

Bucks Travel To Huron To Begin Final Stretch Of Season

BY JEREMY HOECK
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The final third of the regular season presents a critical juncture for the Yankton football team.

At 3-3 and coming off consecutive shutouts, the Bucks spent a bulk of this week not talking about formations or schemes, but confidence, according to head coach Arlin Likness.

"We have to gain confidence, confidence and more confidence," said Likness, whose Bucks visit Huron tonight (Friday) for a 7 p.m. Eastern South Dakota Conference contest.

"We need to show that some of the things we're doing are the right things and start to believe in each other a little more."

Having come out of its latest, tough four-game stretch with one win, Yankton now kick-starts the final three games of the regular season tonight against a Huron (2-4) squad it

has beaten in 20 straight matchups.

Yet for the Bucks, they aren't simply assuming they'll venture to Huron and right the ship after back-to-back shutouts (in which they committed 12 turnovers), Likness said.

"It's not about winning and losing right now, it's about getting better," he said. "You have to start there first."

That's exactly the situation facing Huron first-year head coach Michael Schmitz.

Schmitz, a former player at Brandon Valley most recently an assistant at Huron, inherited a Tigers program that was 8-40 over the previous five seasons. He brought a new system to the fold this season, he said this week.

"I have a definite different system than what they're used to," Schmitz said. "We have different terminology and the way we do things."

Huron, ranked eighth out of nine

teams in Class 11AA, is coming off a 20-14 win over Spearfish and showed flashes of progress, Schmitz said.

"We didn't fall apart when we got down, he said. "They put their heads down for a minute, and then bounced back. And that was a step in the right direction."

The Tigers have been primarily a passing offense - Likness guessed it was around 60 percent of the time - and are led by junior quarterback Hyland Heinz. He has completed 97-of-171 (57 percent) of his passes for nine touchdowns with seven interceptions.

Senior Trey Moeding has a team-high 21 catches for 239 yards and two touchdowns, while 6-foot-5 junior Tye Evers (10-263, 3 TD) and senior Greg Conrad (20-175, 2 TD) are also offensive weapons for the Tigers.

"It will test our secondary, which will be good for us," Likness said. "We've come a long way since our

first game and if we can feel comfortable and make plays, that will really help us."

Huron does not have a rusher that has accumulated 100 yards this season, but the Tigers being able to move the chains to keep their defense off the field is a key, Schmitz said.

"Offensively, we have to be able to move the ball on the ground and get first downs," he said. "That's been our problem. The lack of first downs."

Those would certainly be keys for Yankton as well, but the Bucks right now are working on their confidence, Likness said.

"If we can do that, we'll have turned the corner and maybe start heading in the right direction," he said.

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YHS GAMEDAY

Yankton (3-3) at Huron (2-4)

7 p.m., Huron

LAST MEETING: Yankton opened the 2014 Class 11AA playoffs with a 43-21 victory over Huron on Oct. 30. It was the Bucks' 20th straight victory over the Tigers.

LAST WEEK: Yankton dropped a 35-0 decision to Sioux Falls O'Gorman. Huron beat Spearfish 20-14 for its second victory of the season.

NEXT UP: Yankton hosts Douglas for the first time in the playoff era. With its home schedule complete, Huron heads to Sioux Falls to face O'Gorman.

FOLLOW THE GAME: Jeremy Hoeck (@jhoeck) and James D. Cimburek (@jimburek) will follow the Bucks all season. Follow them on Twitter to keep up with the action.

State Tennis Tourney Begins



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Yankton's Anne Knoff returns a shot during her flight one singles match with Brandon Valley's Jessica Sadler at the South Dakota State Girls' Tennis Tournament on Thursday in Sioux Falls.

Gazelles 14th After First Day

SIoux FALLS & BRANDON — The Yankton Gazelles scored 63 points on the opening day of the South Dakota State Girls' Tennis Tournament, which began on Thursday at McKennan Park and Washington High School in Sioux Falls, and Brandon Valley Middle School in Brandon.

