

10 Vermillion Plain Talk

Seekamp Granted Fourth Year

BY JEREMY HOECK
For the Press and Dakotan

As it turns out, Nicole Seekamp's college career wasn't done March 22 in Greeley, Colorado.

It was that night when the University of South Dakota women's basketball standout hit a shot at the buzzer against Northern Colorado in the WNIT that was ultimately ruled to be a two-pointer, not a three-pointer.

Game over. The Coyotes lost by one point. The final game in Seekamp's USD career, right?

Wrong. Thirty days later, on Monday afternoon, she was informed that the NCAA had granted her a fourth season of eligibility, ensuring that she would be back – minus two games – for the 2015-16 season.

"It was a relief," Seekamp said Tuesday morning. "Like, 'Yes, I'm not done here!'"

"That last game in the Dome, it didn't really feel like the last game. It's exciting that I can play in the Dome again."

A native of Australia, the two-time Summit League tournament MVP returns to a Coyote team coming off a 26-win season that for the third straight year featured a run to the league championship game.

Seekamp averaged a team-best 15.6 points and 5.1 assists per game last season, to go along with 3.6 rebounds. She again picked up her production in

the Summit League tournament, scoring 25, 23 and 21 points as the Coyotes lost in the final to South Dakota State.

It was two weeks later, after two games in the WNIT, when Seekamp said she began having serious thoughts that she could maybe come back the following season – provided that another attempt at an NCAA waiver would be successful.

"We've done it a couple times, but they (NCAA) didn't think I had a good enough argument," Seekamp said. "We worked hard this time. I was pretty confident, but you never know with the NCAA."

Seekamp worked with Jamie Oyen and Drew DeGroot in the USD Compliance department to gather the necessary documents, many involving her (brief) amateur career in Australia. Seekamp also submitted a personal statement, as did one of her former coaches in Australia. The entire waiver was then sent to the NCAA Legislative Release Committee on April 4 for review.

"They probably have so many cases like that, they could just throw it away," Seekamp said. "I talked to one of my friends who went through this, and she was declined before."

"I had faith, though." When the good news arrived Monday afternoon, the only caveat provided in the NCAA decision was that Seekamp sit out the first two games of the 2015-16 season. That was what the

NCAA deemed she had played in amateur competition after her high school graduation in Australia.

"I thought, 'Really? The first two games?' she said. "At the end of the season, it doesn't mean much. It's nothing in the scheme of things. Especially with the team we're going to have."

Seekamp's return now gives the Coyotes three starters back for next season, with seniors-to-be Tia Hemiller and Margaret McCloud. The program will also see redshirts Caitlin Duffy and Abigail Fogg become eligible, and will welcome highly-touted freshman Allison Arens, Jaycee Bradley, Megan Bonar and Madeline Homoly.

"I've played pickup with Allison and Jaycee, and in practice with Duffy and Fogg, so I'm looking forward to it," Seekamp said. "I'm excited for the fall."

Once the Coyotes begin the 2015-16 season with games at Wyoming and Northern Iowa, Seekamp will be a spectator on the bench – much like she was during her redshirt season in 2011-12.

But it's the big picture – i.e., a run to the NCAA Tournament – that had Seekamp most excited by her news.

"At the end of the season, you look back and those don't really mean much," she said. "When we were playing in the Summit League tournament, we didn't think about Drake or Kansas."

"They're not as important as the end."

Vermillion Tennis Competes At Home

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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The Vermillion High School boy's tennis team squared off against Yankton and Sioux Falls Washington in a triangular match Tuesday afternoon at home.

"The matches were really tough and the boys hung in there and played really. Sometimes the scores showed it and sometimes they didn't," said coach Betsey Hughes.

The Tanagers battled strong winds, unseasonably cold temperatures and tough opponents falling to both teams and coming away with one point on the day.

"We've been working on serving, but today with the wind it made it really difficult to see any progress in the serving and we've been working on our net play and that's going very well," Hughes said.

Vermillion's Sam Craig earned the point for the Tanagers by defeating Sioux Falls Washington.

"(Craig) won at number two against Washington, which is a big win," Hughes said. "He split sets."

Despite falling to Sioux Falls Washington 8-1 and Yankton 0-9, Hughes was pleased with the team's performance.

"The things that the kids needed to do better – coming into the net and playing into the volley – they did very well," she said. "There's still some things we need to work on as far as getting both people up at the net and being very dynamic up at the net, moving back and forth."

Vermillion's next home match is scheduled for April 28, where they will face off against Yankton. The start time is set for 4 p.m. and the home matches are played at the University of South Dakota's tennis courts.

Local Area Sports News

Warnock Named Summit Player Of The Week

ELMHURST, Ill.—South Dakota freshman designated player Christy Warnock has been named Summit League Player of the Week for the period ended April 19. It is the first career award for Warnock, who hails from Omaha, Neb.

Warnock hit .714 (5-for-7) including a walk-off grand slam in helping the Coyotes sweep a two-game series with Omaha Friday in Vermillion. She scored four runs and had six RBIs. Warnock registered her first collegiate double and home run, and slugged 1.286 in the twin bill.

Warnock was 3-for-3 and scored three times in a 7-3 win against Omaha in game one. She was 2-for-4 with a double and the grand slam in a six-inning, 11-1 victory in game two.

