

# USD women blast past Western Illinois; SDSU coming up



Heidi Hoff (42) and the University of South Dakota women's basketball team host South Dakota State Saturday.

FILE PHOTO

MACOMB, Ill. – Senior guard Raeshel Contreras scored 24 points and led five more Coyotes to double-digit point totals as South Dakota head women's basketball coach Amy Williams recorded her 50th win with the program on Saturday during USD's 101-87 win over Western Illinois in Western Hall.

Nicole Seekamp, Margaret McCloud and Kelly Stewart all recorded 16 points for the Coyotes (12-4, 2-1), while Tia Hemiller added 11 points and Bridget Arens finished with 10 points. Seekamp recorded her first double-double of the season by adding 10 assists to her scoring total, while Arens was one rebound shy of a double-double with nine rebounds.

Williams ties Mary Zimmerman (1976-82) as the second-fastest coach in program history to reach 50 wins, doing it in 84 games. Chad Lavin (1982-86, 1998-08) reached 50 wins the quickest, doing it in 71 games.

Four Leathernecks (10-6, 2-1) reached double-digit point totals. Ashley Luke tallied a double-double with 34 points and 15 rebounds, Tori Niemann added 16 points and both Sophie Reichelt and Michelle Maher added 11 points.

South Dakota recorded its highest point total ever against a Division I school, topping the previous highs of 96 set against UC Irvine earlier this season and against Western Illinois in the Summit League

Tournament last March. As a team, the Coyotes shot 55 percent from the field (34-for-61) and 50 percent from 3-point range (10-for-20), while WIU shot 44 percent (28-of-63) and 30 percent (6-of-20) respectively.

South Dakota also held a 34-13 edge in bench points and nearly doubled WIU in assists, 20-11.

USD posted a 21-2 run during a seven minute stretch in the frame, turning a 12-8 deficit into a 29-14 lead with 9:31 remaining until the break.

Stewart led USD in scoring in the second half with 14 points while Contreras added 11 points.

South Dakota returned to the DakotaDome to host the Summit League leading North Dakota State Bison (7-8, 3-0) on Thursday at 7 p.m. Look for a recap of the game at [www.plaintalk.net](http://www.plaintalk.net).

Saturday at 2 p.m. the Coyotes play host to rivals and Summit League favorites South Dakota State at the DakotaDome.

- Courtesy of USD Sports Information

## Coyote Tennis Team Predicted Fourth in Summit

South Dakota tennis is expected to finish fourth in the Summit League according to a preseason poll released by the League office on Thursday morning. The poll was voted by each of the league's eight head women's tennis coaches.

The Coyotes, who finished last season with a 13-12 overall record and a 2-4 league record, enter the season coming off a semifinal appearance in last season's league tournament. They return all six members of their singles lineup from a year ago.

Defending league champion Denver was picked to win the league title, tallying 49 points and seven first-place votes, while Fort Wayne finished second with 41 points and one first-place vote. South Dakota State (33), USD (27) and Omaha (23) rounded out the top five, while Oral Roberts (22), IUPUI (21) and Western Illinois (6) rounded out the poll.

The Coyotes will start the league season on Feb. 14 when they host Western Illinois in Sioux Falls.

- Courtesy of USD Sports Information

## USD Swimmers and Divers Open 2nd Half of Season

By Mark Upward  
For the Plain Talk

The University of South Dakota swimmers and divers returned from the Puerto Rico holiday break excited and ready for the return of the competitive swimming and diving action.

"We had a great trip to

Puerto Rico with the team," said USD head swimming coach Jason Mahowald. "We were able to get a ton of training in as well as some fun visiting Old San Juan and kayaking."

The USD swimming and diving teams have used the time since their return home to prepare for the

conference meets against Western Illinois on Friday, Jan. 16 and against Eastern Illinois on Saturday, Jan. 17.

Both meets will be held in Macomb, Illinois.

The Coyote swimmers and divers will have a hard time previewing the competition as they head to Macomb. "It is hard to

really give a preview of the meet because all the teams are coming off of their most intense training phase of the year, so we are not sure how every one is going to look," said Mahowald. "We are swimming our races, and use these meets as a platform to make changes for the end of the season."