The Gazelles survived to today's (Friday) consolation quarterfinals in four of six singles flights and two of three doubles flights.

"They did very well today," said Yankton head coach Kim Velk. "They kept level heads, they kept their minds focused and went to battle."

After a last place finish

in the Eastern South Dakota Conference Championships, the Gazelles were hoping for an improved showing at state. Through the opening day of competition, they have delivered.

"Our overall level of play was better," Velk said. "One through six, I was very proud of what they did today. It was a great day of tennis for everyone. Tomorrow will be even better."

At flight one singles, Anne Knoff will face Brookings' Emma Lucchesi in the consolation quarterfinals after dropping a second-round match to Brandon Valley's Jessica Sadler, the Eastern South

Dakota Conference champion, 6-2, 6-0. Knoff drew a bye in the first round of championship play, as well as the first round of consolation play.

At flight two singles, Mimi Garcia will face Madison's Simone Droge in the consolation quarterfinals. Garcia opened with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Milbank's Tatiana Stemsrud in the first round, lost to third-seeded Meredith Benson of Lincoln 6-0, 6-1 in the second round, then beat Spearfish's Gabby Lewis 10-0 in the first round of consolation play.

At flight three singles, Sophie Kouri will face Milbank's Paige Johnson in the consolation

TENNIS | PAGE 7A



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Yankton's Mimi Garcia returns a shot during her flight two singles match with Milbank's Tatiana Stemsrud in the South Dakota State Girls' Tennis Tournament on Thursday in Sioux Falls.

Beresford Girls Win Dakota XII

BERESFORD — The Beresford girls and West Central boys took the titles of the Dakota XII Conference Cross Country Meet, held on Thursday at The Bridges At Beresford.

Beresford put two runners in the top four and four in the top 13 to beat out Sioux Falls Christian 27-55 for the girls' title. Madison was third at 63.

Dakota Valley's Marisa Schulz won the 5,000-meter event in 19:28.87, edging Beresford's Cait Savey (19:37.54) and Madison's Cami Streff (19:41.24). Beresford's Ashlynn Atwood (19:45.20) placed fourth.

The West Central boys dominated the team race, going 1-2-5-6 to easily beat Sioux Falls Christian 14-30. Madison (80), Lennox (82) and Beresford (83) rounded out a tight pack to complete the top five.

West Central's Derick (16:19.82) and Braden (16:53.23) Peters finished 1-2, followed by Beresford's Alec Atwood (16:53.48) and S.F. Christian's Caleb DeWeerd (17:00.85).

BOYS DIVISION

TEAM SCORES: Beresford 27, S.F. Christian 55, Madison 63, Lennox 89, Dell Rapids 96, Vermillion 98, Canton 101, West Central 113, Dakota Valley 115, Tea Area 178

TOP 20: 1, Marisa Schulz, Dakota Valley 19:28.87; 2, Cait Savey, Beresford 19:37.54; 3, Cami Streff, Madison 19:41.24; 4, Ashlynn Atwood, Beresford 19:45.20; 5, Mailey Bainbridge, Lennox 19:53.06; 6, Halle McMains, Canton 19:59.85; 7, Halley Streff, Madison 20:14.90; 8, Josie Heeren, Elk Point-Jefferson 20:18.95; 9, Maddie Lavin, Vermillion 20:26.54; 10, Robin Stark, Elk Point-Jefferson 20:28.21; 11, Micah Van Kalsbeek, S.F. Christian 20:37.55; 12, Caitlin Worth, Beresford 20:41.76; 13, Grace Quarter, Beresford 21:03.27; 14, Mia Schnabel, S.F. Christian 21:03.41; 15, Riley Hallman, Tri-Valley 21:10.73; 16, Madi Thurston, S.F. Christian 21:11.67; 17, Shelby Sherard, West Central 21:24.80; 18, Sabrina Swee, Beresford 21:33.22; 19, Kendra Schapp, Beresford 21:33.50; 20, Isabel Ihnen, Lennox 21:34.87

Gayville-Volin Sweeps IW, Menno In Triangular

MENNO — In the second matchup between the two teams this week, Gayville-Volin got some revenge on Irene-Wakonda by sweeping the Eagles 25-15, 25-21, 25-23 at a Menno triangular on Thursday.

