

Season Preview | Yankton Boys' Soccer

New-Look Boys' Soccer Program Takes Field

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article originally ran in the Friday, Aug. 16, edition of the Press & Dakotan. It has been updated to reflect the ongoing season.

The Yankton Bucks will have a new look on the field, as well as on the sidelines, as they open the 2024 boys' soccer season.

The Bucks, 11-3-2 and Eastern South Dakota Conference champions a season ago, are in their first season under Dane Hansen. The former Mount Marty University player and assistant coach has been pleased with how the team has responded so far.

"We have a group that's really focused," he said. "I would say they've bought in to the way I'm asking them to play."

Part of that adjustment has been in creating a more team-oriented attack.

"I'm asking them to defend as a team. I'm asking them to attack as a team," Hansen said. "It's a little bit different. It's not 100% what they're used to. So to get that buy-in has been pretty awesome to see."

Part of that change has involved a different defensive alignment.

"We're playing in a different shape than what they're used to defensively. The structure is a little bit different," Hansen said. "I'm asking them to commit more as a unit to defend, whereas sometimes your strikers or wingers would get to relax a little bit when we're defending. I'm asking them to be a little bit more committed as a full 11 (players) to defending."

That defense starts with sophomore Andrew Budig in goal, with junior Kade Reifenrath, junior Nels Hanson and junior Kevin Ortiz on



P&D FILE PHOTO

Christian Pacheco, left, and the Yankton Bucks will look to defend their Eastern South Dakota Conference boys' soccer title in 2024.

the back line.

"Budig has shown himself to make some really good reflex saves. He makes his body big and does a really good job there," Hansen said. "We've got Kade playing center back. We've got Kevin, who's played center back for us quite a while. And we're asking a midfielder (Hanson) to play as a third center back for us. He's really done a good job of adjusting to that position."

Junior Christian Pacheco, a second-team All-State selection a year ago, will shift from striker to the midfield for the Bucks. Seniors Aiden Anderson and Mitchel Zimmerman will also rotate in the middle, as well as others, according to Hansen.

"We'll try different things, just to throw opponents off a little bit, depending on what we need," he said. "We've got some freshmen that I'm looking to get

minutes in those positions, too."

Junior Jack Pedersen, sophomore Tony Guitron and junior Anthony Alfonso will lead the way up front for the Bucks. As with the midfield, Yankton will have several players coming off the bench to help keep the pressure going.

The Bucks were picked fifth in the coaches' preseason poll. Just ahead of Yankton in the poll was the Bucks' season-opening



Boys' Soccer (1-3-1)

Aug. 16	at R.C. Stevens	L 0-3
Aug. 17	at R.C. Central	W 2-0
Aug. 20	vs. Watertown	T 2-2
Aug. 22	at Harrisburg	L 0-1
Aug. 27	vs. S.F. Jefferson	L 0-4
Aug. 29	at Tea Area	(late)
Sept. 3	at Brookings	6 p.m.
Sept. 5	vs. O'Gorman	4 p.m.
Sept. 10	at Brandon Valley	7 p.m.
Sept. 14	vs. S.F. Washington	11 a.m.
Sept. 17	vs. Huron	6 p.m.
Sept. 19	at Mitchell	4 p.m.
Sept. 24	vs. Pierre	6 p.m.
Sept. 28	at Aberdeen Central	noon
Oct. 8	AA First Round	
Oct. 12	AA Quarterfinals	
Oct. 15	AA Semifinals	
Oct. 19	AA Final (Yankton)	7 p.m.

opponent, Rapid City Stevens. The Bucks lost that match 3-0.

"Stevens is traditionally a pretty good team," Hansen said. "They're generally always fit. They've got a good front three."

The Bucks did beat Rapid City Central 2-0 to end the western trip, but Coach Hansen was not as concerned about the outcome of the opening weekend, but the progress shown.

"It might be a little rocky initially but, once we get it, it's going to pay in the long term," he said. "We're looking long term, toward the end of the season."

The schedule will include a single round-robin in ESD play, including at ESD newcomer Tea Area, and three matches against Sioux Falls opponents — Jefferson (4-0 loss), O'Gorman (Sept. 5) and Washington (Sept. 14) — all at home.

As of Aug. 28, Yankton was 1-3-1 on the season.

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