

S.D. State Cross Country

Woods, Kruse Seek Another 1-2 Finish For Gazelles

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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A year ago, Yankton's Savannah Woods and Annie Kruse became the first teammates in nearly 20 years to finish 1-2 in the S.D. Class AA Cross Country Meet.

The duo would like to do that again this year, though the order may be reversed.

Kruse, a senior, has been leading the way this season and is considered one of the favorites when the 2013 meet is held today (Saturday) at Robbinsdale Park in Rapid City. The meet was moved from The Elks Golf Course

in Rapid City due to storm damage from a blizzard earlier this month.

"Annie has got to be one of the favorites, she and Tamara Gorman (2010 champion) from Stevens," said Yankton head cross country coach Dave Dannenbring. "Nobody's been able to chase down either one, and they haven't raced against each other. It will be interesting to see them go head-to-head."

Woods, a sophomore and the defending state champ, wouldn't mind seeing another top-two sweep.

"Hopefully Annie and I take it to them and go 1-2 again," she said.

The Gazelles also returned a pair of

eighth graders — Tessa Folkers (57th) and Madison McClure (75th) — from last year's state meet roster. Senior Whitlee Larson, who finished 17th in 2009 and ninth in both 2010 and 2011, returns after missing the 2012 state meet due to injury.

Kruse, Larson and senior Abby Van Meeteren, who also made the state meet lineup, have provided steady leadership for the girls' squad, while seniors Brice Cowman, Justin Grode and Morgan Hill have been anchors for the boys, according to Dannenbring.

"Whenever you have a couple of good seniors, you're going to have a good season," he said. "And we have

that with Annie, Whitlee and Abby for the girls, and Brice, Justin and Morgan for the boys."

Junior Lauren Graves completes the girls' seven for state. Besides Cowman, who placed seventh, and Grode, who finished 46th last season, the Bucks return junior Paul Fanta (70th) from the 2012 state meet. Junior Kyle Bergeson, sophomores Andrew Peitz and Sam Gusso, and eighth grader Brady Jaquith round out the boys' seven.

"It's been a great group that has stuck together as a team," Dannen-

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USD Football

Coyotes Look To Continue Win Streak

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — All the Coyotes have left to do is win.

Having already ended its long drought in the Missouri Valley Football Conference and their 18-game road losing streak, the USD football team is suddenly near the top of the league standings following a 3-game win streak.

"We needed it too, because we're trying to go to the playoffs," junior line-backer Auston Johnson said after practice this week. "That's our goal."

First comes the matter of kick-starting a season-ending gauntlet with a victory today (Saturday) at Illinois State in Normal, Ill. And if recent history is any indication, the Coyotes (4-3, 3-1) and Red-birds (3-4, 2-2) are in for a close battle.

A year ago, the Coyotes lost five games by a touchdown or less, including a 34-31 defeat to Illinois State. This fall, USD's wins have come by 3, 3, 3 and 7 points.

So yes, there's some truth to the belief that there's not much difference between winning and losing.

"There is in how you feel," Coyote head coach Joe Glenn said, laughing. "You play hard and give it all you got, but you lose by three. And you just feel horrible."

"You win by three and you feel like a million bucks. It's that outhouse versus the penthouse thing."

When it comes to exactly how the Coyotes have been able to turn the corner in quick fashion, Johnson pointed to experience, particularly on the defensive side.

While the offensive side has new weapons in the mix, the defense is mostly the same faces as last year — save two exceptions.

- Johnson transferred from El Camino College in California is third on the team with 41 tackles and trails only Tyler Starr in sacks with three.

- Senior cornerback Jarrod Bryant came to USD from Arizona State, where he earned his Bachelor's degree. Thrown into a starting position, he has responded with 23 tackles and two interceptions.

"I figured if they were losing by that much all the time,

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No. 7 Warriors Too Much For Lancers



THE MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE DOUBLE BLOCK OF BAILEY KUCHTA, 4, AND LEXIE BRANSON, 16, DEFLECTS A SPIKE FROM MIDLAND'S MACKENZIE SCHEEF DURING THEIR GPAC MATCH FRIDAY NIGHT AT CIMPL ARENA.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Midland Sweeps MMC

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

The Midland University Warriors, ranked 7th in NAIA volleyball and second in the Great Plains Athletic Conference standings, efficiently handled the host Mount Marty Lancers 25-15, 25-14 and 25-17 at Laddie E. Cimpl Arena Friday night.

