

Yankton Runners Confident In Returning To Top

BY CODY BALL
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The Yankton Cross Country teams had an uncharacteristic year in 2010 as neither one was able to claim a state championship. This was the first time in eight years that a cross country state championship trophy was not stuffed into the case at YHS. This has not discouraged the runners though, and these teams expect to begin new state title streaks of their own.

In the 2010 season the Bucks ended the year finishing 11th place at the state meet. The finish ended their three year streak of state championships. The attitude at practices remains optimistic that this season will be much more successful.

“We’re coming in expecting to be state champs,” head coach Dave Dannenbring said. “Every team in the state lost people and it looks as though there will be six decent teams this year with legitimate state championship potential. We should be one of those six.”

Leading the team this year are seniors Kipp Kinsley and Logan Smith. Dannenbring feels that these two are more than capable to lead the team as runners as well as in overall team leadership duties.

Joining Kinsley and Smith are returning state qualifiers junior Jacob Bies and sophomore Bryce Cowman.

Rounding out the squad are some young runners, Justin Grode, Ryan Olson and Will Steward. Dannenbring said that with hard work these runners can get into the rotation.

After winning in 2009 for their sixth title in seven years, the Gazelles finished second in 2010, just one point short as Sturgis took home its first-ever state cross country crown.

The setback has not discouraged the YHS runners as they feel confident in their abilities to reclaim the title.

“We expect to be back as state champs,” Dannenbring said. “We are good enough to do it, and I think we will, but that’s why the races are run. Just because you have the talent and expectations to win doesn’t mean it is guaran-



GAZELLES: Whitlee Larson (left), Jenna Grossenburg

teed, and that is what makes competition fun.”

The returning runner that is expected to lead the team is the lone senior on the Gazelle roster, Jenna Grossenburg. Grossenburg finished last year with a 6th place finish at the state meet. She is a proven quality runner, but more important than her running ability is her quality of character.

“She is one of the nicest kids you’ll ever meet,” Dannenbring said, “and she is a true leader, on and off the course.”

Joining Grossenburg is an impressive crew of sophomore runners. These runners include Whitlee Larson who finished 8th at the state meet, and, as Dannenbring suggests, should be grouped with Grossenburg as a very quality runner. There are two other sophomores on the team that also qualified for the state meet last year, Annie Cruse and Ashtyn Haak.

Savannah Woods, an 8th grader, has already put together a solid year in a Gazelle uniform as she qualified for state as a 7th

grader. Look for her to be a successful runner for the next five years on the Gazelle team.

The Gazelles will also be helped by a new student who moved here from North Dakota, Alicia Aume.

The Yankton cross country teams have been a few of the most successful programs at YHS in recent years. When asked why these teams have been successful Dannenbring praised other coaches:

“Dan Fitzsimmons really kept these kids going and got the whole program on track to winning,” Dannenbring said. “Doug Haar was another coach who has played a major role in the success. He was one who got young kids out and kept them motivated.”

Along with the quality coaching that Yankton has benefited from, there have also been quality runners.

“The kids truly wanted to be good, and put in the necessary work to be good,” Dannenbring said. “It has also helped that we have had some great athletes as well.”

When looking at the upcoming schedule, the primary focus is on four races in particular.

“There are four main meets that we will mentally prepare for. The Augustana Meet of Champions, the Norfolk Invite, the Conference Meet and of course, the State Meet,” Dannenbring said. “The other meets we do not glance over, but we do somewhat use them as part of our training regimen to prepare for those four main meets. We will, at times, use these other meets to switch up our roster a bit and let different kids take turns running at the front of the pack. This also will allow our younger runners get some needed experience.”

Along with the meets themselves the philosophy for training is to train moderately and consistently.

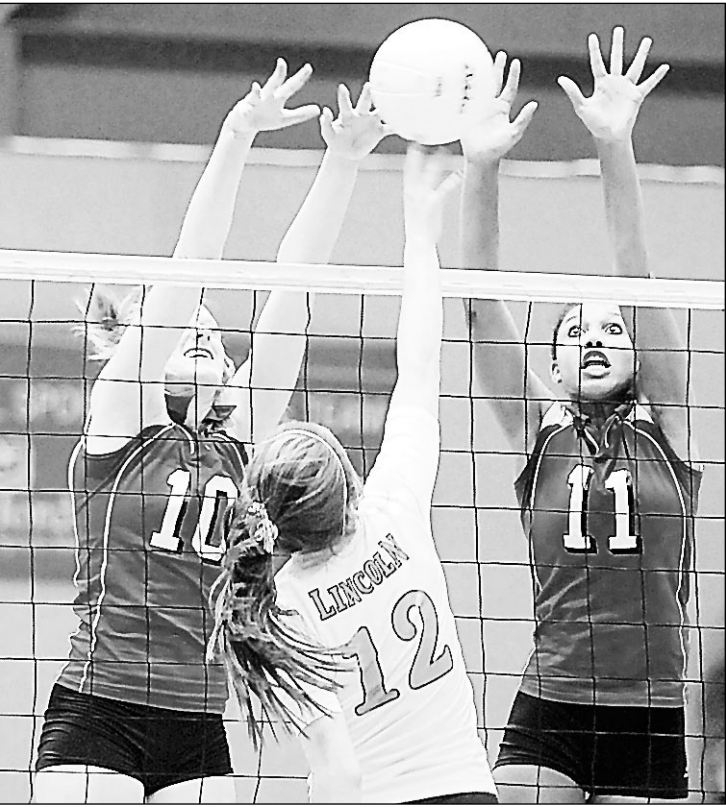
“Using moderation and consistency helps us to eventually add mileage and speed to their runs. By using this philosophy we are able to eliminate injury and mental fatigue, resulting in better finishes for individuals and for the team,” Dannenbring said.

