

Press & Dakotan DAILY DOSE



CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Four-time NASCAR champion Jeff Gordon has clinched at least a wild-card berth in the 12-driver Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

NASCAR determined Wednesday that even if Gordon is knocked out of

Jeff Gordon Clinches Spot In NASCAR's Chase

the top 10 in standings over the next two races, he still would get into the Chase via the wild card.

Gordon has two wins this season, and the only way he could fall out of the top 10 is if Brad Keselowski or Clint Bowyer win the final two races of the

"regular season" to drop him out. Even if that happened, Gordon's two victories would be enough to get him into the Chase.

Kyle Busch, Jimmie Johnson, Matt Kenseth and Carl Edwards all clinched berths on Saturday night. Kevin Harvick clinched at least a wild card.

SDSU Men Ranked Eighth Regionally

BROOKINGS — The South Dakota State men's cross country team opens the season ranked eighth in the U.S. Track & Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association (USTFCCA) regional pre-season poll.

The Jacks are located in the Midwest Region and open the season in the same position that the team held at the finish of 2010.

The Jacks welcome back three of its four all-league selections from last year's championship team, including first team selection Michael Krsnak. Also with Krsnak, SDSU returns a pair of second team performers in Jared Ailts (Yankton) and Greg Vollmer.

Big 12, in state rivals Oklahoma State and Oklahoma in first and second place, lead the Midwest Region. These schools finished in

the top two spots last season, as well, with Oklahoma finishing in first place.

Big Ten schools Minnesota and Illinois follow in third- and fourth-place, followed by Tulsa, Iowa State and Iowa in fifth-, sixth- and seventh-place.

Southern Illinois and Nebraska round out the top 10.

The USTFCCA also released the national poll this week. Oklahoma State, the top team in the Midwest Region, received 10 first-place votes and is the top team in the nation. The Jacks did not receive any votes in the national poll.

South Dakota State opens the men's and women's cross country seasons on Saturday, Sept. 3, in Grand Forks, N.D., for the UND Ron Pynn Invitational.



Jake Reeves, left, and Jesse Ibarra repeated as champions of Yankton's summer cricket darts league. (Submitted Photo)

On Target

Festivities Planned For Augustana Season Opener

SIOUX FALLS — A free pre-game feed and an appearance by a Nashville recording artist highlight the 2011 Augustana football home opener Saturday at Kirkey-Over Stadium. The No. 8-ranked Vikings will face top-ranked Minnesota Duluth at 1 p.m.

Midco Sports Network will provide a complimentary pulled-pork sandwich meal for the first 1,000 fans and an acrylic Augustana mug for the first 500 fans from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fans can enter for a chance to a 32-inch, LCD television. MidcoSN will also carry the game live.

Nashville recording artist and South Dakota native Hailey Steele will sing the national anthem. Her appearance Saturday is sponsored by Sanford Health. Steele has opened for names like Sara Evans, Sugarland, Trick Pony and the legendary Michael Martin Murphy.

At halftime, Augustana football alumni in attendance will be recognized.

MidcoSN, Sanford Health and Schoeneman's are Saturday's game sponsors. General admission tickets for Saturday's game are still available and can be purchased at GoAugieTickets.com. Limited chairback seating

is also still open; call 605-274-6275 to reserve your tickets.

Quick Hitters

HOCKEY: Former Predator Wade Belak, an enforcer who had played with five NHL teams before retiring in March, was found dead Wednesday in Toronto. He was 35. Belak is the third NHL enforcer found dead since May. ... **A Minnesota boy who made an incredible hockey shot during a charity event won't collect the \$50,000 prize** because his twin brother should have taken the shot. The company that insured the event, Odds On Promotions, said Wednesday it would instead donate \$20,000 to youth hockey in Minnesota in the boys' names. Eleven-year-old Nate Smith hit the puck through a tiny hole 89 feet away during a charity hockey game in Faribault (FAYR-boh) on Aug. 11. But it was Nate's identical twin, Nick, whose raffle ticket won the chance to take the shot.

FOOTBALL: The New England Patriots will recognize the 10th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center before Thursday night's exhibition game against the New York Giants. It's the Patriots last game before they open the season on Sept. 12 at the Miami Dolphins.

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

NFL PRESEASON

Thursday, Sep. 1

Detroit at Buffalo, 5:30 p.m.

Indianapolis at Cincinnati, 6 p.m.

Baltimore at Atlanta, 6:30 p.m.

N.Y. Giants at New England, 6:30 p.m.

Dallas at Miami, 6:30 p.m.

Tampa Bay at Washington, 6:30 p.m.

St. Louis at Jacksonville, 6:30 p.m.

Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets, 6:30 p.m.

Cleveland at Chicago, 7 p.m.

Kansas City at Green Bay, 7 p.m.

Houston at Minnesota, 7 p.m.

Tennessee at New Orleans, 7 p.m.

Pittsburgh at Carolina, 7 p.m.

San Francisco at San Diego, 9 p.m.

Friday, Sep. 2

Oakland at Seattle, 9:30 p.m.

