

USD's Larson On The Road To Recovery

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — In basketball terms, Tyler Larson was projected to be a starting 'wing' until he injured one of his 'wheels.'

Thus began an unexpected recovery that led the highly-touted guard for the USD men's basketball team from the sidelines last season back into the regular rotation this season.

Larson, a 6-foot-3 native of Las Vegas, Nev., arrived in Vermillion a year ago and instantly proved to coaches — led by former Coyote coach Dave Boots — that he was ready to be a factor in the Summit League.

Then came a pre-season tear of the ACL in his right knee.

"At first, it was like, 'I kind of just want to take it easy until I get back into the groove of things,'" said Larson, who sat out the 2012-13 season after coming to USD from Casper (Wyo.) College.

"Now it just feels like second nature, like I never got hurt."

It hasn't been the easiest transition back to full-speed action, as one could imagine.

The drives and cuts and jump shots that he once executed without hesitation were suddenly pushed aside by the fear of re-injuring his knee.

Skittish would be a good description.

"When you go through an injury like that, you just don't want it to happen again, no matter what," Larson said.

Though he continues to wear a knee brace, Larson has already proven to be an effective weapon off the bench for the Coyotes (3-3). He has averaged 6.4 points and 4.4 rebounds through eight games — as of Dec. 9.

His biggest contribution came in a 12-point effort in a Dec. 2 home win over Utah Valley.

"I'm just happy that he's finally back, that he feels good about playing again," interim head coach Joey James said. "There's nothing like sitting on that sideline for a year and not being able to get on the floor and help your team."

Following an off-season filled with rehab stints after surgery and numerous sessions on the stationary bike, Larson was ready to return to the court.

Naturally, it took some time — James said Larson was "dragging his leg."

"There was just no flow," the coach said. "He was a little nervous to make a certain cut on that right knee. He was



South Dakota's Tyler Larson brings the ball up the court during a recent game. Larson, a junior, sat out last season due to an ACL tear in his right knee.

very skittish in doing that."

As the season started, Larson was ready to go, just not quite at full speed.

"The start of the season was a little rocky, just trying to get back into the groove of things," Larson said.

Easier said than done, once the physical nature of game speed returned, he added.

"I'm getting through it, getting my confidence back to where I know I can go to the hole and I'm not going to get hurt again. That I'm not going to fall or anything like that."

Asked about his progress, Larson put his percentage at 87 percent.

"My confidence in my knee is a hundred percent," he said, with a smile. "When I first got back, I was question-

ing my speed. Like, 'Am I as fast as I used to be?'"

"When I go up and dunk on someone, then we can call it a hundred."

Larson was joined on the bench last season by fellow redshirts Trey Norris and Adam Thoseby, also transfers — Norris from North Texas and Thoseby from Utah State.

All three are in the regular rotation this season, with Norris as the starting point guard and Thoseby as the starting three-guard.

"I'm constantly trying to remind those guys, 'Hey, just stick to the plan,'" James said. "Once you continue to get more and more comfortable, you'll be fine. Those are three are pretty confident dudes."

"We're just glad they're on our team."

BASKETBALL

Men's 2013-14 Schedule

Dec. 14	vs. Green Bay	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Morehead State	6 p.m.
Dec. 29	at Youngstown State	1 p.m.
Jan. 2	vs. CSU-Northridge	7 p.m.
Jan. 4	vs. Iowa Wesleyan	4:15 p.m.
Jan. 11	vs. Denver	4 p.m.
Jan. 16	vs. IUPUI	7 p.m.
Jan. 18	vs. Fort Wayne	4 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Western Illinois	7 p.m.
Jan. 25	at Omaha	1 p.m.
Jan. 30	vs. North Dakota State	7 p.m.
Feb. 1	vs. South Dakota State	4 p.m.
Feb. 4	vs. Peru State	7 p.m.
Feb. 8	at Denver	5 p.m.
Feb. 13	at Fort Wayne	6 p.m.
Feb. 15	at IUPUI	1 p.m.
Feb. 20	vs. Omaha	7 p.m.
Feb. 22	vs. Western Illinois	4 p.m.
Feb. 27	at North Dakota State	7 p.m.
March 1	at South Dakota State	4 p.m.

