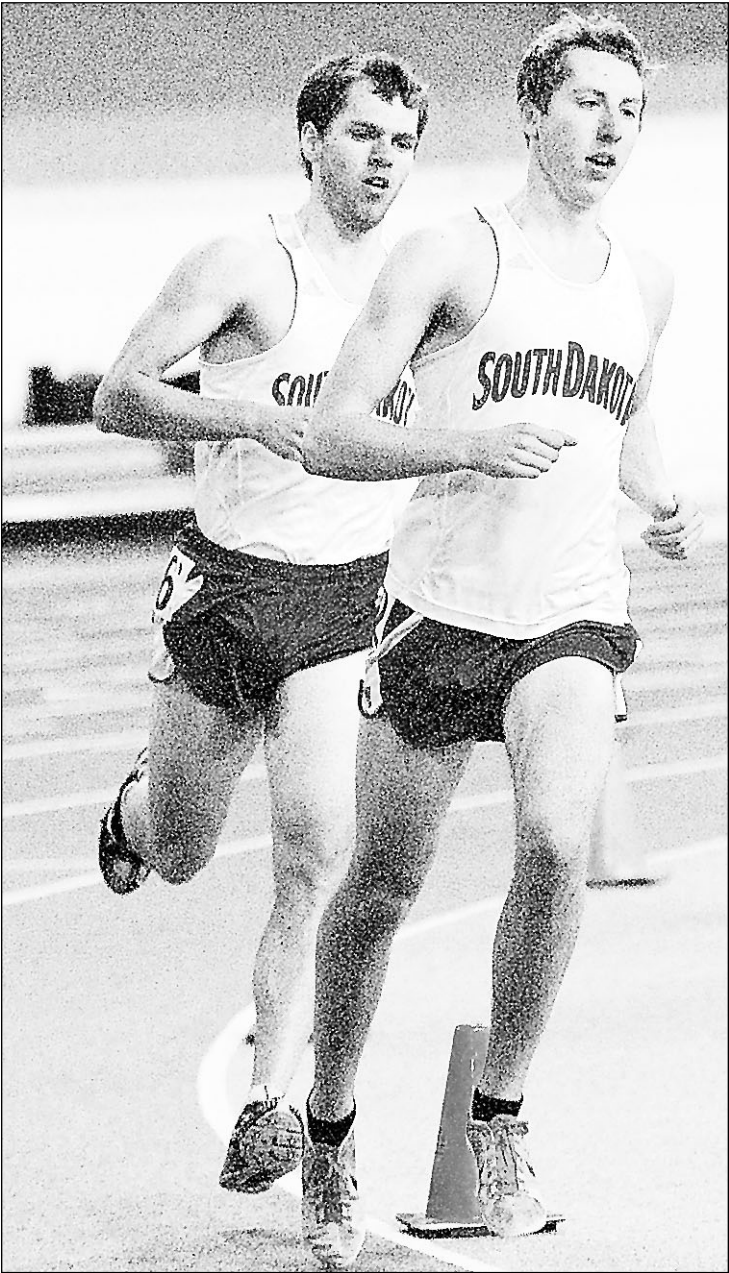


USD Ready For First Year Of Summit, Final Season Of Post-Season Limbo



COYOTES: Jeffrey Mettler (right), Ethan Marquardt

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

VERMILLION — A long journey enters its final stages for the University of South Dakota cross country teams in 2011.

After competing in the Great West Conference for their first three years of a transition to NCAA Division I competition, the Coyotes will join the Summit League for their final season of transitional status. As a transitional Division I team, the Coyotes can compete in conference championships, but they will not be able to participate in regionals or Nationals.

Guiding the Coyotes through the continuing transition has been Dan Fitzsimmons, who enters his fourth year at his alma mater.

Moving from the GWC to the Summit League provides a stepping stone challenge as did moving from the Division II North Central Conference did to the D-I ranks three years ago.

"We had a great experience in the Great West; it gave us something to shoot for and we had a lot of success," said Fitzsimmons. "It allowed us to set ourselves up for the Summit League, and we would not be ready if not for the Great West experience."

