

DWU's Cimpr: 'One Of Those Things Where Success Breeds Success'



JEREMY HOECK/P&D
Dakota Wesleyan head football coach Ross Cimpr addresses the Yankton Quarterback Club on Wednesday. Cimpr, a Wagner native, has the Tigers off to a 5-0 start.

Q&A: Wagner Native Has Tigers Off To 5-0 Start, No. 13 Ranking

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Three years ago, Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell took a chance on a 27-year-old former college football player who had zero head coaching experience.

Ross Cimpr has made that decision look increasingly smart.

The Wagner native, now 31, has guided the Tigers (5-0) to an undefeated start and a No. 13 national ranking in his fourth season.

Cimpr, a former standout at the University of South Dakota, was the featured speaker at Wednesday's Yankton Quarterback Club luncheon. He talked to the crowd about the early success this season of his Tigers, who are off this week and still have three games remaining against ranked Great Plains Athletic Conference teams.

He took a few minutes after his speech Wednesday to talk with the *Press & Dakotan* about the momentum of his program, its recruitment of South Dakota players and its future.

P&D: It seems like there's quite a buzz up there at Dakota Wesleyan. Do you feel like there is?

Cimpr: Yeah, I think there is. A lot of it has to do with our kids. They're local names, they're guys have heard of and want to follow. It's exciting. And I think part of it has to do with the success of our basketball team, and our football guys loved it. They were supportive. It's a very unique relationship with football and basketball, you don't get that all the time at every school. And it's one of those things where success breeds success. That's something we're seeing, people want to be associated with the football team or with DWU athletics. That's really exciting.

When you got hired, did you anticipate this kind of success within a couple of years?

I think that was the goal. The thing we've learned is that it takes a lot of work. We have to get the right guys in and our guys have to be prepared. Our administration has done a great job of being supportive. They took a chance on a kid who was 28 years old and had

never been a head coach before. But I give a lot of credit to our coaches and players, they work hard. Dakota Wesleyan has always had talent, they've always had the ability, but they weren't really able to put it together consistently. Even for us the last three years, we haven't been able to do it consistently. Now we're in a position where we're learning from those mistakes, and hopefully learning from those means we don't have to learn the hard way.

So it's been a process then? Has there been a process for you as a coach?

Absolutely. If our seniors were here right now, they would describe me a lot differently now than I was three years ago. Right away, it was trying to build a culture, trying to set those expectations. And as a coaching staff, you had to constantly remind guys and make examples of what you were expecting to do. You really had to have your thumb on guys. Now our players are doing that on their own, we don't have to remind guys. Now, if I'm upset about something

CIMPR | PAGE 8

YHS Hosts ESD Today

Girls' Tennis: Knoff Leads Gazelles Into Conference Championships

BY JEREMY HOECK
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There was probably going to be a point in her tennis career when Anne Knoff would make the step up to flight one.

She just didn't expect that to come as a sophomore.

Last year's flight five runner-up at state, Knoff has transitioned into the top spot for the Yankton High School girls' tennis team which hosts the Eastern South Dakota Conference (ESD) Championships today (Thursday).

Now matched up with the opposing team's best player, Knoff hasn't slowed down. She will take a 16-7 singles record – with just two losses against ESD foes – into the conference tournament, a year after winning an ESD title at flight five.

“At flight five, it was basically just keeping the ball in play. But now there's more strategy and angles and things like that,” Knoff said before practice Wednesday. “It's forced me to improve my game.”

Thrust into an early leadership role for a young team, Knoff has responded, according to first-year head coach Kim Velk.

“Most girls might shift up one flight, or two at the most, but going from flight five to one is a huge jump, but she's done really well with it,” Velk said.

Moving Knoff up the ladder that quickly was mostly out of necessity, Velk added.

Yankton graduated five seniors from last year's squad that took fourth place at the ESD Championships, but the two most experienced players back – senior Adrienne Kusek and junior Sophie Kouri – did not boast full-time

varsity experience.

“It's definitely been a rebuilding year,” Knoff said. “We've got so many young people this year, but that only means we'll be better in a couple years.”

The Gazelles also boast sophomore Mimi Garcia (8-15 singles record), Kouri (6-16), eighth-grader Josephine Krajewski (6-17), Kusek (5-15), eighth-grader Olivia Tennant (7-15) and sophomore Brenna Becker (1-4).