Summit League Tour:
March 8-11 — Sioux Falls

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.



South Dakota freshman Bridget Arens, with ball, fights for position between Creighton defenders Brianna Rollerson, 50, and Sarah Nelson, 42, during their game last month in Omaha, Neb. Arens posted 11 points and seven rebounds in USD's win against South Dakota Mines on Dec. 7.

Arens Emerges For USD Women

BY JEREMY HOECK
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RAPID CITY — If Bridget Arens' performance on Dec. 7 in Rapid City was any indication, the freshman post for the University of South Dakota women's basketball team is rapidly progressing.

A 6-foot forward from Crofton, Neb., Arens recorded 11 points and seven rebounds off the bench for the Coyotes in a 32-point victory.

For Arens, that game followed a 6-point, 3-rebound performance two days earlier.

And although her season stats — 2.8 points and 3.8 rebounds, through Dec. 9 — are far from eye-popping, Arens has continued to impress her coaches and teammates.

"We feel like she's starting to turn the corner," head coach Amy Williams said. "She played well in some early games, but the ball was rimming out for her."

The stats prove that to be true.

Through the first four games this season, Arens was a combined 0-of-4 from the field, despite playing in 15, 11, 8 and 8 minutes.

She scored five points in an overtime loss to Drake, and then combined to score five points over her next three games.

"There were several games we went without her scoring a basket, but we just felt like if she could get one to fall and see it go on the bucket, she would get going," Williams said.

Even if the scoring was slow to get going, Arens' contribution was felt in other ways.

"She's a force down low, when she sets a screen she's like eliminating you," sophomore point guard Tia Hemiller joked.

Added junior reserve Raeshel Contreras, "It's almost like you're completely

BASKETBALL

Women's 2013-14 Schedule

Dec. 19	vs. College Saint Mary	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	at Nebraska	2:30 p.m.
Dec. 31	at Valparaiso	1:35 p.m.
Jan. 4	vs. Cleveland State	2 p.m.
Jan. 12	at Denver	2 p.m.
Jan. 16	at IUPUI	6 p.m.
Jan. 18	at Fort Wayne	1 p.m.
Jan. 23	vs. Western Illinois	7 p.m.
Jan. 25	vs. Omaha	2 p.m.
Jan. 30	at North Dakota State	7 p.m.
Feb. 2	at South Dakota State	1 p.m.
Feb. 7	vs. Denver	7 p.m.
Feb. 13	vs. Fort Wayne	7 p.m.
Feb. 15	vs. IUPUI	2 p.m.
Feb. 20	at Omaha	7 p.m.
Feb. 22	at Western Illinois	7 p.m.
Feb. 27	vs. North Dakota State	7 p.m.
March 2	vs. South Dakota State	2 p.m.

Summit League Tour:
March 8-11 — Sioux Falls

out of the play."

And even as a freshman, Arens provides an energetic spark, Contreras said.

"We both subbed in together (Dec. 7 at Rapid City), and the first thing she says to me is, 'Let's go, Rae, we've got to be the spark,'" Contreras said.

"She plays the hardest every minute on the floor. She'll always be out there giving a hundred percent."

Any sort of contribution the Coyotes can get from reserves like Arens is welcomed, Williams said.

"The big goal for our team is that we will always be able to have a lot of threats offensively," she said. "We're not going to be a one man show or a two man show, we have a lot of different players that we think can be dangerous."

With time, Arens will continue to progress quickly, Hemiller said.

"Every single game she'll get better and better," Hemiller said. "It's just good to see a freshman have such a great role."

"I think she'll be one of the keys down the road."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

Lancer Women Battle Injury Bug

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE
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Because of a number of injuries to experienced players, the Mount Marty College women's basketball team has been forced to start younger players.

Head coach Tom Schlimgen the team will be happy when they are able to return those players, but his team is still getting better.

"We're pretty inexperienced, and we're playing a lot of young kids and we're playing in a tremendous league," he said. "It's not easy right now, so we just have to battle, battle, battle."

Besides April Winne, who has been out the entire season, Holly Hegge is out with a broken hand, and freshman Kieran O'Malley has missed time due to injury.

Despite the setbacks, Schlimgen said the Lancers are finding out they can go deep.

