

Tanagers Fall To Trojans

Despite Loss, Improvements Seen On Both Sides Of The Line

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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The Vermillion High School football team held its first lead of the season Friday night, but couldn't hold on and went on to lose 36-16 to the visiting Parkston Trojans.

The Tanagers were down 6-0 in the second quarter when junior quarterback Carter Kratz connected with Nick Svendsen for a 66-yard touchdown pass to tie the game. Noah Walker then ran the ball into the end zone for a two-point conversion and an 8-6 lead, Vermillion's first of the season.

"It was big for Nick to step up Friday night and make that catch and run 66 yards for a touchdown," said head coach Andy Homan. "He made some great catches as well (last week) against (Dell Rapids). He is really starting to stand out this year and we like everything we are seeing as coaches on both sides of the ball."

That lead was short lived as the Trojans returned the kickoff for a 90 yard touchdown. A flag was thrown on the play for a personal foul against Parkston. The penalty brought the ball to the 25-yard line and Parkston found the end zone on a one-yard carry on the third play of the drive.

It was another short lived lead. On the kick return, senior Matt Ouellette ran the ball 92 yards for the second Vermillion touchdown of the game. Rylan Pratt carried the ball three yards for the two-point conversion and a 16-14 lead.

"Ouellette again came up big in another part of the game. There isn't much he can't do. We just need to keep finding a way to get the ball into his hands," Homan said.

Parkston took a 20-16 lead on another 1-yard carry and threatened again on its next drive, but Ouellette intercepted a pass in the end zone to take over possession at the Tanagers own 20-yard line.

The teams went into the locker rooms at half time with a 20-16 score after Vermillion blocked a Parkston field goal attempt as time ran out.

Parkston received the second half kickoff, but Vermillion gained possession thanks to a Logan Peterson interception. Four



SHAUNA MARLETTE/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Nick Svendsen pulls down a Carter Kratz pass and then takes it 66-yards for a touchdown in Vermillion's loss to Parkston last Friday.

plays later, Vermillion punted.

The Tanagers held the Trojans scoreless in the third quarter, but Parkston tacked on another 16 points on two touchdowns and two two-point conversions in the fourth for the 36-16 final.

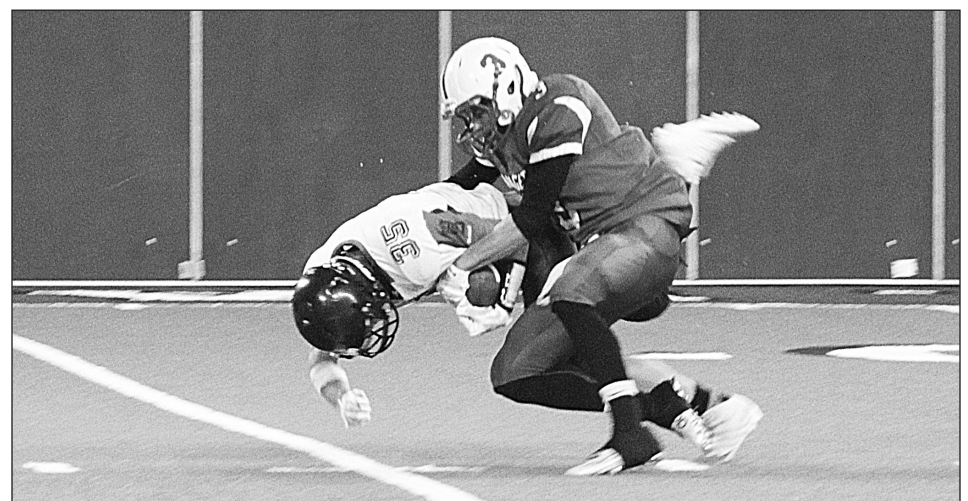
"Our defense is improving, but still a lot of areas to work on," Homan said. "We are young and it shows at times, but the guys are still playing hard and willing to learn."

Kratz threw for five complete passes on eight attempts for 81 yards in the game. Svendsen had a total of 66 yards with one catch, Ouellette and Walker each had six yards on one catch.

Pratt led the team in rushing with 50 yards off 10 carries. Walker recorded 33 yards from eight carries.

On defense, Walker had 10 total tackles and Gabe DeJong had 7.5.

Next Friday, the Tanagers travel to Dakota Valley to take on the Panthers



SHAUNA MARLETTE/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Matt Ouellette had a great game for the Tanagers last Friday including a kick-return for a touchdown. Here he is pictured bringing Parkston's Blake Bietz down in a touch-down saving open field tackle.

FIGHTING FOR THE BALL



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Vermillion's Ben Leber in last Friday's 2-0 loss to Freeman Academy at Cotton Park.

Defensive Errors Cost Tanagers Against Freeman Academy, Fall To James Valley Christian

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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Two defensive errors cost the Vermillion High School boys' soccer two goals as the Tanagers fell to Freeman Academy in last Friday's senior night game.

"We just weren't very aggressive and we couldn't keep possession at all," said head coach Curt Nelson. "We made two simple mistakes that cost us two goals and Freeman (Academy) is a really tough team to score on, especially after you fall behind."