Warnock and the Coyotes (17-22-1, 8-3 Summit) begin a three-game series Saturday against Western Illinois in Macomb, Ill.

T&F: Wetzstein Sets 1,500 University Of SD Record...Again

LONG BEACH, Calif.—Twice on back-to-back days, Coyote junior Katie Wetzstein broke her own school record in the 1,500-meter run to lead South Dakota at the Beach Invitational on Saturday.

Wetzstein took third overall at the meet when she crossed the line as the clock read 4 minutes, 22.62 seconds. This is her third time improving the record since it she originally set it a year ago at the Mt. SAC Relays.

In the 3,000 steeplechase, junior Isaac Allen ran a new career best by crossing the line in 9:07.77 for third place.

Sophomores Mach Dojok and Nicole Schmidt both won their respective heats of the 800 meters, set a new career best and moved into fourth all-time in school history. Dojok clocked a time of 1:50.16 to finish ninth overall, while Schmidt ran a time of 2:11.22.

To cap off the distance performances, senior Taylor Chapman ran 3:50.87 for 1,500 meters.

Senior Cody Snyder was the top collegiate in the discus, tossing the disc 183-4.

In the 400 hurdles, senior Lukas Bernard won his heat and took third overall with a time of 52.11 seconds, just shy of his career best.

The Coyotes also had a strong showing in the men's and women's pole vault. Freshman Jake David cleared 17 feet again to take third overall. Junior Peter Chapman and senior Kevin Sarehkhani both made it over 16 feet.

Competing unattached, Madison Mills led the women's pole vaulters in fourth place after she cleared 13-6 ¼. Freshman Hannah Meador also went over 13-6 ¼, a 10-inch career best, to place fifth based on attempts. In seventh, sophomore Emily Brigham jumped 13-0 ¼.

Sophomore Danielle Waldner took eighth in the shot put with a throw of 46-1 ¼.

The Coyote track and field teams return to the Midwest next weekend for the 106th annual Drake Relays, held in Des Moines, Iowa, April 23-25.

Freshman, Warnock, Leads USD In Sweep

BY JEREMY HOECK
For the Press and Dakotan

Christy Warnock's collegiate offensive career had consisted of four singles and five runs batted in.

The Omaha, Nebraska native quickly padded those stats Friday, and oddly enough, against Omaha.

Warnock, a freshman designated player for the South Dakota softball team, went 5-for-7 with a walk-off grand slam in game two as the Coyotes swept Omaha 7-3 and 11-1 in a Summit League doubleheader at home.

"It was extra special, yeah," she said, smiling. "That was fun to come out and do that against them."

Warnock wasn't alone, however, in her production from the bottom part of the lineup for the Coyotes, who scored 18 runs on 27 hits with five home runs on the day.

The 7-8-9 hitters (Shelby Keil, Taylor Steinfeldt and Warnock) in the lineup combined to go 9-for-19 in the doubleheader, with two home runs, 10 RBIs and nine runs scored.

In short: Another balanced attack for the second-place Coyotes (17-22-1, 8-3).

"It's good to have a team that all the way through, we can do it," Warnock said. "We can count on the first batter or the last batter, it doesn't matter."

The usual suspects for USD again shined on Thursday, as well.

This week's national Player of the Week, Yvon Minogue, was 5-of-for-8 with a home run and four RBIs

out of the leadoff spot, while Allie Daly was 5-for-6 with a pair of home runs in the second game.

Warnock, though, was the standout, as her grand slam in the bottom of the sixth inning of game two sent everyone home.

"I thought, 'Why not? Why not hit the crap out of the ball?'" she joked.

That's been a popular sight of late for the Coyotes, who now have 28 home runs over their last eight games.

"For a freshman to finish a game like that, that's just awesome to see," head coach Amy Klyse said.

"Right now, one through nine, everyone is seeing the ball and hitting the ball."

Perhaps lost in the offensive outburst of the past week and a half for the Coyotes has been the pro-

duction of pitchers Madison Frain and Rachel Cue.

Frain, a junior, pitched all seven innings in the first game and surrendered only three solo home runs. Cue, a sophomore, allowed six hits and one run (in the first inning) of game two – Klyse said it might have been Cue's best performance of the season.

Both pitchers allowed Omaha (20-23, 5-6) to jump out to an early lead, only to be backed up by their offense.

"As a pitcher, I can be relaxed, like I have nothing to worry about," Cue said.

Saturday's final game of the series was cancelled due to rain.

USD will open a three game series against Western Illinois in Macomb, Illinois on Saturday, April 25.

Bye, Heine Resign From VHS Coaching

Vermillion High School's wrestling coaches Hazen Bye and Luke Heine tendered their resignation at the last school board meeting.

Both resignations were accepted and the school is in the process of interviewing new candidates to fill the open positions.

"We thank them for the time they have given us," said athletic director Jason Huska. "We are finishing up interviews and will hopefully have the positions filled by the next school board meeting."

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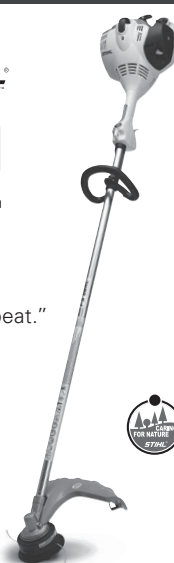
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