

# USD Men Need Reliable Offense

BY JEREMY HOECK

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A season ago, the University of South Dakota men's basketball team knew what it was getting from its top two players, Brandon Bos and Tyler Larson.

They combined to average 28.2 points per game, which amounted to 40 percent of the team's scoring output.

And now they're gone. It's an offensive – and defensive (they also averaged 11.4 rebounds) – void that the Coyotes are still looking to fill, now three weeks before the season opener.

"Somehow, some way we have to figure out how to score the ball," head coach Craig Smith said during Wednesday's Summit League preseason teleconference.

Has USD found who it can rely on for scoring loads?

"Not exactly, to be honest," Smith said with a chuckle.

In all, the Coyotes will return 46 percent of its scoring from last season. While it's not exactly a complete overhaul from a 17-win campaign, it's where the scoring came from that presents an early challenge for USD.

Senior Casey Kasperbauer (9.9 ppg, 43 percent on three-pointers) and Tre Burnette (7.8 ppg, 5.9 rpg) will be counted on for improved production this season. But after that, it's all up for grabs, Smith said.

"We'll lean on those two guys heavily," said Smith, who guided USD to its first-ever Summit League tournament win last season. "Other than that, we're really just a work in progress."

With three other players gone from last season, the Coyotes have seven new faces – four Division I transfers (three will sit out) and three freshmen –

from which to find scoring.

Among those back are Trey Norris (5.5 ppg, 2.7 apg), Eric Robertson (5.1 ppg, 3.3 rpg), Austin Sparks (2.3 ppg), D.J. Davis (1.9 ppg) and Duol Mayot (1.1 ppg).

Junior transfer Shy McClelland could provide a boost for the Coyotes, as could junior Tyler Flack who missed all of last season. Sophomore Zach Dickerson and redshirt freshman Logan Power are also available after redshirting last season.

The Coyotes have been, however, bothered by what Smith called a "rash of injuries" during preseason practices. On Monday, for example, the roster of 17 was narrowed to 10 because of those setbacks.

"It's been a fluky deal this year," Smith said. "It's been more of a challenge to figure out who can do what and figure out what lineups will be good."

A trio of long, rangy freshmen certainly gives USD some options, as Smith pointed out.

Dan Jech is competing for "many minutes," Smith said, while Tyler Hagedorn (Norfolk, Nebraska) "can do a lot of different things" and Tyler Borchers has "really been a great surprise for us in a lot of ways."

Naturally, though, an adjustment period is needed for freshmen new to the college game, particularly the Division I level.

"They're true freshmen, so they're a little bit up and down at times," Smith said.

### USD Women

Knowing who to rely on won't be an issue this season for the USD women's basketball team.

The Coyotes, winners of 26 games a season ago, return 70 percent of their scoring. That number, of course, was

boosted by the off-season news that Nicole Seekamp was granted a fourth year.

She will now resume her place alongside two other returning starters: Seniors Margaret McCloud and Tia Hemmiller, not to mention a host of reserves who have helped develop USD's depth over the past three years.

The challenge for head coach Amy Williams, she said Wednesday, is to mesh all that experience with a group of seven players who have never played in a USD uniform.

"It's been a challenge for my staff and I every day in practice to challenge those upperclassmen and also give the new players the repetition they need," Williams said.

To help in that effort, the coaching staff has spent more time during the preseason working on individual skills, according to Williams.

"In the past, we did a lot more team stuff," she said. "It's been unique, but it's been a fun challenge."

New to the mix this season are Kaitlyn Severyn (transfer), Jasmine Trimboli (transfer), Abigail Fogg (redshirted), Caitlin Duffy (redshirted) and four freshmen – including former Nebraska high school standouts Allison Arens (Crofton) and Jaycee Bradley (Norfolk).

The catalyst, of course, is Seekamp, a two-time Summit League tournament MVP. Last season, she averaged 15.6 points, 3.6 rebounds, 5.1 assists and 1.9 steals per game in leading the Coyotes to the WNIT.

"I think Nicole's biggest attribute is that she's extremely versatile," Williams said. Seekamp has played minutes at the 1-4 positions during her career.

"Now, as a fifth-year senior, she's able to be that coach on the court."

## Brady

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school," she said. "So, a majority of volleyball season I do volleyball practice and then I go run on my own."

Add in show choir practice Monday nights and dance team practice Monday nights and Wednesday mornings. She also has to find time to fit in homework in order to be eligible to participate on each team.

"I keep my grades up so that I can participate in everything," she said.

Brady said all her coaches are understanding and work with her to fit everything into her schedule, but admits it can be a lot to keep up with.

"It can get kind of overwhelming," she said. "But, everyone helps out, so it's nice to have people that understand."