The first goal came with 27 minutes left to play in the first half. The ball popped behind the defense and it was a race to get it. The ball was touched towards the net and the second touch was to the bottom corner of the goal.

The second goal was almost a carbon copy of the first with a one verse one with Vermillion goalkeeper Tristan Meadows and the Freeman Academy forward. The ball was again placed in the bottom corner of the net to go into half time 2-0.

"We didn't put ourselves in a good situation after the first half," Nelson said.

In the second half, the Tanagers changed the defensive formation and held the Bulldogs scoreless.

"I thought we played a lot more aggressive (in the second half), but we still struggled offensively to keep the ball," Nelson said. "Overall it wasn't our best day by far but I'm glad we were able to turn it around effort wise in the second half."

Vermillion readjusted from four defenders to three defenders with Harrison Freeman and Ross Dahlhoff on the outsides and Alec Leber in the middle.

"We just had three defenders in the second half to try and get a little attacking presence, so I thought the defenders played really well in the second half even though they had one less person in the back," Nelson said. "But still, offensively we couldn't put anything together so that was disappointing."

Vermillion saw one yellow card in the game when Freeman was on the attack and two Vermillion players collided. Freeman managed a goal in the play, but it was called back for a free kick at the edge of the 18-yard

box and a yellow card was issued to Leber. Freeman missed the free kick and the score remained 2-0.

"I'm not sure why it was a foul when we ran into our own person," Nelson said. "I'm not sure why he didn't give him an advantage, but luckily it worked out for us in the end."

The next day, Vermillion traveled to Huron to play James Valley Christian. The Tanagers lost to a score of 6-1.

"We made too many simple mistakes with our positioning that helped JVC find the net six times," Nelson said.

Josh Prescott had Vermillion's lone goal in the second half.

"We created a few good opportunities offensively and need to be better at finishing in order to close out the season with better results," Nelson said.

Next, the Tanagers travel to Tea on Saturday for a 5:30 p.m. kickoff against Tea Area, and then close out the season on Tuesday in Sioux Falls against Sioux Falls Christian beginning at 8 p.m.

Changes In Store For USD Football Home Opener Against Drake

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION – While the football game day atmosphere at the DakotaDome has seen many changes during the Division I era, one small sight has not changed: The location of the home team.

That will change this season. In an effort to relocate closer to its fans (among other reasons), the University of South Dakota football team is switching sidelines. The USD bench will now be located on the east side of the field, underneath the permanent seats.

It's a small change, sure, but one player welcomed.

"I think it's huge for us," junior safety Jacob Warner said after Tuesday's practice.

And for a program looking to develop a foothold in the FCS ranks, anything the Coyotes can do to help the turn tide, they'll jump at the opportunity, Warner added. Since head coach Joe Glenn took over in 2011, the program is 6-10 in games played in Vermillion – there was also a home loss in Sioux Falls.

"Every little advantage matters in college football, especially for us for as many close games we've been in," Warner said. "Every little bit helps toward getting those wins."

And if that means switching sidelines to create some sort of a spark at home, it was an option worth pursuing, Glenn said Tuesday.

"I think our guys wanted to feel the home crowd," said Glenn, whose Coyotes (1-1) open their home schedule Saturday

against Drake.

Historically, the Coyote bench had been on that east side. But when Ed Meierkort took over the program in 2004, USD moved over to the west end, underneath the student section.

And it's been that way ever since.

That location, however, has presented some problems: The chain gang is on that side of the field, opposite the press box, and the home team was opposite its locker room and the training room. Additionally, USD coaches in the press box haven't been able to clearly see what the opposing team trots out for personnel.

"Now they can get the calls in faster for us," Warner said.

Naturally, there were some logistics involved with switching the sidelines.

Junior running back Trevor Bouma was among a group of players who approached Glenn about moving, and from there, the topic went to athletic director David Herbster.

"I'm really excited we got it done," Bouma said. "I can't thank coach and Mr. Herbster enough for getting that done."

While where the Coyotes stand won't exactly lead to undefeated records at home, the buzz created from big plays could help if the players are directly underneath their fans, Bouma said.

"I like being in front of our home crowd, but it seems like whenever we make plays, it's just in front of the student section," he said. "Now we'll be able to do that in front of our home crowd and our parents."

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VHS Tanager Tennis Sees Improvements, Falls To Madison

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ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Alex Rosdail in action during the flight three singles in Vermillion High School's home match with Madison Monday afternoon.

The Vermillion High School girls' tennis team played a tough match falling 8-1 to the visiting Madison Bulldogs Monday afternoon.

Libby Sykes came away with Vermillion's win by beating out Madison's Alyssa Jones 11-9 at the flight one singles.

At flight two singles, Brandi Styles played a close match, but Simone Droge snuck by 10-4. Jane Ni Struckman Johnson also played a close 10-4 match with Lily Wolff.

In doubles action, flight two of Styles and Shinayne Whipple battled it out with Droge and Sydney Swenson, but the Madison team prevailed 10-7.

"The girls are really improving in their skills and working hard at improving," said head coach Betsy Hughes. "Each player has won a match and we are looking to add to that as we approach the state tournament on Oct. 8."

The team's last meet before the post season begins is a dual match with Mitchell in Mitchell on Sept. 28 beginning at 4 p.m.