

Booster Bash Set For Friday Night

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
elyse.brightman@plaintalk.net

Vermillion High School is kicking off its fall sports season Friday night with the booster club's Booster Bash.

The event will be held at the high school in the auditorium starting with a dinner at 5 p.m. All fall teams will be in attendance and coaches will have the opportunity to speak about their upcoming season.

"The coaches will speak about the season and introduce their players. So, it's like the kick off for fall sports," said Booster Club president Jim Peterson. "This is our main fundraiser for the booster club."

Vermillion Ford will be onsite and is donating \$20 to anyone over the age of 18 who drives a new Ford.

The Booster Club will also speak about upcoming plans and what has been recently accomplished with the money donated to the booster club.

"Currently, we are in the process of redoing the tennis courts behind the high school and then we are also putting up, in about 2-3 weeks, a new football and track scoreboard which Sanford Health was the major donor on that and First Dakota Bank. In the gym in about 3 weeks we'll put up a brand new basketball, wrestling and volleyball scoreboard with a big video board from Daktronics and a majority of that came from First Dakota Bank," Peterson said.

The donations have also provided new shirts for the bowling, golf and tennis teams.

Currently, the Booster Club has about 150 members and anyone interesting in joining can become member at the Booster Bash.

This is one of three Booster Club events during the year. The next Booster Club fundraiser is the spirit week contest leading up to the homecoming football game in Sept. 25.

"We do a spirit contest in town where we have business paint their windows for homecoming," Peterson said. "We'll have a pregame party at Howler's outside if it's a nice day. We do a remote with 106.3 radio station with some gifts and games for kids. And then we'll do one in the spring, the Hall of Fame event."

Volleyball

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being positive and encouraging to each other," she said. "I think they all have good attitudes about want to get better, which is a good thing because if the girls don't want to get better, it's hard to go further with that."

The positive attitude is mirrored in Jarchow's coaching and has been noticed by the players, even in the short amount of time they have been together.

"When she talks to us, she has a great attitude about everything," Schmitz said. "She cheers us on and so she can just bring our attitudes right up."

If the team continues from the first week of practices, she expects to see much improvement by the end of the season.

"I just expect the girls to play hard and give 100 percent effort," Jarchow said. "We would like to obviously be at the state tournament, but we're just looking for the girls to keep improving throughout the year to get to be where they want to be as players."

A new coach also allows the athletes to start off on a new foot. They are given the opportunity for a true try-out and a chance to showcase their skills in front of a coach who's never seen them play before.

"Since we have a new coach this year, it's like a new start. You don't have to worry about what you did in the past or anything, you can just start over fresh," Schmitz said.

Jarchow is looking to the four seniors on the team, Schmitz, Kyliegh Melstad, Kylee Retzlaff and Kayla Stammer, to lead on the court and off, but also credits the eight juniors for their efforts during the first practices.

"I expect them, being the oldest, to lead the team, but just whoever is going to step up and work hard and be a leader not only on the court but also off the court," she said.

The combination of skills, new coaching, positive attitudes and player experience with 12 upperclassmen will see the team through the 2015 season.

Tanagers volleyball begins the season in Sept. 1 when the team travels to Lennox for a 5 p.m. start time.

South Dakota Falls To Nebraska 6-2 In Exhibition Match

LINCOLN, Neb.—Goals by junior Corey Strang and sophomore Lara Boman put the Coyotes on the board as South Dakota fell to Big Ten's Nebraska 6-2 in an exhibition match Friday at Barbara Hilbner Stadium in Lincoln.

Senior Taylor Nivala fed the ball to Strang at the top of the box in the 60th minute. Strang chipped the ball up and over Nebraska's goalkeeper Erika Johnson.

The second goal came in the final minute as sophomore Lara Boman dribbled into open field with only the goalkeeper to beat. Boman took a long shot from midfield and it bounced into the net to finalize the score at 6-2.

Nebraska's Jaycie Johnson and Caroline Flynn each had a pair of goals and one assist. Lia Baldo and Haley Hanson also had one goal apiece. The Huskers outnumbered the Coyotes in shots taken 18-4.

All three Coyote keepers saw action, with freshman Parker Rytz making her debut in the starting slot. Rytz recorded a save in the first half and freshman Coral Suarez added two more saves in the second half.

Also making their first start in a South Dakota kit were sophomore Katelyn Floysand, freshman Tayler Karas and freshman Makenzie Burmeister.

South Dakota opens the regular season at Creighton on Friday, Aug. 21, in Omaha, Neb.

