

Earl Returns As Coyotes Host UNI For Homecoming

BY JEREMY HOECK

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VERMILLION — After five games, Kevin Earl is back under center at the University of South Dakota.

Five games and six weeks and one broken thumb later, the junior quarterback will return for the Coyotes, who host No. 21-ranked Northern Iowa for today's (Saturday) 3 p.m. homecoming game at the Dakota-Dome.

"It seems like forever since I've been out there," Earl said after a practice this week. "It's nice to be able to get rid of some of the rust."

Earl broke a bone in his right thumb after slamming it against a helmet in the season opener at Oregon. His backup, Ryan Saeger, started the next five games, leading the Coyotes to a 2-2 record.

Even with that much time away

from game action, Earl maintained this week that his timing and accuracy feel crisp — all with little to no pain in his right hand.

"I've always had a pretty good feel with our receivers," he said. "It doesn't really take too long to get back on the same page with them."

Though the Coyotes boast a potent rushing attack that averages 214 yards a game, the receivers are anxious to have their offensive leader back.

"It's nice to have him back," sophomore Riley Donovan said. "It's a whole new energy on the field."

It's one thing to be back on the field after an injury, but it's another obstacle to suddenly be throwing the ball 75 times each practice, head coach Joe Glenn said.

"He's gripping and ripping," the coach said. "He's probably not used to practicing and throwing the ball

that many times."

The timing of Earl's return is fitting, given the opponent.

Against Northern Iowa last season, Earl passed for 370 yards and three touchdowns as the Coyotes scored a double-overtime upset win in Cedar Falls.

"He took the game over, he did an outstanding job last year," UNI head coach Mark Farley said this week. "So I'm sure he's looking forward to it. We'll just have to play better."

That's been a focus for the Coyotes this week: Playing a full four quarters.

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DT Jacobs Back After Virus

BY JEREMY HOECK

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VERMILLION — It wasn't that long ago that Nick Jacobs was laying on a hospital bed, battling a persistent virus that enlarged his spleen.

And now, number 56 is ready to return to the defensive line for the University of South Dakota football team.

Jacobs, a junior defensive tackle, was medically cleared Wednesday and will see his first action of the season today (Saturday) when the Coyotes host No. 21 Northern Iowa.

"I always knew I would come

through," Jacobs said after Wednesday's practice, his first since Aug. 17. "I never lost faith or lost hope."

A two-year starter on the line for the Coyotes (2-3), Jacobs developed an infection in his esophagus during pre-season practices and soon had ulcers. He found it difficult to swallow food, which prompted a weight loss.

Not to mention trips to the hospital.

"It was tough being there for five days, then coming out and

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Coyotes Blank WIU 3-0

BY JEREMY HOECK

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VERMILLION — Conference win No. 6 against zero losses required the University of South Dakota volleyball team to showcase a rarely-needed trait.

Resiliency.

The first-place Coyotes were able to overcome some early frustrations to pick up a Summit League sweep over Western Illinois by scores of 25-23, 25-22, 25-16 on Friday night at the DakotaDome.

Faced with a road trip to unbeaten Denver on Sunday, the Coyotes (12-6 overall) started 6-0 in league play for the second consecutive season. The latest occurrence was far from easy, though.

"It's nice to know we can do that, but we can't do this every time," said senior Kendall Kritenbrink, who had a match-high 14 kills.

"We can't play like that against Denver."

A scrappy defense by the Leathernecks (3-15, 1-4) frustrated the Coyotes in the first two sets, but in-match adjustments — namely keeping at it — kept USD in front.

"That's a testament to what this team is growing into, they're able to learn from mistakes pretty quickly," head coach Leanne Williamson said.

In the opening set, the Coyotes still out-hit the Leathernecks, but weren't exactly ever in control — as the hosts saw the majority of their swings find WIU defensive targets.

"They probably pissed off our hitters, probably had them thinking, 'How did you get that?'" Williamson said.

It was much the same story in set two, but even with a 2-0 lead, the Coyotes had to dig deep during the break, according to freshman setter Brittany Jessen.

"We just had to be ready to play multiple balls in a rally, hit a few more times at them," said Jessen, who finished with 32 set assists. "It's great to make the changes as quick as we did."

Junior Sydney Dimke finished the match with 11 kills for USD, while senior Melissa Firtko had seven kills and six total blocks. Sophomore Audrey Reeg led the defense with 16 digs.