Teammates are also understanding and help fill her in on anything she may have missed at practices.

Fishback says she can rely on Brady to be ready to compete at meets and doesn't have to worry about whether she can handle the time management.

"I never have to worry about her being ready to go or if she will remember to check in," Fishback said. "She is extremely responsible for such a young kid."

As one of the top runners on the girls' cross country team, Brady will be competing at the state meet this Saturday in Sioux Falls, and to prepare for that, she is practicing with the cross country team after school, and heads over for the end of volleyball practice immediately following, where she is learning setting for the first time.

"I'm doing setting this year and I've never set before," she said. "My coaches have been helping with that and when I'm at practice they work with me on that."

Brady said she had thought about narrowing down to one sport, but has a difficult time deciding which one and may not have to choose.

"It's kind of a toss-up of which one to do, but my coaches say if I want to do both they will help to figure it out," she said.

Show choir and dance team continue throughout the year, but once the fall season ends, Brady plans to play on the basketball team in the winter and run track in the spring.

"It is an absolute joy to work with her," Fishback said.

"She has a very positive attitude that just seems to rub off on those around her no matter what activity that is."

# USD Downs Omaha 2-0

OMAHA, Neb.—South Dakota senior Brenna Bills and junior Corey Strang found the back of the net in the Coyotes' 2-0 victory against Omaha at Caniglia Field on Sunday afternoon.

South Dakota improves to 5-11-0 (2-3-0 Summit League) as Omaha falls to 5-9-2 (2-4-0 Summit League). The win moves the Coyotes into fifth in the league standings. South Dakota's three Summit League losses came against the three programs at the top of the league in North Dakota State, South Dakota State, and Oral Roberts.

Strang used the back of her heel to drop the ball from the top of the box to Bills in the 28th minute. Bills fired off a shot to the left corner of the net. Bills put the Coyotes on the board with her third goal of the season. Strang is now tied for sixth in program history with nine career assists.

Strang found herself in a one-on-one opportunity with a Maverick defender in the 80th minute. Strang cut around the defender and finished the ball off to the left corner for her fourth goal of the season.

With a two-goal lead, the Coyotes ran out the clock in the final ten minutes of the match for the Coyotes' first win against the Mavericks in program history. The two teams ended in a nil-nil tie a year ago in Vermillion, S.D.

South Dakota led 11-7 in shots, with six shots-on-goal to Omaha's three. Coyote sophomore goalkeeper Sydney Hardin scooped up three saves on each of the Mavericks' on-target shots.

The Coyote back line pushed forward throughout the match to force eight off-sides calls on the Mavericks. When the Mavericks did get a run going in the 70th minute, sophomore defender Katelyn Floy sand raced from behind to slide tackle the ball away from Omaha's open look on net.

South Dakota returns to the USD Soccer Complex for the final two home games of the season next weekend. The Coyotes face off against IUPUI Friday at 4 p.m. and Western Illinois Sunday at noon.

# Eichkorn Earns 2<sup>nd</sup> Consecutive Athlete Of The Week Honors

ELMHURST, Ill.—South Dakota senior Amber Eichkorn earned her second consecutive Summit League Women's Cross Country Athlete of the Week for the period ended Oct. 18, as released by the league office Tuesday.

Eichkorn collects her fifth career athlete of the week honor and third of the season. The Wichita, Kan., native won the Bradley Pink Classic by 16 seconds with a personal-best 6,000-meter time of 20:11.8. Eichkorn topped the field of 267 runners to record her third individual victory of the season.

Eichkorn holds the top Summit League times in the 4,000 and 5,000 meters this fall. She posted the second-fastest league 6,000-meter time at Bradley.

The Coyotes toe the line for the Summit League Championships on Oct. 31 in Brookings, S.D.

# South Dakota Sweeps IPFW

Freshman Hayley Dotseth led the Coyotes with 10 kills as South Dakota (9-12, 3-5 SL) swept Fort Wayne (6-17, 3-5 SL) 25-12, 25-20, 25-16 Saturday in the Coyote Den.

Sophomore setter Brittany Jessen kept the offense going with 31 assists. Juniors Audrey Reeg and Hayley Jorgensen added nine kills apiece, Jorgensen had a .529 hitting percentage. On defense, Reeg and Jessen each had 12 digs. This was the first sweep of the year for the Coyotes.

"The sweep is a huge stepping stone for us," said South Dakota head coach Leanne Williamson. "We played with a lot of confidence and that showed in some tough situations."

The Coyotes started the first set on a 12-3 run while scoring eight straight points. Dotseth, Jessen, and junior Lindsey Brown had two kills apiece during the stretch. The Coyotes continued this dominance throughout the game and scored six straight points to end the set, the final point being a kill from Reeg. South Dakota held Fort Wayne to an attack percentage of .083 in the set.

