

12 Vermillion Plain Talk

Lavin

From Page 8

the course in 20:09, a full 30 seconds ahead of the second place runner, and in Yankton on Thursday, she ran the 5k course in 20:30 and surpassed the runner in front of her in the last half mile to gain the lead.

"It was good to see her not be afraid to go out to the front and lead the race," said head cross country coach Kelly Fishback. "It was good to see her go out Monday at Alcester and just lead from wire to wire and then same thing again, on Tuesday she got out and was right behind the Yankton girl and then just closed at the end."

The teams at these meets are ones the Vermillion team doesn't typically see during the season, but Lavin thinks the new competition is what makes those races more fun.

"It was a lot of fun just competing, especially at two different places with a lot of different teams," she said. "So, both meets were different people to compete against, which was really nice."

Lavin started running at a young age by participating in 5k road races with her mom, who encouraged her to take up the sport at the high school level.

"I originally thought I was going to be doing soccer, so (cross country) wasn't my original plan," she said. "My mom said to go out for it, so I did and I ended up just liking it a lot."

Though she enjoys the sport, Lavin says running can be a little grueling and sometimes she needs to think about things other than the running while competing.

"I focus on my breathing patterns a lot and, it sounds really weird, but I kind of sing to myself just in my head to keep myself going and to keep my mind off of a little bit of the pain," she said. "Running is not very fun sometimes and it can get quite painful, so just something to focus on other than the running itself."

Even as a sophomore, Lavin brings a wealth of experience to the team. She has been competing on the cross country team since seventh grade and has never really had many older athletes on the team to look up to, meaning she was thrown in to that leadership role at a young age.

"She's got to be that leader and she's had to do it from the get go really," Fishback said. "Only her seventh grade year she had those older athletes in that leadership role."

Fishback is looking for Lavin to take on the role of "a second coach" as she continues to lead the Tanager cross country team for the remainder of the season and the years ahead.

Congratulations Maddie on being named Tanager of the Week.

MVFC Sets Another Record

BY JEREMY HOECK

jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

As the Missouri Valley Football Conference closed the book on its record-breaking 2014 season, there wasn't much remaining the league hadn't accomplished.

It sent half of its teams – five, a record – to the playoffs, and for the first time ever, two teams from the same league met in the championship game. And in both postseason polls, six Valley teams cracked the top-25.

That kind of showing was going to be difficult to beat, right?

"I thought last year was going to be hard to top, and here we are with another record," Illinois State head coach Brock Spack said Tuesday.

That record came Monday when the Valley occupied half of the top-10 in both major FCS polls, the STATS media and coaches – a first for the conference.

Though the order is slightly different, the teams are the same: North Dakota State, Illinois State, South Dakota State, Northern Iowa and Youngstown State. And for good measure, Indiana State is also among the top-25.

Three other league teams – Southern Illinois, Western Illinois and South Dakota – were receiving votes in the media poll, which leaves Missouri State as the only conference team not receiving national recognition.

"There isn't a team you can rest on," Spack said. "You never have any breathing room on a Saturday afternoon."

South Dakota State head coach John Stiegelmeier, whose Jackrabbits boast their highest FCS ranking, was quick to caution that this week's news is probably more a carryover of 2014.

"I think initially we all need to acknowledge that it's a result somewhat of last year's success, which puts you in the top-25 initially," he said. "When you have success early, it moves you up."

In the case of SDSU (3-0), however, it likely climbed the rankings because of its FBS win over Kansas. The Jacks, though, have an opportunity to climb even higher with a win Saturday over North Dakota State – even a loss isn't likely to drop the Jacks all that much.

That's the story with the Missouri Valley, which begins conference play this weekend: Nearly every matchup features a ranked team, which means a playoff-caliber team will lose.

"It's a fun league; a great league," Stiegelmeier said.

Highlanders Blank USD 2-0

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

elyse.brightman@plaintalk.net

Vermillion — Sammy Arellano's two goals propelled the University of California, Riverside to a 2-0 over the University of South Dakota Friday afternoon.

The Coyotes best scoring opportunities came early from forward Taylor Nivala and one minute later from Corey Strang.

Less than five minutes into the game, Nivala dribbled down the left side and attempted a cross in front the net that was cleared away by a UC Riverside defender. Strang followed that up with a one on one opportunity with the keeper. Strand tried to beat goalkeeper Elizabeth Silas on the dribbled. Silas deflected the ball to keep the score even at zero.

The first goal came in the 25th minute. Danielle Lopez carried the ball down the left side, beating a few Coyote defenders, and rifled off a shot that deflected to the feet of Arellano just outside the 18 yard box. Arellano took the shot that found the back of the net for the lead.

South Dakota had few scoring opportunities and managed to get off only two scoring opportunities in the first 40 minutes of play to UC Riverside's 10.

The Coyotes picked up play in the second half with six shots, but still couldn't find the back of the net, and holding UC Riverside to six of their own.

Arellano's insurance goal came in the 75th minute when she collected the ball near the left sideline and dribbled towards the center of the field. She got a shot off just outside the 18 yard box that went over goalkeeper Sydney Hardin's hands.

USD head coach Mandy Green was not pleased with the



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/PRESS AND DAKOTAN
UC Riverside goalkeeper Elizabeth Silas, right, knocks away a shot by South Dakota's Corey Strang during their women's soccer match on Friday at the USD Soccer Field.

team's performance, putting them at 3-8 on the season.

"That was awful by us today. The worst game we've played all season," she said. "That is not how we play, that is not how we've been practicing. I have no idea who that team was today."

