yard dive during the Coyotes' matchup with South Dakota State on Nov. 14 at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. USD finishes the regular season at No. 6 Illinois State today (Saturday).

seasons at Indiana (of the Big Ten) and then was named last year's Missouri Valley Football Conference Newcomer of the Year – when he rolled up over 4,000 yards of total offense.

Spack heaped praise this week on Roberson, saying that he ranks among the best Spack has ever coached, and that list includes former Heisman Trophy candidates.

"And he has what all those guys have, an unbelievable competitive side to him," said Spack, who previously spent 12 seasons at Purdue – where NFL star Drew Bees was once the quarterback.

"He's very unusual in that an athlete can go into a funk sometimes, but he is uncanny about pulling himself out of those and finding a way to make a play."

And Roberson has done plenty of that this season. He passed for 1,683 yards with 14 touchdowns, and has rushed for 509 yards and eight touchdowns.

He leads a sixth-ranked Illinois State (8-2, 6-1) squad that has won an FCS-best 17

straight games at home and can clinch a share of the Missouri Valley title with a win over USD.

Roberson is joined in the Redbirds backfield by running back Marshaun Coprich, who ranks third nationally with 1,469 rushing yards, with 16 TD.

Many of the obstacles facing the Coyotes for this top-10 road game sound similar to the ones faced a month ago when they traveled to North Dakota State. And that ended up being a significant upset for USD.

"We'll have our hands full, but we've had pretty good luck against some of the stronger teams in the league in the last month or so," USD head coach Joe Glenn said. "I think we've grown up quite a bit and come a long way with our defense."

A week ago, the Coyotes built a 20-10 lead on South Dakota State, only to see the Jackrabbits storm back to win 30-23. Moving on from that kind of emotional game



P&D FILE PHOTO

South Dakota's Eric Shufford looks for running room after a catch during the Coyotes' matchup with South Dakota State on Nov. 14 at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

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Jacks Look To Secure Top-8 Seed With Win At W. Illinois

BY TYLER TEAL
Jackrabbits Sports Service

"Top 8" is the new buzzword in Brookings.

That's the message South Dakota State coach John Stiegelmeier has been preaching to his football team.

Getting a top-8 playoff seed has been the Jackrabbits' goal since the beginning of the year and with one game left in the regular season there's only one thing standing in the way: The Western Illinois Leather-necks.

"If you make the playoffs and you're a top-8 seed, it's advantage Jackrabbits," Stiegelmeier said. "You get a bye, you get a home game. The home game would be in Sioux Falls (because of the stadium renovation), but it's a huge advantage ... But we have to go to Western and win."

Even in the "glory years" of running back Zach Zenner and quarterback Austin Sumner, SDSU had to fight to get into the playoffs. This year has a different wrinkle to it, and that's not all bad.

"In reality, we're in a whole different place than we've been," Stiegelmeier said. "Now we're sitting in a good situation battling for a top-8 seed."

Ranked No. 5 in the country, the Jackrabbits (8-2 overall, 5-2 Missouri Valley Football Conference) are heading into unfamiliar territory thanks to a collection of efforts from the whole team.

An argument could be made that it all starts with the defense.

SDSU leads the Missouri Valley in scoring defense, allowing opponents an average of 15.4 points a game. Overall, the Jacks rank fifth, giving up roughly 350 yards of a contest.

And while the strong defensive effort is a good place to start handing out kudos, the Jacks' at-times explosive offense can also make things interesting. The team is fourth in the conference in scoring at 30 points a game. The Jacks are averaging just over 400 yards per game.

Compare that to a Western Illinois team that gives up 31.9 points (seventh) and 400 yards (seventh) a game, and the matchup – on paper at least – seems to favor SDSU.

But Western Illinois (5-5, 4-3) proved last weekend that it is not a team to overlook. The Fighting Leathernecks pulled off a come-from-behind win in overtime, beating Indiana State, 37-30.

That win was powered by a strong rushing attack led by senior Nikko Watson, who finished the game with 153 yards on 30 carries and three touchdowns. Watson turned in his sixth 100-yard game of the year, the 11th of his career.

Those are numbers that worry coaches, and Stiegelmeier is no exception.

"They've got a huge running back, a 6-foot, 250-60 pound young man that's really hard to take down," Stiegelmeier said of Watson. "I think if we whack him a couple times and have success we might discourage him."

The quarterback situation

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Kansas State Rallies Past South Dakota

Wildcats Outscore USD 54-30 In Second Half

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Kansas State used a huge second half to roll past South Dakota 93-72 in men's basketball action on Friday.

USD (1-3) led 42-39 at the half, but the Wildcats used a 54-30 edge in the second half to pull away.

Barry Brown scored a team-high 18 points off the bench to lead Kansas State (3-0). Stephen Hurt, Justin Edwards and Dean Wade each had 15 points, with Edwards and Wade also recording eight rebounds. Kamau Stokes added five assists in the victory.

For USD, Shy McClelland scored a game-high 20 points and had four assists to lead USD. Freshman Dan Jech netted 13 points off the bench. Trey Norris had eight points, six rebounds and six assists off the bench. D.J. Davis also had eight points.

