

## MUCH

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The Coyotes used a tremendous blitz over the final dozen minutes, of the first half to go from 1-point down to 25-up by intermission. "I did think we did a great job of executing our game plan which was to attack the rim, attack the rim in transition, attack the rim in half-court offense," Williams said. "We didn't want to settle for all outside shots, so we wanted to attack and I thought we did a pretty good job of doing that."

The Coyotes' shooting cooled a bit after the break, but their defense - a point of emphasis for Williams this preseason - maintained a consistency throughout as

their edge increased throughout the game despite liberal substitutions.

Yet, Williams still wants to see more from her team's stopper mentality.

"Our team defensively, the goal is not how many turnovers we force...for us we want defensive stops," Williams said. "I thought they came out early out of the gun and I thought 'oh boy.' I thought we really locked in an focused on what our game plan was. When we did that we did a better job of getting stops."

Irvine (1-4) came in averaging just under 25 turnovers a game and their reputation for hurting themselves led to USD pulling away sooner rather than later.

Also games against Washington, Drake, and Kansas sure didn't hurt the team's preparation for a night and

an opponent like this.

"I definitely think those tough games help us get better," Seekamp said. "We just need to make sure we don't lapse knowing they aren't as good as some of those (teams)."

### South Dakota def. UC Irvine 96-52

UC IRVINE (1-4)  
Onogomuho 13, Glassow 4, McKenney 8, Fajemisin 15, Merrill 2, Sutherland 3, Cheung-Sutton 3, Chavez 2, Dee 2. Totals: 19-58 14-21 52.

SOUTH DAKOTA (3-2)  
Tia Heimpler 2, Raeshel Contreras 24, Margaret McCloud 9, Nicole Seekamp 22, Lisa Loeffler 6, Kelly Stewart 1, Bridget Arens 4, Jaylah Jackson 3, Katie Liveringhouse 15, Heidi Hoff 10. TOTALS: 34-68 19-25 96.

For an extended version of the story visit [www.plaintalk.net](http://www.plaintalk.net)

"As an offense, you want to try to find an advantage, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't," Stiegelmeier said. "It wasn't easy, but it worked."

South Dakota kicker Miles Bergner missed a 25-yard field goal in the second quarter, his first miss of the season - though replays later showed the kick was good. The Coyotes later had a pass to Shufford on the goal line taken away by SDSU's Je Ryan Butler for an interception.

The Jackrabbits added field goals from Justin Syrovatka - from 21 and 34 yards - in the second half, building a 37-0 lead before the Coyotes found the end zone.

Earl's 10-yard pass to Shufford early in the fourth quarter got the Coyotes within 37-7 and backup quarterback Ryan Saeger hit tight end Josh Hale for a 10-yard touchdown with 2:10 remaining.

Left to surmise the season and areas of improvement moving forward, Glenn mentioned USD's defense, which closed the season having allowed at least 500 yards in each of their final five games.

"We're giving up too many big plays," Glenn said.

"We really need to take a hard look at how we're defending, if these are the athletes we're going to defend with."

Injuries also took a toll on the Coyotes down the stretch. The top three running backs missed the final two games, leaving Khorey Kilgore (17 carries for 82 yards) as the only true back available Saturday. Fullback Drew Potter had eight carries for 103 yards, providing one of the few bright spots for USD.

The Coyotes will, though, return all 11 defensive starters from Saturday, as well as many of the backups. In all, South Dakota will graduate 10 seniors, but only four of those saw the field Saturday.

Progress may have been slow in 2014, but the Coyotes know the only way to truly improve is to start working right away, linebacker John Wessel said.

"It's not like every game we were getting rolled, we were in games; in them in the fourth quarter," he said. "Seeing that progress is great, we just have to keep fighting."

You can follow Jeremy Hoock on Twitter at [twitter.com/jhoock](https://twitter.com/jhoock). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## Not finishing hurting USD men's hoops

By Alan Dale  
The Plain Talk

A 0-5 start was not the way Craig Smith wanted to start his tenure as the University of South Dakota's new men's basketball coach.

But lost in a winless beginning to the season is that the Coyotes have battled, have fought, and have shown moments of brilliance.

The problem is they just can't finish what they start.

"It is what it is, the hard part is when you have a new team and with so many new guys in the program," Smith said. "The good news is that we are battled tested early. The bad news is you want to get a victory."

"All the other games we hung around, hung around and made it a close game at the end. We have a lot of competitive spirit, we have a lot of fighters on the team, we just have to learn how to finish games. Sometimes it's just part of the process."

This weekend they battled back in losses to Wofford and Fairfield as they overcame deficits to put themselves in a position to win. Against Sam Houston State, USD led early, fell behind late, and rallied to send the game into the first of three overtimes (see below). The team's first two losses also saw the Coyotes battle back from early deficits to make things interesting.

Not bad considering four of the five teams they've played come off 20-plus win

seasons and Wofford and Stanford were NCAA Tournament entrants last spring.

"I am proud of our guys, but we have to figure out how we win those games," Smith said. "This is what I know. We have a really good group that really wants to succeed. It feels like we've been through the ringer a little bit but if we are in a 15-round fight we have only been through round 3. I am confident we are going to stay the course and do well."

One thing senior Brandon Bos said in the preseason is that the team struggled to finish games last season and that pattern continues despite the arrival of Smith.

"As a coach I have to do a better job to help our team make plays," Smith said. "We made a monster run against Wofford to give ourselves a chance and we just run out of time. We just got to keep chopping wood and keep getting better. Like Eminen says we have to really lose ourselves in the team. There are times we look like a phenomenal basketball team and then we go 3-4 minutes where we look awful. Is that a concentration issue or a personnel issue, I don't know."

After their home opener Wednesday against Wayne State (read about the game on [www.plaintalk.net](http://www.plaintalk.net)), the Coyotes travel to the West Coast once again to take on CSU-Bakersfield (Sunday, 6 p.m.) and CS-Northridge (Tuesday, 9 p.m.).

"To win on the road you

have to eliminate losing and we have to improve our free throw shooting," Smith said. "That's mental toughness and you just have to believe you can make them."

### A look back at Fairfield BRIDGEPORT, Conn.—

South Dakota (0-5) scored the final 11 points of regulation to tie the game at 68-68 and force overtime, but it wasn't enough as they fell 80-72 after the extra session. Tyler Larson scored a career-high 23 points and had 12 rebounds in recording his second double-double of the tournament.

### A look back at Wofford BRIDGEPORT, Conn.—

What a way to start a season. Wofford guard Karl Cochran made eight three-pointers and scored a game-high 31 points to lead the Terriers to a 72-68 win against South Dakota Saturday at Webster Bank Arena.

### A look back at Sam Houston State BRIDGEPORT, Conn.—

Sam Houston State guard DeMarcus Gatlin hit a game-tying three-pointer at the end of the first overtime and the Bearkats eventually prevailed in triple overtime, 93-85, against South Dakota Friday at Webster Bank Arena.

Coyote guard Brandon Bos led all scorers with 21 points. Teammate Tyler Larson had career highs of 17 points and 13 rebounds. Tre Burnette added 13 points, 12 rebounds and five steals.

- Courtesy of USD sports information

## ENDS

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for a 10-yard touchdown play.

It wasn't like the Coyotes were struggling to move the ball against the Jackrabbits defense, they just stalled out on prime opportunities. USD had six drives inside the SDSU 25-yard line, but had a missed field goal, an interception at the goal line and a pair of turnovers on downs.

"We were able to move the ball. It took us a little bit to get a feel for the field," said Earl, who passed for 226 yards and a touchdown.

"We started putting some plays together, just couldn't punch the ball in the end zone to get six points."

The opening half was controlled by SDSU, which scored on its first five drives and used 320 yards to build a 31-0 lead at the break - thanks in large part to big plays from Sumner.

Facing the league's worst defense (in terms of yardage and points allowed), the Brandon native had pass completions of 27, 41, 28 and 37 yards in the first quarter, and later had a 50-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter.

## WINTER

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"The difference for me this year is that I know I have to be tighter on my skills in my routines and more fluid in my routines," said Williams. "For the team, I hope we can have fun this year, but still place well at state. My personal goal is to complete my double twist on floor and my front tuck on floor."

As a seventh grader, Williams was the only Tanager gymnast to place in the top 10 on any event at last year's state meet when she placed sixth on the beam with a score of 8.5.

"I think this is going to be a fun year for us with all the young girls we have," said Mallory. "For the team, we got 4th place last year, so I hope we can move up a spot this year. Personally, I would like to finish a full on floor and get a handspring full on vault."

The Tanagers with four juniors, four ninth graders, five eighth graders, and seven seventh graders on the 2014 gymnastics team have a lot of work ahead of them to improve on last year's performances.

This gives Fitzsimmons and Rucker lots of things to work on during each practice session.

