

UNI Upends South Dakota 20-7

BY JEREMY HOECK

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CEDAR FALLS, Iowa — Any momentum accrued over the past two weeks for the University of South Dakota football team came to a screeching halt Saturday.

Particularly on offense. And particularly after the first quarter.

A promising start in a place where not many visiting teams find success was hampered by a struggling offense for USD, and the result was a 20-7 Missouri Valley loss to Northern Iowa at the UNI-Dome.

The main problem for the Coyotes? They were held to 54 rushing yards on 36 carries, for a 1.5 average.

"If we don't make money on the ground, we probably won't win many football games," head coach Joe Glenn said.

"That's who we are; we like to run the football and blend in the pass."

Having won in their last trip to the UNI-Dome two years ago, USD (4-4, 2-3) instead suffered a potentially damaging loss to its playoff aspirations — the Coyotes have three league games remaining.

"We can play with those people; we can win some," Glenn said, referring to the win over North Dakota State two weeks ago.

"We're not giving up yet, not at all."

The same Northern Iowa defense that allowed 71 yards in the first half a week ago surrendered 81 after the first quarter Saturday.

The Coyotes rolled up 106 yards of total offense in the opening quarter, when they scored their only touchdown, a 23-yard pass from Ryan Saeger to wideout Brandt Van Roekel.

"The first three drives, it looked like we were able to establish something, but then we just disappeared," Saeger said.

With their run game not gaining any ground, the Coyotes became rather one-dimensional. And outside of the first quarter,

USD even had problems moving the ball through the air.

Asked later about his defense's domination, Northern Iowa coach Mark Farley said his Panthers (4-4, 2-3) got used to the tempo.

"I think we figured it out pretty quickly what their thought was moving the football," said Farley, whose team keeps its own playoff hopes alive.

The only thing that kept USD in the game was its defense; a common theme over the last three weeks.

Although Northern Iowa out-gained USD by over 200 yards (394-187), the Panthers struggled to pull away. With UNI up 14-7 at halftime, it managed only a pair of field goals after halftime.

"We kept them to two field goals in the second half, and I'm just so proud of the guys on our team," USD senior linebacker Keyen Lage said.

Each team had a long touchdown pass in the second half called back on a penalty, proof that each side couldn't take advantage of opportunities. Northern Iowa also scored only three points off three USD turnovers.

Down 20-7 midway through the third quarter, USD had a 79-yard touchdown pass from Saeger to Van Roekel called back on an illegal forward pass — Saeger was past the marker. Instead, the Coyotes punted.

There was another critical point where it looked like USD might get things going. Its defensive line forced an Aaron Bailey fumble at the 14:27 mark of the fourth quarter, but the Coyotes were forced to punt — after consecutive false start penalties on their line.

On the next series, USD started its drive at the 3-yard line, and then had a run for a loss and a false start penalty.

Much of the post-game talk centered on Northern Iowa punter Sam Kuhter (he averaged 52.4 yards on five punts), but USD's offensive struggles were also a popular topic.

"Our defense was probably good enough to win a game, we just didn't do it on offense," Glenn said.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D
Northern Iowa running back Savon Huggins, 28, and South Dakota defensive back Chris Tyler get physical on a play during Saturday's game in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Bailey, a transfer quarterback from Illinois, finished with 231 yards passing and 44 yards on the ground — the latter of which was one of the bright spots for the Coyotes.

Another bright spot? USD recorded five quarterback sacks, two from redshirt freshman defensive lineman Andrew Van Ginkel,

and one each from Lage, Colin Mertlik and Sean Bredl.

Van Roekel caught six passes for 89 yards and Michael Fredrick ran for 50 yards for the Coyotes, who host Southern Illinois next Saturday.

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Behind The Scenes At Coyote Game Day

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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It takes a small army of people to make sure game day operations run smoothly at the DakotaDome.

More than 100 people, from the football team all the way to the parking attendants, work together to make sure the day goes without a hitch to make it as enjoyable as possible for fans attending each event.

"A lot of it is about coordination. Everybody has their piece whether it's marketing, whether it's tickets, development, the football team," said Dan Gaston, the senior associate athletic director for operations and facility management at the University of South Dakota. "My job is to coordinate it all."

Gaston is in his first year with USD, but held the same role the University of Washington in Seattle for the previous three years. Right now, he says one of the more important parts of his job is learning the way USD runs operations, but from a day-to-day perspective, it all about coordinating.

"Coordinating parking, coordinating the facilities staff, coordinating with marketing and tickets and the football team and the visiting team and the officials and when MidCo is here and all those groups. It's just getting all the information and getting it to the right people," he said.