BASEBALL

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	83	52	.615	—
New York	81	53	.604	1 1/2
Tampa Bay	73	61	.545	9 1/2
Baltimore	68	68	.500	15 1/2
Baltimore	54	80	.403	28 1/2

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Detroit	75	61	.551	—
Cleveland	67	65	.508	6
Chicago	59	66	.467	12
Minnesota	57	79	.419	18
Kansas City	56	81	.409	19 1/2

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	77	59	.566	—
Los Angeles	73	62	.541	3 1/2
Oakland	60	75	.444	16 1/2
Seattle	57	77	.425	19

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

Chicago White Sox at Detroit, 6:05 p.m.

Toronto at N.Y. Yankees, 6:05 p.m.

Baltimore at Tampa Bay, 6:10 p.m.

Texas at Atlanta, 6:10 p.m.

Cleveland at Kansas City, 7:10 p.m.

Minnesota at L.A. Angels, 9:05 p.m.

Seattle at Oakland, 9:05 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Philadelphia	86	46	.652	—
Atlanta	80	55	.593	7 1/2
New York	65	69	.485	22
Washington	63	71	.470	24
Florida	60	75	.444	27 1/2

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	81	55	.596	—
St. Louis	71	64	.526	9 1/2
Cincinnati	67	69	.493	14
Pittsburgh	62	74	.456	19
Chicago	59	78	.431	22 1/2
Houston	47	90	.343	34 1/2

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
San Francisco	77	59	.566	—
San Francisco	72	65	.526	5 1/2
Los Angeles	65	70	.481	11 1/2
Colorado	64	72	.471	13
San Diego	60	77	.438	17 1/2

AREA CALENDAR

Thursday, September 1

CROSS COUNTRY, PREP Brandon Valley Inv. (YHS, 4:30 p.m.), Niobrara-Vergide Inv. (Bloomfield, Creighton, Niobrara-Vergide, 4 p.m.)

GOLF, DAKOTAS TOUR The Ridge Open at Sioux Center, Iowa

GOLF, BOYS' Beresford Quad (Beresford, Elk Point-Jefferson, 4 p.m.); Wagner at Parkston

GOLF, GIRLS' West Holt Inv. (Crofton, 9 a.m.)

VOLLEYBALL, GIRLS' Brookings at YHS (7 p.m.); Northeast Nebraska Classic at Pender and Wisner (Allen); Andes Central at Avon; Canton at Beresford; Creighton/Osmond vs. Niobrara-Vergide at Vergide; Dakota Valley at Elk Point-Jefferson; Dodge/Winslow at Wausa; Emerson-Hubbard/Ponca at Homer; Freeman Academy at Menno; Gayville-Volin at Alcester-Hudson; Hanson at Parkston; Hartington/Newcastle at Wynot; Irene-Wakonda at Marion; Laurel-Concord-Coleridge at Randolph; Lynch/Santee at West Boyd; McCook Central-Montrose at Parker (HC); Ne-ligh-Oakdale at Crofton; Tripp-Delmont-Armour at White Lake; Vermillion at South Sioux City; Wagner at Chamberlain; Westington Springs at Platte-Geddes

VOLLEYBALL, GIRLS' JV Brookings at YHS (4:30 p.m.)

VOLLEYBALL, GIRLS' SOPH Brookings at YHS (5:45 p.m.)

VOLLEYBALL, GIRLS' 9TH Brookings at YHS (4:30 p.m.)

Friday, September 2

CROSS COUNTRY, PREP Don Baker Memorial at Vermillion (Crofton, Gayville-Volin, Irene-Wakonda, Vermillion, Viborg-Hurley, 4 p.m.); S.F. Christian FCA Bowl Meet (Elk Point-Jefferson)

Football Huron at YHS (7:30 p.m., KYNT-AM, KVHT-FM); Alcester-Hudson at Gayville-Volin; Allen at Newcastle; Bloomfield vs. Niobrara-Vergide at Vergide; Bon Homme at Platte-Geddes-Dakota Christian (KVA-FM); Cedar Rapids at Santee; Centerville at Parker (HC); Corsica-Stickney at Menno (PN); Dakota Valley at Beresford; Elgin Public-Pope John at Creighton; Elk Point-Jefferson at Sioux Falls Christian; Hanson vs. Avon at Sioux Falls; Hartington at Wynot; Hartington Cedar Catholic at Crofton; Irene-Wakonda at Marion; Lutheran High Northeast at Laurel-Concord-Coleridge; Plankinton at Mary Indian; Scotland at South Central; Tripp-Delmont-Armour at Andes Central (HC); Vermillion at South Sioux City, Neb. (KVTK-AM); Viborg-Hurley at Baltic; Wagner at Parkston

GOLF, DAKOTAS TOUR The Ridge Open at Sioux Center, Iowa

GOLF, BOYS' YHS at Vermillion (1 p.m.)

SOCCER, BOYS' Yankton at R.C. Stevens (8 p.m.); Freeman Academy at Lead-Deadwood; Vermillion at James Valley Christian

SOCCER, BOYS' JV Yankton at R.C. Stevens (6 p.m.)

