

Roddick's Career Ends With Open Loss To del Potro

NEW YORK (AP) — More than an hour after hitting one last shot as a professional tennis player, then delivering one last, voice-wavering speech to an adoring U.S. Open audience, Andy Roddick exited the locker room one last time.

Accompanied by his wife and other family members, a black baseball cap tugged low over his eyes, Roddick slung a racket bag off his aching right shoulder — the one responsible for so many high-speed aces, violent forehands and the most recent Grand Slam title by an American man — and tossed the equipment in the back of a waiting van.

Won't need that any longer. Serenaded by choruses of "Let's go, Andy!" that rang through Arthur Ashe Stadium in the closing moments of his career, the 2003 U.S. Open champion headed into retirement with a 6-7 (1), 7-6 (4), 6-2, 6-4 loss to 2009 champion Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina in

the fourth round at Flushing Meadows on Wednesday.

"If we do badly, then it costs us something; if we do well, we get great things. This was about something bigger. It wasn't about ranking points or paychecks or anything else," Roddick said. "This week I felt like I was 12 years old, playing in a park. It was extremely innocent. That was fun. I enjoyed it."

It was a bittersweet goodbye, for the fans who gave him a standing ovation at the end — del Potro joined in, rising from his changeover chair to applaud — and for Roddick himself.

He covered his face with a white towel while seated on the sideline after sailing a running forehand long with the final swing of his racket. Earlier, he appeared to be trying to avoid crying while serving in the next-to-last game; in the stands, his wife, model-actress Brooklyn Decker, stuck a finger underneath her dark sunglasses to wipe

away her tears.

"Playing the last five games was pretty hard. Once I got down a break, I could barely look at my (guest) box," Roddick said during a news conference sprinkled with the sort of witty one-liners he quickly came to be known for after turning pro in 2000. "I don't know what the emotions are. I'm a little overwhelmed right now. I normally feel like I can grasp things pretty quickly and clearly. I certainly don't feel that way right now."

During an on-court address to the crowd, Roddick got choked up, particularly when making a reference to his longtime agent, Ken Meyerson, who died last year.

When handed a microphone, Roddick began by saying: "Oh, wow. For the first time in my career, I'm not sure what to say."

"Since I was a kid, I've been coming to this tournament. I felt lucky just to sit where all of you are sitting today, to

watch this game, to see the champions that have come and gone," Roddick told the fans in a moment reminiscent of Andre Agassi's farewell speech at the 2006 U.S. Open after his final match. "I've loved every minute of it."

It was appropriate that Roddick would leave tennis at Flushing Meadows, which is why he surprisingly announced last Thursday, his 30th birthday, that the U.S. Open would be his final tournament. A perfect book-end: He visited the hard-court Grand Slam tournament at age 9, a trip his parents gave him as a birthday present.

He would go on to win a junior title in New York, then the 2003 men's trophy at age 21, allowing him to end that season No. 1 in the ATP rankings. He later participated in four other major finals — one at the U.S. Open, three at Wimbledon — and lost each to Roger Federer, including a 16-14 fifth set at the All England Club in 2009.



P&D FILE PHOTO

Yankton quarterback Michael Rucker, 16, sets up to pass during a home game in the 2011 season. Rucker became Yankton High School's all-time career leader in passing yards during the Bucks' 30-7 win at Huron on Friday. The senior now stands at 2,409 career passing yards.

Rucker Adds To YHS Football Tradition

Senior Became Bucks' All-Time Leading Passer Last Week

BY CHRIS RILEY

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In case you were not aware, the Yankton Bucks football program has quite the storied tradition. 15 state championships and 31 conference titles speaks volumes about the quality of athletes who have worn the red and white jerseys each fall for over 100 years.

That is what makes senior quarterback Michael Rucker's latest accomplishment awful impressive.

Rucker, in his second season as the full-time starter, threw for 101 yards against Huron this past Friday night to set a new all-time career passing yardage mark for the Bucks. Mike Stotz (1997-1999) previously held the record of 2,336 yards. Rucker now owns the record with 2,409 yards, a mark that is sure to grow significantly throughout the course of his senior season.

"It means a lot," Rucker said of breaking the record. "Yankton High School has been such a powerhouse so it is quite an honor to be on the list."

Rucker, who also owns the Yankton marks for passing yards in a season and in a single game, entered this season almost assured of the record barring major injury.

So were there any pregame jitters knowing that he was less than 30 yards from the mark entering Friday's game?

"It (the record) was not in my mind," Rucker said. "I was just thinking that we gotta get the 'W.'"

With 224 career wins to his credit, Yankton head coach Arlin Likness has seen a few decent quarterbacks in his day, and he had plenty of praise for his current senior signal caller.

