

YHS Runners Aim High After Strong ESD Meet

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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After a pair of third place finishes in the Eastern South Dakota Conference Championships, the Yankton cross country team is ready for state, according to head coach Dave Dannenbring.

For both teams, the focus is on doing what each runner is capable of doing.

"We want to compete to the best of our ability," Coach Dannenbring said. "We'll take wherever that puts us."

The races will be held at Yankton Trails Park in Sioux Falls, a soccer complex with some man-made hills put in. With a team built for more rugged terrain, Yankton will have to adjust its strategy.

"A hilly course is to our advantage.

We are a strong hill-running team," Coach Dannenbring said. "We have to change our thinking. We need to get the pace out early. If the pace is slow, we have to be the ones to take the lead."

Girls

On the girls' side, the Gazelles are anchored by a pair of frontrunners, 2012 state champion Savannah Woods and 2015 ESD champion Madison McClure.

"Having some frontrunners is key to

winning," Coach Dannenbring said. "Scoring five is a challenge, but when you have two right up front it takes some pressure off the fifth runner."

It will be the final state meet for Woods, who has put together an impressive running resume during her YHS career.

"It's tough to see those really good kids go," Coach Dannenbring said. "But I'm also excited for her, as I have been for a lot of our college-bound runners. It's a whole new part of her life that's going to start next year, and she's set herself up to have a good college career."

For now, Woods is focused on the task at hand: trying lead her team to the highest finish possible.

"I'm really excited," she said. "Saturday will be our day to shine as a team, together."

For Woods, the focus will be on the process, not necessarily the race.

"Lately I've been thinking about races too much and psyching myself out," she said. "I don't want that to happen this time. I need to just go out and run my best."

Besides Woods and McClure, a sophomore, the Gazelles will run sophomores Tessa Folkers and Carly Vavra, freshman Rylie Andrus and eighth graders Lauren Eidsness and Lexi Rust at state. Rust joined

the team after the completion of the soccer season last month.

"Lexi had run before and we knew she liked running," Coach Dannenbring said. "Soccer got over early enough that she was able to prove that she deserved that spot."

Rust is not the first "dual-sport" runner for Yankton. For example, in 2005, Ashley Storm was a part of state championship teams at YHS in both volleyball and cross country in the same fall. In 2004, Ty Dannenbring was a part of a state championship boys' golf team and a state runner-up cross country team in the same fall.

"We've had a number of kids that have done that over the years," Coach Dannenbring said. "We've had a few soccer boys that did that, but recently their season has been extended so they did not have the opportunity to run."

The Class AA girls' race is set for 2 p.m. This is a different schedule in the past, as the Class AA girls' race will occur after the Class A girls' race instead of the Class A boys' race.

Boys

While Yankton's girls have just one senior and no juniors, the Bucks boast a



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton senior Savannah Woods, the 2012 Class AA champion, is one of five seniors competing for the Gazelles and Bucks and the 2015 South Dakota State Cross Country Meet today (Saturday) in Sioux Falls. The other four seniors are on the boys' team.

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Van Ginkel Plays Like A 'Starr' For USD

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION – The comparisons are unavoidable.

Andrew Van Ginkel plays the same position as Tyler Starr. He hails from the same pocket in northwest Iowa. He's about the same build. He sports the same long, blonde hair.

And perhaps even more striking, Van Ginkel has quickly emerged as one of the top defensive ends – capable of a tackle behind the line on any given play – in the Missouri Valley Football Conference.

With Starr now in the NFL with the Atlanta Falcons, Van Ginkel has inherited the mantle of the 'hybrid' pass rusher from northwest Iowa.

"There's definitely something in that water that's keeping them going," USD senior defensive lineman Drew Iddings joked.

Van Ginkel, from Rock Valley, Iowa, ranks eighth nationally with six sacks – three fewer than the Coyotes had all of last season. And he's doing this as a redshirt freshman; someone new to the field.

To that point, Van Ginkel has the edge on Starr, who didn't see the field for USD until his sophomore year.

"They have some attributes that are kind of the same on the field," defensive line coach Marquice Williams said. "Tyler was a little more aggressive, but Gink is getting there."

And perhaps faster than anyone imagined.

During spring practices earlier this year, one of the consistent messages from the USD coaches was that Van Ginkel, their scout team lineman, could be a star in the making. With the Coyotes switching from a 3-4 defense to a 4-3 defense, his ability to rush the quarterback could be on full display.

"I personally didn't think it would be like this, but I just have to keep going with what coaches have been teaching me," Van Ginkel said. "They're doing a phenomenal job with helping me become a better player."

Previously a hybrid lineman/linebacker during scout team drills, the coaches remember seeing flashes of what Van Ginkel could do. They were limited flashes, sure, but the potential was obvious.