"I am familiar with some of those programs, and it's a deeper conference," said Fitzsimmons of the Summit. "We're a little young, but we've got talented athletes who are looking forward to the challenge."

Through the changes, Fitzsimmons, who enjoyed a large amount of success and runners in surplus as the coach of Yankton High School's track and cross country programs, remains patient and believes he can see the big picture.

"I think we have learned a lot; things don't happen overnight, but I feel like we're heading in the right direction," Fitzsimmons said. "The university has a great recipe for success and we are adding the ingredients; we are definitely recruiting a different kind of athlete."

That different kind of athlete doesn't

necessarily rule out local kids - a key ingredient to the success of past USD track and cross country programs.

Former YHS runners Megan Hilson and Travis Brenner are expected to be the leaders for their respective women's and men's teams throughout their careers at USD.

"We do have local kids and we will continue to coach them up; the top athletes in South Dakota used to leave the state, but now they can stay here," said Fitzsimmons. "Megan and Travis are prime examples because they would've had to look elsewhere, but they chose to stay."

Hilson, a sophomore, battled with Carol Miller (Jr., Mead, Neb.) for the team's top spot as both finished either first or second among the Coyotes in each meet last season.

Hilson's season-best time was a 17:52 at the Great West Championships last October. Hilson's best finish was a 3rd-place showing at a University of North Dakota dual, where she took third with a 19:08 time.

Miller finished ninth at the GWC Championships (17:23) and second at the North Dakota dual (18:57).

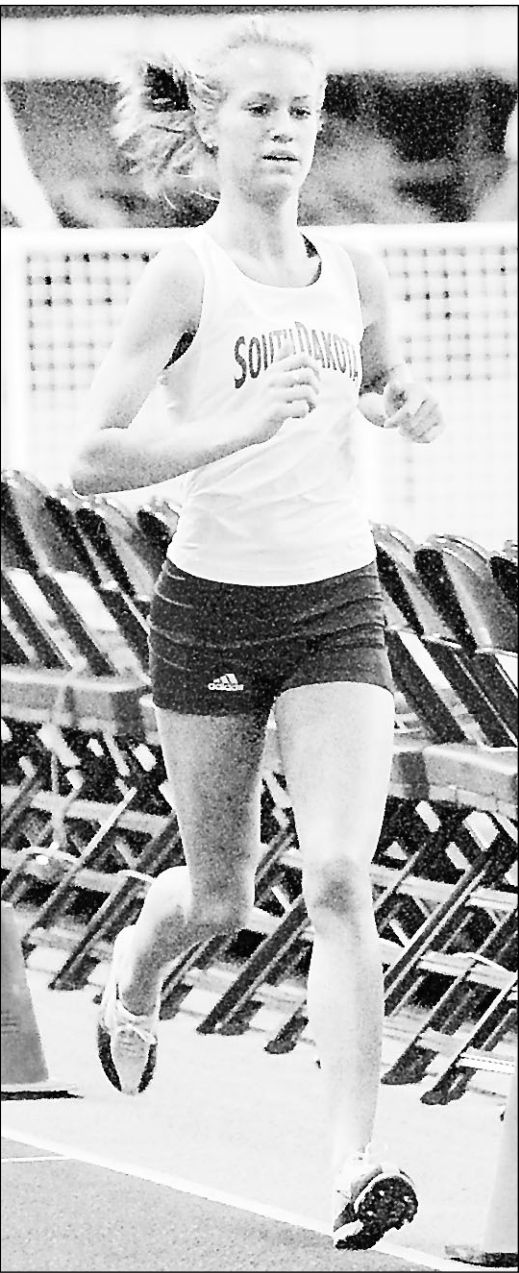
"The nice part of our women's team is that I feel we are twelve deep with similar athletes," Fitzsimmons said.

Others who are expected to contribute are Jessica Bradli (Jr., Rapid City Stevens) and Britni Waller (So., Lincoln, Neb.), two runners that Fitzsimmons feels have really blossomed.

