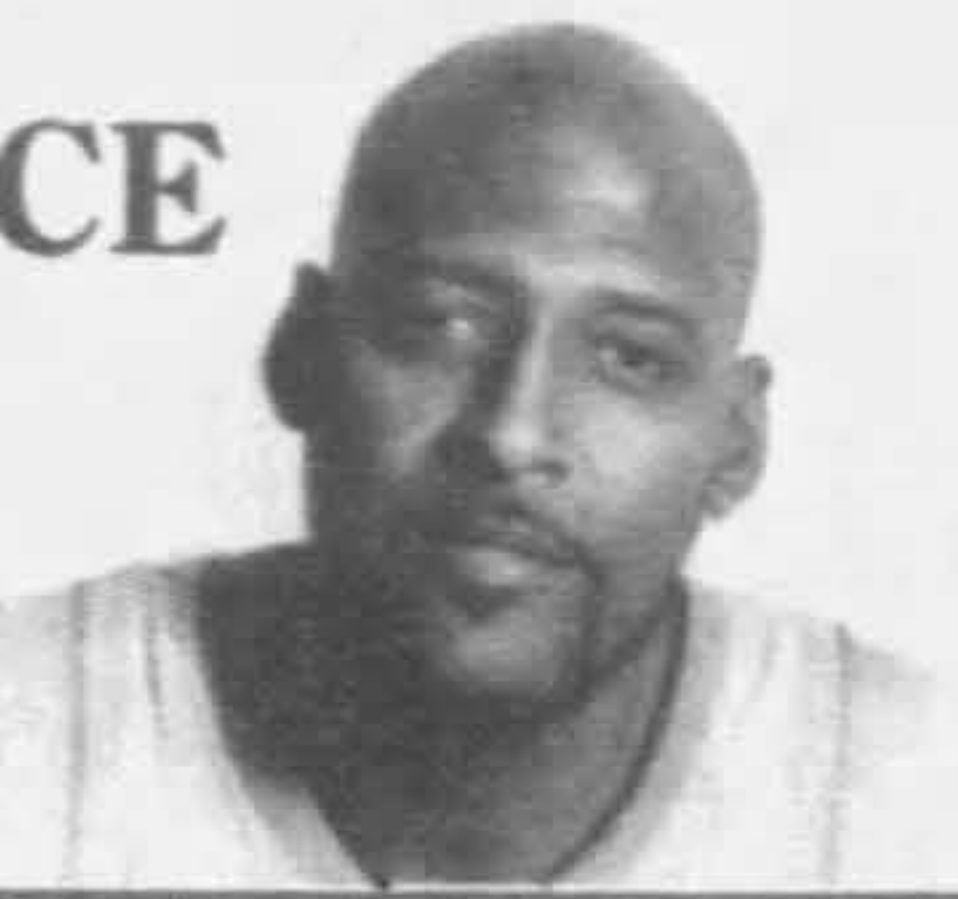




OLD FACE, NEW PLACE

Promising '80s star Tarpley leads new season - **Sports**



TESTS IN A MALL: Want to check for pregnancy, assess cholesterol? Bet you never thought to do it here - **8C**

CAFE RIVALS: Brookings, Vermillion: Who's No. 1? - **1D**

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Friday • Nov. 14, 2003

SIoux FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

50 Cents

S.D. kids in top 10 in math, reading

Scores are first measure of No Child Left Behind standards

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON
jsanders@argusleader.com

South Dakota's public school students are among the nation's best in math and reading.

That's according to a test that gives state educators their first glimpse of how well schools are meeting the standards set by the federal No Child Left Behind program.

Results from the reading and math portions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, often

► Comparison of area states; online links 6A

called "the nation's report card," were released Thursday. A sample of fourth- and eighth-graders - more than 12,200 in South Dakota alone - took the test in January, February and March.

The eighth-graders' average scores put them third highest in the nation in reading and fourth in math. Fourth-grade students ranked sixth in both subjects.

