

Cross Country | Summit League Championships

# Fitzsimmons: USD Finish Not A Surprise

Coyote Teams Finished Second In Second Season In League

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Competing not far from a place known for its 'zero to 60' boasts, the University of South Dakota cross country teams did their best impression in reliable sports terms.

It wasn't on a paved road, but the progression from fifth to second place in a matter of 12 months wasn't exactly a huge surprise for the Coyote men's and women's squads. Both finished second at the Summit League Championships, held Saturday in Rochester, Mich. — a suburb of Detroit, known universally as "Motor City."

"We set that as a goal," head coach Dan Fitzsimmons said Monday. "After last year, we suspected the teams ahead

of us would have their seniors back, but it would be more realistic to think we could contend this year."

It was a meet dominated by Dakota schools. The Coyotes finished behind North Dakota State in the women's 6K race and behind South Dakota State in the men's 8K race.

"We were so excited with how we did," USD junior Megan Hilson, a Yankton native, said. "It would have been pretty awesome to win, but going from fifth to second place was great to see."

For a program in its second year in the Summit League, the Coyote women in particular put together a strong season. At one point for two weeks, USD was ranked in the Division I Midwest Regional rankings.

"We were all pretty confident coming

in, just because of how the season has gone," said Hilson, who was one of seven Coyotes to earn all-conference honors.

North Dakota State had runners at 2-4-7-8 to win the women's team championship with 36 total points, followed by USD at 59 points. South Dakota State took third place at 63.

Hilson led the Coyote women with a sixth-place finish, in a time of 22:23.7. Brittini Hutton of Oakland was first overall, while a pair of North Dakota State runners finished ahead of Hilson. USD also put a pair of freshmen in the top 12, with Amber Eickhorn (11) and Katie Wetstein (12).

"Megan had a great race. It was nice to see her shine, and our freshmen did exactly what they came here to do,"

Fitzsimmons said. He also commended the performance of senior Ali Gress, the team's fifth runner, who took 14th.

Hilson's performance was another example of the program's quick progression. She wasn't even in the team's top five runners at last year's Summit League meet, but jumped to the No. 1 slot a year later.

"There's just something about a conference meet, you can't let yourself get tired," Hilson said. "You've got to keep pushing until the finish line."

The men's race was particularly close.

Jeff Mettler, a junior for USD, finished second behind Michael Krnsak of South Dakota State, a fifth-year senior. Krnsak clocked a 25:06.4, just ahead of Mettler at 25:10.6. USD's only senior, Ethan Marquardt, took seventh place, followed by freshman teammate Mubarik Musa.

Cosmas Ayabei, a senior at Kansas City who qualified for the NCAA Championships a year ago, finished fourth.

South Dakota State put runners at 1-3-6-10 to finish first in the men's team race with 35 total points, followed by USD at 62 points. IUPUI was third at 104, proving just how dominant the Dakota schools are in the sport — on both the men's and women's side.

"Everyone realizes how tough NDSU is, but we're not that far behind them," Hilson said. "It'd be great to beat them. We knew that SDSU would come on strong, but we were confident we could beat them out."

Doing so down the line will take additional progression, Fitzsimmons said. The Coyote men will graduate one senior, while the women will graduate two

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# Knights Escape Bucks 21-17