In set two, the Coyotes started strong again and scored the first five points with a service ace from Jessen and a kill apiece from Jorgensen and senior Kelsey Biltoft. Later in the set, Biltoft had a kill to put the Coyotes up 20-12 and the team never looked back as they took the second set.

Just like the first two sets, the Coyotes jumped out to a lead in the third set and led the Mastodons 8-3. With the Coyotes up 9-7, South Dakota went on a 9-3 run to take a 19-10 lead as they won the third set and swept Fort Wayne.

"Now that we have put ourselves in a better position in the conference, we need to continue to grow and improve," said Williamson. "We will rest up and keep pushing ourselves to get better each week."

The Coyotes are back in action on Friday as they travel to Tulsa, Okla., and take on Oral Roberts at 7 p.m.

# Saeger, Bergner Named Players Of The Week

South Dakota junior quarterback Ryan Saeger is Offensive Player of the Week and junior punter/place-kicker Miles Bergner is Special Teams Player of the Week as announced by the Missouri Valley Football Conference Sunday.

The announcement came on the heels of the Coyotes' 24-21 upset of second-ranked and four-time defending national champion North Dakota State Saturday in Fargo. The victory marked South Dakota's first win in Fargo since 1978 and snapped the Bison's MVFC-record 26-game home win streak.

Saeger accounted for all three touchdowns in Saturday's victory. He passed for 202 yards and ran for 92 more. Against the top third-down defense in the nation, Saeger completed eight of them, including six with his legs and two with his arm. Saeger led the Coyotes on a 15-play, 72-yard touchdown drive that tied the game at 21-all with 4:47 remaining. He quarterbacked the 55-yard drive that setup the game-winning score.

Saeger threw two 8-yard touchdown passes and snuck in from a yard award for a third score. His 202 yards passing were three shy of his career high.

Bergner made a game-winning 33-yard field goal as time expired that gave the Coyotes the victory. He also averaged a career-best 49 yards on four punts and had a season-long of 61 yards. In addition, Bergner had two touchbacks on four kickoffs. This is the fourth time Berger has earned the weekly award.

South Dakota (3-3, 1-2 MVFC) returns to Vermillion and will host Missouri State (1-5, 0-3) at 2 p.m. Saturday inside the DakotaDome.

# Coyotes X-Country Competes At Bradley Pink Classic

PEORIA, Ill. — For the third time this season, South Dakota senior Amber Eichkorn found herself at the front of the pack at the Bradley Pink Classic in Peoria, Ill., Friday afternoon.

Eichkorn crossed the finish line in a new personal best 6,000-meter time of 20 minutes, 11.8 seconds, to win. The runner-up finished 16 seconds back. Eichkorn's previous best of 20:30 was run at the NCAA Midwest Regional meet a year ago when she qualified for the NCAA Cross Country Championships.

"Both teams improved their times from a year ago," said head coach Dan Fitzsimmons. "It didn't show up with higher finishes in the team results, in part due to a few more quality teams entered in the field and

several more outstanding individuals.

"We were hoping to have five men under 26 minutes and we were close. We also aimed to have seven women under 23 minutes and we accomplished that goal with flying colors."

The Coyote women finished eighth as a team with additional help from seniors Katie Wetzstein and Kelsey Barrett. Wetzstein finished 21st overall with a time of 21:10.3. Barrett ended up 57th with a clocking of 21:54.4.

Freshman Megan Billington and junior Jessica Feldman ran into the finishing chute together, taking 91st and 92nd to round out the Coyote scorers. Billington ran a season-best 22:04.9, with Feldman two-tenths of a second off in 22:05.1.

Bringing the Coyotes in as pushers were sophomore Erin Wetzstein in 109th place and junior Nicole Schmidt in 131st. Wetzstein finished a minute faster than her career-best on a cross country course in 22:12.1. Schmidt followed in 22:22.1.

The Coyote men took 15th as a team, as senior Mubarik Musa led the way with a new career best 8,000-meter time of 24:09.2. Musa trailed the lead pack by 20 seconds, finishing fourth overall with a blistering pace of 4:52.

Senior Isaac Allen finished as the Coyotes' second runner in 73rd place with a time of 25:12.3.

Both freshman Nathan Wendt and sophomore Brice Cowman dropped nearly two minutes off their season

bests, finishing in 117th and 122nd, respectively. Wendt clocked 25:39.2 and Cowman finished in 25:42.4.

Sophomore Matthew Schilmoeller rounded out the Coyote scorers in 178th place with a time of 26:26.9.

South Dakota toes the line for the Summit League Championship in Brookings on Oct. 31.

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