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# Tanagers Rally Over Wagner For Regional Championship, State Tournament Berth

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN  
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The Vermillion baseball team is headed to the Class B State Tournament for the first time in three years after scoring 10 runs in one inning to jump ahead of Wagner for the Region 1B championship.

The Tanagers played two games Monday afternoon in Tabor and knocked off Beresford 7-6 in game one to face the winner of the Wagner, Bon Homme game for game two. Wagner beat No. 1 seeded Bon Homme 2-1.

Game 1

The Tanagers flew to a 6-0 lead in the first inning against the Watchdogs.

Travis Weber and Jake Odens had back-to-back RBI singles scoring Cole Anderson and Brandon Mockler. With Jefferson Galvin at bat, Andrew Heine scored from third on a wild pitch. Galvin then lined a two-run double scoring Weber and Odens. Galvin was brought home by John Benson's RBI single for the 6-0 lead.

Vermillion added another in the second off a sacrifice fly from Weber that scored Mockler for their final run of the game.

"We put the pressure on Beresford and I thought their (pitcher) threw a great game. I just think we had some really opportune hits that came at the right time and sometimes that's just the way it goes for a pitcher," said head coach Jason Gault.

Beresford wouldn't go down without fight and made it a one-run game by the seventh inning.

"We just got some guys that are playing in positions that they normally don't play," Gault said. "That makes it tough and communication becomes critical in that situation and we just didn't do a good job of communicating."

The Watchdogs rallied in the sixth inning to bring the score within three, and then plated another two in the bottom of the seventh for a one-run game.

With two outs and the tying run on third, Vermillion pitcher Carter Kratz struck out the batter for the final out of the game.

Hunter Christopherson earned the win for the Tanagers and Kratz recorded the save.

"The strike zone was pretty small and that makes it tough, especially for two good hitting teams," Gault said. "It can make for a pretty heavy scoreboard, but (Christopherson) settled in."

Game 2

The Tanagers went into the fifth inning against Wagner down 6-0 in the regional championship game only to score 10 runs on six hits and four Raiders errors for the 11-6 win.

"I think probably in the third or fourth, we didn't capitalize on a bases loaded situation and then they got runs," Gault said. "We were a little down but we talked and it's one of these situations where you've got nothing to lose."

Bats came alive after Kratz laced an RBI double that



JEREMY HOECK/PRESS AND DAKOTAN

Vermillion players celebrate their 11-6 victory over Wagner-Avon in Monday night's Region 1B championship game in Tabor.

scored Benson, who drew a walk to get on base.

The Tanagers saw 14 at-bats earning 10 runs on six hits in the frame that ended in a 10-6 lead. Mockler, Weber, Nate Robertson and Cole Anderson all recorded RBIs in the inning.

"It's a credit to the kind of athletes and kind of young men they're become over the last few years and it's just fun to watch," Gault said. "As a coach you just kind of sit back in that situation and, we've talked about this before about hitting being contagious and I really thought was that all we needed was a couple things to go right. Once a couple things go right, nobody wants to make that third out and I think that was a prime example of that."

Jefferson Galvin's RBI single in the sixth scored Jake Odens for the 11-6 final.

"I think our guys never gave up," Gault said. "I think

that is the reason we preach to our kids to always know the game is never over. It's a credit to our kids. There's no coaching involved there, that's all nine of our kids in our line-up, that's our pinch hitters, our pinch runners, that's just guys going out there and never giving up."

Odens, Anderson and Mockler combined on the mound for Vermillion.

Vermillion now travels to the state tournament on Saturday in Sioux Falls to face Dell Rapids at Augustana College's Ronken Field at 10 a.m. St.

St. Thomas More and McCook Central square off in the other semifinal and the winners of each game will play for the championship.

"I think you just focus on doing what you're doing," Gault said. "We have to kind of dance with the girl that brought us."

## Track Season Ends At State

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN AND DYLAN HUGGINS  
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The Vermillion High School track team ended its season on a high note last weekend at the Class A State Track Meet in Spearfish and Rapid City.

Though the Tanagers didn't put up big numbers, the young team's success can be measured in individual improvements they have seen over the year by posting their fastest times of the season at their last meet.

"Our athletes improved by leaps and bounds throughout the season," said head coach Lenni Billberg. "Each week we saw better and better performances."

Maddie Lavin posted the highest-placing performance for the Tanagers with second place in the 1600 meter run clocking in at 5:14.33.

"(Lavin) ran a very savvy 1600 to take second in a very loaded mile field," Billberg said.

A new school record was broken by the girls' 1600 sprint medley relay team during last Friday night's preliminary races. The team of MaKenna Druecker, Maddie Gregiore, Rachel Brady and Lavin ran a 4:17.97 for the new record.

In the finals the girls ran a 4:28.58 for seventh place.

The girls 4x400 of Brady, MaKenna Koble, Katie Kost and Lavin also took seventh with 4:19.64.

"It went really well. I'm super proud of our team. Everything was well deserved," Lavin said. "With all the effort we put into this season it's definitely showing especially since we didn't even make it to the 4x400 finals last year."

The boys' medley relay team of Matt Bierle, Jeremiah Johnson, Andrew Pietrzak and Logan Peterson ran their fastest time of the season, a combined 3:46.14 for sixth place.

"Friday night (they knew) they had to be fast just to make the final and then they sneak into sixth place as a team despite having Andrew Pietrzak, cutoff twice on the back stretch," Billberg said.

The 4x400 meter relay team of Peterson, Pietrzak, Bierle and Jon Rosales also took sixth place with 3:36.20.

"Matt Bierle was the great surprise of the weekend," Billberg said. "He cut off 2 seconds on his 4x400 time to push us into the finals."

