

# Tanager soccer: Boys finish 7th, girls 8th in state tournament play

By Parker Knox  
Sportswriter

After the previous Saturday when both Vermillion soccer teams dominated opponents in their state tournament play-in games and went to Mitchell with momentum, the state tournaments themselves proved to be disappointing for both Tanager clubs.

The boys lost to Groton, 3-0, in the first round; lost to St. Thomas More of Rapid City, 4-3, in the consolation semifinals, but defeated Freeman Academy, 2-1, to capture seventh-place honors.

The girls never did find the net and were shut out three times, losing first to Harrisburg, 1-0; then to Belle Fourche, 5-0, and finally to Mitchell, 1-0, in their seventh-place game.

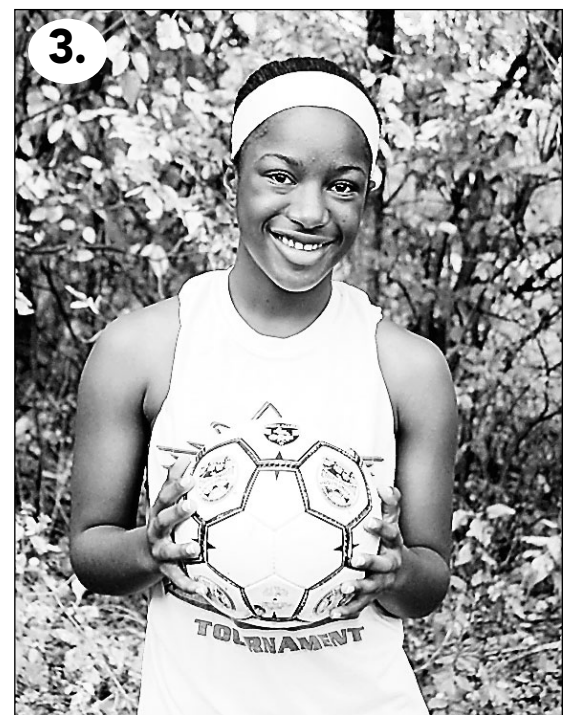
The boys' second-day loss to St. Thomas More was the toughest to take since Vermillion had a 3-0 halftime lead on a trio of goals by Nate Samudzi. However, they had to play into the strong wind in the second half. The Cavaliers capitalized on their advantage, tying the game and then scoring the go-ahead goal with about two minutes remaining.

The seventh-place victory was a nail-biter, too, but had a more positive ending. Freeman Academy had a 1-0 lead until Tanner Settles scored on a header off a Samudzi assist with just over five minutes left. The game went into overtime, and Samudzi scored the winner off an Andrew Kost assist with eight minutes remaining in the extra period.

Girls coach Dave LaCombe was hoping his girls could upset No. 2 Harrisburg in their first-round game Thursday, and it just about happened. The game remained a scoreless tie after a Vermillion goal was nullified by an offside violation early in the second half. Harrisburg got its only goal of the game – and the only one it needed – at the 78-minute mark.

"The team played probably their best game this whole season," LaCombe said. "The wind was definitely a huge factor as we had to play differently in the second half. The team played their hearts out. We exhausted all our strength against Harrisburg, and it showed in the second game."

Both Tanager teams are relatively young although the athletes they lose via graduation contributed substantially to their respective clubs. The boys team will lose Andrew Kost, Brendan Raizola, Michael Brunick and Nick Britten to graduation. Christine Epping, Shelby Gregoire and Katie Wasley will graduate from the girls' roster.



**1. Members of the Vermillion Tanager girls' soccer team** which placed eighth at the state tournament are (front) Katie Wasley and Shelby Gregoire, (second row) Sophia Taggart, Chyenne Mallory, Hailey Freidel, Teddi Settles, Tori Gregoire, Shantel French, Alexis Reich, Mackenzie Gale, Katie Kost, and (back row) Chyenne Steemken, Kortni Walker, Kelsey Meadows, Sowmya Ragothaman, Allison Mockler, Autumn Barnett, Head Coach Dave LaCombe, Alyssa Soesbe and Kayla Stammer. Not pictured are Christine Epping, Assistant Coach Hannah Nehlich-Arobba and Sonnie LaCombe – Team Manager; **2. Members of the 2011 Vermillion Tanager boys' soccer team** are (front) Brett Hansen, Hussein Abdulameer, Daniel Robinson, Seth Druin, Alec Leber, Joe Miller, Ben Houser, Sam Tigert, (middle) James May, Mikel Giles, Nathan Samudzi, Brenden Raizola, Michael Griffin, Blaine Bottolfson, Alex Robertson, Matthew Wasley and (back) Assistant Coach Brad James, Andrew Kost, Christian Wasley, Christopher Lubbers, Nick Britten, Michael Brunick, Ethan James, Tanner Settles, Austin Druin, Coach Carlos Telleria. Not shown, Lynn Riley, parent volunteer and Kari Jo James, parent manager. (Photo by Suzanne Peterman) **3. Natasha Samudzi**, a member of the Vermillion Tanager girls' soccer team, was selected as South Dakota Olympic Development Program (ODP) Player of the Year 2011. **4. VHS Boys 2011 All State Soccer Players** are First Team: Nathan Samudzi (center) and Second Team: Andrew Kost (right) and Ethan James (left). **5. Tanager girls' soccer players** who received All State awards are: First Team – Shelby Gregoire, Honorable Mention – Mackenzie Gale and Second Team Goalie – Katie Wasley.

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