BY CHRIS RILEY

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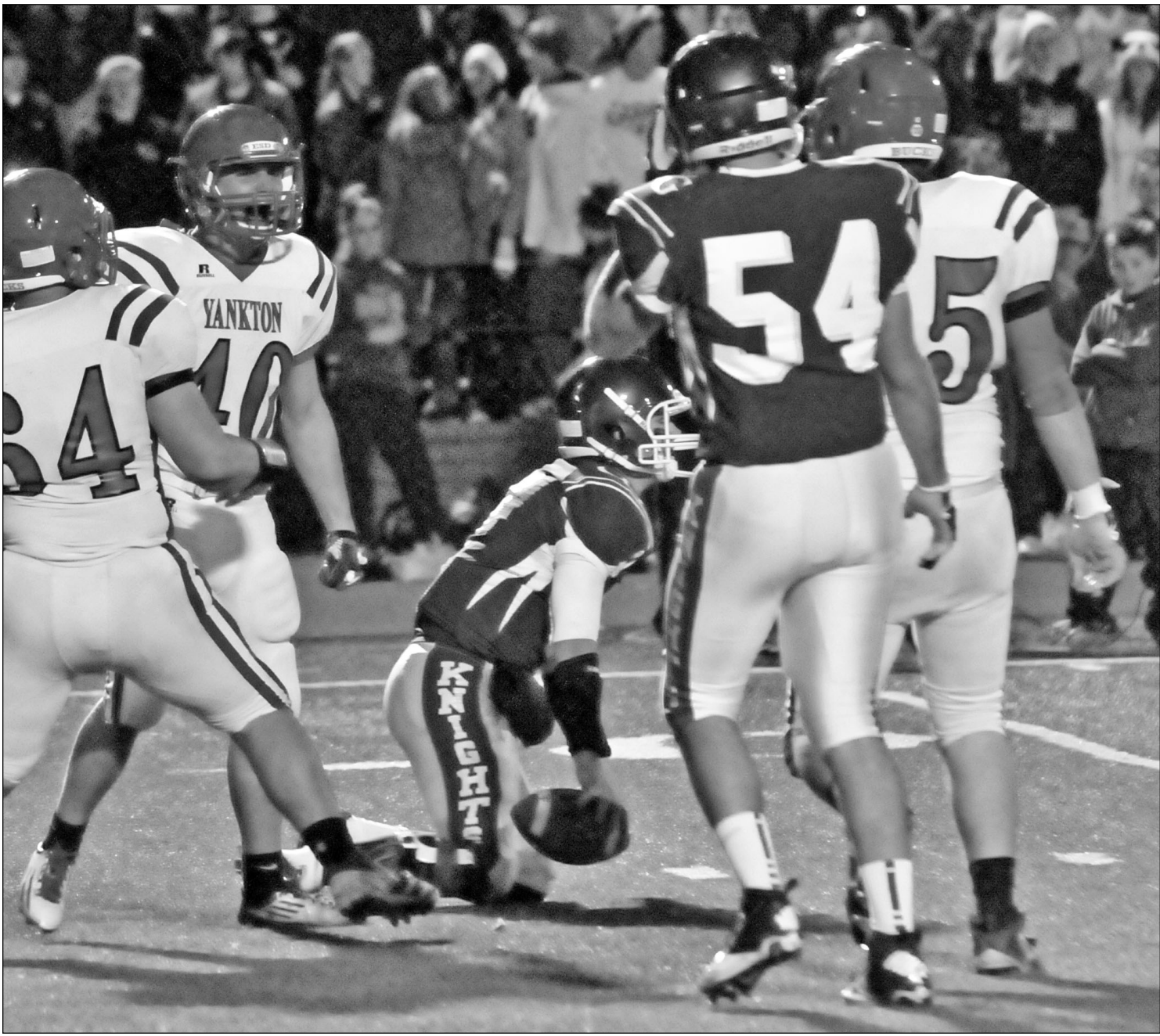
SIOUX FALLS — For the second year in a row the Yankton Bucks saw their season end in a second-round playoff loss at the hands of the O'Gorman Knights in Sioux Falls. While last year the Knights completely dominated on their way to a 54-14 win, this year it was the Bucks who looked to be in control throughout the majority of the game.

Yankton held a 17-7 lead heading into the fourth quarter of Monday night's quarterfinal contest at McEaney Field. Then, the offense stalled and mistakes mounted for the Bucks, allowing the Knights to score two fourth-quarter touchdowns on their way to a 21-17 victory on their home field and set up a Saturday matchup against Washington in the semifinals.

"These were two very evenly matched teams," O'Gorman head coach Steve Kueter said. "This was a classic matchup of two teams that like to slug it out on the ground and that's fun to see once in a while."

Bucks coach Arlin Likness said that his team would need control the ball heading into the game and Yankton did exactly that on the opening possession, driving 84 yards on 15 plays while using up almost eight minutes on the clock before the drive culminated in a two-yard touchdown run by senior James Hisek.

Sophomore Brady Hale's extra point attempt was blocked but the Bucks still had to feel good about a 6-0 lead with just over four minutes left in the first quarter before O'Gorman even touched the ball.



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Yankton's James Hisek, 40, is congratulated by teammate Steven McKee, 64, after Hisek's sack of O'Gorman quarterback Blake Hilmoe, on a knee, during their Class 11AA playoff football game on Monday in Sioux Falls.

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# Colome Holds Off Avon 22-16 For Semifinal Berth

COLOME — Colome defeated Avon 22-16 in Monday night football action in Colome.

Terrance Kinzer rushed for 243 yards and out of Colome's total of 307 yards rushing. Terrance also had 18 tackles for the night.

For Avon, Devin Tolsma had 18 carries and rushed for 129 yards and had nine tackles. Brandon Kocmich had 18 carries and rushed for 100 yards.

Colome will participate in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Canistota 50, Wall 0

CANISTOTA — With 121 yards rushing and two touchdowns, Alex Robertson led the Canistota Hawks in a win against the Wall Eagles 50-0 Monday night in Canistota.

Eric Tieszen rushed for 75 yards and two touchdowns, Nick Hofer rushed for 28 yards and Cody Bunger passed for 60 yards and one touchdown. Boone Dekramer and Dylan Seubert also had touchdowns for the night. Jason Vanwinkle had 12 sacks for

the night, Tyler Decker had five and Robertson and Carson Hofer each had two.

For the Eagles, Tyler Trask had 13 carries and rushed for 51 yards. Les Williams had eight tackles, while Lane Blasius and Tyler Peterson each had six tackles.

Canistota will face Arlington in the semi-finals on Saturday.

WALL 0 0-0  
CANISTOTA 50 14 36-50

Tri-Valley 37, Deuel 14

COLTON — Logan Otto led

Tri-Valley in the defeat of Deuel 37-14 Monday night.