Vermillion Competes In Minneapolis Tournament

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
elyse.brightman@plaintalk.net

For the second consecutive year, the 9th grade girls' basketball team qualified for the Great Four-State Basketball Tournament in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Teams from North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota compete in respective state tournaments and the top two teams from each state travel to the Target Center in Minneapolis July 30-31.

Vermillion finished second in the South Dakota tournament to Onida-Warner-Selby-Aberdeen Roncalli.

The floor at the Target Center, home of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx, is 10 feet longer than a typical high school court and tournament format had the games at 16 minute halves with running clocks. Clocks were stopped during time-outs only.

In game one, Vermillion fell to Mountain Iron Buhl 36-28. Vermillion scored just seven points in the first half, but used the second half overcame a 13-point deficit.

Vermillion bounced back to take game two 37-35 over Roseau.

"We came out a lot more efficient, but had some droughts. Overall, (we) moved the ball a lot better and controlled the game and rebounded way better than game one," said head coach Brad Melstad.

Roseau drained two 3-pointers in the final minute to make it a two-point game, but Vermillion was able to hold on for the win.

Game three was a rematch of the South Dakota championship putting Vermillion up against Onida-Warner-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Vermillion 9th grade girls' basketball team on the floor of the Target Center in Minneapolis at the Great Four-State Basketball Tournament July 30-31.

Back row, left: Head coach Brad Melstad, Mady Gilbertson, Lauren Bern, Kasey Jensen, Haleigh Melstad and Assistant coach Nicky Gilbertson. Front row, left: Haley Doty, Emily Bye and Madisen Martinez

Selby-Aberdeen Roncalli in the consolation championship.

Vermillion prevailed 44-32. The game was tied halfway through the second half before Vermillion pulled away for the 12-point win.

"Overall, these girls are starting to click with some things we have been

doing for two years now," Melstad said. "A few girls always get nervous game one, but then overcome it all the next few games."

This will be the last year for this group to compete in this tournament, since there aren't older age group divisions.

Coyotes Hope Defensive Changes Lead To Progress

BY JEREMY HOECK
Press and Dakotan

Something had to change. Jason Petrino and Marquice Williams knew that. It couldn't be business as usual for the University of South Dakota defense, after a 2-win season where league opponents scored 38 points a game.

One particular area that needed attention was the defensive line.

And so, the combination of a full-on recruiting embrace, a change from a 3-4 to a 4-3 defensive scheme and depth has – in their minds – fueled some optimism for the 2015 season.

Williams, who coaches the defensive line, had to look no further than pre-season gatherings.

"It feels like the first time ever that we'll be in a meeting room and amazed by the number I have," he said Wednesday during USD's media day gathering in Vermillion.

Depth is certainly a large part of the equation for the Coyotes, who are looking to improve from a sub-par defensive season a year ago.

Two years ago, USD led the Missouri Valley Football Conference with 39 sacks (9 coming from league Defensive Player of the Year Tyler Starr), but that team total dropped to eight last year – third-worst in the nation.

"We've got experience, which we haven't had in the past," senior Nick Jacobs said.

Whereas a year ago, the Coyotes had to move some offensive guys to defense to provide that group with some extra bodies, the team boasts a number of options for 2015: Drew Iddings, Jacobs, Sean Bredl, Mason Ruiz and Jon Maag, among others. And then there would be another group of guys listed as linebackers who may play more of an end position, such as Andrew Van Ginkel, Jake Leohr and Colin Mertlik.

The concept of switching to a 4-3 look was simple: More guys to pressure the quarterback.

"Now we'll have four people rushing the quarterback and be playing our gaps a lot better, so the pressure will come," said Iddings, a Rapid City native.

Keeping in mind that players like Starr – now with the NFL's Atlanta Falcons – don't often land in

Vermillion, the Coyote coaching staff had to instead use the talent it already had. Sure, they could go out and put together an impressive recruiting class (which, by all accounts, it did), but the immediate focus was shifting around the pieces they already had.

"We're not in a position like LSU or Texas to say we're going to recruit the best 'that,'" said Petrino, the defensive coordinator. "For us, it's about our personnel, and who we have, and putting them in the best positions for success."

For a program still trying to find its way in the Missouri Valley, USD has instead searched for athletes; versatile players who could eventually fit into a number of positions.

"We have to recruit athletes and develop them," Petrino said. "Coach (Joe) Glenn has always been that way. He's always recruited athletes, and eventually they'll find where they fit best."

A year ago, the Coyotes found it tough to fill the shoes of a guy like Starr, whose sheer athletic ability wreaked havoc on opposing quarterbacks and lines. Replacing nine sacks was going to have to be a team effort, and that proved challenging.

"We sat back after the season and evaluated," Williams said. "We couldn't just play guys in Tyler Starr's position; you have to have a certain type of guy for that."

