

Vermillion And The 35 Years Of Playoff Football

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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It's been 35 years since high school playoff football was established in South Dakota, and Vermillion has been a frequent contender in the championship game, so it may be safe to say Vermillion is a football town.

Every Friday night crowds gather for at least nine weeks in the fall to cheer on the Vermillion High School Tanagers, for arguably the biggest spectator sport at the high school level, but what is it about Tanager football that gets people so fired up?

"Just the general nature of Midwest small town football in the fall, I think it's something that kind of bonds communities together," said Gary Culver, Tanagers head coach from 1977-2012. "You get geared up and ready — and I'm not talking just the football team and the coaches that are involved there, but kind of the community too, it builds up and everything surrounds that in terms of the communication, the chatter, the conversations at the coffee shops, and I think that's why football itself is kind of America's game."

The one-game-a-week scheduling for football gives students, parents, teachers and community members an exciting way to end the week.

Vermillion High School has been fortunate to have a rich history in the game, and much success in terms of winning and losing with multiple appearances in the state championship, including the first ever title game between the Tanagers and Winner in 1981. Winner went



BY SHAUNA MARLETTE/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Vermillion has a longstanding tradition with high school football playoffs in South Dakota by hosting the event every year in the DakotaDome along with the Tanagers capturing five titles from six appearances.

35 YEARS | PAGE A11

Panthers Shut Down USD

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa — Northern Iowa seniors Jen Keitel and Amber Sorenson scored 15 and 14 points, respectively, to lead the Panthers to a 64-43 win against South Dakota in the McLeod Center on Tuesday night.

Northern Iowa improved to 2-0 on the season while South Dakota fell to 0-2.

South Dakota shot a mere 28.1 percent (16-for-57) from the field and finished 1-for-10 beyond the arc.

Although the Coyotes crashed the boards to out rebound the Panthers 45-32, South Dakota had 19 turnovers to Northern Iowa's nine. UNI scored 22 points off of Coyote turnovers during the game.

"We were playing a bit rushed under pressure instead of with poise, which I believe caused a few of the shooting woes," said head coach Amy Williams. "Even more concerning is having only seven assists and 19 turnovers — that's not the way we want to play basketball. There is a bit of a learning curve early in the season with seven new players and some of that will come with time."

After an early bucket by senior center Margaret McCloud, the Coyotes missed eight straight jumpers to help the Panthers on a 12-0 run. Northern Iowa would not trail again. Sophomore Kate Liveringhouse ended the Coyotes' five-minute scoring drought with a layup in the sixth minute of the game.

Keitel had eight of her game-high 15 points in the first quarter.

The Coyotes started the second quarter down 18-8. South Dakota matched Northern Iowa nearly bucket-for-basket in the second quarter as Northern Iowa took the halftime lead 35-22.

Senior Kelly Stewart sunk the Coyotes only 3-pointer of

the game just 20 seconds into the second half to start the Coyotes on a 9-2 run. South Dakota would close the gap down to six, the smallest margin since the first quarter, when a pair of treys by Panther guard Angie Davison would put Northern Iowa back on the board again.

After a layup by freshman guard Jaycee Bradley with four minutes remaining in the third quarter, the Coyotes would not score again until two minutes into the fourth. UNI racked up 12 points during the span to increase the lead to 20. The Panthers then outscored the Coyotes 13-8 in the fourth quarter to seal the victory.

In addition to Keitel and Sorenson, Northern Iowa's Madison Weekly reached double-digits with 11 points. Sorenson and Sharnae Lamar led the Panther rebounding effort with six boards apiece.

Liveringhouse led the Coyotes in scoring with 11 points. She also pulled down five rebounds.

Senior point guard Tia Hemiller, junior forward Bridget Arens, and McCloud each tallied six points a piece. McCloud added a team-high six rebounds with four offensive boards.

