

A Tanager By Choice



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Chuck Iverson accepting his induction into the Tanager Hall of Fame on May 2.

Editor's note: This is part of a six week series honoring the athletes chosen as the inaugural class of Vermillion High School's Tanager Hall of Fame.

ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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If Meckling High School didn't close in 1965, Chuck Iverson would have never been a Vermillion Tanager.

"I grew up on a farm not too far from Meckling," Iverson said. "Meckling High School closed and at that point we had three choices: to go to Gayville or Wakonda or Vermillion. I went up (to Vermillion) and it was probably the best thing that ever happened to me."

Iverson attended Vermillion High School from 1965-69 where he played football and basketball, and this year, he was elected to the first class of the Tanagers Hall of Fame.

"Vermillion has a tremendous tradition and a tremendous legacy of great athletes and so, I don't know who chose them, but I want to thank them. I don't know that I'm deserving, but I'll gladly accept it," Iverson said.

As a new student to the school, the sports teams gave Iverson a sense of

belonging and acceptance amongst his classmates.

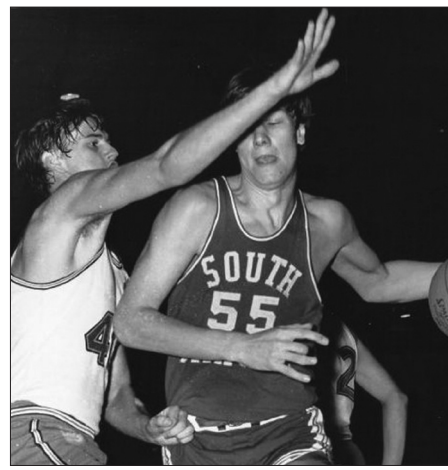
"I think a lot of people don't realize, with athletics you have a great retention tool because you have a built in family," Iverson said. "You fit in because you're part of a team and I think that was really a difference maker for me."

He played under great Vermillion coaches Ron Brown, Marion Brink and others and he credits them with his success later on in life. The 6'9" Iverson admits he wasn't the most coordinated athlete entering high school, but these coaches took time to work with him.

"The coaches spent time with me to learn simple things, like jump rope or whatever. They spent a lot of time and I think molded me into a person and an athlete, or as much as I could be," he said.

Iverson was a three-year varsity player for both football and basketball, but focused more of his attention on basketball. The extra work paid off when Iverson was offered a full scholarship to play basketball at the University of South Dakota where he played from 1969-1973 while earning his Bachelors of Science degree in physical education.

"I'm sure I would have gone to college



COURTESY PHOTO

Chuck Iverson in a game for the University of South Dakota where he played from 1969-1973.

anyhow," Iverson said. "I enjoyed farm life, but I just wanted to get off the farm at that point. I think (basketball) was the big push. It made it a no brainer.

"Maybe because of my size, but as far as going into college, I think everybody realized I had a lot more potential in basketball than I did in football," Iverson said.

Potential is one way to put it.

After college, Iverson, a post player, was drafted by the Seattle Supersonics of the NBA.

"I had an opportunity to have Bill Russell as my coach for a week," Iverson said. "I made the last cut before they made the regular season. That was a great experience, one I'll never forget."

After his stint in Seattle, Iverson was selected for a team of Midwest all-stars to travel overseas and play in tournaments in the then Soviet Union as well as all over Europe.

"It was one of the first teams allowed into the Soviet Union. This is the middle of the Cold War era, and we got to go over and go to Leningrad and Moscow in a basketball tournament. A real eye opener," he said.

He was also offered a job to play professionally in Europe, but decided to forgo the offer and returned to South Dakota to help on his family's farm and coach.

"I think athletics are tremendous as far as developing character," Iverson said. "Sometimes, they say that athletics doesn't build character it just shows the character. I think in some cases that's true, but I think in other cases it helps build character because it can have an impression."

He coached women's basketball for 17 years at Mount Marty College in Yankton and currently serves as the school's athletics director.

"Being an athletic director, I can still be involved. The thing I miss with coaching is more the interaction you have with the athletes but I still have a chance to have that type of repair with our coaching staff and I think that's the thing that keeps me young and keeps me going."

Iverson credits Vermillion High School for his success on the basketball court, but also in helping him grow as a person he is today.

"I think it's easy to push in the academic part and it's easy to push in the athletic part but the other part, as far as making you more mature and more responsible for your decisions, I think that's one of the things that Vermillion did a tremendous job with me."

Coyotes Finish Second At Summit Tournament

FARGO, N.D.—North Dakota State won its second consecutive Summit League Tournament title with a 13-3 win against South Dakota in the championship game Saturday at Ellig Sports Complex.

The Bison (43-9) pounded out 17 hits in just four at bats while pitcher Krista Menke limited the Coyotes (28-25-1) to three hits and struck out nine in five innings of work.

South Dakota's three hits came on consecutive at bats in the top of the fourth inning. Katie Cochran hit a three-run homer to right that cut the Bison's lead to 8-3. Menke (32-4) retired the next five hitters in order to secure North Dakota State's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

It was Cochran and sophomore pitcher Rachel Cue who helped South Dakota reach the championship game. Cochran's solo home run in the bottom of the fourth inning was the only run in a 1-0 Coyote victory against IUPUI in an elimination game earlier in the day. The win avenged the team's 11-9 loss to the Jaguars on Friday.

Cue (12-12) pitched her fourth shutout of the season and turned in one of the most dominant performances of her career. She gave up three singles and a walk and none of the runners advanced past first base.