Rosales ran 52.76 in 400 meter dash placing fifth and was glad to finish in the top 5 after being out for a month due to a torn hamstring.

"It felt pretty good. Especially in the beginning I was injured. I hadn't run under a minute in one of my races," he said.

Overall, the girls' team scored 12 points for 19th place and the boys' had 10 points for 18th place in the team standings. The Tanagers are looking to build on this year and are looking forward to next year's season.

"Altogether, this meet showed how hard work, team effort, and flat out competing can bring success," Billberg said. "We can't wait for next year."

Girls' Team Results

1. St. Thomas More, 108; 2. Madison, 69,5833; 3. Custer, 53; 4. Dakota Valley, 52; 5. Bon Homme, 40.7; 6. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 37; 7. Lead-Deadwood, 36; 8. Canton, 32.5; 9. Tri-Valley, 27; 10. Clark/Willow Lake, 26; 11. Belle Fourche, 21.5; 12. Garretson, 21; 13. SF Christian, 20; 14. McCook Central/Montrose, 19; 15. Hill City, 18; 16. Elk Point-Jefferson, 17; 17. Deubrook Area, 16; 18. West Central, 13.5; 19. Vermillion, 12; 19.



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/ PRESS AND DAKOTAN

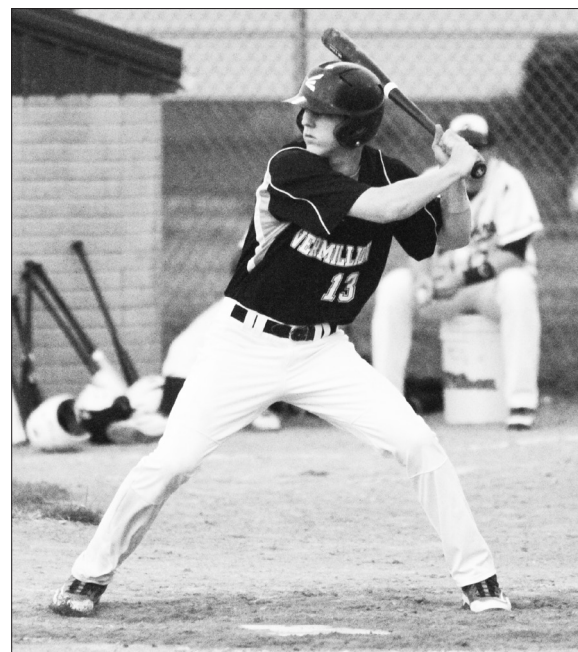
Vermillion's Logan Peterson in action during the Class A State track meet last weekend in Spearfish and Rapid City,

Dell Rapids, 12; 21. Britton-Hecla, 10.5; 22. Ethan/Parkston, 9; 23. Redfield/Doland, 8; 24. Tea Area, 7; 25. Miller, 6; 25. Lennox, 6; 25. Todd County, 6; 25. Chamberlain, 6; 29. Flandreau, 5; 29. Webster Area, 5; 31. Groton Area, 4; 31. Aberdeen Roncalli, 4; 31. Hot Springs, 4; 34. Winner, 3; 35. Hamlin, 2; 36. Sisseton, 1; 37. Beresford, 0.33333; 37. Sioux Valley, 0.33333

Boys' Team Results

1. St. Thomas More, 121.5; 2. West Central, 60.5; 3. Dell Rapids, 52; 4. Aberdeen Roncalli, 50; 5. Madison, 45; 6. SF Christian, 43; 7. Bon Homm, 36.5; 8. Ethan/Parkston, 36; 9. Clark/Willow Lake, 33; 9. Groton Area, 33; 11. Custer, 32; 12. Redfield/Doland, 24; 13. Winner, 23; 14. Sioux Valley, 18; 15. Webster Area, 16; 16. Elk Point-Jefferson, 15; 17. Lennox, 11; 18. Vermillion, 10; 18. McCook Central/Montrose, 10; 20. Beresford, 9.5; 21. Todd County, 9; 21. Garretson, 9; 21. Millbank, 9; 24. Hamlin, 8; 25. Lead-Deadwood, 6; 26. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 5; 26. Tri-Valley, 5; 28. Chamberlain, 4; 29. Crow Creek, 3; 30. Deuel, 2; 31. Flandreau, 1; 31. Canton, 1

## Sox Drop Two



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Vermillion's Jayce Juska in the Grey Sox 6-2 loss to the Harrisburg Woodies

FOR THE PLAIN TALK

One bad inning with a few errors has told the story in the last week of Vermillion Grey Sox baseball. The Sox dropped a State Line League game with the Harrisburg Woodies on May 27 6-2 in Vermillion. They followed it up with a loss to league leading Larchwood Diamonds 13-0 on May 21 in Larchwood. The Greys were on the road again on June 2 and dropped a non-league contest with the leaders of the South Central League Irene 15-8.

As of Wednesday, the Sox are in sixth place in the State Line League with a record of 1-2 and 1-4 overall.

Harrisburg Woodies 6 Vermillion Grey Sox 2

Rusty Jensen made his 2015 debut versus Harrisburg and allowed three earned runs in four innings of work. However the fourth inning of this contest was marred by fielding errors, allowing the visiting Woodies to score five runs.

Tyler Johnson and Josh Merrigan came in relief and did an excellent job of keeping Vermillion in the game, but it wasn't enough. Merrigan threw three strong innings, recording three strikeouts and only two hits. Johnson struck out six of the 11 batters he faced.

Jayce Huska, Tyler Johnson and Tom Heisinger each had two hits for the Greys with Huska and Heisinger each recording an RBI.

Vermillion Grey Sox 0 Larchwood Diamonds 13

The Vermillion Grey Sox dropped their second State Line League game of the year to the Larchwood Diamonds on