The different depart-

ments involved at the football games communicate to Gaston their plans for the day, and he makes that information known to all others involved with operations. He compares his job to a quarterback or a point guard on a basketball team.



Dan Gaston

"When you're on a basketball court, everyone has their job," Gaston said. "The point guard facilitates the play, or the quarterback kind of facilitates the play. That's the way I kind of look at it. You need to have somebody that gets all the information to the right place. For example, do the police have all the information that they need to know."

Planning for the games starts well before kickoff, usually during the summer months.

"Typically you're starting the real in depth stuff ideally two to three months out," Gaston said. "You get all the groups together, you start talking about what's new, what worked last year, what are we changing, all those different things."

Gaston works closely with USD's assistant athletic director for marketing and promotions, Joe Thunte, during game days. Thunte oversees the on field entertainment during timeouts,

in between quarters or any other time there may be a clock stoppage.

"I would say that we coordinate everything together," Gaston said. "(If) half time is going to be longer I need to tell the officials and I need to tell the other team, so a lot of it is about communication and being on the same page. We have a weekly meeting before every football game to go through everybody's area and what going on this week."

"I don't need to be at every marketing meeting, but at some point, we all need to understand what marketing is going to do."

On the field, Thunte sees that every break in play keeps the fans engaged and entertained. He also oversees that the activities run on time, what shows on the video board and writes the script for the public announcer.

"We come up with many ideas as we can by utilizing the video board and utilizing the events on the field," Thunte said. "One example, (on Sept. 19 against Drake) we had a game where we had a fan name as many boy bands as they can in 15 second then we played a video of Eric Shufford, our wide receiver, doing the same thing and then if our fan had more than him, he won."

Each game has three media time outs every quarter,

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Denver Sweeps Coyotes

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Leanne Williamson spent 15 minutes talking with her team after coming up short in a frustrating conference sweep.

What was the message from the University of South Dakota volleyball coach?

"It's just about figuring out who they want to be as a team," said Williamson, whose Coyotes suffered a 3-0 loss to second-place Denver in Summit League action Tuesday night at the DakotaDome.

"It's a question we pose to them quite often."

Particularly since the Summit League season started.

For every win over first-place IUPUI comes a puzzling 3-0 loss at South Dakota State. For every performance like last Saturday's sweep of North Dakota State comes a result like Tuesday.

"And right now, I don't know what team is going to show up," Williamson said.

"That's been our Achilles heel all year."

"At some point in time they've got to make a decision to be better."

It's that up-and-down nature that has USD (5-7) sitting in sixth place in the Summit League standings — six teams make the tournament.

"I definitely see what she's talking

about," senior middle Kelsey Biltoft said.

"It's about making little changes faster."

"We just didn't do that, and that's something we need to work on."

Denver (10-3), the league's best hitting team, controlled the pace from start to finish against the Coyotes and finished with a .365 hitting percentage.

In fact, the Pioneers got a .778 clip from Ruth Okoye (7 kills, 0 errors on 9 swings) and a .706 effort from Sarah Schmid (13 kills, 1 error on 17 swings).

The Coyotes, meanwhile, got 12 kills on 35 swings from Audrey Reeg, and the next highest figure was Haley Jorgensen's eight kills.

"If they want to have success here at the end of the season, they've got to figure out who they want to be as a program and know that team is coming out every single day," Williamson said.

A road trip to Western Illinois looms for the Coyotes on Friday before a quick turnaround for Sunday's home match with South Dakota State.

In total, USD has four regular season matches remaining with which to find the next gear.

"That's something we as a team have to dig down deep and decide to make a change, and once we do, we have to stick with it," Biltoft said.

"It's one thing to say you want to, but it's another to actually do it."



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Vermillion High School's Nicole Klemme in the Tanagers Region 4 first round match against Lennox Tuesday night.

Regions

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The Tanagers maintained the lead and Kaci Madsen tipped the ball just over the net for a 25-22 win.

Vermillion dropped sets two and three, but wouldn't go down without a fight. The team held a steady throughout the entire fourth set for a 25-18 win and forcing a fifth set.

"The girls dug down deep inside and showed that they wanted to fight and didn't want to end their season," Jarchow said.

In the deciding set, neither team led

by more than three points until Lennox scored the match point at 15-11 to move on to the next round.

Madsen hit seven kills in the game, Amanda Finnegan added six and Melstad had five.

Kyleigh Moran contributed 14 assists and Emily Bye protected the back line with 20 digs.

The Tanagers ended the season with a record of 7-17, winning seven of the final 17 games after dropping the first 11 straight.

"We had our downs during (the season), but it comes from being a first year coach," Jarchow said. "(I'm) learning certain things and also the girls learning from each other while learning how to overcome those downs and to come out with a positive."



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