"And I thought, 'OK, if he can run, I can teach him to use his hands,'" Williams said. "You can't teach athleti-

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Nebraska State Cross Country

X-tra Special



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Crofton sophomore Haley Arens, 35, pulls away from Dundy County-Stratton's Madison Lambley to win the Class D girls' race at the Nebraska State Cross Country Meet on Friday at the Kearney Country Club. Crofton put its top four runners in the top 21 to win a 10th straight team title.

Crofton Girls Win 10th Straight Neb. State Cross Country Title

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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KEARNEY, Neb. — The Crofton girls' cross country team knows about leaving a legacy. They also know about something else.

Dominance.

For a state-record 10th straight year, the Class D girls' race at the Nebraska State Cross Country Meet ended with Crofton hoisting the championship trophy. It was the Lady Warriors' 19th state cross country title overall, also a state record.

"We really focus on building a legacy. It's not our legacy (as coaches), it's theirs," said Crofton head coach Jayne Arens. "The girls build a legacy with their enthusiasm, their work ethic."

Crofton scored 34 points to beat out both Malcolm and Ainsworth, each at 73. Malcolm finished second based on the team's fifth runner.

The Lady Warriors were led by sophomore Haley Arens, who pulled away from Dundy County-Stratton junior Madison Lambley to win the individual title. Arens finished in 19:29.4, becoming the first Crofton runner since Kristin Steffen in 2006 — the Lady Warriors' first team title in the current streak — to win an individual state title.

"Haley has definitely matured as a runner," said Coach Arens, Haley's mother. "Last year she ran with Braska Patterson (of Stanton, who finished third in the 2014 state meet. Arens was second)."

Haley Arens tried to stay calm at the start of the race, but might have been too calm.

"I did not want to start too fast," she said. "But when I got to my mom at the mile mark, I was at 6:09. I definitely went out too slow.

"But it worked out."

Haley Arens passed Lambley, who was fourth a year ago, near the midway point of the race and kept the junior at bay

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Pierre Defeats Gazelles 3-1

BY MICHAEL HAMMOND
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The Pierre Lady Governors won the final three sets of their 20-25, 26-24, 25-19, 25-18 over Yankton on Friday in Yankton.

"Our defense really picked it up, especially after that first set," Pierre coach Chris Swiden said. "Our setters and hitters played some of the best they have all season, so it was a really good match for us."

In the first set Yankton jumped out to a lead early and never let it go, scoring on multiple Pierre mistakes. Becky Frick was the leader in the set for the Gazelles recording three kills, a block, and an ace.

"We were running some quicker offense that was scoring points for us," Yankton coach Tiffany Beste said. "Pierre made some mistakes that helped us get energy on our side."

Macy Halverson led the way for the Lady Gov's in the second set with six kills, with Pierre stopping a late Yankton run.

"Once we got rolling in our second set, I was really happy with our play," Swiden said. "It was whether or not we could cut the errors out."

Pierre and Yankton were tied at 16 apiece in the third set, and then the Lady Gov's went on a seven-point run to put the set out of reach. During the run, Elena Svingen collected two kills and Kallie Stout notched two aces.

In the fourth set, Yankton built a 4-0 lead before Pierre matched with another seven-point run that included two Halverson kills. Yankton got within one point at 10-11, but Pierre shut the door five-point streak, not allowing the Gazelles to get close again.

"I thought we came out in set one and had a lot of energy," Beste said. "As soon as Pierre came out and got

a lead in set two, we kind of didn't know what to do and reverted back to our old habits that weren't effective for us."

Swiden was happy with the play from Maddie Reinke and Halverson.

"Maddie Reinke did a pretty good job blocking Becky from Yankton, and that allowed us to stay in system a little bit more," Swiden said. "Macy Halverson, blocking, and she had a lot of really good hits out of the middle that I think kept them out of system, and I think really helped us gain momentum."

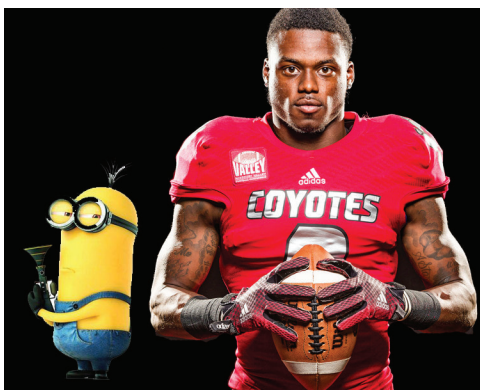
For the Lady Governors, Svingen led with 13 kills and added three aces. Sammi Clause totaled two solo blocks and two block assists. Jordyn Lemieux led the team with 21 assists. Halverson recorded 11 kills and assisted on four blocks. Cody Ryckman was tops in digs with 11

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JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Yankton's Becky Frick tries to place the ball over a Pierre double block during their ESD match Friday night at the Summit Center. The Lady Governors rallied from a first-set loss to beat the Gazelles 3-1. The scores were 20-25, 26-24, 25-19, 25-18. Frick recorded a match-high 16 kills for Yankton, which lost for the seventh straight match.



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