Ann Miller led the Leather-

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South Dakota's Sydney Dimke, 17, splits a pair of Western Illinois defenders during their Summit League volleyball match on Friday at the Coyote Den in the DakotaDome. USD won 3-0 to improve to 6-0 in Summit League action.

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Bucks Blast Gavs 37-0

From P&D Staff Reports

PIERRE — The Yankton Bucks needed two possessions to get back on track, then powered to a 37-0 victory over Pierre in Eastern South Dakota Conference football action on Friday.

The victory clinches at least a share of the ESD title for Yankton, 7-0 overall and 5-0 in league play. The Bucks finish the regular season at home against Harrisburg on Oct. 17, as Yankton has a bye in the final week of the season.

The Bucks finished a stretch in which they played 2 1/2 games in eight days, including trips to Aberdeen and Pierre. In those 10 quarters, Yankton outscored its opponents — Watertown, Aberdeen Central and Pierre — by a margin of 81-0.

Mason Strahl passed for 186 yards and two scores, hitting Evan Greenway four times for 91 yards and score. Jordan Lightner rushed for 50 yards and a score, and caught a 32-yard touchdown pass. Parker Kuchta rushed

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BCNG Edges Crofton Girls For Mid-State Title

ALBION, Neb. — Boone Central-Newman Grove edged out Crofton and Wayne for top honors in a tightly-contested girls' race in the Mid-State Conference cross country meet on Friday in Albion, Nebraska.

The host Cardinals put four runners in the top 10 to edge both Crofton and Wayne by a 31-32 margin. Crofton finished ahead of Wayne thanks to the finish of its fifth runner.

Crofton's Haley Arens won the girls' race, finishing the 5,000-meter course in 19:17. Wayne's Marcella Jurotich (19:24) and Marta Puffer (19:43) finished second and third.

O'Neill edged host BCNG 32-33 for the boys' title. Crofton was third at 42 points.

O'Neill's Grant Johnston won the boys' race, clocking a 16:26 over the 5,000-meter course. Crofton's Cole Steffen (16:42) was second, followed by Andrew Rasmussen of BCNG (16:45).

BOYS' DIVISION

TEAM SCORES: O'Neill 32, Boone Central-Newman Grove 33, Crofton 42, Wayne 51, Norfolk Catholic 64

TOP 15: 1, Grant Johnston, O'Neill 16:26; 2, Cole Steffen, Crofton 16:42; 3, Andrew Rasmussen, BCNG 16:45; 4, Ben Hoskins, Wayne 17:08; 5, Matthew Wiesler, Norfolk Catholic 17:16; 6, Blake Johnson, O'Neill 17:17; 7, Cody Shanno, BCNG 17:22; 8, Cameron Carney, Norfolk Catholic 17:24; 9, Brady Stucky, Crofton 17:26; 10, Nathaniel Jennings, O'Neill 17:27; 11, Thomas Hosford, BCNG 17:27; 12, Sam Stopak, BCNG 17:36; 13, Luke Puffer, Wayne 17:41; 14, Josh Goeden, Crofton 17:44; 15, Blake Walters, O'Neill 17:48

GIRLS' DIVISION

TEAM SCORES: Boone Central-Newman Grove 31, Crofton 32, Wayne 32, Norfolk Catholic 61, O'Neill 76

TOP 15: 1, Haley Arens, Crofton 19:17; 2, Marcella Jurotich, Wayne 19:24; 3, Marta Puffer, Wayne 19:43; 4, Kendra Gonzalez, BCNG 19:52; 5, Nicole Aschhoff, Norfolk Catholic 19:54; 6, Quinn Wagge, Crofton 20:05; 7, Alejandra Vergara-Kessenbrock, O'Neill 20:06; 8, Sheldon Beierman, BCNG 20:09; 9, Taylor Starnam, BCNG 20:10; 10, Christina Stopak, BCNG 20:13; 11, Cassie Heier, Wayne 20:16; 12, Kendy Kube, Crofton 20:31; 13, Krista Zavadil, Crofton 20:37; 14, Catherine Weeder, BCNG 20:39; 15, Vanessa McFarland, Crofton 20:43

Bloomfield Inv.

BLOOMFIELD, Neb. — Hartington-Newcastle swept team honors at the Bloomfield Invitational cross country meet, held Friday at Rolling Hills Golf Course near Bloomfield, Nebraska.