Hardin recorded three saves in the game and UC Riverside's goalkeeper Elizabeth Silas had five.

USD's next game is Friday, Oct. 2 at the USD soccer complex when the Coyotes take on Oral Roberts University.

Cross Country

From Page 9

There was one more exception to the rule. Seventh grader Taryn Whisler was enter in the junior varsity race and ran the 5,000 meter course in 23:48 for eighth place. She was followed closely by teammate Melissa Mikkelsen for ninth place at 23:59.

Justin Sorenson placed third in the boys' junior varsity race with a time of 18:18.

"Justin just continues to get better each week," Fishback said.

Cordell Sweeney (19:28), Landon Smith (20:16), Tate Nielsen (21:01) and Devin O'Neill (22:31) all competed in the boys junior varsity division for Vermillion.

In the middle school division, Vermillion is proving to have a promising future with all the runners on the girls' side placing in the top 15 and the top 25 for the

boys. The middle school races were held on 3,000 meter course.

Sadie Pederson (13:45) placed fourth, Kate Develder (14:00) placed eighth, Kaitlin Killian (14:23) was 10th and Hannah Gruhn (15:00) 15th.

"Our young middle school girls are really starting to figure things out, and are challenging for a varsity spot here at the end of the season," Fishback said.

For the boys, Nate Bohnsack (11:47), Nick Doty (12:30), Yang Xu (12:31) and Adriel Blue (13:18) all competed for Vermillion.

Vermillion's cross country team will travel to Lennox on Friday afternoon for the Lennox Invite before heading to Beresford on Thursday for the Dakota XII Conference meet.

Volleyball

From Page 9

we did."

And even despite those errors down the stretch in the fifth set, the Coyotes still had statistical advantages in kills (72-55) and team blocks (11-6).

But as they found out, edges in certain areas don't always amount to wins in the Summit League.

"You've got to earn your points in this league," Williamson said. "We say all the time, you can beat anybody on any given night and you can get beat by anybody if you give them those opportunities, and that's what we did."

The challenge now for the Coyotes, who travel to Omaha tonight (Saturday), is to establish a true identity moving forward, according to their coach.

"They have the opportunity to be extremely good. I think they've shown how good they can be," Williamson said. "They've beaten some really good teams, but then we've lost to some teams we shouldn't lose to."

Dimke added 15 kills on Friday, while Biltoft had 11 kills and seven total blocks (one solo), and Jessen recorded 59 set assists. Peyton Crosser led Western Illinois with 21 kills.

Having now emerged from the non-conference portion of their schedule and begun league play, the Coyotes need to start taking advantage of those things they've learned along the way, Reeg said.

"We definitely learned a lot," she said. "We found points we needed to work on, but we're still finding things to work on. We'll keep working."

USD Adds North Star's Simpson

BY JEREMY HOECK

jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

The University of South Dakota men's basketball program won a major recruiting battle in landing the commitment of point guard Triston Simpson.

Simpson, a 6-foot senior at Lincoln (Nebraska) North Star High School, announced Sunday evening that he has committed to USD – choosing the Coyotes over offers from three other Summit League schools.

"I felt comfortable up there," Simpson said shortly after his announcement. "The coaches believe in me, and I believe in the coaches."

In the end, that was the overriding factor for the services of Simpson.

"Really, the most important thing in recruiting was the coaching staff and the players," he said. "I really got to know the coaching staff, got to hang out with the guys, and I really liked the coaching staff."

Simpson, who made an official visit to USD last weekend, averaged 17.9 points, 4.7 assists, 4.0 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game as a junior last season at North Star.

It was the production, combined later with his AAU play over the summer with the OSA Crusaders that made Simpson a popular target for D-I schools.

More than USD's upcoming 6,000-seat basketball arena, Simpson said he was impressed by USD's Business school – he wants to pursue a business degree.

But again, Simpson went back to the relationship he developed with Smith and the rest of the USD coaching staff.

"I think he's really going to turn this program around," Simpson said of Smith. "The last few years haven't been the greatest; they haven't been to the NCAA Tournament, but I think he'll help get them there."

Football

From Page 9

Noah Walker's six-yard carry to get on the board. Pratt then carried the ball three yards for the two-point conversion.

Madison marched down the field in the fourth quarter, but was stopped short at the four-yard line when senior Matt Ouellette intercepted a potential touchdown pass.

The Tanagers returning drive resulted in five first downs, including a 14-yard run by Jon Rosales and another 14-yard carry by Ouellette, who replaced Kratz at the quarterback for the final few plays of the game.

"Ouellette played quarterback his sophomore year and played all summer for us, so I just asked Kratz if it was alright if (Ouellette) could just lead the offense just one time down the field for a score and he said he had no problem with that, so we just let Matt do it"

Ouellette found Nick Svendsen for a seven-yard touchdown pass, completed by a three-yard run for the two-point conversion by Walker for the 48-16 final.

The game ended on a sack by Kaleb Blue, his first of the season.

Madison held Vermillion to just 35 receiving yards, with two complete attempts by Kratz for 28 yards and one by Ouellette for seven.

"They obviously were trying to stop our passing and make us run and we were able to run on it, we just have to hold onto the ball," Homan said. "We saw a lot of positives, but there are still a lot of things we have to work on to be at a caliber like that with Madison to try and play at that level."

Pratt led the team in rushing with 87 yards on 13 attempts and Walker had 57 yards on 14 attempts, including the six-yard touchdown.

The Tanagers, now 1-4 on the season, travel to Tea next Friday to take on the 4-1 Titans with a 7 p.m. kickoff.

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