The 2015 Summit League Preseason Player of the Year Nicole Seekamp, who forfeited two games when the NCAA reinstated her fourth season of eligibility, returns to the court with the Coyotes Thursday.

"Nicole makes everyone around her better," said Williams. "I hope she brings that calming presence to the floor, as we have been playing rushed and taking out-of-character shots these first two ball games."

South Dakota faces the Big 12's Kansas State at 7 p.m. Thursday in Manhattan, Kansas.

USD Fifth For Summit League Tournament

South Dakota earns the fifth seed at the Summit League Tournament, as announced by the Summit League on Sunday. The Coyotes will be joined by Denver, IUPUI, Omaha, North Dakota State and Oral Roberts.

The 2015 Summit League Volleyball Championship will be played Nov. 20-22, at Hamilton Gymnasium on the campus of the University of Denver. Friday's quarterfinals and Saturday's semifinals can be live streamed for free on denverpioneers.com and Sunday's final can be seen on espn3.com

South Dakota received the fifth seed with a win over Fort Wayne Saturday night and an Oral Roberts loss Sunday. The Coyotes (14-15, 8-8 Summit League) play No. 4 North Dakota State (18-11, 10-6 Summit League) in the first match of the tournament at 6 p.m. central time Friday. The second quarterfinal between No. 3 Omaha (17-12, 12-4 Summit League) and No. 6 Oral Roberts (14-15, 8-8) will begin at 8:30 p.m.

The tournament concludes with Sunday's championship match at 3 p.m. The winner claims the Summit League's bid to the NCAA Tournament.

USD Going To 'Fight Like Heck' For Winning Season

BY JEREMY HOECK

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All is not lost for the University of South Dakota football team.

Head coach Joe Glenn was clear about that during Tuesday's Missouri Valley Football teleconference.

A win in Saturday's regular season finale at sixth-ranked Illinois State would ensure a winning record for the Coyotes (5-5, 3-4), who haven't finished a season above .500 since 2011.

What would that mean for USD?

"You walk a little taller for a year, you feel a little bit better about where you're going, what direction you're headed," Glenn said.

A week after their playoff hopes were all but dashed with a 30-23 home loss to rival South Dakota State, the Coyotes still have one final goal to play for. The program, in year four under Glenn, hadn't won a game in the month of November since that 2011 season, but the Coyotes now have a chance for two.

"We're going to salvage what we can," Glenn said. "We have a chance for a winning season, and we're going to fight like heck for it."

And yet, the playoff question returned. An Illinois State reporter asked Glenn if he felt any potential 6-5 Valley team (Western Illinois, Youngstown State and USD all have a chance to finish with that record) could deserve an at-large invite to the FCS postseason.

It's not likely that the conference gets

more than five bids, but all hope might not be lost, Glenn said.

"We'll see," he said. "We need a win, and I'm saying, what if we won? We'd have a win over North Dakota State and Illinois State."

"I'm not predicting a win, but I'm telling you, what if we did? That's two of the top six teams in the nation. We might have something to stand on with that."

Having won zero conference games a year ago, USD has thrust itself into the middle of the Missouri Valley standings — aided by that upset victory at North Dakota State — and has caught the attention of coaches nationwide.

"No surprise to me," Illinois State head coach Brock Spack said Tuesday.

"I've known coach Glenn for a while, he's an excellent coach and their staff does a great job," added Spack, who called USD "easily the most improved" team in the league. "You could tell even at the end of last year, they were getting better."

Winning in Normal, however, isn't going to be easy for the Coyotes.

Illinois State owns a 17-game home winning streak, but in the FCS, but of course, USD, ended North Dakota State's then-longest home win streak last month.

"We'll have our hands full, but we've had pretty good luck against some of the stronger teams in the league in the last month or so," Glenn said. "I think we've grown up quite a bit and came a long way with our defense."

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Rosales Named To Academic All-State

Vermillion High School football senior Jon Rosales was named to the Academic All-State team this week by the South Dakota Football Coaches Association.

