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2015 Summit Conference Basketball Tournament



University of South Dakota's men's (left in red) and women's (right, in white) basketball teams were eliminated from the Summit Conference Basketball Tournament earlier this week. The men fell in the semifinals and the women in the final, both to archrivals South Dakota State. The teams won't know if they will play in a postseason tournament until Sunday or Monday.

DICK CARLSON / INERTIA

Denied the Summit

JACKS LEAVE NO DOUBT IN BIG SEMIFINAL WIN OVER SDSU MEN

By Jeremy Hoeck
Press & Dakotan

SIOUX FALLS — As Tyler Larson left the court in the waning minutes of a lop-sided loss, he embraced head coach Craig Smith. The senior shared an extended moment with his coach, finally patting him on the head before making his way to the bench. There was a sense of finality to the scene, albeit in a disappointing setting. “As far as basketball and life, I’ve been through a lot, and I really look up to him a lot,” Larson said after a 78-65 loss to South Dakota State in Monday night’s Summit League

Tournament semifinals in Sioux Falls. Watching Larson and fellow senior Brandon Bos — both playing for their third USD coach — leave in such an emotional way, it came across as a kind of torch passing. Perhaps the two main reasons the Coyotes were even in the semifinals handing the reins over to Smith, who was wrapping up year one with the program. A first year that could have gone one of two ways: The returning players not buying into a new coaching staff’s scheme, or coming together and taking the program to new heights. “Sometimes when you’re new to a program, sometimes the hardest guys to coach are the seniors,” Smith said. “They’re rooted

in their ways. “It’s hard to change the stripes of the zebra.” Smith had come to USD with much fanfare, having spent two years with Tim Miles at Nebraska before their stints together at Colorado State. When he was hired nearly a full year ago, Smith made clear that his expectations were high: talk of reaching the NCAA Tournament wasn’t going to be motivation, it was going to be an expectation. “When we first met him, we were a little skeptical,” Larson said. “After a couple weeks, we saw he’s the real deal. “That he was going to turn this program around.” And Smith did that in

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SDSU ROLLS TO BIG LEAD, KNOCK OUT COYOTE WOMEN, 72-57

By Jeremy Hoeck
Press & Dakotan

SIOUX FALLS — After a 1-year hiatus, the Jackrabbits are back in the Big Dance. And they beat their rivals again to get there. In front of a record crowd, South Dakota State dispatched top-seeded University of South Dakota 72-57 in Tuesday afternoon’s Summit League tournament championship game in Sioux Falls. For the sixth time in seven years, the Jackrabbits (25-7) move on to the NCAA Tournament. “It’s a surreal feeling,” said freshman guard Macy Miller, who had 19 points

and six rebounds and was named to the all-tournament team. “We’re not done yet, we’re looking forward to going to March Madness.” Not only was Tuesday’s championship game a battle between the top two seeds, it was a rematch of last year’s semifinals when USD beat SDSU and eventually went on to the NCAA Tournament. This time, the Jacks got the job done. “In 15 years, you really appreciate the difference between winning and losing, it’s such a huge void in that feeling,” head coach Aaron Johnston said. Unlike many of their recent meetings, though, the difference between the

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Boosters Announce New Hall of Fame

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

Last week the Vermillion Athletic Booster Club announced its first class for its Athletic Hall of Fame which is set to be created this spring. Ron Brown, Ben Leber, Jay Hennies, Chuck Iverson, Mark Manning, and Lonna Thelein Larson were selected as the inaugural class for the newly formed Hall of Fame. On May 2, the booster club’s first ever inductees will be honored at the Old Lumber Company, beginning with a 5 p.m. before the 6 p.m. dinner. “VHS Athletic Booster Club is very excited,” said club President Jim Peterson. “We have heard from community that this is great. It will be annual event. It is great we will be able to stay connected or recognize those that have moved out of the community.

So far the inductees have been “honored, touched” or humbled by their place in the new hall according to Peterson who added one told him they were “looking forward to the event.” “We believe all of inductees have gone to VHS are great role models for your youth,” Peterson said. To be considered, an athlete had to have been graduated from Vermillion High School for at least 10

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Two Vermillion Youth Boys Hoop Teams to Play at State

Top two South Dakota Dakota teams invited to Target Center in Minneapolis Two youth boys’ basketball teams from Vermillion will play in the South Dakota Youth Basketball State Championship in Huron. All South Dakota teams in grades 5-9 have been invited to play off for the over-all South Dakota state championships. All teams play 3-4 games in one day. Boys in grades 5, 7 and 9 and girls in grades 6 and 8 will play on Saturday, April 11. Boys in grades 6 & 8, and girls in grades 5, 7 and 9 will play Sunday, April 12. The top two teams in each state are invited to play off in an “Elite Eight” format at the Target Center in Minneapolis for the Great Four-State Championship. This playoff system is sponsored by the Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx and coordinated by Pacesetter Sports. All head coaches and athletic directors in the four-state area have been sent a playoff packet. Further information and registration are also available at www.pacesetternet.com. Matt Bare, Sr. Group Sales Executive, MN Timberwolves/Lynx bare@timberwolves.com

Submitted by Jeff McCarron, Director, Pacesetter Sports

Vermillion Boys Watch Hoop Season Come to Early End



By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

It was two different games within the same one and two contests that completely flipped the switch over six days. The last two games between the Vermillion Tanager boys’ basketball team and the Canton C-Hawks had a little bit of everything over 64 minutes as they battled it out the second time in less than a week Thursday night in a Region 4A quarterfinal contest. The host, No. 3 seed Tanagers came out on fire and scored 20 points in the first quarter only to score that same amount over the last 24 minutes and No. 6 Canton would pull away for a 51-40 victory six days after being blitzed 66-47 in Vermillion. Vermillion (9-12) saw its season come to an end while Canton moves on to the semifinal round. “In the fourth quarter we put ourselves in a position where we got down three possessions and (Canton) could dictate things,” Drake said. “We knew it would be a tight game in the fourth. We just hoped we would be in that position up three possessions in the fourth quarter and dictate things.”

Cooper Williams led Vermillion with 12 points while Jeremiah Johnson added nine points and Brandon Mockler chipped in with eight points off the bench. Canton (7-14) used a combination of a man and zone defense against Vermillion as and trapped the corners and high and low posts but like that mattered any. The Tanagers banged away from outside including two big 3-bombs by Brandon Mockler and another by Matt Ouellette as both subs came up big early. Then Cooper Williams drilled a sweet running three from 30-feet as time expired on the first eight minutes and Vermillion led 20-15 heading into the second quarter. The Tanagers finished the first quarter with five 3-pointers. “We did hit some shots and you have to be able to hit perimeter shots,” Drake said. “They started man and then basically when to zone midway through the first. We may have settled a little bit too much from the outside.” Deep outside shooting wasn’t the problem for Vermillion, but its inability to hit midrange shots, to start the second quarter allowed Canton to pull ahead with back-to-back arc-huggers to go up 21-20

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Vermillion Tanager Carter Andre (33) attacks the basket last week in the teams’ 51-40 Region 4A loss to Canton. THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK