



SPORTS

November 6, 2015 www.plaintalk.net

SUMMIT LEAGUE CHAMPIONS



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

The South Dakota women's cross country team takes the awards stand after receiving the championship trophy for winning the Summit League Cross Country Championships on Saturday in Brookings. It was the Coyotes' second straight league title.

Coyotes Capture 2nd Consecutive League Title

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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BROOKINGS – University of South Dakota cross country coach is always looking to the future, whether it is during the off-season, during the season, or at the end of the season. Saturday, though, he was happy to not worry about the future for a day or two.

And to hoist another Summit League championship trophy. USD edged host South Dakota State 38-46 on Saturday to win a second straight Summit League women's cross country title. North Dakota State was third, five points behind the Jackrabbits. IUPUI finished fourth.

"The women's race was a four-team race, and then a two-team race as the race shaped up," said a happy Fitzsimmons after the meet. "The kids stepped up that said they would. They said that if they only had to step up one day all year, this would be the time."

North Dakota State's Erin Teschuk

defended her individual title, finishing the 6,000-meter event in 20:43.91. USD's Amber Eichkorn was second in 21:07.43, her second straight runner-up finish.

For Eichkorn, making sure she didn't finish lower than second was more important than finishing first.

"Going into the race, I knew I had to get at least second," she said. "I knew it was going to be a race between me and Teschuk, and that it could go either way. We're both very competitive, and we're both completely different runners. She's more of a 'sit and kick,' that I just had to get out and see what happens, see if I could take the kick out of her."

But Teschuk began to pull away, leaving Eichkorn with the choice: try to chase her down or remain steady and cruise in for second.

"I could hear how far back the third place pack was," Eichkorn said. "I just had to stay here and that would help my team the most."

"It would have been nice to win an individual title, but winning a team

title means so much more."

NDSU's Brittany Brownotter (21:44.75) finished third, edging out USD's Kelsey Barrett (21:46.19). For Barrett, the race was about staying focused on the team goal.

"We sat around and talked about our goals, and I said, 'The whole race, every single second of the race, I'm going to be thinking, "Is what I'm doing right now going to help my team win the race."' That was just my approach," she said. "You have to know where everyone is ahead. You have to know what place you're in, and you have to know what you need to do to help your team."

"That's how we all went into it." SDSU's first two runners, Samantha Anderson (21:56.19) and Rachel King (21:56.24), finished right behind Barrett. That theme would play out for the rest of the scoring runners, as USD's Katie Wetzstein (8th, 21:59.60), Nicole Schmidt (11th, 22:38.19) and Megan Billington (13th, 22:47.14)

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Tanager Of The Week



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Junior Kyleigh Moran leads Vermillion High School's volleyball team with offensive skill and a positive attitude.

Moran Shows Leadership With Positive Attitude

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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Junior Kyleigh Moran is a staple on the court during Vermillion High School volleyball games.

She is a major contributor and plays a big role on the team's offense at the setter position. For her hard work, Moran has been named Tanager of the Week.

"My role is to set up each of the hitters so they can get a kill and I take almost every second ball," she said.

Last Thursday, Moran racked up 15 assists in the three set sweep of Flandreau Indian School and Tuesday night she added another 15 in the team's five set loss to Lennox in the first round of the Region 4 tournament.

"Flandreau we played really well," Moran said. "We started off a little rocky and I started off a little rocky, but we came out the next couple sets swinging real hard and our passes were great, which helps to set, and then the hitters can put it away."

The setter stands in the front line and plays a big role in controlling the team's offense.

"We always say the setter is the quarterback of the team, they kind of run the team when they are out on the court," said head volleyball coach Gabi Jarchow. "She does a really good job of telling people where they need to go."

Jarchow also said Moran is able to adjust well to each hitter's needs.

"She also does a really good job, if her sets aren't where they need to be, she always asks the hitters 'do you need it higher? Do you need it off the net more?' (She's) just always making sure that she's bettering the team," Jarchow said.

Moran has been playing the setter position since 7th grade when she began playing volleyball. She enjoyed watching the University of South Dakota team play and decided she wanted to try her hand at the sport. She spends a lot of time improving her skills on the court, including working with USD setter Brittney Jessen during the summer.

"She gave me a lot of pointers and helped me out," Moran said. "I plan on doing a lot this winter too to improve for next season."

Not only does she lead with her play, but according to Jarchow, Moran makes sure to keep a positive attitude, even if the team may be struggling.

"She brings a lot of positive feedback for the girls," Jarchow said. "I know girls look up to her in times of struggle because she's always encouraging them. She brings lots of energy, lots and lots of energy which is good because we always need to have that one person who has that energy when not quite everybody is there and we're struggling and we make a play that maybe isn't that great."

Moran is also a member of the high school's golf team and participates in student council and Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD). She is also planning on joining yearbook when volleyball season ends.

Congratulations Kyleigh on being named Tanager of the Week.

If you know a high school student deserving of recognition in athletics or otherwise, suggestions for Tanager of the Week can be sent to Elyse Brightman at elyse.brightman@plaintalk.net or by calling 605-624-4429.

Lennox Holds Off Vermillion

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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As the season came to a close Tuesday night, first year head volleyball coach at Vermillion High School, Gabi Jarchow said she considered it a success.

"From where they began this season, they have grown tremendously, not only as volleyball players, but as young ladies. Learning to mature and make smart decisions on and off the court," she said. "Overall, I think the season was fantastic."

The Tanagers lost in five sets (25-22, 11-25, 16-25, 25-18, 11-15) in the first game of the Region 4 tournament to Lennox, a team they had faced twice during the regular season.

"We played (Lennox) our very first game of the season and we lost a very close game," Jarchow said. "And then we played them in the conference tournament a

couple weeks ago and we beat them."

Last Thursday's three set sweep of Flandreau Indian (25-13, 25-9, 25-6) put Vermillion at the number four seed for Region play and gave home court advantage over the number five seed Lennox.

The evenly matched teams did not disappoint and played to a five set thriller.

"They obviously didn't give up," Jarchow said. "I told the girls 'we came back and we fought and we played like the team that we are.' It just comes down to us deciding how we want to play and we didn't give up. They fought hard to come back and it just could have gone either way."

Lennox held a two point lead for most of the first set, but Vermillion fought back to tie the game at 17, then took a two-point edge from and ace by Haleigh Melstad.

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ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Amanda Finnegan hits the ball over the net Tuesday night in the Vermillion High School volleyball team's first round loss to Lennox in the Region 4 tournament.



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