

Cross Country | S.D. Regions

State Meet Tickets Punched



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Gayville-Volin junior Laura Nelson sets the pace during the varsity girls' race at the Region 2B Cross Country Meet on Wednesday at Howard Golf Course. Nelson won the race, helping the Raiders to the team title.

Nelson, GV Girls Win Region 2B

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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HOWARD — New venue, new distance, same results for the Gayville-Volin girls.

The Gayville-Volin girls — second in the last three South Dakota State Class B Cross Country meets — put two runners in the top four and all five in the top 25 to win the team title at the Region 2B Cross Country meet, held Wednesday at the Howard Golf Course.

This year's meet marked the first time South Dakota girls have run 5,000 meters for post-season. It also marked the first year in Region 2B for Gayville-Volin and other teams from the southeast corner of the state.

“It was an unknown for us,” said Gayville-Volin head coach Larry Bufington. “But we knew if everyone did their part the team would be in good shape.”

Another unknown was the condition of GV junior Laura Nelson, who had been under the weather since the weekend. Nelson fought through to win in 19:14, more than a minute ahead of Dell Rapids St. Mary sophomore Christina Vogel (20:26.5).

“I tried to relax. I felt good, but a little tight,” said Nelson, the 2013 Class B champ. “There's not going to be a race where I don't feel bad at some point, but the best races come where I get out of that sooner rather than later.”

Elkton-Lake Benton senior Heidi Stoltenburg (20:28.4) was third, followed by Gayville-Volin senior Genevieve Clark (20:32.6), the 2012 champion.

“I had my breakthrough today,” said Clark. “I am happy about that.”

Clark compared the course to drills from her other fall sport, volleyball.

“It was like when we do line drills in volleyball,” she said. “It was zig-zaggy, which helped me.”

Also for the Raiders, Megan Hirsch (21:00.0) was 11th, Elianna Clark (21:42.5) was 19th and Jayden Engen (22:52.1) was 25th. Gayville-Volin finished at 15 points, with Dell Rapids St. Mary (26) second and Howard (37) third.

“Our girls have been working so hard, juggling volleyball and cross country,” Nelson said. The Clark sisters and Hirsch are also a part of the Raiders' volleyball program. “I've been so proud of them. They are the best teammates.”

Viborg-Hurley was fifth with 48 points, led by a ninth place finish from junior Jacia Christiansen (20:48.1) and a 17th place finish from Kirsten Paetow (21:32.7). Alcester-Hudson freshman Kendra Jensen (20:47.8) placed eighth, also earning a state meet berth.

With a state meet berth locked up, Bufington turned his attention to his “favorite night, looking at all the regions to see how we size up,” he said. “I think our girls feel good about what they did today. It gives us momentum going into state.”

On the boys' side, Canistota beat out McCrosan 17-21 for the team title. Elkton-Lake Benton, led by medalist Cameron Harming (17:13.5), edged out Viborg-Hurley 32-37 for the third and final state qualifying spot out of the region.

Canistota was led by runner-up Mason Decker (17:28.7) and third place Mandre Adams (17:54.0). Viborg-Hurley junior Logan Hansen (17:57.8) was fourth.

“It was different competition, but it's still the same race, still the same distance,” Hansen said. “We knew the course was flat, and we usually run better on flat courses.”

Despite getting fourth, Viborg-Hurley will still get to compete as a team, with

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FA Boys, Menno's Edelman Lead Way In 3B

BY JEREMY HOECK
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FREEMAN — Morgan Edelman saw her opportunity and jumped at it.

The seventh-grader from Menno, new to the varsity ranks, captured the girls' title at the Region 3B cross country meet held Wednesday at Freeman's Valley View Golf Course.

With traditionally solid teams like Gayville-Volin and Viborg-Hurley in a different region, and a number of other talented seniors from 2014 gone, this year's girls' race was there for the taking. And Edelman took advantage, finishing the 5,000-meter course in a time of 21:32.97.

“It means a lot to me, because I'm a seventh grader and it feels good to know I have a few years left to run,” Edelman said.

Freeman, last year's girls' runner-up, captured the team championship with four runners in the top 10. The Flyers, who had 13 team points, have



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

These three Freeman Academy runners stick together during the boys' race at Wednesday's Region 3B cross country meet at Freeman's Valley View Golf Course.