"They're ranked number seven — we knew they were going to be tough," Mount Marty head coach Candice Climer said. "They are a very consistent team and they don't make many errors."

The Warriors committed just 10 errors on the night while the Lancers committed 21.

"Our thing tonight was that we had a lot of good rallies, but we ended them with an error," Mount Marty head coach Candice Climer said.

The Warriors used a .421 hitting percentage to take the first game.

Midland jumped out to a

6-2 lead courtesy of a KC Heimann kill that found its way through a pair of Lancer blockers.

The Lancers were unable to string points together until Laura Groseth attacked over the Midland blockers to begin a 3-point rally and trim the Warrior lead to 12-8.

However, the solid serving of Midland's Jordyn Bymers lifted Midland to a 4-0 run.

Bymers aced a serve to push Midland to a 16-8 lead. Mahala Egr ended Midland's 25-15 first-game with an ace serve.

Mount Marty's rallies and service game picked up in the second game, but finishes were inches off.

A solid strike from Kristen Boyle found the post, and an attack from Bailey Kuchta struck ground just beyond the sideline, ending a long volley and resulting in Midland points.

The Warriors built a 13-6 lead as Heimann beat a Lancer blocker.

Climer called for a timeout, and the Lancers followed with a picture-perfect set from Caitlyn Illg to Laura Groseth to cut Midland's lead to 15-7.

Illg set to Lexie Branson, whose solid swing resulted in another Lancer point and a taste of momentum.

A back-set from Illg to Branson left MMC trailing 17-9.

Allison Cross and Groseth added late kills for the Lancers, but Midland closed out the second game with a 25-14 win.

The Lancers jumped out to a 4-0 game-3 lead.

Branson had a pair of kills and Illg served up an ace during the spurt.

The Warriors battled back to take an 8-7 lead as Megan Farley set to Heimann for a kill.

Mount Marty was within 21-16 after Cross sent an attack on a line through Midland's defense, and Kristie Tessmer served up an ace,

but Farley set to Ashlee Harms for an attack that fell and closed out the sweep for Midland with a 25-17 game-3 win.

Cross and Branson each had six kills to lead the Lancers. Illg set for 18 assists as Courtney Miller had 10 digs.

Heimann led Midland (10-2, 28-2) with 13 kills while Mackenzie Scheef added 11 kills.

Farley set for 35 assists and Molly Pettit had 13 digs.

With volleys ending in Midland points, Climer was looking for a hitter to keep the ball in play and give the Lancers a chance.

"Sam Bischoff had a good game," Climer said of the sophomore hitter from West Haven, Utah. "She came in and took care of the ball for us."

"One thing we have now is depth, so we tell the kids they've got to be ready be-

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Area Well-Represented At State Meet

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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Seven Class A and 11 Class B teams from southeast South Dakota will be represented when the South Dakota State Cross Country meet is held today (Saturday) at Robbinsdale Park in Rapid City. The event was moved from the Elks Golf Course in Rapid City due to storm damage.

The field includes the Parker boys, who will be aiming for a fourth consecutive Class B title despite the graduation of three-time individual champion Duane Jongeling. Also entered is defending Class B girls' champion Genevieve Clark of Gayville-Volin, and 2012 Class A girls' runner-up Madisen Lavin of Vermillion.

Competition begins at noon (Mountain Time) with the Class B girls' race, followed by the Class A girls' race, the Class B boys' race and the Class A boys' race. Awards for Class A and Class B will be at approximately 2:30 p.m. MT, following the Class AA girls' race. Girls' races are 4,000 meters, while boys' races are 5,000 meters.

Here is a look at area teams, listed by class and in alphabetical order.

Class B

Avon

The Pirates will take one boy out west, senior Brant Blaha. Blaha competed at state a year ago, finishing 49th.

Centerville

The Tornadoses will take junior Nick Wixon to state. He finished 62nd in the meet a year ago.

Freeman

The Flyers will have two girls and one boy headed west, including returning state placewinner Rebecca Eberts. The sophomore finished 15th a year ago.

Seventh grader Hannah Eberts will make her state meet debut in the girls' race. Senior Grant Preheim will compete for the Flyer boys.

Freeman Academy

With three runners back from a fourth place finish a year ago, the Bobcat boys will be looking to again be in the trophy mix.