Traia Hubbard had 13 kills to lead Gayville-Volin (10-5), while Megan Hirsch had 12 kills, and Genevieve Clark posted 11 kills and 21 digs.

Viola Ishmael chipped in with 19 digs in the win and Grace Dangel had 32 set assists.

In the loss for Irene-Wakonda (6-7), Caitlin Hinseth had nine kills, two blocks and 25 digs,

Maddie Mohr had seven kills, Taylor Lee had six kills and Hannah Anderson had 17 set assists.

IRENE-WAKONDA (6-7).....15 21 23
GAYVILLE-VOLIN (10-5).....25 25 25

Gayville-Volin 3, Menno 2

MENNO — The Gayville-Volin Raiders rallied from an 0-2 hole to beat Menno in five sets during a triangular in Menno on Thursday night. Gayville-Volin won by scores of 15-25, 20-25, 25-11, 25-15, 15-4.

Genevieve Clark had 23 kills and 32 digs for the Raiders, while Megan Hirsch added 17 kills and 17 digs. Traia Hubbard chipped in with 16 kills and four ace serves, and Grace Dangel had 54 set assists.

In the loss for Menno, Tara Spencer recorded nine kills, five blocks and 12 digs, while Paige Heckenlaible had eight kills and three blocks. Hailey Fergen had 12 set assists and 14 digs, and Liz Massey led the defense with 22 digs.

Gayville-Volin will host a tournament on Saturday.

GAYVILLE-VOLIN.....15 20 25 15 4
MENNO (7-6).....25 25 11 5 4

Menno 3, Irene-Wak. 0

MENNO — Tara Spencer and Paige Heckenlaible both recorded nine kills as Menno swept Irene-Wakonda 25-22, 25-19, 25-22 during a home triangular on Thursday.

Spencer added 23 digs and four blocks for Menno (7-6), while Ashton Vaith had 21 digs and Hailey Fergen

added 10 set assists.

For Irene-Wakonda (6-8), Caitlin Hinseth had 12 kills and four blocks, Ashley Steffen had nine kills, Maddie Mohr posted six kills and four blocks, and Ashley Emmick notched 20 digs.

Irene-Wakonda will play in the Chester Challenge on Saturday.

IRENE-WAKONDA (6-8).....22 19 22
MENNO (7-6).....25 25 25

Niobrara-Verdigre Tri. North Central 2, Niobrara-Verdigre 1

NIORRARA, Neb. — Both teams fought hard to make the matches competitive, but North Central was able to get past Niobrara Verdigre on Tuesday night. The final scores of each game

were 26-28, 25-23, and 19-25.

In the loss for Niobrara Verdigre, Hannah Stark had 14 set assists and six digs. Brittany Eisehauer had 19 digs and 13 kills.

No stats were provided for North Central.

North Central's next game is against Clearwater/ Orchard and Niobrara Verdigre's next game is against Cedar Catholic.

NIORRARA VERDIGRE (11-7).....26 25 19
NORTH CENTRAL (16-6).....28 23 15

St. Mary's 2, Niobrara-Verdigre 0

NIORRARA, Neb. — St. Mary's came to play Tuesday night as they beat

VOLLEYBALL | PAGE 7A

Big East Conf. GARRETSON — The Garretson boys and Flandreau girls claimed top honors in the Big East Conference cross country meet, held on Thursday at River Ridge Golf Course.

