

## Upcoming Sports Schedule

Tanager volleyball hosts Dakota Valley	5 p.m. Oct. 21	Tanager volleyball at Harrisburg	5 p.m. Oct. 24
State cross country at Sioux Falls	All Day Oct. 22	First round of high school football playoffs	Oct. 25
Tanager JV volleyball at Elk Point	9 a.m. Oct. 22	Tanager volleyball at Elk Point-Jefferson	5 p.m. Oct. 27

### BOWLING

#### USD Faculty/Staff League October 12, 2011

Teams	Won	Loss
Goosanders	112.5	37.5
Mighty Mallards	95.0	55.0
Teals	76.0	74.0
Mandarin	70.5	79.5
Wood Ducks	70.0	80.0
Mighty Ducks	69.5	80.5
Coots	54.5	95.5
Pintails	52.0	98.0

High Scr Game-Team	Score
Wood Ducks	657
Teals	633
Wood Ducks	621

High Scr Series-Team	Score
Wood Ducks	1818
Teals	1758
Pintails	1647

High Hcp Game-Team	Score
Wood Ducks	894
Teals	886
Goosanders	859

High Hcp Series-Team	Score
Wood Ducks	2529
Teals	2517
Mighty Mallards	2472

High Scr Game-Men	Score
Tony Solbach	215
Mark Tipton	209
Michael Hook	207

High Scr Series-Men	Score
Tony Solbach	537
Michael Hook	502
Mark Tipton	501

High Hcp Game-Men	Score
Tony Solbach	271
Michael Hook	256
Mark Tipton	253

High Hcp Series-Men	Score
Tony Solbach	705
Bill Dodge	655
Michael Hook	649

High Scr Game-Women	Score
Darlis LaBahn	201
Jan Grage	169
Jan Grage	167

High Scr Series-Women	Score
Jan Grage	494
Darlis LaBahn	459
Nikki Stammer	436

High Hcp Game-Women	Score
Darlis LaBahn	266
Jonie Hook	247
Barb Martin	245

High Hcp Series-Women	Score
Nikki Stammer	679
Jonie Hook	668
Barb Martin	658

# Final play of Madison/VHS football duel secures playoff spot for Tanagers

By Parker Knox  
Sportswriter

A thing of beauty, it was not. But a thing of joy? It certainly was that!

Last Friday's Vermillion-Madison football tussle was a case of two teams fighting for their playoff lives, and when it came down to the game's final play – a 22-yard field goal attempt to win it for the Bulldogs – half of the Tanager defense swarmed in to block the kick and preserve a 29-28 Vermillion victory.

"This was a playoff game for us," said Coach Gary Culver, whose Tanagers faced the prospect of missing the playoffs if they had lost since they had an open date on their schedule after last night's regular-season finales.

"The bad news is we practice on Monday. The good news is we practice on Monday," Culver said in his post-game interview.

So far as the computers which figure playoff power points know, the Tanagers' one-point escape could just as well have been a 50-point blowout, because a win is a win. And when the SDHSAA's playoff pairings are announced this (Friday) morning, it is expected to show that Vermillion will have qualified as the fourth seed in their region and will be going to Dakota Valley or Tea Area to tackle the top seed in their playoff opener Tuesday night.

"We didn't always play smart," said Culver, no doubt referring to a swarm of 15 penalties, seven of them in the first quarter alone, "but we played hard."

And the Tanagers had to because when Madison capitalized on a turnover at the 10-yard line and scored with 4:33 left in the third quarter, the Bulldogs went up 28-13. The end of the Vermillion season seemed very near.

On their subsequent possession, the Tanagers continued to self-destruct – a holding penalty on first down, a one-yard gain an incompleton, a 10-yard gain but then a quarterback sack. Madison took over at the Tanager 32 with

everything going its way.

But Will Mart caused a two-yard loss on first down. The defense held a Bulldog runner to no gain on second down. A third-down pass went incomplete. Then the game began to turn on a fourth-down punt attempt. Alex Osborne blocked the kick, and Avery Garcia pounced on the pigskin in the end zone for a sudden Vermillion touchdown. When D'Andre Fore ran in for a two-point conversion, the Tanagers found themselves down by only 28-21 with still a full quarter to play.

As the game moved into the final stanza, Madison moved to a first down but then faced a third-and-12 from its own 29. A screen pass was completed, and it gained 11 yards, but thanks to a Mitch Brown tackle, the Bulldogs did not get the 12th and final yard they needed for a first down.

Stunningly the Madison coaching hierarchy chose to go for it on fourth-and-1 with a seven-point lead in their own territory. Garcia was the defensive star of the moment, stopping the Bulldog ball carrier for no gain. With 10:10 left, the Tanagers took over at the Madison 40.

For six straight plays, Fore carried the mail – for 25 yards, then for seven, and five, and one, and none, but then on third-and-goal from the 2-yard line, he crossed the goal line at the 7:30 mark. Madison's lead was 28-27.