"I feel like we've come together at the right time," said Bobcat head coach Suzanne Koerner. "It's been a journey, but we've gotten there because of various things throughout the season."

"We're peaking at the right time," Senior Cole Hofer (35th), sophomore Ryan Haggerty (38th) and eighth grader Brennan Haggerty (101st) return from the Bobcats' state meet run a year ago. They are joined by senior Teagan Schroeder and freshman Dane Allison.

"Cole and Ryan were both in the 30s last year. They've been really hungry to get an individual place this year," Koerner said. "Our third runner is a rookie senior (Schroeder) who played basketball, but had never run track or cross country. He's been a big part of us being at the point we're at."

Koerner said that the team's goal is to finish as well as they did a year ago.

"It's lofty, but it is doable if they have a good day," she said. "There are probably six or seven teams that could be vying for 3-4-5. Hopefully we're in that position."

The Bobcats also send a returning placewinner in the girls' race, Junior Clara Koerner (18th).

"It's been a tale of two seasons for her," Coach Koerner said. "She struggled in the beginning, but she figured out how to get going, and got her confidence back. Now she's close to the point she was at last season."

Gayville-Volin

Despite having four of the five runners from its state runner-up team back from a season ago, this year's Raider squad doesn't look exactly like the one from a season ago.

But Coach Larry Buffington still expects the Raiders to be in the running.

"Ispswich is the favorite," he said. "There are six teams in the hunt for places two through seven, including South Central, which beat us in regions. Dell Rapids St. Mary, Potter County, Northwestern and Estelina are packed in there."

"It's going to be a real battle for 2-3-4."

A year ago, a young Raider squad surprised the field — and themselves — with its runner-up finish.

"Last year we went up there not knowing, and we were happy to get a trophy," Buffington said. "This year we're more excited, and we expect to do at least as well as we did last year."

The Raiders return the defending state champion in sophomore Genevieve Clark, but freshman Laura Nelson, who finished fifth at state last year, has consistently run ahead of year ... and nearly everyone else.

"We are fortunate to have two of the best runners in the state," Buffington said. "We're confident that we'll have two of the best runners in the state, not just in the 'B' ranks, again this year."

Freshman Megan Hirsch was 43rd at state a year ago. Junior Kellia Barta placed 89th. Eighth grader Elianna Clark, Genevieve's younger sister, was not on the 2012 state meet team.

Even though the Raiders have high expectations, Buffington wants the girls to enjoy the experience.

"I want them to get there, race and have fun," he said.

Marty

Arian Iron Elk will compete in the boys' race for the Braves. He finished 89th in the meet a year ago.

Menno

Sophomore Lindsey Grassmid will compete for the Wolves at state. She did not compete in the meet last season.

Parker

Parker's Olson twins, Michael and Ryan, will be looking to help the Pheasants finish on top for a fourth straight season.

"We feel overjoyed that we can talk about a fourth one," said Parker head coach Phil Bjorberg. "We've got a shot at it. That's all we can ask."

Michael finished 10th and Olson 19th a season ago. Fellow senior Tristen Ericksen was 98th a year ago but has greatly improved. Senior Eli Mask and eighth grader Grant Plucker have joined the varsity roster to fill the roster spots left by 2013 graduates Duane Jongeling, a three-time state champion, and Jake Volmer.

"Plucker is a talented young kid. He's also a junior high quarterback, and he's been a pleasant surprise," Bjorberg said. "He and Tristen have been switching off in the third and fourth spots."

Even if a fourth straight title isn't in the cards for the Pheasants, Bjorberg is hoping for another strong finish.

"Hopefully we get after it and make sure somebody has to work hard to beat us," he said. "I want those guys to be top-four and get in front of the crowd one more time, but we'll take what happens."

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Crofton Sweeps Neb. Class D Championships

KEARNEY, Neb. — The Crofton cross country program swept Class D team honors at the Nebraska State Meet on Friday, running away with an eighth consecutive girls' team title and adding the school's first boys' title since 1991.

In the girls' race, which was 5,000 meters for the first time, Crofton put all six of its runners ahead of every other team's fourth and final scoring runner to claim the title. Crofton finished at 32 points, followed by Ord (61) and Malcolm (95).

The eight consecutive titles ties a Crofton record (1981-88) and marks the 17th championship in the 34-year history of girls' cross country in Nebraska.