Both Cochran and Cue were named to the 16-person all-tournament team. Teammates Katie Dinning and Morgan Hancock joined them.

Cochran was named to the team for the second consecutive year after batting 5-for-10 with two homers and four RBIs. Cue was 1-0 in two starts and three appearances at the tournament. She struck out 10 in 15 1/3 innings of work.

South Dakota finished the season with a Summit League record 77 home runs. The Coyotes batted .325 as a team and averaged more than six runs per game.

Minogue earns Summit League Athlete of the Month honors

ELMHURST, Ill.—South Dakota junior Yvon Minogue has been named the April Summit League Athlete of the Month. Minogue becomes the first Coyote female to earn the award this year and adds to the four honors accumulated by senior Tyler Larson and junior Teivaskie Lewin.

A first baseman from Corona, California, Minogue picks up her first career accolade after batting .538 (35-of-65) during April and leading South Dakota to a 13-5 record. She had a hit in all but three games, including 13 multi-hit contests. Perfect games included going 4-for-4 at Creighton on April 8 with a double and two runs scored and going 3-for-3 against Fort Wayne on April 12 with a home run, double, three RBI and three runs. She added three-hit games versus Omaha on April 17, at North Dakota on April 28 and versus Kansas City on April 30.

Minogue had a .954 slugging percentage for the month and .583 on-base percentage with 22 runs scored, 17 RBI, seven doubles, six home runs and a triple. She added seven walks and recorded just three strikeouts. Minogue also broke the Summit League's single-season records for hits (87) and doubles (26) during the month. She currently ranks second and first, respectively, in the nation. Her batting average of .481 this season is fifth nationally.

Minogue helped the Coyotes solidify second place in the Summit League tournament.

Jamaican Connections Paying Off For USD

BY JEREMY HOECK

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What football is to the United States and ice hockey is to Canada, track – specifically sprints – is to Jamaica.

The University of South Dakota track program is learning that first-hand.

"Track is probably the number one sport in Jamaica right now," said junior Teivaskie Lewin, a native of Montego Bay.

And so far, Lewin, along with Gawain Williams and Shanice Cannigan haven't just provided the Coyote men's and women's teams with a new perspective on the sport, they've become instant Summit League title contenders.

They're not the first Jamaicans to compete for USD and probably won't be the last, and it's all thanks to a former Coyote athlete.

Hamid Woodham, who ran for the Coyotes back in the late 1980s and is now an optometrist in his native Jamaica, has been a kind of intermediary – helping introduce athletes to certain programs, and vice versa.

"Part of his commitment to track is that he likes to help kids get placed," said Dave Gottsleben, USD's head men's coach.

Woodham's influence on the high school scene has been beneficial for USD, which wouldn't otherwise get an opportunity to see – and recruit – Jamaican athletes in person.

"You really need that," Gottsleben said. "You can't just go off of marks, you have to go off people.

And so far, he hasn't missed."

Of the three athletes, Lewin arrived in Vermillion first, and immediately found success at the Division I level.

After transferring from Butte Community College (California), Lewin won the 60-meter hurdles and took third in the long jump at last year's Summit League indoor meet. He then missed qualifying for the NCAA Outdoor Championships by .03 seconds in the 110 hurdles.

This year, Lewin was named the Summit League Athlete of the Month in three consecutive months during the

indoor season, where he qualified for the NCAA Indoor Championships. He is now redshirting the outdoor season.

The biggest adjustment for Lewin may have nothing to do with track, he joked.

"I was used to the American system, but wasn't used to the cold," Lewin said. "Thank God they have a dome I can practice in."

Cannigan, a freshman, leads the Summit League in the 100-meter hurdles and ranks fifth in the 400 hurdles, and also boasts the eighth-best mark in the long jump.

Williams, also a freshman, is second in the conference in the 100-meter dash and seventh in the 200.

Neither had ever heard of the University of South Dakota during their high school years, but once an opportunity became available to compete for the D-I university, they jumped at it.

"I got a scholarship to come here," said Cannigan, who hails from Lucea, Jamaica. "I thought I better take it."

Getting such an opportunity is a dream that starts early for Jamaican youth.

From their primary school (grades 1-6) on up through high school (grades 7-12), athletes grow up wanting to follow in the footsteps of their track heroes – names like Asafa Powell, Usain Bolt and Yohan Blake.

"Seeing all those big athletes, it just inspired us as young kids to push each other," Lewin said. "In America, track isn't that important, and you guys have football and all that stuff."

"We really focus on speed and strength. We just capitalize on our athletes there."

And it's not only on the track where the trio has blossomed, Gottsleben added.

"There's just a high level of commitment and a level of cooperation from them," he said. "They're just really team people. Most are pretty quiet, but they buy into the team concept."

Even if it means, in Lewin's case, more time in practice and an increased focus on academics than he was used to at a junior college.

"The work load is more, and the training is harder,"



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Teivaskie Lewin, right, competing unattached as he redshirts this season for the University of South Dakota, flies over a hurdle on the way to winning the men's 110-meter event at the Mount Marty College Twilight track and field meet on April 23 at Williams Field in Yankton.

Lewin said. "It's more of a team basis here; it's more of a family. It was a pretty easy adjustment."

One thing that wasn't easy to get used to?

Again, the weather, Cannigan joked.

"I'm adjusting very well, despite the cold weather," she said, smiling. "I'm not used to it, but I think I'm getting there."

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