Hartington-Newcastle beat

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Gazelles 12th Entering Final Day Of State Tennis; Knoff To Semis

RAPID CITY — The Yankton Gazelles scored 83 points on Friday's second day, but slipped to 12th entering the final day of the South Dakota State Girls' Tennis Tournament.

Sioux Falls O'Gorman leads with 510 points, with St. Thomas More 483.5 and Rapid City Stevens at 437.

Yankton's Anne Knoff advanced to the semifinals at flight five singles, beating Sioux Falls Lincoln's Kaitlyn Olson 6-1, 6-0. The second-seeded freshman will face Mitchell's Allison Buckley in the semifinals today (Saturday).

Knoff and Buckley split during the regular season, with Knoff winning the matchup in the Eastern South Dakota Conference championships.

"Anne has been looking forward to this one," said Yankton head coach Matt Ter-mansen. "They are pretty much the same player. They

don't beat themselves, and they're all over the court."

If Knoff advances, she will become just the second Gazelle to ever play for a state championship. A championship win would make her the first Gazelle ever to win a state title, and would give her a school-record tying 29 victories on the season.

Yankton senior Kaitlyn Frank will compete for the consolation title at flight three singles after a pair of victories on Friday. She will face Roosevelt's Morgan Johnson, a player Frank beat during the regular season.

"Kaitlyn played a great match to advance," Ter-mansen said. "She's confident that she can beat Johnson again."

Yankton seniors Sarah Rockne and Frank saw their season end in the play-in match for the fifth place match. The Gazelles were knocked into consolation play with a loss to St.

Thomas More in the quarter-finals.

At flight one singles, Yankton senior Sarah Rockne was eliminated in the consolation semifinals. Yankton's Anna Kokesh (flight six singles) was also eliminated in the consolation semifinals. Knoff and Mimi Garcia were ousted in the consolation semifinals at flight three doubles.

Garcia won a match in consolation play before being eliminated in the flight four consolation quarterfinals. Kokesh and Kim Cap were ousted in flight two doubles consolation quarterfinal play.

At flight two singles, Maddie Logue was eliminated in the opening round of consolation play.

Vermillion scored six points on the second day. At flight two singles, Libby Sykes advanced by injury default before falling in the consolation quarterfinals.

The tournament concludes today.

Briar Cliff Downs Lancer Men In Overtime

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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As Mount Marty College men's soccer coach Nathan Epp watched Briar Cliff celebrate a 2-1 overtime victory over the Lancers on Friday at Easton Field, he looked back at the closing minutes of the game.

In those final minutes, he could see a mirror of the Lancers' 3-10 season.

Mount Marty had a 16-10 edge in shots in the second half, many of which came in the closing minutes after the each team scored on penalty kicks early in the second half.

"The last 20 minutes was the same as the rest of our season," Epp said. "We outplayed a team, created opportunities, don't finish and they quickly counter."

Briar Cliff held a slim 21-20 edge in shots, including an 11-9 edge in shots on goal. Four players accounted for 20 of Briar Cliff's shots, in-

also

■ Briar Cliff Women Blank Mount Marty. PAGE 12

Lancers recording shots and seven putting those on frame.

"Today we played aggressive — our style of soccer," Epp said. "Of course, that makes (the loss) even more frustrating."

Neither team scored in the opening frame, with MMC's Humberto Estrada preserving the shutout with five saves.

In the 59th minute the Lancers drew a penalty kick. Adan Garcia-Marquez stepped to the line and buried the shot, his third goal of the season.

"I'm proud of Adan. He stepped up and took it," Epp said. "You want someone

who is confident that he will make it to take the shot, and it's what I expect from him as a senior."

Briar Cliff drew its own penalty kick attempt eight minutes later. After Estrada deflected the attempt by Briar Cliff's Simon Moore, officials ruled that Estrada had left the line early and awarded a second attempt. This time, Javi Magana buried the shot to tie the match.

"It was unfortunate," Epp said. "I thought he made a clean save."

MMC kept the offensive pressure on Briar Cliff to close regulation, including three scoring chances in the final 75 seconds. Six minutes into overtime, Briar Cliff's Luke Manganaro played a ball through the Lancer defense and scored the game-winner.

MMC, now 1-5 in GPAC play, makes its final non-

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Mount Marty's Adan Garcia-Marquez celebrates after his second half goal on a penalty kick during the Lancers' Great Plains Athletic Conference men's soccer match with Briar Cliff on Friday at Easton Field. Briar Cliff rallied to a 2-1 overtime victory.

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D