The Crofton girls were led by junior Quinn Wragge's eighth place finish in 20:27.0. Juniors Kendy Kube (10th, 20:37.0) and Vanessa McFarland (11th, 20:43.0) also earned a medal with a top-15 finish. Senior Jazmin Wubben (21:11.5) placed 24th to round out the Warrior scoring. Sophomores Keely Hagge (21:52.9) and Kyla Dendinger (21:58.3) placed 40th and 42nd, each

more than 15 seconds ahead of the fourth runners from Malcolm and Ord.

Also in the Class D girls' race, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge junior Sadie Petersen placed 43rd in 21:59.8, Randolph sophomore Martine Eriksen finished 52nd in 22:20.2 and Bloomfield senior Breanna Gallup finished 78th in 23:13.1.

Ord junior Katherine Lansman finished in 19:56.0 to win the Class D girls' race, just under 10 seconds ahead of Yutan senior Sarah Pogue.

Crofton edged Nebraska Christian 69-71 for the Class D boys' title, the school's eighth crown. Yutan finished third at 89, followed by Stanton (95) and Ainsworth (96).

Senior Alex Janssen was the lone Warrior to earn a top-15 finish, placing sixth in 17:16.9. Junior Cole Steffen (17th, 17:50.3) and senior Drew Eskins (19th, 18:01.4) just missed the awards stand.

Junior Joshua Goeden placed 66th in 19:14.2, freshman Jake Neuhaufen finished 69th (19:14.5) and junior Ronnie Ausdemore placed 135th (21:27.3) for Crofton. Laurel-Concord-Coleridge

placed 16th, led by sophomore Aaron Haahr's ninth place finish in 17:29.8. Sophomore Jordan Jansen (19:45.4) placed 90th, senior Adam Haahr (20:33.5) placed 118th and sophomore Ethan Gubbels (22:17.2) placed 141st for the Bears.

Also in Class D, Bloomfield sophomores Tyler Haigh (19:22.2) and Kyle Young (19:23.6) placed 73rd and 74th.

Nebraska Christian senior Hans Epp won in 16:26.6, 15 seconds ahead of Ainsworth junior Zachary Welch (16:41.9). Nebraska Christian junior Warren Dexter (17:05.7) placed third.

Hartington's Noah Noecker finished 35th in the Class C boys' race, clocking an 18:12.3. Mitchell senior Levi Avila won in 17:04.5, but Milford beat out Mitchell for team honors.

In the Class C girls' race, Hartington junior Anna Brodersen placed 38th, finishing in 22:06.0. Mitchell freshman Celeste Cardona won the race in 20:18.4 Columbus Scotus beat out Norfolk Catholic and Wayne for the team title.

Football: Bucks Open 11AA Playoffs At Home Against Mitchell

The Yankton Bucks will host Mitchell in the opening round of the Class 11AA football playoffs, according to a release from the South Dakota High School Activities Association on Friday morning.

Game time has been set at 7 p.m. at Crane-Youngworth Field, according to YHS Activities Director Ryan Mors.

The Bucks finished 4-4, and are the third seed. Mitchell is 3-5 after its 28-21 loss to Huron on Thursday. The Kernels beat Yankton 27-21 on Aug. 31 in the season opener for both squads.

Other first-round action in Class 11AA includes Brookings (3-5) at top-seeded Pierre (7-1), Douglas (4-4) at Watertown (5-3) and Huron (3-5) at Harrisburg (3-5).

Dakota Valley (5-3) is the top seed in Region 2 and will host Vermillion (1-7) in the opening round of the Class

11A playoffs.

In Class 11B, Wagner (4-4) will travel to Parkston (7-1) and Bon Homme (5-3) will travel to Winner (8-0) in Region 3. Beresford (5-3), which was shifted to Region 2 after placing fifth in Region 3, will travel to Tri-Valley (3-5).

Menno-Marion (4-4), in its first season of the new co-op, will face top-seeded Garretson (7-1) in the opening round of the Class 9AA playoffs. Also in 9AA, Parker (5-3) will travel to Elkton-Lake Benton (6-2).

In Class 9A, Alcester-Hudson (7-1) will host Chester Area (4-4) in the first round. Viborg-Hurley (4-4) was shipped to Region 1 and will travel to unbeaten Leola-Frederick (8-0).

In Class 9B, Avon (8-0) will host Scotland (4-4).

Playoff times for other games will be posted as they are made available.