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CELEBRATING THE FALL SEASONS



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

The Vermillion High School dance team performing at the Booster Bash last Friday night to kick off the year and the beginning of the falls sports season. The Booster Bash allowed coaches to introduce the players for all fall sports and share a few comments about the upcoming season.

Vermillion Over West Central, Fall To Tea Area

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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Three goals in the first 10 minutes of the Vermillion girls' soccer season opener carried the Tanagers to a 3-2 win over West Central last Thursday afternoon in Sioux Falls.

"I was really proud with how the girls came out with a lot of confidence and a lot of control. We got three early goals and then our legs did get a little bit tired which is to be expected the first game," said head coach Shannon Fitzsimmons.

After the Tanagers hit the post twice in the opening minutes, the first goal came unassisted when central midfielder Autumn Barnett dribbled through two West Central defenders and launched a shot from about 20 yards out. West Central's keeper, Hailee Fischer, got a hand on the ball, but it rolled over her fingertips and into the back of the net.

Minutes later, Maddie Regnerus tucked away a rebound from a shot off Natasha Samudzi for a two-goal lead.

The final Vermillion goal came when Samudzi's high pressure allowed her to gain possession inside the 18-yard box and slot the ball between Fischer and the goal post.

The 3-0 was short lived when West Central scored twice later in the half on a miscommunication in Vermillion's defense inside of the 18-yard box, then again when Vermillion gave up a free kick from around 20 yards out from the goal. West Central placed the ball just over Vermillion's defense right to the feet of Ashley Eickman who placed it in the net at the six-yard box.

"I thought our defense just got beat a few times, it just happened that they were able to finish those couple opportunities," Fitzsimmons said.

Both teams settled in for a scoreless second half. West Central put the pressure on late in the game, but Vermillion was able to hold on for the 3-2 win.

In the early stages of the season the team is still looking for the right rhythm. The Tanagers started the game in a 4-4-2 formation, but by the second half switched to a 4-5-1.



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Members of the Vermillion High School girls' soccer team form a wall in front of a West Central freekick in the Tangers' 3-2 win over the Trojans last Thursday.

"I was proud with how the girls were able to adjust when we changed our formation and continue to still be effective and stay in the game," Fitzsimmons said. "Although we didn't score any goals in the second half, we also didn't give up any in the second and defense won the game."

Fitzsimmons plans to see the younger players earning minutes and gaining some experience on the field by rotating into the open positions more often. Freshmen MaKenna Druecker, defense, and Kasey Herbster, forward, both earn starting spots in

last Thursday's line-up.

"A lot of the younger girls got minutes today, so as that goes on it will give them more confidence," Barnett said.

Sowmya Ragotherman, Mady Gregoire, Jaida Anderson and Druecker gave solid performances on defense. Goalkeeper Mady Gilbertson recorded nine saves in the game.

The rematch is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 3 with a 5 p.m. kickoff.

The Tanagers followed the win with a 3-1 loss to Tea Area on Tuesday afternoon.

Vermillion went into

halftime down by two, but was able to get on the board with 35 minutes left in the game. Tea scored the final goal 17 minutes later.

Vermillion sits a 1-1 on the season with the next games scheduled for Saturday at 2 p.m. at Cotton Park with Vermillion's boys' soccer team immediately following at 4 p.m. as part of a double header.

Softball Opens Season With Win

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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Vermillion softball is ready to show people what they've got. Last season, the Tanagers won just one game, ending the season with a 1-12 record; however, this year they come out as a new team with a new mindset.

"Last year was a sad year," said senior Sydney Furry. "A lot of us played individually versus as a team collectively, so in that aspect we weren't able to win any games."

That wasn't the case at the team's opening games on Sunday in Sioux Falls when they came out on top of the first game of a double-header against Jackson, Minnesota 6-4.

"I think this is the year people will notice that we're back," said head coach Josh Wood. "This year it's energy, it's working as a team, being tight together and playing to win versus trying to avoid losing."

Starting the season off with a win already ensures a match of last year's record and gives the players the confidence they need to know they can compete with any team.

"(It's) A big deal," said coach Wood. "And against Jackson, who was number two in the south west region for Minnesota. They're a good team and it was a big deal to get a win out of the gate and know you can do it."

Last season was the second year back on the diamond for Vermillion after the varsity team went on hiatus for four years. This year, Vermillion fields a full varsity team, as well as a full junior varsity team.

At Sunday's opener, the Tanagers took a 3-0 lead in the second inning against Jackson, who answered with two in the same inning.

Another in the third and a few insurance runs in the fourth inning gave Vermillion a comfortable lead into the fifth. Jackson scored two in the bottom of the fifth, but Vermillion held on for the win.

Sydney Furry and Morgan Halverson recorded two RBIs and Kara Mulheron and Maddie Treiber each recorded one.

Treiber went the distance for the win.

"They came out strong (with) good intensity and they kept it all the way through the game," said coach Wood. "Good batting and nice relaxed, perfect defense. Not a single error."

Game two put Vermillion up against Lennox.

The Tanagers were down 14-1 going into the bottom of the sixth after Lennox scored 13 in the top of the inning. Vermillion was able to score seven in the inning before the game ended 14-8.

"We worked really hard together, we had strong defense, a lot of teamwork and we were working well and communicating. We had a bad inning but we were able to come back with it a lot stronger," said Sydney Furry.

Sierra Furry, Sydney Furry, Kiley Wood, Lexie Malimanek, Biz Wood, Mulheron and Treiber all had hits in the inning.

Treiber took the loss with Kiley Wood pitching in relief.

"What I was proud of these kids for doing, is they actually got up to bat in the bottom of the inning, they were down by so far that you couldn't reasonably come back, but they scored seven runs," said coach Wood.

A 1-1 start to the season is promising as the team grows and learns to play together opening the door to a successful year.

"Last year was extraordinarily difficult for a young team working to get its competitive legs at the varsity level," said coach Wood. "The girls played Class A schools in five of the first six games of the season, including Watertown ranked No. 1 ahead of the Sioux Falls Roosevelt and Washington, three times. That's a tough lead off to a season with a new and diverse team."

Many of the players spend the summer playing on teams together, which allows them to get more comfortable and into a better rhythm on the field and there has already been a noticeable difference.

"We've gotten closer over the summer because we played summer ball," said junior Malimanek. "Once we get something going, it all just keeps going because we get into a flow."

With all the practice and teamwork the team has been exposed to over the last few months, Wood is hoping to be past the rebuilding stages and with a team that has just one senior, there's still plenty of room to grow.

"We're still very young," said coach Wood. "We carry three upperclassmen on the roster and we're very young versus the bigger schools."

The Tanagers will have help on the mound in two All-State pitchers with junior Kiley Wood and Treiber, a freshman.

"Maddie Treiber throws pretty hard with a really good change-up," said coach Wood. "Kiley Wood throws every bit of junk you can throw."

Offensively, Wood is expecting contributions from the entire line-up.

"We got 9-10 kids on the roster and everyone can hit," he said. "We can score."

The Tanagers look to improve their record on Sunday when they travel to Madison to take on Madison and Watertown. The team's only home games are scheduled for Sept. 20.

Vermillion Tanager Fans

that would like to come and cheer on the Tanagers, who are 65 years old or older, please stop at the Administrative Services Office at 17 Prospect Street to obtain a complimentary activity pass that will allow you into the events at no charge.



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