While preparing for their first competitions, Dannenbring has credited the weather for getting the teams to a productive start. Besides a major storm on Aug. 18, the weather has been uncharacteristically mild.

“The weather this year has allowed us to train better. We haven’t had to cut things short because of the weather and the risks that heat and humidity bring,” Dannenbring said.

The Cross Country teams will have their first meet at Sioux Falls at the O’Gorman Invite on Aug. 26.

Dannenbring is assisted in coaching by Luke Youmans and Doug Haar.



GAZELLES: Kelsey Fitzgerald (10), Mikala Hora (11)

Experience Gives YHS Volleyball Program Reason For Optimism

BY JEREMY HOECK
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After coming within one victory of a state tournament berth, the Yankton Gazelles volleyball team could be in for something special in 2011.

With talent and experience at all the key positions on the court, head coach Leasa Woodward is naturally optimistic.

“They seem pretty hungry,” Woodward said. “Nobody feels like they got to their true potential. The good thing is, it’s so refreshing to see what they remember from that.”

The Gazelles finished last season with a 10-11 record, including an 8-6 mark in the Eastern South Dakota Conference (ESD). Yankton earned a third-place finish at the district tournament, but lost to Watertown in regions.

“It was an up and down season for us, but at the very least we were competitive,” Woodward said. “We return a strong core from last year. That’s something we’re really excited about.”

Leading that core are All-ESD selections Chloe Cornemann (Sr., libero) and Mikala Hora (Jr., OH). Cornemann ranked eighth in Class AA in total digs (374), while Hora was Class AA’s third-leading hitter, with 336 kills.

Additionally, Emily Fedders (Sr.) returns as the team’s setter after ranking sixth in the state in assists (643) a year ago.

“Those are really key positions to have experience in,” Woodward said. “The learning curve shouldn’t be anywhere near what it was last year.”

Also returning for the Gazelles

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9/2	Niobrara-Verdigre	A	9/30	St. Mary's	H
9/9	Creighton	H	10/7	Newcastle	A
9/16	Howells	A	10/14	Wausa	H
9/23	Chambers	A	10/20	Wynot	H

Bloomfield Queen Bees Volleyball					
9/6	Osmond	A	9/29	Wynot	H
9/8	Allen/Wausa	Allen	10/4	Lynch/Santee	H
9/10	Dodge Inv.		10/8	Randolph/Winside	H
9/12	Wausa	A	10/11	Newcastle	A
9/13	Madison	H	10/13	West Boyd	H
9/15	Winside	A	10/17	Knox County Tourn.	H
9/20	Hartington	A	10/24	Lewis & Clark Conf.	
9/22	Humphrey St. Francis	H		Tournament	TBA

YHS FB

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ing game.

Depth will be a concern, as the Bucks will ask several players to start both ways early in the season as other players develop.

“That’s part of the problem right now. We want to develop more players so we can get these guys more rest,” Likness said. “For example, we need our linebackers to do a lot of hitting, but those guys are also listed as running backs.”

Huber, Hunhoff, Knodel and the Soulek brothers will lead on the defensive line, with juniors

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Logan Van Winkle and Austin Schwarz also expected to contribute. McKee and Wilson Tieszen, the top returning tacklers from a year ago, lead the linebacking corps, flanked by Sage, Hisek, C.J. Warren and Jase Likness. Pasco, Fitzsimmons, Schroeder, Vollmer, McNeill and Colton Wurtz all have experience in the secondary.

Huber and sophomore Lane Sawatzke will share kicking duties early on, as Andrew Hummel — the late-season clutch kicker from a year ago — will miss this season due to a torn labrum suffered this past summer. Huber started last season as the team’s kicker before going down in week two.

Hunhoff, who took over punting duties when Huber went down last season, returns in that

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role, with Jase Likness as his backup.

Several other players will be asked to prove themselves on special teams.

“We’re always looking for someone to step in on special teams,” Coach Likness said. “All of those guys are on the brink of finding a spot on our offense or defense. Hopefully they get out and make things happen for us.”

The Bucks start their season with home games against Pierre and Huron before things get tougher.

“Pierre is a good program and Huron is hungry,” Likness said. “Watertown has its whole line back. Aberdeen is better than last year.”

Brookings comes to Yankton for week five and Pioneer Day, followed by games against Sioux Falls Roosevelt and Sioux Falls Washington. Mitchell and Brandon Valley finish out the Bucks’ regular season slate.

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“The rest of the season is what we call a buzz saw,” Likness said. “Brookings has a lot of kids back. The two Sioux Falls schools have both been successful the last four, five years. Mitchell has probably the best football team it has had in the last 25 years. Brandon Valley is always dangerous.”

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Crofton Warriors Football					
9/2	Hart. Cedar Catholic	H	9/30	West Holt	H
9/9	Wakefield	A	10/7	Neligh-Oakdale	A
9/16	Wisner-Pilger	A	10/14	Laurel-Concord	H
9/23	Lutheran High NE	H	10/20	Plainview	A

Crofton Lady Warriors Volleyball					
9/1	Neligh-Oakdale	H	9/24	Norfolk Catholic/Lutheran High NE	NC
9/6	Hart. Cedar Catholic/Madison Hartington		9/27	Lutheran High NE	H
9/8	O'Neill	A	9/29	West Holt	H
9/10	Boone Central Inv.		10/6	Wayne	H
9/13	Laurel-Concord-Coleridge	H	10/11	Creighton	H
9/15	Randolph	A	10/13	Elkhorn Valley	A
9/20	Plainview	A	10/17	Knox Co. Tourn.	
9/22	Battle Creek/Wisner-Pilger	H	10/24	NENAC Tourn. Tilden	