To be eligible for the award, athletes must be a senior, must have a GPA of 3.5 or higher and must have played or managed in the football program for at least three years.

During the season, Rosales garnered 21.5 tackles and one sack at linebacker for the Tanagers.

On offense, Rosales ran for 136 yards on 16 attempts at fullback with two touchdowns, both coming in the final game of the season. He also had one reception for three yards.

Rosales is the only Tanager to receive the award.

USD Cross Country Seniors Earn All-Midwest Region Honors

LAWRENCE, Kan. — South Dakota seniors Amber Eichkorn and Mubarik Musa earned all-Midwest Region honors for their performances at the NCAA Midwest Regional in Lawrence, Kan., Friday afternoon.

Eichkorn returned to Rim Rock Farm five years after winning a Kansas high school state title on the same course. This time, Eichkorn was among the lead pack in a field of 223 collegiate runners from nine states. Eichkorn led the field through the first mile and remained in the top-10 through the 6,000-meter course. Eichkorn crossed the finish line in 20 minutes, 32.9 seconds, for eighth place. It is the program's highest individual finish in Division I, improving her own 10th-place finish from a year ago.

Musa took 15th in the 192-man field. He clocked 30:22.4, more than a half-minute faster than his previous 10,000-meter best on a cross country course. Musa reached as high as ninth place in the middle of the six-mile race.

Paced by Eichkorn, South Dakota's women took 14th in the team race. Seniors Katie Wetzstein and Kelsey Barrett finished 49th and 70th, respectively. Wetzstein finished in 21:31.0 with Barrett shortly after in 21:46.8.

Freshman Megan Billington and sophomore Erin Wetzstein ran into the chute together in 135th and 137th, respectively. Billington logged a time of 22:35.9 and Wetzstein clocked 22:36.1.

Rounding out the Coyote runners were juniors Jessica Feldman and Nicole Schmidt. Feldman finished 153rd in 22:50.3. Schmidt took 188th in 23:29.3.

The Coyote men finished in 22nd place as a team. Senior Isaac Allen was the next Coyote across the line after Musa in 78th place. Allen covered the course in 31:44.7.

Sophomore Brice Cowman took 147th with a clocking of 33:09.6.

Freshman Zach Welch and redshirt-junior Mach Dojik rounded out the Coyote scorers together in 180th and 181st. Welch finished in 34:21.7 and Dojik clocked 34:28.5.

Eichkorn awaits the at-large selections for the NCAA Championships. A live selection show with NCAA qualifiers will be announced on NCAA.com tomorrow.

Eichkorn Qualifies For Second-Straight NCAA Championship

INDIANAPOLIS—South Dakota senior Amber Eichkorn qualified for the NCAA Cross Country Championships for the second consecutive season, as announced by the NCAA on Saturday.

Eichkorn placed eighth at the NCAA Midwest Regional in Lawrence, Kan., Friday with a time of 20:32.9. Eichkorn was the fourth individual not on a qualifying team and receives an automatic individual qualifying spot.

To automatically qualify for the NCAA Championships, a team must finish in the top-two of their respective region or an individual must be among the top-four runners not on a qualifying team. There are also 13 at-large team berths and two at-large individual berths granted by a selection process based on regional finish and regular-season competition.

Five women's teams from the Midwest region qualified for the NCAA Championships. Oklahoma State and Iowa State earned the region's automatic berths by finishing first and second, respectively. Minnesota, Tulsa, and Kansas received three of the 13 at-large berths.

Individual qualifiers from the NCAA Midwest Regional include North Dakota State's Erin Teschuk, Illinois' Alyssa Schneider, Bradley's Kristen Busch, and Eichkorn.

Eichkorn toes the line for the NCAA Championships at the E.P. Tom Sawyer State Park in Louisville, Ky., at 11 a.m. on Nov. 21. The meet will be broadcast live online at NCAA.com.

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