Sigornie Pfefferle (Jr., Grand Island, Neb.) was an all-conference performer two years ago while Kristen Steffen of Crofton returns from a late spring injury to show what she can do.

"She's a sleeper off last year's squad," Fitzsimmons said of the sophomore. "Nobody saw how good of a season she actually had before she got hurt."

Other Coyote women to watch are Abby



COYOTES: Megan Hilson

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USD Golf Squads Hit Hard By Graduation

BY CLAY STODDARD
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VERMILLION — The University of South Dakota men's and women's golf teams will both be in the same boat this season, with the loss of a majority of their players from the 2010-11 season.

The men and women will both be rebuilding and adding to the small returning squads during the 2011-12 season.

The USD men improved throughout the season last year and finished the season with an eighth place finish in the America Sky Championship in Scottsdale Ariz. in May of 2011.

"We did all right last season, we started to peak right at the end of the year. My men's team peaked right at the conference tournament, which placed us in the top half of the teams," said Nick Hovden, second-year head coach for the Coyotes.

The USD women had a bit of a tough year last season with a 6th place finish in the Great West Championship in April.

"The ladies struggled a little bit at the end of the year," Hovden said.

The Coyote golf teams are gearing up to begin the new season this fall, and they are both looking to make improvements and additions. The fall season for the Coyotes is just part of their whole year, with the spring season being when the championship tournaments are held.

"Our fall season is not technically our championship season, but it is a full schedule. Both teams have five events. The spring season is our championship season, because that is when conference and NCAA tournaments are held," said Hovden.

The Coyote men will be missing one of their top players in Kyle Scanlon, from Stillwater, Minn.

"We will miss him tremendously," said Hovden.

Even though the numbers are low for the men this season there are a few strong returning players who will play a big role on the team this year.

Lucas Turner, from Bowdle, will be one of the only seniors on

2011 Fall Schedule	
Sept. 12-13 — Nebraska Chip 'n' Club Invitational (Men and Women), Lincoln, Neb.	Oct. 3-4 — Jim Colberg Intercollegiate (M), Manhattan, Kan.
Sept. 19-20 — Erv Kaiser Classic (M), Oxbow, N.D.	Oct. 17-18 — Payne Stewart Memorial (W), Springfield, Mo.
Oct. 26-27 — SIU-Edwardsville Intercollegiate (W), Edwardsville, Ill.	Oct. 17-18 — Austin Peay State Intercollegiate (M), Hopkinsville, Ky.
Oct. 3-4 — Huskie Classic (W), DeKalb, Ill.	Oct. 24-25 — SIU-Edwardsville Intercollegiate (M), Edwardsville, Ill.
	Oct. 31-Nov. 1 — UAB Fall Blast (W), Gulf Shores, Ala.

the team this year for the Coyotes.

"Turner made the conference team last year, and I expect him to step in right away and start pushing the younger kids," Hovden said.

Ben Heller, a junior from Aberdeen, will be one of the Coyotes who will pick up the slack. Also, Ty Munneke, a junior from Champlin, Minn. and Nolan Schmidt, a sophomore from Avoca, Iowa. will bring strength back to the team.

Dakota Clark, a freshman from Orwil, Minn., will be expected to contribute right away.

"Clark is a stud and I think he will be coming in right away and pushing those older kids," Hovden said.

The men's and women's golf teams will be having tryouts the first week of school to try and fill a few roster spots.

The Coyote women will be missing some strong players from last year's team.

"We did lose some good players last year, Steph Lazilla, from Highlands Ranch, Colo., was a leader for us last year," Hovden said.

The USD women's golf team will be looking to make improvements on last year through hard work and with many new additions.

"I have even higher expectations for my women's team. I had 12 on the roster last year, and I am only returning three of them this fall," Hovden said.

"There will be a lot of new faces, I signed four new young ladies who are going to be freshmen this year who I think will come in and make an immediate

impact. They are going to have to, they are going to get thrown into the fire right away," Hovden added.

The Coyote women are returning a few players this season who will be required to step up and take control of the leadership on the squad.