And while there are undoubtedly guys who could bring down a quarterback, it wasn't happening at near the same rate – only two other FCS teams had fewer sacks last season.

"We go from breaking the Missouri Valley sack record to having a down year," Jacobs said. "We wanted to emphasize getting pressure like we did the year before."

Perhaps a bigger concern for the Coyotes from last year wasn't the sack total but the rushing yardage the defense was allowing. In a league that featured a number of the nation's top rushers, USD surrendered an average of 235 yards on the ground.

The hope, according to Williams, is that by having more athletes to rely on (granted they stay healthy, which has been a concern team-wide), the Coyotes can use their speed to slow teams down.

"The menu up front for our guys is minimal, but we're going to let

them play fast with some more responsibilities," Williams said.

If the old adage of 'be strong up the middle' is true, the Coyotes could be in for some progress in 2015. They will have seniors in linebackers Keyen Lage, Ryan Hillier and Colin Buscarini, as well as junior John Wessel who was the team's second-leading tackler last season. As Petrino pointed out, when USD was its best on defense (2013, for example), it was guided by senior leadership.

Will that depth in the front seven lead to progress? That's the hope, according to Jacobs.

"I want us to be an aggressive defense and assert ourselves in the Missouri Valley as an aggressive defense," he said.

Pressure cannot be the only area of improvement, however, according to Petrino. There's still the matter of coverage, particularly in the passing game where the Coyotes allowed 232 yards – and a number of big plays – last season.

They have to be adaptable, Petrino said.

"You've got to be that way in college football," he said.

From teams that use a spread offense, to ones that use an option, to the ones that are more base styles (like most in the Missouri Valley), defenses have to be ready for anything, Petrino said.

First comes the matter of tightening up the fundamentals, from the stance, to getting off blocks, to communication, to coverages. It's those small aspects that add up to progress, according to Iddings.

"We always say, focus on the little things and the big things will fall into place," he said.

Williams likes to use a 'one percent' analogy.

The idea is simple: Improve on something every day.

"We can't worry about being 'this' team unless we're focused on one percent every day," Williams said. "That one percent adds up."

And that means that no matter what the opposing team does, the Coyotes are doing their job, he added.

"At the end of the day, it's about what we do," Williams said. "If we can take care of everything in-house and make sure we're fundamentally sound, we'll have a great season."

USD Men's Basketball Schedule Released

Two games against the Big Ten, one against Kansas State and a trip to Las Vegas highlight the 2015-16 South Dakota men's basketball schedule released Friday.

The schedule includes 14 non-conference games before the Coyotes host IUPUI in a Summit League opener on New Year's Day. Three of those non-conference games are home and another will take place in Sioux Falls on Dec. 28 when South Dakota takes on Florida Gulf Coast inside the Pentagon.

"We have put together another challenging slate of non-conference games," said South Dakota Head Coach Craig Smith. "It will be the second year in a row that we

play seven of our first eight away from the DakotaDome."

South Dakota will face Wright State, Northern Illinois and Cal State Northridge on consecutive days at a season-opening tournament in DeKalb, Ill., Nov. 13-15. The Coyotes take on Kansas State in Manhattan, Kan., on Nov. 20.

The home opener is Nov. 24 against South Dakota Mines. Two games in Sacramento, Calif., against Sacramento State and Eastern Washington will be held Nov. 28-29. Eastern Washington won the Big Sky Tournament a year ago and competed in the NCAA Tournament. The Coyotes take on Minnesota in Minneapolis on Dec. 5.

Home games against Kansas City and CSU Bakersfield will be held Dec. 8 and Dec. 12, respectively. Those are followed by road trips to Milwaukee (Dec. 17), Illinois (Dec. 19) and UNLV (Dec. 22). The game in Sioux Falls wraps up 2015.

"Kansas State, Minnesota and Illinois give us games against two of the best conferences in college basketball," said Smith. "UNLV is one of the most nationally recognized teams in the nation. The mid-major portion of our schedule will be demanding and great for both our players and fans as we prepare for Summit League play."

Jan. 1 marks the start of a 16-game

Summit League slate. The Coyotes take on Summit League Tournament Champion North Dakota State in Fargo, N.D., Jan. 13 and host South Dakota State on Jan. 23.

The return trip to SDSU is Feb. 13. The Coyotes host Denver on Senior Night Feb. 21. That will mark the team's final game played inside the DakotaDome. South Dakota wraps up the regular season on the road against IUPUI (Feb. 25) and Western Illinois (Feb. 27).

The Summit League Tournament will be held March 5-8 in Sioux Falls, S.D. Eight of the league's top nine teams will compete then for an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.