"We're happy with our

BASKETBALL

Women's 2013-14 Schedule

Dec. 14	at Concordia	2 p.m.
Dec. 17	vs. Alb*	3:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	vs. Clark*	3 p.m.
Dec. 21	at Hastings	2 p.m.
Jan. 4	at Nebraska Wesleyan	2 p.m.
Jan. 8	vs. Briar Cliff	6 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Dakota State	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	vs. Presentation	2 p.m.
Jan. 15	at Dakota Wesleyan	6 p.m.
Jan. 18	at Midland	2 p.m.
Jan. 22	at Dordt	6 p.m.
Jan. 25	vs. Doane	2 p.m.
Jan. 29	vs. Northwestern	6 p.m.
Feb. 1	vs. Concordia	2 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Morningside	6 p.m.
Feb. 8	vs. Hastings	2 p.m.
Feb. 12	at Briar Cliff	6 p.m.
Feb. 14	at Grace	5 p.m.
Feb. 15	at Minnesota West	1 p.m.
Feb. 19	vs. Dakota Wesleyan	6 p.m.
Feb. 22	vs. Nebraska Wesleyan	2 p.m.

* Wisconsin Dells, Wis.
GPAC Tour — Feb. 26-March 4

depth," he said. "It's really going to develop because they're young players, and as the season progresses we're getting some kids in the action."

"We're responding pretty well, but we need to get better. That happens as you get



Mount Marty guard April Winne, 15, passes around the defense of Doane's Erin DeVries during a game last season. Winne will miss this season due to injury.

more experience."

The response from the younger players, Schlimgen said, has been excitement.

"We don't want them to play scared, and again that comes with playing time," he said. "We've gotten some good performances from some kids who have had minimal varsity experience, and they've been responding. It

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GAYVILLE-VOLIN RAIDERS

Dec. 13vs. Baltic	Jan. 24at Bridgewater-Emery (B)
Dec. 17at Wausa, Neb.	Jan. 25vs. Tripp-Delmont-Armour
Dec. 20	.....vs. Alcester-Hudson	Jan. 28	.....vs. Menno
Dec. 27	.....Swiftel Classic (Brookings)	Jan. 30	.....vs. Bloomfield, Neb.
Jan. 7	.....vs. Scotland	Jan. 7	.....at Freeman Academy
Jan. 10	.....at Irene-Wakonda (I)	Feb. 11	.....at Walthill, Neb.
Jan. 14	.....vs. Canistota	Feb. 13	.....vs. Marion
Jan. 16	.....at Viborg-Hurley (V)	Feb. 14	.....at Centerville
Jan. 18	.....Tri-Valley Classic (Alcester)	Feb. 17	.....vs. Avon
Jan. 21	.....at Parker	Feb. 27	.....vs. Marion

Boys' Basketball

Dec. 10	.....vs. Menno	Jan. 21	.....at Parker
Dec. 13	.....vs. Baltic	Jan. 25	.....vs. Tripp-Delmont-Armour
Dec. 17	.....at Wausa, Neb.	Jan. 30	.....vs. Bloomfield, Neb.
Dec. 20	.....vs. Alcester-Hudson	Feb. 1	.....Tri-Valley Classic (Alcester)
Dec. 27	.....Swiftel Classic (Brookings)	Feb. 6	.....at Freeman Academy
Jan. 7	.....vs. Scotland	Feb. 11	.....at Walthill, Neb.
Jan. 10	.....at Irene-Wakonda (I)	Feb. 13	.....vs. Marion
Jan. 14	.....vs. Canistota	Feb. 14	.....at Centerville
Jan. 16	.....at Viborg-Hurley (V)	Feb. 17	.....vs. Avon
Jan. 18	.....Tri-Valley Classic (Alcester)	Feb. 27	.....vs. Marion
Jan. 21	.....at Parker		

Girls' Basketball

Dec. 10vs. Menno	Jan. 21at Parker
Dec. 13vs. Baltic	Jan. 25vs. Tripp-Delmont-Armour
Dec. 17at Wausa, Neb.	Jan. 30vs. Bloomfield, Neb.
Dec. 20vs. Alcester-Hudson	Feb. 1Tri-Valley Classic (Alcester)
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