"Michael is a very strong leader," Likness said. "He puts his time in, he is a good decision maker, and he does not ask anything of his teammates that he does not do himself."

If you have been around Yankton football for long you are aware that they have traditionally been a grind it out on the ground type of team, but that had to change in recent years as Yankton added more of a spread offense.

"So many of the other teams have gotten so strong and quick on defense," Likness said. "We went through our assets and Michael was our best thrower."

That was back in 2010 during his sophomore season, when Rucker saw his first varsity action late in the season after overcoming an early-season injury. Although the varsity experience was new, Rucker was no stranger to the quarterback position.

"I started playing quarterback in junior league, fourth or fifth grade," Rucker said.

He was also quick to credit his teammates for making his opportunity at re-writing the record books possible.

"Without teammates I wouldn't have any records," Rucker added. "I've been friends and teammates with these guys since elementary school and I think it shows on the football field."

So with the record broken, something that was admittedly never his goal coming into the season, where do Rucker and the Bucks go from here?

"We want to be the best that we can be every Friday," Rucker said. "Our focus is on Watertown for this week; I just want to leave it all on the field."

Michael Rucker might be leaving all of his play on the field, but he is also leaving his name all over the Yankton High School record books.

You can follow Chris Riley on Twitter at twitter.com/ChrisCRiley

HCC LOOKS TO BREAK DOWN THE FRONT DOOR



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Hartington Cedar Catholic volleyball coach Adam Kuntz, middle, smiles during a light moment at Tuesday night's Crofton Triangular in Crofton, Neb. The Trojans won both of their matches to move to 6-1 on the season.

Trojans Want To Add District Title To Resume

Volleyball: Cedar Catholic Has Needed Wild Card To Score Back-To-Back State Berths

BY JEREMY HOECK

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CROFTON, Neb. — Sure, the Hartington Cedar Catholic volleyball team was proud to represent its school at the state tournament each of the last two years.

But, as the coaches and players will tell you, they weren't satisfied qualifying through the back-door entrance otherwise known as the wild card.

"We want to get there our way," senior setter Emily Schrempp said, pointing to her chest prior to taking the court for Tuesday's first match at the Crofton Triangular.

"That's our goal."

As many teams do, the Trojans (6-1) have embraced a kind of adage to constantly remind them of that mission. In the team's locker room hangs a target with a prominent bullseye. On the bottom of the target lies the phrase "Come Get Us."

"We want to earn it. Two years in a row, we feel like we got lucky to get there," said 25-year-old head coach Adam Kuntz, who took over the program prior to the 2010 season.

"We like to say our luck has run out."

The eight seniors on this year's roster were sophomores when the 2010 team went 26-6 and advanced all the way to the Class C2 championship match — ultimately losing to Lutheran High Northeast.

It was more of the same in 2011: A 23-9 record, another state tournament berth, but the Trojans were

"We want to get there our way. That's our goal."
EMILY SCHREMP, CEDAR CATHOLIC SENIOR SETTER

ousted in the first round.

That "bad taste" — as Kuntz puts it — translated into an increased effort to detail during the off-season. With eight seniors and four juniors back from last fall, the Trojans are out to prove that they are once again a force to be taken seriously in C2.

"It didn't take long for the rest of the girls to follow after that," Kuntz said. "They set the tone. They really made this a volleyball school."

An argument could be made, though, that Cedar Catholic is more than a volleyball powerhouse. Its girls' basketball team has qualified for the state tournament three of the past four years (reaching the state title game in 2010), and the school sent eight girls to the 2012 state track meet — seven of whom are back this year.

That across-the-board success is not without a key reason, according to senior middle hitter Lexi Steffen. "It's just a lot of hard work and dedication," she said Tuesday. "It's another year together and it really shows. Our control has gotten a lot better."

"We just hope to come out on top."

Since Kuntz took over a program loaded with talent, the Trojans have come out on top 77 percent of the

time (a 55-16 record). The team's only loss this season came to Columbus Scotus, a Class C1 team, at the Scotus Tournament last Saturday.

The biggest weapon for Cedar Catholic?

Depth, no question, says Kuntz.

"We always say that how good we are during matches is directly because of our 'B' team," he said.

"Some of our best games are in practice. That might sound bad, but it's the truth; we've got a really good 'B' team."

Being pushed like that in practices and scrimmages gives the Trojans a kind of game atmosphere, Schrempp said.

"That's definitely we've won so many games, because of them," she said. "They literally pick everything up in practice; nothing hits the floor. It kind of frustrates you, because you want to pound the ball into the floor."

It certainly doesn't help the confidence when Kuntz gets out there during practice and blocks at the net, joked Steffen.

"It makes you better when you think you have something and coach sends it right back in your face," she said.

