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Vermillion Over McCook Central For Third In State

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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Vermillion High School topped McCook Central 6-4 for third place in the Class B state baseball tournament Saturday afternoon, June 6, at Augustana College's Ronken Field in Sioux Falls.

"This is group of kids you don't have to say much about," said head coach Jason Gault. "They're going to compete, and if that means playing for third place instead of first place, they're going to go out there and they're still going to do a great job and hustle and give it 100 percent."

Travis Weber's two run single in the top of the third inning gave the Tanagers a 2-0 lead, but Vermillion fell behind 4-2 in bottom of the frame.

"We go up early with two, they chase back with four," Gault said. "Then we get a big hit out of Travis Weber. Just pretty typical of what you've seen in the past four or five games."

Weber again got the Tanagers on the board in the fifth inning with an RBI single followed by another RBI single from Jake Odens. Weber came around to score when Nate Robertson hit into a fielder's choice.

Hunter Christopherson's RBI single in the sixth inning gave the final score of 6-4.

Odens started on the mound for Vermillion and didn't give up a hit until the third inning. In all, Odens gave up four runs on two hits with four walks. Carter Kratz came in for relief in the third and gave a solid performance going four and two-thirds innings giving up two hits with four strikeouts.

"We think the strike zone kind of shrinks a little bit on us with (Odens) up there in that inning where he walked a couple guys and then Carter comes in and does a good job."

Cole Anderson went 2-for-4 and Brandon Mockler was 1-for-1 with two walks.

In Saturday morning's opening



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/PRESS AND DAKOTAN
The Vermillion Tanagers pose for a team photo after placing third in the South Dakota Class B High School Baseball Tournament on Saturday in Sioux Falls.

game of the tournament, Vermillion fell to Dell Rapids 3-2.

"We have to score more runs than two if we're going to beat that team and that's just the way it is," Gault said. "It was a good baseball game though, and I think it gives you an idea of the kind of competition the state tournament brings in."

The Tanagers went up 1-0 early in the first when Christopherson reached base on an error that scored Kratz.

Christopherson again brought Kratz home in the third with an RBI single.

Dell Rapids plated three in the bottom of the sixth inning with a sacrifice fly and a two run single for the go-ahead run.

"It was a tough one," Gault said. "You feel like you're in control of it. We knew that two runs weren't going to be enough to beat them. That's a very good baseball team." Christopherson threw a complete



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/PRESS AND DAKOTAN
Vermillion second baseman John Benson snares a ground ball during the third place game of the South Dakota Class B High School Baseball Tournament on Saturday in Sioux Falls.

game for the Tanagers going six innings and allowing five hits with three strikeouts and two walks.

Vermillion ends the season as regional champions and third place in the state with a 14-4 overall record.

SDHSAA Delays Decision On Revising Transgender Policy

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – The board of directors decided Wednesday to wait until August to further consider changes to the transgender athletic participation policy for the South Dakota High School Activities Association.

Many state legislators and a variety of public and private school officials disagree with the existing policy that allows a student to apply to participate on athletic teams of the opposite gender.

The board discussed the matter for more than 90 minutes Wednesday. The proposed revisions call for using an independent hearing officer to handle applications rather than a SDHSAA committee.

Board members reached a loose consensus that they wouldn't consider applications unless a student appealed the hearing officer's decision.

But the board snagged on the process for choosing the hearing officer.

Sandy Klatt of Brandon, who represents large school districts on the board, said there would be a perception of bias if the SDHSAA executive staff or the board selects the hearing officer.

"That's putting this board in a precarious situation," Klatt said. "I think we have a conundrum I don't know how to solve."

Klatt argued that the existing policy should be rescinded while the new policy is developed. But she withdrew her remarks after Aberdeen athletic director Gene Brownell said school districts need a policy in place as fall sports seasons start.

Board member Dan Whalen, who recently stepped down as Pierre athletic director, said he remains concerned about safety and fairness if a boy is competing against a girl and they are the same weight.

Whalen said the board seemed focused more on legal protection than on competitive fairness.

"I know this ship has sailed. I hope its name isn't Titanic," Whalen said.

Whalen noted that people decorate their baby's bedroom according to the child's gender. "I think the birth certificate issue is valid. That's why we're running into these things," he said.

Whalen said the Legislature should "step forward and make that commitment" about gender. Many legislators favor using the gender listed on the athlete's birth certificate.

Board member Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen said the SDHSAA board would adhere to a legislative decision.

"I think we're getting closer. I think we need a policy. I don't know this is it yet," Uttermark said.

He agreed with Whalen's concern about safety and said privacy issues go beyond the scope of the association. "I've got a 10-year-old daughter myself. There are concerns," Uttermark said.