Returning for the Coyotes will be Nicole Funck, a junior from Dakota Dunes, she will be accompanied by Hailey Sheldahl, a sophomore from Ottumwa, Iowa.

"Funck has been playing well this summer, and watch out for Sheldahl, she has been working hard this summer and playing in a lot of tournaments," said Hovden

"She was really starting to find her game at the end of last year and I think she is going to come in and be in one of those top spots on the team right away. I am really excited, it is going to be a lot of fun this year," Hovden added.

With the 2010-11 season being the first year for coach Hovden, he feels both he and the team are more prepared for the 2011-12 season.

"We have had more time to prepare this summer, and I think the sky is the limit. We are making huge strides, we jump into the Summit League this year, we get to play in the Summit League Championships this year, and right away this fall, we will see many of the Summit League teams in a lot of these tournaments. So we are going to see how we match up with them right away out of the chute," Hovden said.

Both the Coyote men and women will begin their fall season at the University of Nebraska on Sept. 12-13.

Lancer Cross Country Team Set To Embark On 'Promising' Season

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

With an experienced returning corps, a school-record in participation numbers, a veteran coach, and newcomers expected to make an immediate impact, the Mount Marty Lancers embark on the 2011 Great Plains Athletic Conference cross-country season with a guarded excitement.

"We could have the best men's and women's teams in school history," said Lancer head coach Randy Fischer. "We don't want to get too excited, but we have a lot of promise on both the men's and women's sides."

The Lancers have 17 women and 15 men ready to run this fall.

"Those are the best numbers in school history; this is my fifth year and I've been trying to get the numbers up, so now we can focus on quality and try to make an impact in the GPAC."

To make an impact, the Lancers will have to have five runners on the course, and the depth will allow them to do that.

"It's a good feeling to have that," Fischer said of the depth. "We're in a very tough conference where you need to have a very good team just to compete."

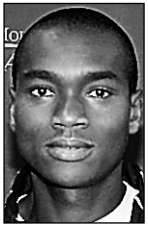
The men's team finished eighth in the GPAC last fall, but Fischer hopes to leap into the GPAC's top four.

Heading the team is senior Titus Kosgei of Eldoret, Kenya, who has Nationals experience during the Lancer track season.

"Titus has been training very hard with some 90- to 95-mile weeks to get ready for this season," Fischer said. "He's been our top runner the last three years."

Returning with fellow co-captain Kosgei is senior Tyler Smit of Lennox.

"He's a talented young man,"



Kosgei

2011 Schedule	
Sept. 10 — Nike Meet, Sioux Falls	Oct. 22 — Mount Marty Invitational, HSC Course, Yankton
Sept. 17 — Woody Greeno Inv., Lincoln, Neb.	Nov. 5 — Great Plains Athletic Conference Championships, Lincoln, Neb.
Oct. 1 — South Dakota State Inv., Brookings	Nov. 19 — NAIA Championships, Vancouver, Wash.
Oct. 8 — Briar Cliff Inv., at Adams Nature Trail, Sioux City, Iowa	

Fischer said. "He had a good cross-country season a year ago and he's looking forward to getting this one started."

Mount Marty also got a contribution from Samuel Lopez last season, and the harrier from Brawley, Calif., hopes to continue his success during his sophomore season.

Also from Brawley, sophomore and newcomer Leo Banales should also help.

"This guy is coming with Sam and they're good friends," Fischer said of Banales. "Sam was a big impact for us last year and Leo will be a big help for us as well."

Jordan Pater, a sophomore from Adrian, Minn. looks to round out the Lancer top five.

"Jordan has tremendously improved and he is looking forward to what he can do this season."

Looking to add to the mix is James Jensen, a junior from North Platte, Neb.

"James has had a good summer and I think he will help us out quite a bit as well," Fischer said.

"We have a chance to solidify our top five, so we'll be a little stronger up front," Fischer said.

The Lancer women finished ninth in 2010, but with the 17 runners and competition, that finish should change this fall.

"That's the most ladies we've ever had," said Fischer of the

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