“A lot of the girls are probably playing at flights they wouldn't normally be in, but it's great experience for them,” Velk said. “Especially in years to come, it will really benefit them.”

In the present, though, the experience gained at a conference tournament will be critical for those varsity newcomers, according to Knoff.

“It will be really chaotic, but it will be fun to play at home,” she said. “They'll have the homecourt advantage, so that will be nice for them.”

Brandon Valley returns as the reigning ESD team champion. And although the Gazelles might not be thinking team title, they're aiming for consistent play, according to Velk.

“I'm hoping for some consistency and doing what we're capable of,” she said. “The big thing is, I want the girls go out there and fight for every point. That's what we've stressed all year long.”

Action begins today at 8 a.m. Flights 1-4 singles and 1-2 doubles will be contested at the YHS/SAC Courts, while flights 5-6 singles and 3 doubles will be held at Memorial Park.

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P&D FILE PHOTO
Yankton's Anne Knoff serves the ball during a home match earlier this season. Knoff and the Gazelles host the Eastern South Dakota Conference Girls' Tennis Championships today (Thursday) at the YHS/SAC Tennis Courts and the Memorial Park Tennis Courts. Play will begin at 8 a.m.

GAZELLES VOLLEYBALL

Mitchell (0-9)
at Yankton (2-8)

7 p.m., Summit Center

LAST MEETING: Yankton earned a 3-2 victory over the Kernels on Sept. 10 in Mitchell. Yankton's Becky Frick had 18 kills, 3 ace serves, 4 blocks and 20 digs in the victory.

LAST TIME OUT: Yankton dropped a 3-0 decision against Aberdeen Central on Saturday. Mitchell dropped a 3-1 decision at Harrisburg on Tuesday.

NEXT UP: Yankton concludes a three-match home stand against ESD foe Brookings on Monday. Mitchell heads to Huron for the weekend, facing Sturgis, Spearfish, Sioux Falls Washington and Sioux Falls Lincoln, all on Saturday.

MMC Tied For Second After First Round Of GPAC Tourney

NORTH SIOUX CITY – The Mount Marty College women sit in a tie for second after the opening round of the Great Plains Athletic Conference Golf Tournament, held Wednesday at Two Rivers Golf Course in North Sioux City.

Morningside shot the low score of the opening round with a 342. MMC and Nebraska Wesleyan each shot 346. Concordia and defending champion Dakota Wesleyan sit at 354.

DWU's Lauren Fitts leads the way after the opening round with a 75. Nebraska Wesleyan's Kelsey Marshall is second at 82. MMC's Logan Wagner (Parkston) and Kellie Winckler (Lake Andes) are in a tie for third at 83.

Also for MMC, Kelly Amundson (Vermillion) and Kristen Shanahan are tied for 18th at 90. Elly Mueller (Vermillion) shot a 92 to sit in

GOLF | PAGE 8

Cavaliers Aiming High Dakota Wesleyan Upends MMC

Volleyball: Bon Homme Shoots For First State Berth Since '99

BY JEREMY HOECK
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TYNDALL – None of the four seniors on the Bon Homme volleyball team remember when their school last played in a state tournament.

“Ever since I've lived in Tyndall, I can't remember the last time,” Morgan McAllister said.

For reference sake, it was 1999.

The Cavaliers want to end that streak.

“It'd be extremely exciting, especially as a senior,” McAllister said. “This is the year, definitely.”

It has been a process for Bon Homme in the sport of volleyball. Three years ago, the Cavs won 10 matches. Two years ago, they won 17. Last year, they won 20.

And now this season, Bon Homme – even with three consecutive losses – is off to a 15-4 start and has, according to coaches and players, used its strong chemistry to bolster the program's expectations.



P&D FILE PHOTO
The Bon Homme Cavaliers prepare to take the floor during a home match earlier this season. The Cavaliers are 15-4 on the season, and host Menno tonight (Thursday).

In short, the Cavaliers – who host Menno tonight (Thursday) – are thinking state tournament.

“You have to see the big picture,” senior Michelle Sestak said. “If you don't have that big goal, you won't have anything to build on.”

