

Coyote Men Fall at NDSU; Host Avila Tuesday

FARGO, N.D.—North Dakota State senior guard Lawrence Alexander made a program-record eight three-pointers and the Bison made 14 triples in all in a 71-47 win against South Dakota Saturday at Scheels Arena. Alexander led all scorers with 31 points.

The win avenged the Bison's loss to South Dakota back on Jan. 14. North Dakota State (17-7, 9-2 Summit) has won four in a row and remain atop the Summit League standings.

Alexander, along with teammates Paul Miller and Carlin Dupree, combined to make 13 of 17 three-point tries. Miller had 11 points to go with seven rebounds. Dupree finished with 10 points. The Bison were 14 of 22 from long range. Alexander was 8 for 11.

The Burnette had 10 points and six rebounds to lead South Dakota (11-14, 5-6). It's the third consecutive game Burnette has scored 10-plus points. Brandon Bos added eight for the Coyotes, which made 2 of 11 from beyond the arc and were held to their lowest scoring output of the season.

Alexander scored NDSU's first 15 points and the Bison led 12-3 eight minutes into the contest. South Dakota closed to 12-10, but another 10-2 run by NDSU made it 22-12 with five minutes to go in the first. The Bison led 35-20 at the break.

North Dakota State shot 50 percent in the first half (14-28) and the second (13-26). The Bison made 7 of 8 triples in the second stanza to detract any USD comeback hopes. NDSU also owned a 37-21 edge on the boards.

It was the first game of a three-game road trip for South Dakota, its final road games of the season before wrapping up with four at home. The Coyotes returned to the court Thursday at Omaha.

On Tuesday they play host to NAIA school Avilla at the DakotaDome. Tip time is scheduled for 7 p.m.

- *Courtesy of USD Sports Information*

USD Rolls Past Western

One of the many rallying cries for the University of South Dakota men's basketball team this season?

Something head coach Craig Smith calls NBA: 'Next best action.'

Five days after a 1-point home loss, the Coyotes bounced back in a big way Thursday night, cruising past Western Illinois 75-61 in Summit League action at the DakotaDome.

With a game looming at first-place North Dakota State, the Coyotes (11-13, 5-5) certainly didn't want four straight losses on their backs.

"It's nice to have some momentum going into Saturday's game, that'll be a tough game," senior Brandon Bos said.

Up one at halftime against the Leathernecks (8-13, 3-7), USD was considerably more aggressive in the second half. The hosts out-scored WIU 24-10 in the paint after halftime.

"We knew we had to come out with a lot of energy, but we knew they would come back with a run," said junior Tre Burnette, who scored 19 points and grabbed seven rebounds.

The early stages of each half were dominated by the Coyotes. They started the first half 14-2 and then scored the first 14 points of the second half.

Everyone in the DakotaDome knew what USD had to do: Avoid giving it up. Senior Tyler Larson even joked later that it's well known USD has blown some big leads.

"Once we got up, we were like, 'OK we have to maintain this lead,'" Larson said.

While Bos had his usual performance (18 points, five assists, four rebounds), the bigger story was the emergence of Burnette and the late surge by Larson.

In Burnette's case, he followed up a 10-point outing last time out with 19 points Thursday. Burnette, a junior transfer, had gone 12 games in a row without reaching double figures.

"He's starting to figure some things out," Smith said.

Jeremy Hoeck / Press & Dakotan

TOP SHOTS



These students participated in the Knights of Columbus Free Throw contest on Jan. 25 at the Vermillion High School. (Back row, L-R) Josh Bern won the 11-year-old boys, Kennedy Pratt won the 13-year-old girls, Mckenzie Mockler earned second place in 13-year-old girls and Leah Herbster won the 10-year-old girls. (Back row) Jakob Dobney took third place in 11-year-old boys, Wesley Schulz finished in second place in 11-year-old boys and Carter Mart won the 11-year-old boys. The winners go to Beresford on Sunday for the district championship.

COURTESY PHOTO

Eichkorn, Coyotes earn USTFC-CCA All-Academic honors NEW ORLEANS—

South Dakota men's and women's cross country teams and Coyote junior Amber Eichkorn have

earned All-Academic honors, according to a release by the U.S. Track and Field/Cross Country Coaches Association on Wednesday.

- *Courtesy of USD Sports*

LEAD

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South Dakota played host to Omaha on Thursday at 7 p.m. before they take to the road for a Wednesday night encounter at Denver. That game is set for an 8 p.m. tip.

- *Courtesy of USD Sports Information*

USD Rolls Past Fort Wayne, 91-80

When Lisa Loeffler missed a jumper with 6 minutes and 44 seconds left in the game, there was an audible groan from the crowd.

No, not because she was struggling. The opposite, actually.

That was the only miss of the game (8-of-9) for the senior, who scored a season-high 17 points as the University of South Dakota women held off Fort Wayne 91-80 in Summit League action Friday at the DakotaDome.

"When teams play zone, it gets the little short corner or the high post open," Loeffler said later, adding with a smile, "and that's kind of my favorite spot."