Flandreau put four runners in the top

CROSS | PAGE 7A

MMC Hoopsters 'Rock The Castle'

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Three-point contests might as well have been designed specifically for the Mount Marty College women's basketball program.

And for Logan Wagner in particular. Wagner, a junior from Parkston, won the contest for the second time in her career during Thursday night's 'Rock The Castle' basketball event at Cimpr Arena.

Seeing such a performance from a women's player was nothing new for those in attendance. The Lancers are nationally known in the NAIA ranks for their three-point exploits under head coach Tom Schlimgen.

"That's the definition of Mount Marty basketball," said Wagner, who has 124 three-pointers in her career.

"We broke that record last year, and that's saying something for this school."

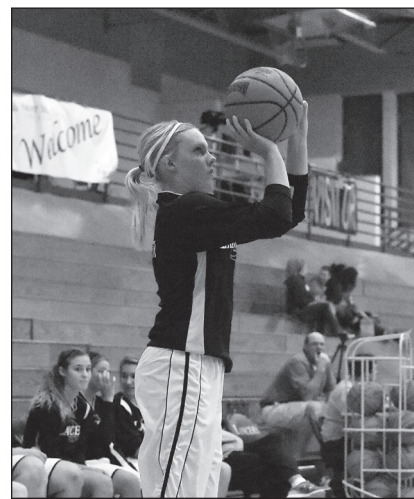
In winning 19 games last season, Mount Marty made a team-record 299 three-pointers — an amount that ranked third nationally.

Wagner, in particular, has thrived in the 'Rock The Castle' three-point contest. She won the event as a freshman, but didn't participate last year.

Otherwise, she would likely be a three-time champion, Schlimgen joked.

"She gave me a little grief last year because I wouldn't let her defend her title," he said. "We had some older girls who did it."

The Lancers have thrived in an offense that spreads out their shooters and will



JEREMY HOECK/P&D
Mount Marty College junior Logan Wagner participates in the three-point contest at Thursday night's 'Rock The Castle' event at Cimpr Arena. Wagner won the event for the second time.

routinely average 30 three-point attempts a game.

"This is a shooter's dream to play for this team," Wagner said. "Especially when we have a point guard like Cassidy (Gebhart) who can penetrate and get you the ball."

Mount Marty brings back 208 of those three-pointers made from last season (after graduation losses), led by senior Alex Kneeland's 87 and Wagner's 53.

It's a team full of shooters who genu-

inely like to practice their three-pointers, Schlimgen said.

"There have been a lot of times the men's players will joke, 'Hey, you guys want to have a dunk contest?'" he said.

"And we always say, 'No, but we'll go for a three-point shooting contest.'"

One of the running jokes on the team, Wagner said, is that players would prefer taking an open three-pointer on a 2-on-1 fastbreak.

"Most teams would want a layup," Wagner said. "We'll take the three."

The combination of having come up just short of the NAIA National Tournament last season and its returning experience have the Lancers feeling optimistic for the 2015-16 season.

"We've got a lot of experience back, so we're really thinking positive right now," Schlimgen said. "We've got some girls we'll really miss, but we think we've got some really nice depth."

Along with Gebhart, Kneeland and Wagner, the Lancer women also return a group that includes Raquel Sutura (Sr.), Sam Blake (Sr.), Brittini Bormann (Sr.), Erica Dreckman (Sr.), Ashley Green (Jr.), Denae Veldkamp (Jr.) and Kellie Winckler (Jr.).

"There's a lot of excitement that we could get there," Wagner said. "We know what some teams lost, but we bring back almost everybody."

Also at Thursday's 'Rock The Castle' event, senior K.J. DeCristino won the slam dunk contest for the second year in a row.

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JEREMY HOECK/P&D
Wearing a Superman shirt and cape, Mount Marty College senior K.J. DeCristino soars over teammate Anthony Stransky during Thursday night's dunk contest at the 'Rock The Castle' event at Cimpr Arena.