Sophomore Taggart has been a state competitor since seventh grade. As a sophomore this year, Taggart will be called upon as one of the veterans to help the younger gymnasts develop. "I really want our team to go, possibly into the top three at state," said Taggart. "Personally, I would like to get into the top five at state and maybe win an event at regions."

It's still very early in the year, but Fitzsimmons believes the varsity competitors for the first meet will be Mallory (11th), Shayla Kiertzner (11th), Sydney Furry (11th), Taggart (9th), Morgan Graham (9th), Peyton Larson (8th) and Williams (8th).

There is no doubt in the state who the powerhouse in Class A gymnastics in the state is. In the past 20 years, the Class A state title has been won by either Duel or Madison. Madison had the longest winning streak with 15 straight titles until Duel took over in 2011 and won 3 consecutive Class A state titles.

Madison regained the



Freshman Anneliese Taggart is just one of a number of young talents on this year's Vermillion High School gymnastics team.

### FILE PHOTO

champions' podium in 2014 when they scored 141.4 points to Duel's 134.125.

Third place has been spread around the state for the past 20 years and it looks like the Vermillion team is eyeing it carefully in the 2014 season.

The Vermillion High School gymnasts will host Sioux Falls Lincoln on Dec. 2 at the Vermillion High School. The remaining schedule sees the Tanagers home two more times, hosting the Winter

Wonderland Invitational on Dec. 30 and then a dual with Yankton on Jan. 22.

The remaining meets for this year include the Wagner Invitational on Dec. 13, the Stanley Co. Invitational on Jan. 10, the Madison Invitational on Jan. 17, and the Wagner/West Central/Vermillion triangular on Feb. 2.

The Region 2A meet will be held in Wagner on Feb. 6 with the state meet Feb. 13 and 14 in Watertown.

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## READY

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practice every day and work hard every day so I can improve on my finish from last year," said Hage. "As a team, I hope can improve on our 18 wins and 3 loss dual record."

Regan Bye was a state champion in the 145 pound weight class while his cousin Brett Bye was a state champion in the 152 pound weight class last year. Both Regan and Brett were juniors last year at the 2014 state meet and are returning this year to defend their championship titles.

"My goal is to win another state title, but this year it will have to be in the 160 pound weight class," said Regan Bye. "My advice to the young wrestlers coming into the program is to not give up. Fight through the tough times because things will get better."

Regan Bye has signed a letter of intent to join the wrestling program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Overall my goal is to make myself a better wrestler so that I can achieve goals that I have set for myself down the road in my career," added Regan.

Brett Bye is also gearing up to defend his state title as he prepares for the 2015 state tournament. "I would really like to go undefeated and not have a takedown against me this year," stated Brett Bye. "I hope we can get into the top five as a team or maybe even into the top three." Brett Bye has received a scholarship to attend South Dakota State University and join the Jackrabbit wrestling program.

The wrestlers listed as varsity for the opening match of the season for the Vermillion High School wrestling program are ninth graders Riley Beach and Trey Hage, sopho-

mores Jacob Husby, Carter Kratz Kyle Seibel, Noah Walker, junior Noah Westergaard, and seniors Regan Bye, Brett Bye, Brandon Hertz, Josh Westhuaser, and Adam Winslow.

Sophomore Jacob Husby has his eyes set on competing at the state meet. "My goal is to compete in the state meet as a 126 pounder," said Husby. "I know I need to work harder at practice and put in more time so I can see the results."

Two more sophomores that are hoping to make it to the state meet in February and compete for a medal are Kratz and Seibel.

"I really want to wrestle at the 132 pound class. I would like to get lots of takedowns and improve my wrestling overall," said Seibel. "My future goal is to be a state champion." Seibel believes that this year's team can make it into the top five at the 2015 state meet.

"Wrestling takes a certain mindset and great conditioning," said Kratz. "Having Brett and Regan at practice to push me will make me a better wrestler." Kratz worked out at the Legends program this summer and he thought that helped him to become a better wrestler.

"I'm excited for the kids because they are hard working kids. They know me now as a coach and what to expect each year," stated Vermillion coach Hazen Bye. "They are beginning to look forward to the grind of the season."

The Vermillion wrestling squad has two home meets in January. A triangular with Lennox and Tea Area on January 20 and another home meet on Feb. 5 against Wagner and Crofton.

The remaining away meets begin this coming Tuesday against the Lennox Orioles. For a complete listing of the away meets, go to the Vermillion School District Website.

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