Team chemistry also plays a key role for Cedar Catholic. The Trojans

Zoey Heimes posted a team-high 49 digs, with Kelsie Higgins finishing with 25 digs and Taylor Lauer adding 10 digs for the Lady Blue Devils.

Allen, now 2-4, travels to Bloomfield for a triangular with the Queen Bees and Wausa today (Thursday). Wynot, 2-1, hosts South Dakota Class B power Viborg Hurley today.

Allen won the JV match 25-8, 8-25, 15-5. Wynot took the C-match 25-22, 25-14.

ALLEN (2-4)25 19 25 25
WYNOT (2-1)21 25 12 15

EPPJ Double Tri.

ELGIN, Neb. — Niobrara-Verdigre went 0-2 in a double-triangular hosted by Elgin Public-Pope John on Tuesday.

EPPJ and Stuart each swept the Cougars, with Stuart claiming a 25-16, 15-7 victory; and EPPJ winning 25-16, 25-22.

In the Stuart match, McKayla Eisenhauer had four kills and Shelby McCordle had four assists to lead N-V. Tessa Ives recorded two ace serves for the Cougars.

Niobrara-Verdigre travels to Santee for a triangular with the Lady Warriors and O'Neill St. Mary's on Tuesday, Sept. 11.

Eagles Power Past Parkston 3-0

PARKSTON — Kellie Winckler had five kills, five blocks and four ace serves to lead Andes Central to a 25-17, 25-14, 25-10 victory over Parkston in Little Missouri Valley Conference volleyball action on Tuesday.

Krista Winckler had four kills and four blocks, and Sierra Svatos had nine assists for Andes Central. Latasha Dion had six ace serves and seven digs. Dennisha Johannesson had three ace serves and Payton Johannesson had three blocks in the win.

For Parkston, Laura Weiss led the way with five kills, four blocks and two ace serves.

Kenzie Lee had 10 digs and two ace serves, and Whitney Weber had three ace serves in the effort.

Andes Central, 3-0 overall and in league play, travels to Corsica to face Corsica-Stickney today (Thursday). Parkston also faces Corsica-Stickney next, on Sept. 11 at home.

ANDES CENTRAL (3-0)25 25 25
PARKSTON (2-5)17 14 10

Allen 3, Wynot 1

WYNOT, Neb. — After taking their lumps in the loaded Northeast Nebraska Classic, the Allen Eagles took their frustrations out on Wynot Tuesday, beating the Lady Blue Devils 25-21, 19-25, 25-12, 25-15 in Lewis & Clark Conference volleyball action on Tuesday.

Allen had come into the match losers of four straight, three to teams in bigger classes and one to 4-1 Guardian Angels Central Catholic.

For Wynot, Maggie Schulte had eight kills and Sam Wieseler had six kills to lead the way. Jenna Heine recorded 14 assists, with Erica Burbach posting 13 assists and 14 digs.

Paralympics An Inspiration To War-Wounded Athletes

BY ROB HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — The explosion that took away Brad Snyder's sight couldn't touch the Navy lieutenant's fighting spirit.

A year after Snyder stepped on an improvised explosive device laid by Taliban that he was trying to detect while on duty in Kandahar, the American is swimming at the London Paralympics — and adding sporting medals to his military ones.

"It was pretty much immediate that I (decided I) was going to try and minimize my blindness as much as possible, and get out and pursue success," Snyder told The Associated Press. "Thankfully my support network was pretty savvy and said, 'You should check out this Paralympic swimming thing.'"

Snyder is glad he listened, having quickly excelled with the same determination he applied to clearing

IEDs in one of the most dangerous Afghanistan assignments.

Before Friday's anniversary of the blast, Snyder has already been on the London podium twice: winning gold in the 100-meter freestyle and silver in the 50.

"This is something every kid dreams of when they are 8," he said. "I remember Tom Dolan winning the 400 IM in Atlanta (at the Olympics)."

"Through blindness I've been

able to experience a level of competition I never would have otherwise. So in a way I am very thankful for that."

Snyder is one of many servicemen in London using sport to aid their recovery after being horrifically injured on the front lines of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars launched after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S.

"I hope that my generation," Snyder says, "the warriors coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq who are

lying in bed missing a limb or whatever and they don't know what's next, can see my story and say: 'Hey, that's for me. If he can do it, I can too.'"

Snyder's remarkably fast journey from the battlefield to elite sporting competition began soon after he discovered he would never see again.

He is one of the lucky ones, as shown by the tattoo commemorating a fallen comrade that adorns his chest.

"In my line of work, I had seen quite a few injuries due to blasts, and none of them were very good," Snyder said. "I was able to see out of my left eye for a brief moment after I was blown up."

"I looked down and saw I had both my legs and both my arms, and immediately felt relatively optimistic about the outcome. I felt very thankful that maybe this isn't going to be so bad."