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## Williams leads way for three statebound Tanager gymnasts

By Mark Upward  
For the Plain Talk

The Vermillion Tanagers survived a case of the nerves at the start at the Region 2A gymnastics meet held at Wagner High School.

"We were just nervous at the beginning of the meet and it showed on our first two events," said Vermillion Coach Shannon Fitzsimmons. "We are still a young team when it comes to this type of competition."

The final team results for the Region 2A meet saw Wagner/BonHomme on top with a score of 133.7 points.

Chamberlain was very close behind as they posted a 132.5 score for second while Parkston/Ethan/Hanson finished out the automatic qualifying top three spot with a 129.35 posting.

Rounding out the seven team field were Stanley County (126.075), Vermillion (124.625), Hot Springs (118.650) and Wall/Kadoka/Philip Area (105.4).

With the Region 1A meet concluded on Thursday night, the Tanagers knew they would have to finish in the top three spots at Wagner or score higher than Sisseton's 121.7 posted at the Region 1A meet. Beating Sisseton's score would put Vermillion into the state meet as a wild card team.

The Tanagers' had a solid start with a 28.350 on bars, one of their best scores of the year. The next rotation had the Tanagers traveling to the balance beam where, once again, the Tanagers struggled to stay on the beam and lost points from the team score because of the seven falls.

"We worked our routines at practice all week and with a full team tonight, even though it was a rough road, we pulled out our best score of the season," said Fitzsimmons. "We really need to keep working on the balance beam. We have those skills, but we just need to gain more confidence as we perform them and hit them all on the same day."

However, a 29.85 beam score put the Tanagers in a good position to

best Sisseton's score as they were heading to the Tanagers best two events, floor and vault.

The Tanager gymnasts performed well on floor and vault, 33.425 and 33.025 respectively. At the conclusion of the vault competition, the Vermillion Tanagers had performed their best score of the year and qualified for the State Gymnastics meet at Watertown next weekend.

Individuals who qualified for All-Around competition at state for the Tanagers include Carter Williams and Cheyenne Mallory. Williams qualified by placing fifth in the All-Around competition with a score of 33.9. Mallory's score of 31.9 qualified her by meeting the qualifying standard of 31.0 points at the region meet.

"Carter had another standout meet. Even though she is only an eighth grader, she looks like a veteran gymnast out there. Also, Cheyenne has been battling illness and injury all

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Vermillion High's Carter Williams finished fifth in the Region 2 all-around last weekend and was one of three Tanagers to qualify for this weekend's Class A state finals.

MARK UPWARD / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

## The Dakota Daze



Jefferson Galvin scored 10 points for the Vermillion Tanagers Tuesday night against Dakota Valley, but it wasn't enough as the visiting Panthers pulled out a 56-48 win.

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

### Despite Tanager Teams' Best Efforts, Panther Hoops Escape Vermillion with Sweep on Tuesday

By Alan Dale  
The Plain Talk

Confidence is a beautiful thing.

Tuesday night the Dakota Valley Panther basketball teams had it for different reasons and the Vermillion Tanager squads suffered for it.

The Tanager boys locked horns with the Panthers, a program that hadn't lost to Vermillion High in seven years while the Dakota Valley girls entered play against the VHS girls riding a wave of confident, high-scoring play.

It all added up to a Dakota Valley Dakota XII Conference sweep as the Tanager boys fell 56-48 and the Panther girls raced back home to North Sioux City on the heels of a 73-64 victory over a scrappy Vermillion bunch.

### Tanager Girls Fall in Shootout

The Tanager girls were hoping to make a push in the Region 4 standings as the regular season winds

down, but the Panthers who came in to Vermillion following back-to-back 70-point plus performances.

Those wins included a 23-point rout of Sioux City North on Monday night. That same Stars team defeated Vermillion (6-12) by 18 last Friday night in Iowa (see related story).

In this contest, Vermillion went toe-to-toe offensively, but had enough small bursts of negative play that gave Dakota Valley (9-9) the breathing room it needed.

"We did not mind the up-tempo game because they only really brought in one kid off the bench," Vermillion head coach Jon Brooks said. "We thought over the time with our bench we would wear them down at that tempo but they were fast and athletic at every position. They are a very confident team right now. I can see why they are winning basketball games."

Freshman Haleigh Melstad led the Tanagers with 25 points while Twila Sweeney (10 points) and Kyleigh Melstad (nine points) did their part to

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## Tanager Wrestling Takes 6th in Yankton; Dakota 12 Next

By Mark Upward  
For the Plain Talk

Despite stiff competition from in-state and out-of-state teams, the Vermillion Tanagers placed sixth with a score of 124.5.

Millard South High School traveled up from Omaha, Ne. to claim the top spot by posting the best team score of the tournament – an impressive 276.0 points.