## USD MEN'S TRACK TEAM TO ATTEND HOLIDAY INN INVITE THIS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

By Mark Upward  
For the Plain Talk

The USD men's track squad will travel to Lincoln, Nebraska for the Holiday Inn Invitational.

Twenty teams are scheduled to be at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on the campus of the University of Nebraska.

Teams included in the field are University of Nebraska, Iowa State University, University of Northern Colorado, Air Force Academy, University of South Dakota,

University of Nebraska-Omaha, Drake University, Oklahoma State University, University of Nebraska-Kearney, Minnesota State University, Northwest Missouri State, Midland University, Concordia University, Cloud County CC, Barton CC, Cowley County CC, Iowa Central CC, Benedictine College, Nebraska Wesleyan, and Iowa Western CC.

"We are taking a rather conservative approach to this meet. We have some athletes on the track that are running in their off events," said USD men's track coach Dave

Gottsleben.

Coach Gottsleben believes that Kyle McKelvey and Cody Snuder have a very good chance to be very competitive in the shot put event in Lincoln.

"We will use this meet as a stepping stone toward a fun month of meets in February including the indoor Summit League meet," said Gottsleben.

The USD Coyote men's track team is the two time defending champions of the indoor Summit League meet.

## HOOPS

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Casey Kasperbauer scored 11 points and James Hunter added 10 for South Dakota. Kasperbauer's third 3-pointer of the game gave USD a 57-56 lead with three minutes to go. Trey Norris hit a long-range jumper with 1:24 to go that gave the Coyotes the lead for good at 61-59. Norris had eight points and three

assists.

Forbes led all scorers with 24 points on 11 of 13 shooting. He also had eight rebounds. Evans added 16 points for the Mastodons (8-9, 1-3).

The game had 10 ties and 10 lead changes and the largest lead in the second half was four points. The Coyotes led 33-32 at the break. Both teams shot close to 50 percent from the field.

- Courtesy of USD Sports Information

# Kosovo and Beyond for Anna Wonnenberg

By Alan Dale  
The Plain Talk

In the summer of 2016 Anna Wonnenberg's time as a member of the Peace Corps will come to an end.

But before that, she plans to do plenty of significant work.

Wonnenberg currently is a teacher of English in Kosovo, a nation still trying to dig itself out of the ruins of one of the most brutal wars in world history.

One war ends and another one begins and for now the only battle Wonnenberg has is getting her students, whom she enjoys working with immensely, to learn the English language.

That is why she is hoping to create a fun correspondence with her students and students in Vermillion and other points of South Dakota.

Wonnenberg grew up in Gregory County and later spent five years as a pre-teen and young teenager living in Mozambique located in Southern Africa. She spent time there when her parents, Charles and Diane, worked as missionaries.

Later she completed her undergraduate work at South Dakota State University with a B.A. in Global Studies and later earned her M.A. in Political Science in International Studies from the University of South Dakota.

She's lived everywhere but Wonnenberg still says South Dakota "is and always will be home."

Wonnenberg chose to join the Peace Corps because she has had a desire to work and help others and specifically those from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

"I love studying the world and working with people from other countries," she said.

"Honestly, I felt that now would be the perfect time to do work like this: I have not yet started a career, I'm single without children, and I knew that joining the Peace Corps would open up new opportunities for my

future."

She arrived in Kosovo in June of 2013 and completed three months of "intensive training" in the local, Albanian language, and the national culture.

She also worked on developing the necessary skills to teach and work there.

"I swore-in as a Peace Corps Volunteer in August along with 24 others, which was an amazing event," Wonnenberg said.

She ended up in the war-torn region of Kosovo, what was once one of the major cultural centers of the former Yugoslavia prior to the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008 and is now considered a partially recognized state.

"A year ago, I accepted an invitation by Peace Corps to serve in Azerbaijan, a country in the Middle East bordering Iran and Russia," Wonnenberg said. "I was all ready to go. I'd quit my job, sold my car, and was in New York City with my suitcases a few days early before I was set to leave the country."

"Well, on April 1st, I got a phone call that the program in Azerbaijan was cancelled. I couldn't tell you how hard I had to work to convince my friends and family that this was not, in fact, an April Fools' joke."

The next week the Peace Corps worked with Wonnenberg to help her find a new placement and she chose Kosovo because it would be a part of the first ever such program in their country.

"Then I researched Kosovo and was fascinated by the region's ancient and recent history," she said.

