



August 14, 2015 www.plaintalk.net

# VHS Soccer Preps For First Official Season

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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This fall will be the first season the boys' soccer team at Vermillion High School is competing as a sanctioned team and head coach Curt Nelson is looking forward to the shift.

"This will be more similar to when I first started coaching four years ago when we had a solid organization and a state tournament," Nelson said.

The Tanagers started practice last week, and with the first game only one week away the team is looking to step up their game in order to compete with some of the bigger schools they will be matched against.

"After the first week of practice, we've really just been focusing on conditioning and fundamentals," Nelson said. "Getting everyone back in the swing of soccer activities and really just setting a foundation so we can progress tactically as we get into the next couple weeks here."

The team went 3-3-1 last year as a club team and, with only one other club team in the state, faced many sanctioned schools, but could not compete in a state tournament at the end of the season. This year, the Tanagers will have the chance to play in a state tournament.

The Tanagers will take the field against almost half of the same opponents from last year season and Nelson is really pushing conditioning and fundamentals to prepare his team.

"I think we need to work on our conditioning because we're not as deep as some of the other teams are, so that will be a major focus," he said. "Then making sure we can just get our fundamentals down and really play together as a unit will really be the key to compete with some of the bigger schools."

Defenseman Alec Leber will be returning for his senior season along with midfielder Joe Miller. Both have been part of the boys' soccer program for the last four years.

Another senior to look for on the field is Andrew Callahan.

"Andrew Callahan (has) is really improved since he started playing with us two years ago so I'm real excited to watch him finish out his high school career as well," Nelson said.

The Tanager boys' soccer team begins



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
**Above: The Vermillion boys' soccer team began practices last week at Cotton Park to prepare for the fall season. This year will mark the first year the team will play as a sanctioned high school team. Below: Head boys' soccer coach at Curt Nelson, far right, watches a drill during the Tanagers first week of practice at Cotton Park. Vermillion opens the season Saturday, Aug. 22 at Freeman Academy.**



game play on Saturday Aug. 22 when the team travels to Freeman Academy to take on the Bobcats at 1 p.m.

The first home game is scheduled for Aug. 29 against Groton with kick-off at 2 p.m. All home games are played at Cotton Park.

# Seven Selected To Coyote Sports Hall Of Fame

Seven Coyotes comprise the 2015 Henry Heider Coyote Sports Hall of Fame Class. The induction ceremony will be held Sept. 19 during USD's Hall of Fame Weekend.

Brothers and baseball players Jason '94 and Jeff Huska '95, football player Chris Mikkelsen '05, softball player Kristi (Gorman) McKee '99, track and field athletes Mike Martin '85 and Brianne (Vette) Edwards '04, and special contributor Nancy McCahren '57 are represented in the class of 2015. The group brings the Hall of Fame total to 297 individuals.

An abbreviated bio of the 2015 Hall of Fame Class follows:

*Kristi (Gorman) McKee (1995-98)*

McKee, who came to USD from Denison, Iowa, is one of two players in program history to earn All-America honors and was the first to do so following her junior season in 1997. McKee is a two-time all-NCC and all-region outfielder who led South Dakota to a program-record 40 wins in 1998 when she batted .401 with 46 RBIs and 48 runs scored. She hit .409 during her All-America season in 1997. McKee graduated holding program career records for hits (225), runs (124), RBIs (98) and doubles (40). She also had the second-highest batting average on the books at .347. She still ranks in the top 10 in all five categories.

McKee and her husband, Mickey, reside in Houston, Texas, with their four children Taylor, Maddox, Peyton and Brooks. McKee taught and coached in the Houston area for 10 years. She and Mickey own Kodiak Gas Services, an oilfield service company.