SOCCER, GIRLS' Yankton at R.C. Stevens (8 p.m.); Vermillion at Sturgis

SOCCER, GIRLS' JV Yankton at R.C. Stevens (6 p.m.)

TENNIS, GIRLS' YHS/Pierre at Mitchell (2 p.m.); S.F. Roosevelt at Vermillion

VOLLEYBALL, WOMEN'S Creighton Tour. (USD vs. Marquette, 4:30 p.m.); Cardinal Stritch Tour. (MMC vs. St. Francis, 10 a.m.; MMC vs. Huntington, 3:30 p.m.)

VOLLEYBALL, GIRLS' Battle Creek/Hartington Cedar Catholic at Elkhorn Valley

Three From Iowa's Training Incident Have Left Team

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — When Iowa opens the season Saturday, three of the 13 players who were hospitalized after a now-scrapped weightlifting exercise in January won't be on the team.

One walk-on player and two who were on scholarship quit the team following their hospitalization with rhabdomyolysis, a muscle disorder that caused discolored urine and extreme soreness, according to a report released this week by a committee appointed by President Sally Mason to investigate the injuries.

The walk-on quit before spring

practice to concentrate on academics. One of the scholarship players left the team before spring practice, considered transferring and then stayed at Iowa but decided not to play football. The other completed spring practice but left the university for what the report described as unrelated personal reasons.

The report, e-mailed to the Iowa Board of Regents and posted online Tuesday, does not identify any of the players. The second player is believed to be reserve senior cornerback Willie Lowe, who had asked for a release from his schol-

arship last spring to consider transferring but later decided to remain enrolled at Iowa but not rejoin the team.

The committee concluded that all 13 players appear to have completely recovered and it's considered possible but unlikely they will develop any long-term health problems. It also noted the athletics department has reaffirmed its commitment to never again use the workout that caused the injuries and taken steps to educate employees, athletes and others about how to prevent and identify rhabdomyolysis.

Vikings

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well today, so we'll see."

The Vikings chose Ponder, a Texas native and Florida State alum, with the 12th pick in the first round in April. The summer-long lockout put him behind in his development, and he's been up and down in the preseason. He's completed 51.5 percent of his passes for 207 yards, no TDs and no interceptions in parts of three games.

Typical of most rookie quar-

terbacks, especially this preseason, Ponder has looked a little rushed in the pocket and prone to scramble to the edge to give himself more room to work. But he performed well in a two-minute drill at the end of the game against Dallas on Saturday, looking poised as he quickly moved the Vikings down the field.

"I've thought each week I've learned a different thing from each game and hopefully take it into this last one," Ponder said. "I think I've progressed. Right now I'm in that thinking stage, that learning curve stage. I'm adjusting. But I've thought so far it's

gone pretty well."

Webb started the final two games last season, leading the Vikings to an upset win over the Eagles in Philadelphia. But his superior athleticism have the Vikings trying to work him in at receiver as well as quarterback. Webb is 12 for 23 for 170 yards and an interception in the preseason and has also rushed for 90 yards and a touchdown in the preseason.

"We've been doing a good job competing against one another throughout this camp," Webb said. "Just going into the last game you want to continue to get better."

Coyotes

From Page 9

28 and Peru State on Dec. 21.

One non-conference game that has not been announced is on Feb. 18, when USD hosts an opponent to be announced in the Coyotes' first-ever ESPN Bracket-buster game. While Boots welcomes the exposure, he is not sure about the timing, with only two conference games after it.

"It will be a showcase thing. It will be fine to play it," Boots said. "It's difficult to even have that game at that time of the year because you're trying to play conference games, which are extremely important. This will be a non-conference game."

USD will make its first foray into Summit League conference play beginning Dec. 1 at defending league champion Oakland

(Mich.), a NCAA qualifier last season.

"The real quality thing about it is having that challenge of playing in that Summit League, having nine home games with that and nine road games, and knowing you're going to be playing almost every Thursday and Saturday, and not jumping around," Boots said. "The last three years we've been all over the map, with games on Monday or Tuesday or Sunday, just no consistency with it. I think we can get back into a good routine with that, and that's going to be just a little more fun friendly."

USD faces former NCC rivals SDSU and NDSU twice, heading to Brookings Jan. 12 and Fargo, N.D., Jan. 14. The Coyotes host South Dakota State Feb. 9, the Jackrabbits' first visit to Vermillion since 2004. The Bison make the return trip Feb. 11.

While the 2011-12 season marks the first year of Summit League play for the Coyotes, it

also marks the final year of USD's transition to NCAA Division I. The Coyotes will be post-season eligible in 2012-13.

"I think everybody's going to be happy to be done with it," Boots said. "But just because the transition ends doesn't mean that you've made it. There's so much work to be done and we're in a building process with this. We're going to be as patient as we can, but we're going to try to be as successful as we can as quick as we can."

With the school year underway, Boots is excited to get back to work with the team.

"It's always a great time of year. Everybody wants to get back. Their energy's high," he said. "We'll get and find out the improvements our guys have made and our new guys. We'll see if they are going to be what we'd hoped they would be, and try to mix them all together and see if we can put together another competitive team."

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