

Road To The Dome Begins



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Yankton's Alex Withrow, center, pressures Huron quarterback Hyland Heinz during their Class 11AA football playoff game on Thursday at Crane-Youngworth Field. Yankton rolled to a 33-8 victory to advance to the 11AA semifinals for a third straight season. The Bucks will host Harrisburg on Nov. 6, a rematch of the 2014 semifinals.

Bucks Bounce Tigers

BY JEREMY HOECK
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The defense again led the way for the defending champs. Especially with the offense committing six turnovers, Yankton needed that performance from its defense.

Winning rather handily for the fourth game in a row, Yankton rolled past Huron 33-8 in Thursday night's Class 11AA first round playoff matchup at Crane-Youngworth Field.

The win advances the Bucks (7-3) to next Friday's semifinals at home against Harrisburg, which beat Brookings.

Put another way: The playoffs are already shaping up like 2014.

"It's a good feeling to move on, especially with Harrisburg coming here," Yankton head coach Arlin Likness said.

Three weeks after their regular season meeting, it was a similar story in the postseason: Yankton got started early and never really let Huron (2-8) get going.

The Tigers, who had scored 18 points in the game three weeks ago, were held to four total yards in the first half — minus-13 on the ground.

Huron junior quarterback Hyland Heinz was unofficially held to 11-of-35 passing for 86 yards and one touchdown — that coming late against the Yankton second team. He was under pressure all night, and was sacked twice.

And consequently, the Tigers had problems moving the ball against the Yankton first team defense.

"We just couldn't move the ball; couldn't get going," Huron coach Michael Schmitz said. "We gave them too many short fields."

The Bucks, however, couldn't capitalize on every one of those opportunities. They threw four interceptions and fumbled the ball twice.

"We got some things done, except we kept shooting ourselves in the foot," Likness said. "You have



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Yankton's Blake Savey runs to the endzone during the Bucks' Class 11AA football playoff game with Huron on Thursday at Crane-Youngworth Field.

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DAVE EGGEN/INERTIA
University of South Dakota women's cross country runners Katie Wetzstein, 138, and Amber Eichkorn lead the pack during the SDSU Classic on Oct. 3 in Brookings. The Summit League Championships will be held Saturday at the same course.

Cross Country: USD Ready For Summit League Meet

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILION — The bar had already been set. Conference championship for the women, third-place finish for the men.

The next step for Dan Fitzsimmons' cross country runners at the University of South Dakota this fall has been to progress. And not settle.

In a sport like cross country, about the best barometer of progression is time improvement from last year, from last meet and even at times — as Fitzsimmons, the USD coach said — from the day before.

"When you match what we did a year ago to now, we're a better team," Fitzsimmons said. "And that's something we've been working toward all season."

The Coyotes have likewise been working toward Saturday's Summit League Cross Country Championships at Edgebrook Golf Course in Brookings.

Although the USD women come in as the defending champion, there's also the matter of holding off North Dakota State which will be seeking its fourth league title in five years.

While Fitzsimmons was well aware that his Coyotes have the target on their back, the former Yankton coach maintained that cross country isn't exactly the kind of sport where you can slow down an opposing team.

"You can't stop other teams from doing what they do," Fitzsimmons said. "There's no

defense in this sport.

"If you know you went out there and gave it your best, what else can you do?"

If the Coyotes are going to repeat their championship, they'll need a repeat of that performance.

North Dakota State's Erin Teschuck is the defending champion, while USD's Amber Eichkorn and Katie Wetzstein went 2-3, respectively — all three are back and boast the league's top three 6K times this fall.

The Coyotes won the team title by 31 points last year, though, because of their depth. They went 2-3-5-6-13, and they return four of those five runners this season (the fifth, Bethany Kozak, is redshirting). USD will also look to runners like Kelsey Barrett, Megan Billington and Jessica Feldman for depth.

With so many faces back from last year's title team, USD came into the season with high expectations — the women were the pre-season favorite — but also expectations that everyone else in the Summit League is on the rise as well, Fitzsimmons said.

Have the Coyotes raised the bar?

"I think we have, yes, but I think the whole conference has raised the bar," he said.

"When you look at what it took to place in the conference track meet in the distance races a year ago, that has gotten progressively better."

Progress, at times, can be a funny thing, though, Fitzsimmons joked.

Two weeks ago at the Bradley Pink Classic

in Illinois, the Coyote women saw a nearly 30-second improvement from a year ago from every runner. And yet, they dropped from second place to eighth place as a team — mostly due to a better field.

"I really think our young kids have improved," Fitzsimmons said. "Early on in the year, we were talking about the time gap, and we've narrowed that gap."

"If we can keep that gap under two minutes, we're probably having a good day."

The Coyote men are likewise going to need a small time gap to contend for another top-3 finish at the Summit League meet Saturday.

In finishing third a year ago, the Coyotes went 4-5-6 and return two of those runners (Mubarik Musa, Isaac Allen), but it looks like IUPUI is the favorite to win the team championship. South Dakota State, the runner-up last year, could also be in the mix.

South Dakota State's Trent Lusignan comes into the conference meet with the best 8K time, nearly 20 seconds better than USD's Musa.

"We feel like we've got two really good individuals, but SDSU has about four and IUPUI is more of a pack," Fitzsimmons said. "I see it coming down to a few points to win the title."

Saturday's action at Edgebrook Golf Course will begin at 11 a.m. with the men's 8K race, followed by the women's 6K race at noon.

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