*Jason Huska (1991-94)*

Huska, who grew up in Vermillion, is one of two players in program history to earn all-NCC honors three times (his brother, Jeff, is the other). In 140 collegiate games spanning four seasons from 1991-94, Huska batted .342 (152-for-445) with program records of 22 home runs and 102 runs scored. He also had 103 RBIs. Huska started at first base for three seasons and was a catcher during his freshman campaign. He finished with a program-record 868 putouts and carried a .984 fielding percentage.

Huska's first season with the Coyotes was the program's first following a four-year hiatus. Huska batted .363 as

a freshman in leading the program to a record 21 wins and a 9-7 mark in NCC play.

Huska has served as assistant principal and athletic director at Vermillion High School for the last 15 years. He and his wife, Sue, have two daughters, Mckenzie and Keely, and a son, Jayce.

*Jeff Huska (1991-94)*

Huska, who grew up in Vermillion, is a two-time Academic All-American infielder who led the Coyotes in batting for four consecutive seasons from 1991-94. He graduated as the program's all-time leader in eight different offensive categories including batting average (.382), hits (165), RBIs (117), doubles (35) and slugging percentage (.595).

Huska and his brother, Jason, are the only Coyotes to be named to the All-NCC team three times. He led the NCC in batting during conference play as a freshman (.500) and broke South Dakota's single-season record by hitting .419 (44-for-105) as a senior. He belted 18 home runs, scored 91 times and had a .456 on-base percentage in four seasons as a Coyote. Huska currently resides in Windom, Minn., with his wife, Jennifer, and their children Sam, Kaitlee and Charlee. Huska serves as a high school biology and anatomy teacher. He is also a head girls basketball coach and assistant varsity football coach.

*Chris Mikkelsen (2001-04)*

Mikkelsen, who came to USD from Gregory, S.D., is a two-time all-NCC performer who excelled as both a wide receiver and return man. He caught 150 passes for 2,279 yards and 15 touchdowns in four seasons from 2001-04. He averaged 11 yards on 39 punt returns and 26 yards on 25 kickoff returns in that span and has the longest kickoff return in program history of 100 yards.

Mikkelsen is a three-time academic all-NCC honoree who helped lead the Coyotes to a 9-2 record as a senior in 2004. He graduated as the program's all-time leader in receptions. He currently ranks third in career catches, fourth in receiving yards, sixth in receiving touchdowns, and seventh in all-purpose yards (3,417).

Upon graduating from USD, Mikkelsen enrolled in chiropractic school in Bloomington, Minn., and graduated in 2010. He began working at ChiroSport in

Sioux Falls that same year and is now part owner of the company. He and his wife, Abbey, celebrated their first child, Knox, in August of 2014.

*Mike Martin (1981, 1983-85)*

Martin, who came to USD from Sac City, Iowa, is a four-time North Central Conference champion and the 1983 national-runner-up in the 800-meter run. His program-record time of 1:50.10 in the event stood for 18 years and remains the third-fastest time in program history. It was the fastest ever in South Dakota intercollegiate circles.

Martin won NCC indoor 800 championships in 1983 and 1984. He won outdoor titles in 1983 and 1985. Martin was also a member of the Coyotes' sprint medley relay team, which set the all-time state collegiate record at 3:20.16. He was named USD's Male Athlete of the Year in 1985. In 2005, he was inducted into USD's

Track and Field Hall of Honor.

Martin currently resides in Overland Park, Kan., where he is the owner of a remodeling company, JAM Construction, LLC. He and his wife, Tricia, have two sons, Jonathon and Andrew.

*Brianne (Vette) Edwards (2001-04)*

Edwards, who came to USD from Spearfish, S.D., is an 11-time national qualifier, a seven-time All-American, and the 2004 national champion in the heptathlon. She led South Dakota to the 2004 outdoor North Central Conference championship and was named NCC Indoor and Outdoor MVP that same season. She went on to be named NCAA Woman of the Year for the state of South Dakota and earned an NCAA postgraduate scholarship. Edwards, a five-time NCC champion,

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