When Klatt called for rescinding the existing policy, Uttermark responded: "What's more dangerous – a policy that's not perfect or having no policy?"

SDHSAA executive director Wayne Carney defended the existing policy and the proposed revisions.

"I don't think anybody's not saying it's right –" Carney said.

Klatt interjected: "I do."

That's when Brownell, a former board member, asked that the policy be kept in place so there is something to use. Brownell said he wants something to protect a student's rights and the school district.

Klatt said she would take back her comments about rescinding in respect for Brownell's comments.

Board president Rick Weber said the matter will be kept on hold until further revisions are brought back at the August meeting.

USD Athletic Trainer Receives NATA Athletic Trainer Service Award

DALLAS – Bruce E. Fischbach, MSS, ATC, has been selected as one of the National Athletic Trainers' Association's 2015 Athletic Trainer Service Award recipients. Fischbach, a resident of Vermillion, South Dakota, is the director of sports medicine and head athletic trainer at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. The Athletic Trainer Service Award recognizes NATA members for their contributions to the athletic training profession as a volunteer at the local and state levels. These recipients have been involved in professional associations, community organizations, grassroots public relations efforts and service as a volunteer athletic trainer. Candidates must have held the certified athletic trainer (ATC) credential, conferred by the Board of Certification, and have been an NATA member, both for at least 20 years. "We are always excited to recognize the dedication, excellence, inspirational outlook and commitment of our honorees, and this year is no exception. These recipients serve as role models to their peers and represent some of the best of the best of the athletic training profession," said NATA Honors & Awards Committee Chair Chuck Kimmel, ATC. "We know they will continue to contribute to their place of work and their community at large in ensuring quality of care and optimal health moving into the years ahead." The presentation will be made during NATA's 66th Clinical Symposia & AT Expo in St. Louis on June 25, 2015.

For The Love OF Coaching

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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For Jay Hennies, coaching was in his blood.

"I was an education major, naturally, and I wanted to become a teacher and coach, so I did," Hennies said.

He coached boys' basketball at Vermillion High School for 18 years and even though that was his main sport, he also dabbled in football and girls' and boys' tennis.

Because of the time he spent and the success these teams saw under his direction, Hennies was elected into the inaugural class of the Vermillion High School Tanager's Hall of Fame last month.

"When you consider who the other inductees were, these people were efficient, high caliber people and high caliber athletes so to be listed with that group is very complimentary," Hennies said.

Hennies enjoyed coaching because it gave him a chance to see his young athletes grow, not only on the court, but in academics and socially.

"What made it fun was that you can begin to see the improvement, not only in the individuals as they relate to themselves, but also the improvement in the way that they operate within a teamwork situation," he said. "When you're coaching you're not going to win all the time but you always like to see improvement and you always like to see, not only improvement in the basketball court but also off the court."

Though coaching came naturally to him, he admits it wasn't always the easiest and having the athletes understand their role on the team was sometimes difficult to have them understand.

"Some people would like to have different roles, but if you're going to operate at a high efficiency, everyone has to understand that they have a specific role to play and they have to assume that role and sometimes it takes a little longer than normal to get that point across, but when you do, you're team operates on a much higher and more efficient level."

His methods paid off as he coached teams to undefeated regular seasons and even state championships in 1988 and 1989. At that time there were



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Former Vermillion High School coach Jay Hennies speaking at the Tanger Hall of Fame induction banquet on May 2.

only two athletic classes in South Dakota and Vermillion was playing against bigger schools from cities like Sioux Falls and Yankton.

"If you look back at the teams, some of the people were more talented, run faster, shoot better, jump higher," Hennies said. "Some teams were not as talented but they still accomplished a lot of things. They still worked very hard and it was a fun time to coach all of the teams that we had."

He believed that in order for athletes to be successful, they needed to participate in as many sports as possible.

"We always encouraged the people that I came in contact with to be involved all season long, and during the summer too, in as many activities as they possibly could," Hennies said. "There's a trend out there that tries to isolate and keep a kid going all year long in one sport, but my philosophy was the more different activities that student could be involved in, the better

well-rounded that individual would be."

He also believes sports help students become well versed people and young athletes will see more success in academics, as well as later on in life.

"You learn many valuable lifelong lessons, teamwork, how to sacrifice and how to get along with people, how to meet people," he said.

Hennies was a player himself and was a part of the men's basketball team at the University of South Dakota from 1961-1965. After graduating, he became the graduate assistant coach for the freshman basketball team at USD the following year while earning his master's degree.

In 1986, he was inducted in the University of South Dakota athletic Hall of Fame and is also a member of the South Dakota Coaches Hall of Fame.

Hennies was also a teacher at VHS teaching physical sciences, biology and physical education class "every now and then".