Otto had seven carries and rushed for a total of 105 yards and three touchdowns. Logan Koopman had 11 carries and rushed for 92 yards, and Brett Page passed for 47 yards and one touchdown. Dominick Burgraff had six tackles for the night.

For Deuel, Lincoln Swenson had 20 carries and rushed for 77 yards and one touchdown. Swenson also passed for 116 yards and one touchdown. Curt Boeke had seven tackles.

Deuel will participate in the semi-finals on Saturday.

DEUEL 15 15 7 0-37  
TRI-VALLEY 0 0 0 14-14

Castlewood 48, Waverly-South Shore 8

WAVERLY, Neb. — Carson Borer rushed for 113 yards and three touchdowns to lead Castlewood in a win against Waverly-South Shore 48-8 Monday night in Waverly.

# Spearfish Edges DV 14-13

BY JOSH BENHAM

Rapid City Journal

SPEARFISH — Nate Rotert and the rest of the Spearfish senior class were not going to allow their season to end Monday night.

Not at home, and not without unfinished business left on the table.

Rotert scored a 36-yard rushing touchdown with four minutes left after Dakota Valley missed a game-clinching field goal, and the Spartan defense hung on in the waning seconds to defeat the Panthers 14-13 in their 11A quarterfinal football playoff at Lyle Hare Stadium.

"It's hard to explain how I feel," Spearfish head coach Bruce Bresee said. "To be able to come back in a huge game like this, it's been something we've been trying to teach them. They really came and met that challenge."

Dakota Valley faced a fourth-and-14 at midfield with one minute left when quarterback Aaron Likness found Andrew Reiff on the sideline near the first down marker. But the measurement showed Dakota Valley just barely short, giving the ball back to Spearfish and allowing the crowd to let out a cheer of relief.

Rotert rushed for 85 yards and scored both the Spartan touchdowns, and senior quarterback Brandon Kemp threw for 124 yards, including some clutch throws down the stretch that helped Spearfish (8-3 overall) advance to the semifinals.

"We have a lot of seniors on both sides of the ball, and we wanted this game to define us," Rotert, a senior, said. "We didn't want our senior year to be defined as us coming this close and losing like last year."

The win came despite a monstrous game from Dakota Valley running back Tanner Lambert, who rushed for 294 yards and two touchdowns. It was Lambert's 34-yard scoring burst that gave

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# Class 9B: Cougars Survive Hitchcock-Tulare 38-28



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Viborg-Hurley running back Trevor Jacobsen, with ball, tries to out-run Hitchcock-Tulare defender Landon Bushong to the end zone during their Class 9B quarterfinal game Monday night in Hurley.

BY JEREMY HOECK

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HURLEY — Playoffs are seen as a time to overcome hurdles.

At least, that's the way Viborg-Hurley looked at the way it overcame plenty of those Monday night.

Not only did the Cougars get out-gained nearly 2-to-1 in total yardage, they rallied from a 20-8 deficit to beat Hitchcock-Tulare 38-28 in the Class 9B quarterfinals in Hurley.

"It's good to be tested, I guess, and luckily we dealt with it OK," said Viborg-Hurley junior quarterback Jack Huether, who rushed for two touchdowns and passed for three more.

"It was definitely tough, but we came back and fought," he added. "Tonight was honestly the hardest I've seen us play all year."

An effort like that was necessary for the Cougars (8-2), who advance to the 9-man semifinals

for the third year in a row. Viborg-Hurley will travel to Colome on Saturday.

Hitchcock-Tulare, which would eventually out-gain Viborg-Hurley 458-237 in total yardage, jumped ahead 14-0 on a pair of touchdown runs (2 and 3 yards) by quarterback Dan Marshall.

Down two scores at the 5:22 mark of the first quarter, the Cougars finally got rolling, and in a big way.

Huether capped off a 75-yard drive with a 3-yard touchdown run at the 4:11 mark, pulling Viborg-Hurley within 14-8. It was a start, but far from out of trouble for the Cougars.

"We're an emotional team, and we needed something; anything to go right for us," first-year head coach Erik Sommervold said. "Once we made a play, even just one, it got the confidence back for us."

The Patriots scored again early in the second quarter, on a 23-yard touchdown run by Mar-

shall to lead 20-8.

Four minutes later, however, Huether found Trevor Jacobsen for a 33-yard touchdown, and following a Patriots punt, hit Andrew Hora for a 55-yard touchdown play with 4:10 left for halftime.

The score proved to be the go-ahead touchdown. At halftime, the Cougars led 30-20 thanks to another Huether-to-Hora connection, this one for three yards.

"We were optimistic after half that we at least got the football first," Sommervold said. "It didn't work out for us, but we made big plays when we needed to."

On the other side, it was the opposite side for the Patriots.

"We had a great start, but they (V-H) showed how dangerous they are," Hitchcock-Tulare head coach Kenny Huether said. "It certainly didn't take them long to get going."

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