Vermillion's 14th penalty came at a bad time. Fore scored the two-point conversion to give the Tanagers the lead, but it was nullified by a holding call. Thus the ball went all the way back to the 13-yard line from where VHS could try either a kick to tie the game (or not!) or a very long two-point attempt. They chose the latter option, and what will be one of the season's most memorable plays ensued. Quarterback Kyle Weiss narrowly escaped being sacked, but he did, and he lofted a pass into the end zone. There Tanner Anderson leaped up out of a crowd of Bulldogs to snatch the precious cargo out of the air,

and – wonder of wonders! – the Tanagers led 29-28 with 7:30 to go.

Madison began to shoot itself in the foot. Two penalties on the next possession proved costly, forcing the Bulldogs to go to the air. They ran out of downs and had to punt with 6:19 left.

Though they didn't score, the Tanagers, despite a 15th penalty, killed nearly four minutes off the clock. Fore had gains of 10 and seven yards on the seven-play possession. Culver let the play clock expire, then called a time-out with 2:32 left.

The Tanagers punted the ball away, and Madison obliged with a penalty on its return. The Bulldogs started from their own 29 and faced a drive of 71 yards in 2:22 if they were to win. They came oh-so-close to doing just that.

Madison completed five passes on the way downfield, including a 21-yard screen pass completion that got them to a first-and-goal at the 5-yard line with 43 seconds left. The Tanagers' big rally seemed destined to prove futile.

But Brett Bye and Stetson Kastengen stopped the ball carrier for a five-yard loss on first down. A second-down pass was completed to the 5-yard line, and Madison let the clock go to 0:03. To win it or to lose it, it was field-goal time.

Just as a defensive play saved a win over Tea Area last month, so did a defensive play save this one as the Tanager line made sure the kicked football was not going to become airborne.

"I couldn't be more proud of a team than I was in Madison," Culver said later. "To battle back from a two-touchdown deficit not once but twice in a must-win situation on the road says a lot about this group of young men."

Madison had begun the game as fired up as it could be, storming downfield from its own 29-yard line to the 7 from where the Bulldogs faced a fourth-and-2 situation. Chayse Meierkort had made a touchdown-saving tackle earlier in the drive, and from the 8

Nick Jensen, Garcia and Will Mart teamed up to hold Madison's Rush Milne to a yard. The ball went to Milne on fourth down, too, but Jensen threw him for a one-yard loss, and Vermillion took over.

But the Tanagers committed three penalties in four plays and were fortunate to recover their own fumble of a bad pitch. Mart punted it away, but the Bulldogs got to start from the Vermillion 31. It took only three plays for Milne to score Madison's first touchdown against VHS in five years after four straight shutouts.

Three more penalties on the next Tanager possession doomed that one. Madison went on a 78-yard march with Nick Page scoring from the 1 for a 14-0 lead.

Weiss and the offense followed with a scoring drive without which the team likely could not have survived. A 28-yard pass to Anderson was a big play en route downfield as was a 26-yard burst by Mitch Brown. Fore scored the TD from the 4, and Mart kicked the point for a 14-7 deficit.

When Anderson intercepted a long pass four plays later, the Tanagers were in business. They went from their own 32 to score in seven plays. The TD came on a picturesque pass from Weiss to Anderson covering 19 yards. An extra-point kick failed, so VHS trailed 14-13.

The possession unfortunately took only 1:38, leaving Madison 48 seconds with which to work. The Bulldogs went 70 yards in those final seconds, scoring on a 23-yard pass from Kyle Roemen to Chris Nielsen with 0:02 left. That score, which could have been so demoralizing, sent the Tanagers into halftime down by 21-13 instead of by a point, but still within reach of a win.

The Tanagers quickly punted as the third quarter began. So

did Madison, but the Bulldogs set up the Tanagers in dangerous territory, starting from their own 7. A six-yard loss on a sack, a delay penalty and a fumbled snap on a fourth-down punt proved disastrous. Madison got the ball only 10 yards away from a score. A personal foul on VHS only compounded the situation. Milne scored from the 2-yard line, and the lead was 28-13.

But as you now know, the Tanagers, finishing the regular season at 3-5 overall and 2-2 in the Big 8 Conference, found ways to overcome that disadvantage. A rapidly improving Weiss guiding the offense with a passing game as well as a ground game was one reason, and a dedicated effort by the defense was another.

"Had we not blocked the field goal on the last play, we would probably be putting the pads away this week," Culver said. "Of course you could point to so many plays that helped determine the outcome of this game. It would be difficult to pick them all out."

As for not playing at all in this final week of the regular season, it's a blessing for the Tanagers, who last week had most of their walking wounded back from the injury list except for Michael Sand and Riley Vlasman. "We have a chance to heal up this week and possibly have everyone ready to go for the first-round playoff game," Culver said. "And anything can happen in a one-game series as we've been telling our players all season long."

VHS ..... 0 13 8 8 -- 29  
MADISON 6 15 7 0 -- 28

1st quarter:  
Madison: Rush Milne 5-yd. run (kick failed), 4:04.  
2nd quarter:  
Madison: Nick Page 1-yd. run (Page run), 8:40.  
VHS: D'Andre Fore 3-yd.

■ FOOTBALL, Page 6

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