Loeffler, a 6-foot-1 Minnesota native, came in averaging 6.1 points on the season, but has now reached double figures in four of 10 league games for the first-place Coyotes (18-5, 8-2).

"I like to think we have a pretty good connection playing (together) for a couple years," said senior Nicole Seekamp, who finished with 19 points and 10 assists — four to Loeffler.

"Whenever I'm driving, I know she's either going to be in the short corner or the elbow. It's that instinct to pass it there almost."

Yes, it was the fifth time this season the Coyotes eclipsed 90 points, but a late surge by the Mastodons (8-15, 2-8) didn't exactly have the hosts feeling as great after the game.

Fort Wayne, keyed by a game-high 27 points from senior Haley Seibert and 13 three-pointers, closed the game on a 23-7 run — preventing another blowout for USD.

In short: Offense isn't the issue for the Coyotes, according to head coach Amy Williams.

"My concern is on the other end," she said. "That's nagging at me; feeling like we're not polished where we need to be defensively."

In moving to 11-0 at home this season, the Coyotes dished out at least 20 assists for a second consecutive game. They finished with 26 on 29 baskets Friday.

"As long as you're in the right spot in the right time, we're going to give you the ball," Seekamp said.

Junior Tia Hemiller added 12 points for the



Nicole Seekamp (35) drives to the hoop last week during her and the University of South Dakota women's 91-80 win over Fort Wayne in Summit League action. The Coyotes hosted Omaha Thursday night and travel to Denver, Wednesday.

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Coyotes, who shot 51 percent, while senior Raeshel Contreras, junior Kelly Stewart and sophomore Bridget Arens all added nine points.

The story, though, was the performance of Loeffler.

"She's a senior and she just knows and understands the way this thing goes," said Williams, who credited Loeffler's preparation for a zone defense.

"She's playing the way we know she can."

Just about everything went USD's way on offense in the first half. Seventeen assists on 19 baskets — which resulted in 56 percent shooting — led to

a 49-28 halftime lead.

After the Mastodons made a surge early in the second half to get within 12, the Coyotes scored 14 straight to balloon the margin.

Up by as many 27 points with 4:43 to play, the hosts couldn't find a way to put away the Mastodons. The visitors scored 23 of the game's final 30 points to make things respectable.

"Coach said in the locker room, when we get tired, we have those kinds of lapses," Seekamp said. "We just have to keep working on those kinds of things."

Jeremy Hoeck / Press & Dakotan

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A 'Legends' Reminder

On Sunday the nomination process began for the new Plain Talk project 'Legends' that will give Vermillion sports fans and our readers to decide who the greatest athletes in the city's history are.

But in order for it to happen, The Plain Talk will need your participation and so far it's been pretty good. Yet, to make this the most comprehensive project around we need ample participation in order to best represent the sports memories of Vermillion High and University of South Dakota fans.

Fans of Vermillion will be able to nominate on an individual basis who they feel are the five greatest male and female athletes of all time are from this city. We will collect nominations up until March 31. Then from April 1-14, we will tabulate the nominations. From there we will compile a list of the athletes who received the top 25 most nominations. (all dates tentative and subject to change).

That list will then be announced in the April 17 issue of The Plain Talk. From that date through May 31, fans will then be able to vote for who they think are the THREE GREATEST LEGENDS OF ALL TIME in Vermillion.

Once the voting ends, we will tabulate those results and throughout the months of

July and August we will write stories on, at minimum, those who were selected the Top 5 Legends of Vermillion, on a weekly basis, leading up to the first day of the college sports season at the University of South Dakota. If we get enough votes, we may even extend that to a "Great Eight" series of stories or at max, a Top 10.

Thus we will write the stories that you ultimately voted for.

Still have your attention? Good.

So if you want to nominate who you believe are the great individual athletes in Vermillion history, here is how we will make this the greatest project ever devised and produced in a local newspaper, possibly ever. It will be because it will be the first joint project between readers and writers that we have found. Like I said: You decide the content through your nominations and later, your votes.

Here is how you nominate.

1. Nominations should be athletes who played at Vermillion High School or the University of South Dakota. They can also be local athletes who participated in adult rec that did something of extraordinary levels. A famous runner? Bicyclist? Bowler? They can be considered too.

2. You may nominate up to THREE different people.

3. To nominate you need to include:

- a. Their school or affiliation
- b. Known years competed
- c. What sport/s they are being nominated for
- d. A short reason for why they are being nominated
- e. Also, if you wish to help, provide some background information so we know where to begin our research, especially if the athletes are from a much later time.

4. You can send in your nominations via:

- a. Email at news@plaintalk.net.
- b. Online at https://plaintalk-dot-net.bloxcms.com/site/forms/online_services/submit_news/legends/legends/
- c. Postal Mail by sending it to: 201 West Cherry Street, Vermillion, SD 57609
- d. By calling Alan Dale at 605-624-4429.

e. Also please leave contact information so we can potentially follow up on more information on some of these great legends.

And that's all. Soon after we complete this process we will then tell you how to vote for YOUR Top Three. Remember this first part is simply a nomination process. It is the first step of three: Nominations, Voting, and then the Writing.

Let us become...
Legendary.
- *The Plain Talk*

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