"Kosovo is a 'newborn' country (and is) Europe's newest country. I feel that Kosovo, while being a small country of only a couple million people and about the size of Connecticut, is important on the world stage. It is a Muslim-majority young democracy, and with the help of both the U.S. and the European

Union, I hope that it will continue its nation-building process in the right direction."

While she has been there Wonnenberg has been quite busy.

"My main project goal here is to improve English teaching in the local elementary school," she said. "The aim of the Peace Corps is for sustainable development, so I work closely with a Kosovar teacher, and we co-teach classes together. Sometimes it is easy to get discouraged, but then I look at the small successes with this teacher and I feel good about my work. She is speaking more English in the classroom, and uses more creative and interactive activities instead of just lecturing. The fact that she is improving in her teaching means that the students at this school will continue to benefit from my service even after I leave."

She said she loves working with the children as Wonnenberg teaches English to 1-2 and 6-7 grade students. She also teaches Zumba classes and is getting kids from Kosovo to get involved in Write On! which is an international creative writing competition for students.

That is where South Dakota and Vermillion come to the forefront.

"I find it personally very satisfying being able to share and relate my experiences here in Kosovo back home to South Dakota," Wonnenberg said. "I think it grounds me, in a way, to tie the two together. I'm open to collaborating with any educators or organizations in South Dakota interested in enriching their students' education with first-hand correspondence with my Kosovar students and I."

Wonnenberg would like a classroom, 4-H club, a Sunday School class or any other type of class to correspond with her students in Kosovo.

"We'd work through the framework of World Wise Schools but we could collaborate in any way we'd



Anna Wonnenberg, right, teaches English to a seventh-grade class in Kosovo as part of her work with the Peace Corps.

COURTESY PHOTO

decide," she said. "For example, a geography class could benefit from learning about children on the other side of the world, and we could exchange maps, pictures, and letters. This is, of course, beneficial for my students as well, as they'll have added opportunities to practice English."

"I'd love to share my experiences traveling the world and in the Peace Corps with students and organizations in South Dakota."

Despite the fresh memories of the war's damage, it is hard to find many displaying the scars of its shadow on the peoples' psyche...but they are there.

"Coming here now, though, you could hardly tell that this city was razed, but some signs remain," Wonnenberg said. "One home in town has preserved a wall riddled with bullet holes. A neighbor has shown me a part of an outdoor shed that was bombed; he has the mortar shell too. Each family had to rebuild their homes, and things like childhood photos are a luxury; most possessions like those were destroyed."

"On the outside, there is peace in Kosovo. But some say that Kosovo is a boiling

pot, and that someday the lid is going to blow again. Ethnic tensions are real here. I'm able to spend time in my community which is over 95 percent Muslim and ethnically Albanian, and then also spend time at a local Serbian Orthodox Monastery. This is because of my freedom as an American. Most Kosovars would not socialize in both of these worlds."

The lifestyle and culture does make Wonnenberg miss her homeland at times.

"The ethnic Albanian nationalism here is sometimes overwhelming, and I often miss being in the mix of cultures we have in the United States," she said. "One of the biggest strongholds keeping Kosovar back, I believe, is this strong nationalism. Many Kosovar Albanians have lived through war and ethnic cleansing at the hands of Serbians. But somehow the relationship between them must get better, before either side can move forward."

Moving forward for Wonnenberg includes some more ideas for future projects.

"At the moment my focus is on the school, working with my counterpart, and helping

meet needs there," she said. "We have ideas for some small projects in the school, including a mobile resource center to hold various supplies to use in English classes. A mobile projector would be very useful; that's something my counterpart has brought up several times. I think I'll be writing my first grant sometime soon."

Wonnenberg currently lives with a Kosovar family while learning the Albanian language. She will immerse herself in the Kosovo lifestyle until July of 2016 comes calling.

"When I'm done, I'd like to return to southeast South Dakota," she said. "I know what it's like to be a foreigner living in a new country, and I'd like to use my experiences to help internationals in the United States. I'll always have a passion to travel, but at the end of the day, I miss the rolling plains."

More information on the Peace Corps and World Wise Schools can be found at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/>. Anyone interested in asking Wonnenberg questions on her project can email her at [worldviajante@gmail.com](mailto:worldviajante@gmail.com)