"Omaha Millard South was a team full of upper classmen and mature wrestlers," said Vermillion Coach Hazen Bye. "This is a great tournament in our backyard and we enjoyed being here. We hope to come back next year."

Sioux Falls Roosevelt was the top team of the in-state teams as they took second place with 217.0 points, while Pierre finished in third (214.5), Brookings in fourth

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## SPORTS LEGENDS of Vermillion

Starting Sunday, Feb. 1 through March 31:  
The Nomination Process Takes Place

– Nominate your five greatest Vermillion athletes from Vermillion High School, the University of South Dakota, and any other sports aligned with the area.

**THEN!**

**From April 17 – May 31:**

**The Voting Process Will Take Over**

– YOU the readers and fans will vote and rank from No. 1-3 the top three all-time athletes from the final list of nominations.

**FINALLY!**

The Plain Talk staff will tabulate all the voting points and write stories for – at minimum – The Top 5 vote getters and write their stories over the months of July and August.

The max would be a Top 10.

These are the stories we will write and that YOU voted on. **These are YOUR Legends and we will tell their stories for you!**



### Nomination Form

Nominee's First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nominee's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sport: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years Competed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reason for Nomination: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Background Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nominated by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off or mail your nominations to the Plain Talk at  
201 W. Cherry Street, Vermillion, SD 57069

\*Nominations can also be filled out online at  
[https://plaintalk-dot-net.bloxcms.com/site/forms/online\\_services/submit\\_news/legends/legends/](https://plaintalk-dot-net.bloxcms.com/site/forms/online_services/submit_news/legends/legends/)  
or by calling 605-624-2695

## Coyote Women's Hoops Continue to Lead Summit

FARGO, N.D.— The South Dakota women's basketball team led by 16 points at halftime, but had to hold off a second half charge by North Dakota State to tally an 83-79 win over the Bison at Benton Bunker Fieldhouse on Sunday afternoon.

Nicole Seekamp led South Dakota (19-5, 9-2) with 21 points, 15 of those coming in the second half, and tallied five assists. Raeshel Contreras added 20 points, Kelly Stewart tallied 10 points and Margaret McCloud finished with eight points and seven rebounds.

South Dakota never trailed in the game, led by as many as 23 points in the first half and led 45-29 at halftime, but a rally by NDSU (9-14, 5-6) cut the lead down to two points twice within the final three minutes of the game. The Bison shot 56 percent, got 20 points from Brooke LeMar and forced USD into 11 turnovers in the second half.

Junior guard Heidi Hoff responded both times the Bison cut the lead to two. After NDSU closed the gap

to 77-75 with 2:16 remaining, Hoff grabbed an offensive board off a missed 3-pointer by Stewart and hit the ensuing jumper to grow USD's lead to four with 1:39 left. She also hit the game icing free throws with two seconds remaining.

Hoff started the game due to an injury to Tia Hemiller and finished with five points and seven rebounds. Hemiller, who started the previous 56 games for the Coyotes, will miss an indefinite amount of time.

The Coyotes also got a lift from their bench, as they outscored the Bison bench 23-5.

LeMar tallied 27 points to lead the Bison, while Liz Keena scored 22 points on 9-for-11 shooting and Taylor Thunstedt added 13 points to the NDSU effort. Keena led NDSU in rebounds with seven.

South Dakota shot 50 percent (17-of-34) in the first half and scored 15 points off of 11 NDSU turnovers. The Coyotes had a 21-6 run over an eight minute stretch in the half and led by 23 points (36-

13) with 6:41 remaining. NDSU was 11-of-31 shooting (35 percent) in the half with Keena's 11 points leading the way.

Contreras led USD in the first half with 15 points, going 6-of-10 from the floor and 3-of-6 from beyond the 3-point arc. Seekamp added six points and five assists while McCloud had six points and five rebounds.

NDSU flipped the script offensively in the second half, shooting 56 percent (17-of-30) in the period. The Bison outscored the Coyotes 19-7 during an almost seven minute stretch (16:42 remaining to 9:49 left) in the half, shooting 8-for-13 and holding USD to 2-for-10 during that time. Despite that cool streak, the

Coyotes finished the half shooting 48 percent (12-of-25) and held NDSU to just seven points off of 11 turnovers.

Outside of LeMar's 20 points in the half, Keena added 11 points and Thunstedt tallied seven for NDSU. Seekamp was the only player for the Coyotes to score more than five points in the second half.

With the win, the Coyotes extended their lead in the Summit League standings to one and a half games over second place. South Dakota State (16-7, 7-3) moved into second after topping Fort Wayne 89-68 and Western Illinois (15-9, 7-4) dropped to third after losing at Omaha 54-51.

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