USD plays its home opener on Tuesday, taking on NCAA Division II South Dakota School of Mines. Start time is set for 7 p.m. at the DakotaDome, the opening game of the final season for basketball in that

facility.

MINNESOTA 74, MISSOURI STATE 69; SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO (AP) — Joey King couldn't miss to start Friday's game, helping Minnesota's offense get off to a fast start on the way to building a big lead at the Puerto Rico Tipoff.

The only problem? The Gophers spent the rest of the day fighting to keep their advantage.

King scored 18 points to help Minnesota, which blew most of an 18-point lead before holding off Missouri State 74-69 in the consolation bracket.

Carlos Morris added 12 points for the Gophers (3-1), who led by 13 at halftime and quickly increased that margin in what appeared to be a developing blowout.

Instead, the Gophers battled foul trouble and needed some key baskets and final-minute free throws to close it out. The Bears (0-3) came as close as three points on three different occasions in the final 11 minutes.

"We've got to do a better job of doing that—when we have a big lead, just step on the gas and don't let teams come back," Morris said. "We've just got to keep playing hard

and keep finishing games."

There were plenty of positives for the Gophers, at least on the offensive end. They shot 55 percent before half-time and made 13 of 23 3-pointers for the game, posting an almost better percentage than they managed from the foul line (11 of 19).

King led that effort by making his first six 3s before finishing 6-for-7, leading an inconsistent outside shooting team that went 3 for 22 on 3s in its second game.

Morris and Nate Mason each hit key 3-pointers to answer Missouri State's best runs. Kevin Dorsey also made two free throws with 16.7 seconds left to turn away the Bears' final push, and was 4-for-4 from the line in the final 35 seconds.

Camryn Boone scored 17 points to lead Missouri State, which had a rough opening day in San Juan with a 93-59 loss Thursday to No. 23 Butler.

The Bears looked headed to another ugly result when Minnesota scored two quick baskets out of the break to turn a 13-point lead into a 49-31 edge with 18:43 left. But this time, they managed to fight back and make a game of it.

"This is going to really help us,"

Bears coach Paul Lusk said. "I love my guys. ... I thought we responded after getting embarrassed yesterday against a very good team."

ORAL ROBERTS 70, UT MARTIN 66; HARRISONSBURG, Va. (AP) — Obi Emegano hit a career-high five 3-pointers and finished with 28 points in leading Oral Roberts to a 70-66 victory over UT Martin on Friday.

Brandon Conley added 14 points and eight rebounds to lead a 39-29 edge on the boards for the Golden Eagles (2-1). Albert Owens scored 13 points.

Alex Anderson scored 25 points for the Skyhawks (0-3). Twymond Howard added 19 points and Myles Taylor 10.

The Skyhawks, who trailed by 16 at one point in the second half, were down by four at halftime. They cut a 10-point second-half deficit to 5 with 1:25 to go but Emegano made seven free throws and Owens three to fend off UT Martin. Emegano finished 11 of 12 from the line.

The game was played at James Madison as part of the Men Against Breast Cancer Classic.

Volleyball: Chester Area Rallies Past Parker For State B Finals Berth

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to poor weather conditions, the Press & Dakotan was not able to send a reporter to Friday's action in the South Dakota State Volleyball Tournament. We hope to be able to send a reporter for today's matches.

SIoux FALLS – After Chester standout Jenna Reiff left the Flyers' quarterfinal victory due to injury on Thursday, there were questions if she would be productive, or even available, for the Flyers' semifinal match with Parker in the South Dakota State Class B Volleyball Tournament.

Reiff erased all doubts, recording 31 kills, 18 digs and six blocks (four solo) in a 25-18, 23-25, 25-27, 25-18, 15-6 victory over the Pheas-

ants on Friday at the Denny Sanford Premier Center.

The victory sends the top-seeded Flyers into the championship match for a third consecutive season. The Flyers' opponent will play the winner between three-time defending champion Warner and Sully Buttes, a match that was not completed by presstime.

It was Chester's third victory of the season over its Big East Conference rival.

Samantha Ordahl had 21 kills and four blocks (one solo), and Karissa Campbell had 15 kills for Chester, which held a 75-50 edge in kills in the match. Josie Wolf posted 64 assists and 26 digs. Molly Heyn had 31 digs, Hanna Reiff had 12 digs and

two ace serves. Sarah Benson had 11 digs and Sierra Vanliere had 10 digs in the victory.

For Parker, Rylie Christensen had 21 kills and Gabby Herlyn had 14 kills and three blocks to lead the offense. Contessa Harold had a hand in 12 of the team's 17 blocks (10 solo). Makenzie Dean had 35 assists and 32 digs. Hannah Carlson had 28 digs. Lexi Olson had 24 digs and three ace serves. Grace Leberman had 18 digs and Chastin Mohr had 10 digs in the effort.

Parker faced both Warner and Sully Buttes in the 2014 state tournament, losing to Warner in the semifinals and beating Sully Buttes in the third place match.

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