Signs of a successful season began to take shape this spring, when the Cavaliers had enough players to participate in some Junior Olympic (JO) matches. Hav-

ing lost only one senior, it was an opportunity for those players coming back to gel.

“A good core of the team was the coming back, so I figured we should be able to build on that,” head coach Lindsey Fathke said Wednesday.

Unlike a sport such as track or basketball, where a player can work by themselves on certain aspects

MITCHELL – Dakota Wesleyan earned its 10th victory of the season at the expense of Mount Marty, a 25-13, 24-26, 25-22, 20-25, 15-11 decision over the Lancers in Great Plains Athletic Conference volleyball action on Wednesday.

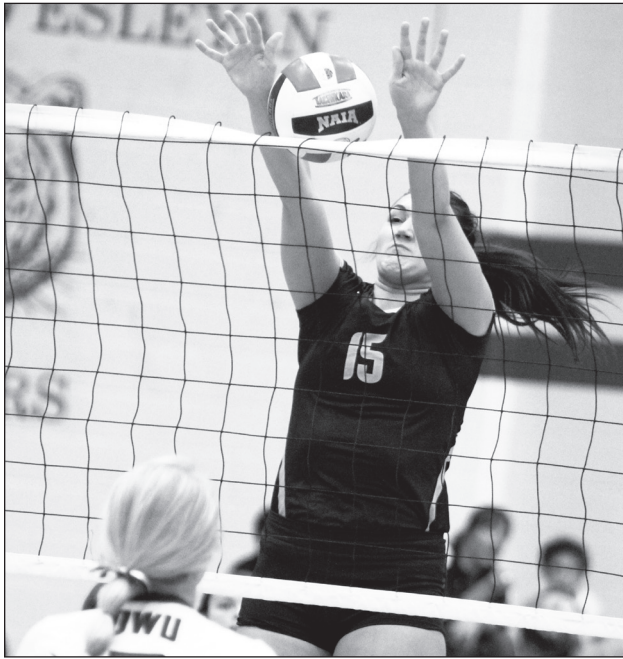
Lauren Tadlock had 16 kills and 10 digs, and Dana Misiaszek had 13 kills and three blocks to lead DWU (10-8, 2-4 GPAC). Taylor Spence posted 11 kills and 14 digs. Sammy Fluck had 10 kills and six blocks. Michelle Van Epps posted 46 assists and 15 digs, and Emily Pengilly had 14 digs in the victory.

For MMC (5-10, 2-5 GPAC), Sierra Kloth had 15 kills and four blocks, and Bailey Kuchta had 10 kills to lead the way. Amber Dysthe had 42 assists and 16 digs. BreAnne Thege finished with 31 digs. Sam Bischoff posted nine kills. Laura Cattle had eight kills and four blocks. Kayla Jones had 14 digs, Allison Cross had six blocks, and Maura Lysne had 11 digs for the Lancers.

DWU travels to Doane on Saturday. MMC travels to unbeaten Midland (19-0, 6-0 GPAC) on Friday.

Pierce 3, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge 0

PIERCE, Neb. — Pierce came ready to play Tuesday night and made quick



ERIC MAYER/MITCHELL REPUBLIC
Mount Marty's Allison Cross tries to block the ball during a Great Plains Athletic Conference volleyball game against Dakota Wesleyan University on Wednesday in Mitchell.

work of Laurel-Concord-Coleridge as they won 3-0. The final scores were 25-12, and 25-7, and 25-11. The game was held in Pierce.

In the win for Pierce, Krystina Schuett had 10 attacks and four digs. Casey Sutherland had eight digs Jaci Brahmner had eight attacks.

For LCC, Bryn Schutte, Katie Leapley and Kaci Groene each had three kills and two blocks. Katelyn Cook finished with 11 assists. Schutte also had seven digs for the Bears.

Pierce's next match is against Boone Central/ Newman Grove and

Laurel-Concord-Coleridge's is against Creighton.
LAUREL-CONCORD-COLERIDGE (2-15),12 7 11
PIERCE (10-7).....25 25 25

Wakefield Triangular Hartington-Newcastle 2, Wausa 0

WAKEFIELD, Neb. – Hartington-Newcastle defeated Wausa 25-12, 25-15 in the Wakefield volleyball triangular

VOLLEYBALL | PAGE 8