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Riding High



P&D FILE PHOTO

Scotland quarterback Tanner Iwan, right, tries to break away from a Gayville-Volin defender during a game in Scotland earlier this season. The Highlanders, 6-0, play Colome on Friday.

Scotland Football Off To 6-0 Start

BY JEREMY HOECK
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SCOTLAND — Kreg Kepplinger jokingly admits that he catches himself thinking about football during class.

It's always on his mind.

“I think a lot of the guys here do too,” Kepplinger, a senior at Scotland High School, said Wednesday. “It's a big part of our day.”

And those day-time thoughts have translated into success on the football field.

The Highlanders, winners of four games each of the past two years, are off to an undefeated 6-0 start this season and find themselves ranked second in this week's Class 9A sportswriters poll.

Not since the state championship years of 2006 and 2007 has Scotland entered the ‘title contender’ conversation. And while their unblemished record may have surprised fans outside the town, the

Highlanders themselves know exactly why they've had success, according to third-year head coach Ryan Robb.

Dedication.

“You raise expectations, and they start to see the message my staff and I have been preaching, nobody gives you anything in life, you have to work for it,” said Robb, who took over in Scotland in 2013.

“And these guys really put in a lot of time. They set goals and don't stop until they reach them.”

That has been a shared trait among the players back from last season, according to Kepplinger. They realized that in order to change the culture of the football program, they would have to do it together — there wasn't going to be one player garnering all the attention this season.

“It seemed like we meshed better together,” Kepplinger said. “There are no super-

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P&D FILE PHOTO

Scotland assistant coach Jason Vaith, center, jumps high to celebrate with defensive back Damien Fuerst, 15, during the game against Gayville-Volin.

SDSU First, USD Second In Summit League Women's Preseason Poll

USD's Seekamp Named League's Preseason Player Of The Year

ELMHURST, Ill.—South Dakota senior guard Nicole Seekamp was voted the Summit League Preseason Player of the Year while the Coyote women's basketball team placed second in the preseason poll released by the league office Wednesday evening. Seniors Tia Hemiller and Margaret McCloud were also named preseason second-team all-Summit League. The polls were voted on by the league's head coaches, sports information directors,

and select media.

The reigning Summit League regular season champions received 502 points and 15 of 33 first-place votes for second place. South Dakota State edged the Coyotes out of the top spot by six points with a total of 508 points and 17 first-place votes. It was the fourth straight season that SDSU was the league's preseason pick.

IUPUI took third with 379 points, while Oral Roberts grabbed the final first-place

vote and finished fourth with 317 points. Western Illinois (276), North Dakota State (250), Omaha (199), Denver (183), and Fort Wayne (86) rounded out the poll.

Seekamp led the Summit League in assists (5.1 apg), steals (1.9 spg), and assist-to-turnover ratio (2.01) last season. She was the fourth-leading scorer in the Summit at 15.6 points per game. At the Summit League Tournament, she averaged 23 points, five assists and two steals. Seekamp is a two-time first-team all-Summit League performer and became the third player in Summit League

also

■ Jackrabbit Men Claim Top Spot In Summit League Preseason Poll. **PAGE 10**

Young and sophomore Macy Miller also earned Summit League preseason first team all-league honors.

Young averaged 10.6 points and 2.5 assists while shooting 41.3 percent from the field, 41.2 percent from

history to twice be named the Summit League Tournament Most Valuable Player last season.

SDSU junior Kerri

3-point range and 88.9 percent from the free-throw line in 16 league outings a year ago.

Miller was a second-team all-conference selection, an all-tournament pick and named to the 2014-15 All-Newcomer Team after averaging a team-leading 14.7 points, 4.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists while shooting 50 percent from the field and 90.6 percent from the foul line in 16 league games last year. Overall, Miller averaged 13.7 points, 4.4 rebounds and 2.7 assists and had 6 20-plus point games.

She set the single-season

freshman scoring record with 453 points and enters the 2015-16 season with a string of 19 consecutive free throws made.

The Coyotes' starting point guard, Hemiller averaged 8.4 points, 5.2 rebounds, and 2.7 assists per game. Hemiller earned honorable mention all-Summit League honors a year ago.

In the post, McCloud led the Summit League in field goal percentage at 54.5 percent (131-240). She averaged 9.4 points and 6.3 rebounds per game.

SDSU sophomore Ellie **SUMMIT | PAGE 10**