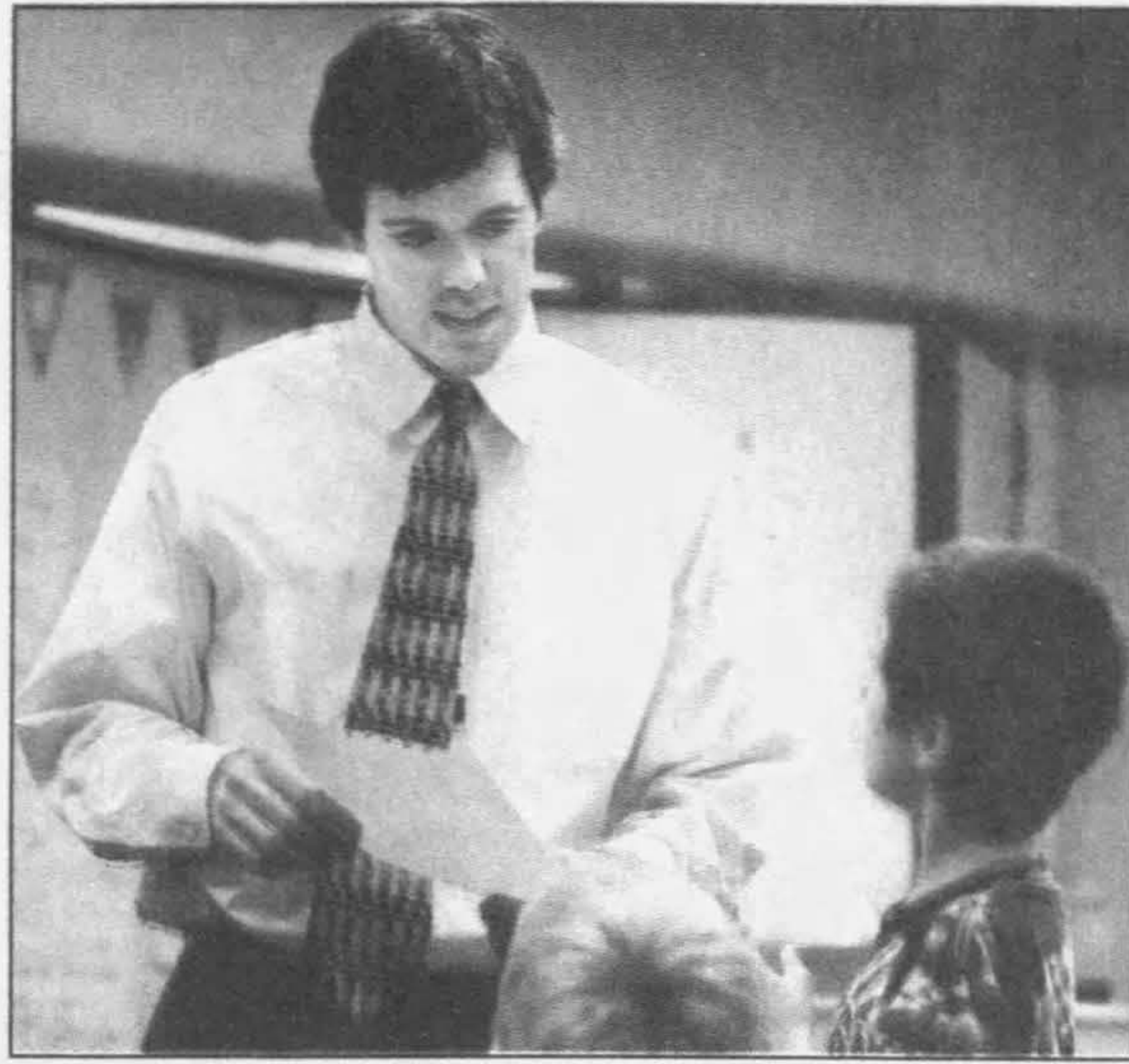
Educators were particularly encouraged by the report because this is the first year the state has taken part in the NAEP, administered periodically since 1969. South Dakota was the last state to join the testing.

The NAEP is widely acknowledged as more challenging than any single state's standardized test. Some educators worried the national exams would do

more to assess state standards than measure what students know.

Those fears seemed unfounded Thursday, when South Dakota's scores revealed students to be above the national average in nearly every respect. But unlike other states, South Dakota has no baseline against which to judge itself. The results are a snapshot of a moment in time, unable to signal trends.

Still, the top-10 distinction came as welcome news.



LLOYD B. CUNNINGHAM / ARGUS LEADER

Kirk Zeeck, a fourth-grade teacher at Hawthorne Elementary, talks Thursday with David Molina about a writing assignment. For the first time, South Dakota has taken part in the National Assessment of Educational Progress exams.

"These results really do give us some good feelings about what we're doing," said Cheryl Larson, principal at Hawthorne Elementary School, where a number of fourth-graders took part.

See **TESTS**, page 6A

Chief justice sacked in Alabama

Commandments judge: 'No regrets'

BY KYLE WINGFIELD
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who became a hero to religious conservatives for refusing to remove his granite Ten Commandments monument from the state courthouse, was thrown off the bench Thursday by a judicial ethics panel for having "placed himself above the law."

"I have absolutely no regrets. I have done what I was sworn to do," Moore declared afterward, drawing applause from dozens of supporters at the courthouse. "It's about whether or not you can acknowledge God as a source of our law and our liberty. That's all I've done."

The nine members of the Court of the Judiciary handed out the harshest penalty possible, saying Moore left them with no choice by repeatedly insisting he would never obey a federal judge's order to move the 2½-ton block of granite from the courthouse rotunda.

"Anything short of removal would only serve to set up another confrontation that would ultimately bring us back to where we are today," the panel said.

Moore spent eight months designing the monument and helped move it into the building one night in 2001. He soon became a lightning rod for criticism from civil liberties activists who said

See **JUDGE**, page 7A



Roy Moore

Trio embodies West Central mystique

Core of seniors leads school to brink of 8th football title in 11 years

BY STU WHITNEY
swhitney@argusleader.com

HARTFORD - As a feisty kid growing up in South Dakota's version of Titledown, James Lemke developed a devotion to football.

The rest is history.

Lured by the lights at West Central High School, Lemke and his fellow seniors have enriched this community's remarkable run of gridiron success - which includes seven Class 11A state championships in the past 10 years.

"I remember Friday nights as a little kid, running around playing catch behind the stands the way the kids do now," said Lemke, a shifty halfback who will lead the top-ranked Trojans (10-1) into tonight's Class 11A finals against No. 2 Hot Springs (10-1) at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

"I always dreamed of winning a state championship like all those teams that came before us, and I knew we had the ability and work ethic to do it."

Those dreams now seem modest to West Central's trio of senior standouts - Lemke, Derek Zacharias and Kyle Kadinger, who all started playing varsity football as freshmen in 2000.

Now seniors, that talented class has claimed three consecutive state titles and compiled a record of 43-4 during the past four years - including 15-0 in playoff games.

With a win tonight, the Trojans would match the state record of four straight championships set by Freeman from 1996-99.

"It would be great to end it with a win," said Zacharias, a bruising fullback who has rushed for 1,328 yards and 16 touchdowns this season. "Not a lot of people get this chance, and now we've had it four years. It's a great feeling."

As starters since their sophomore years, Lemke, Zacharias and Kadinger symbolize the success of Coach Jim Uttecht's program, which captured its first state title in 1993 and also reeled off three in a row from 1996-98.

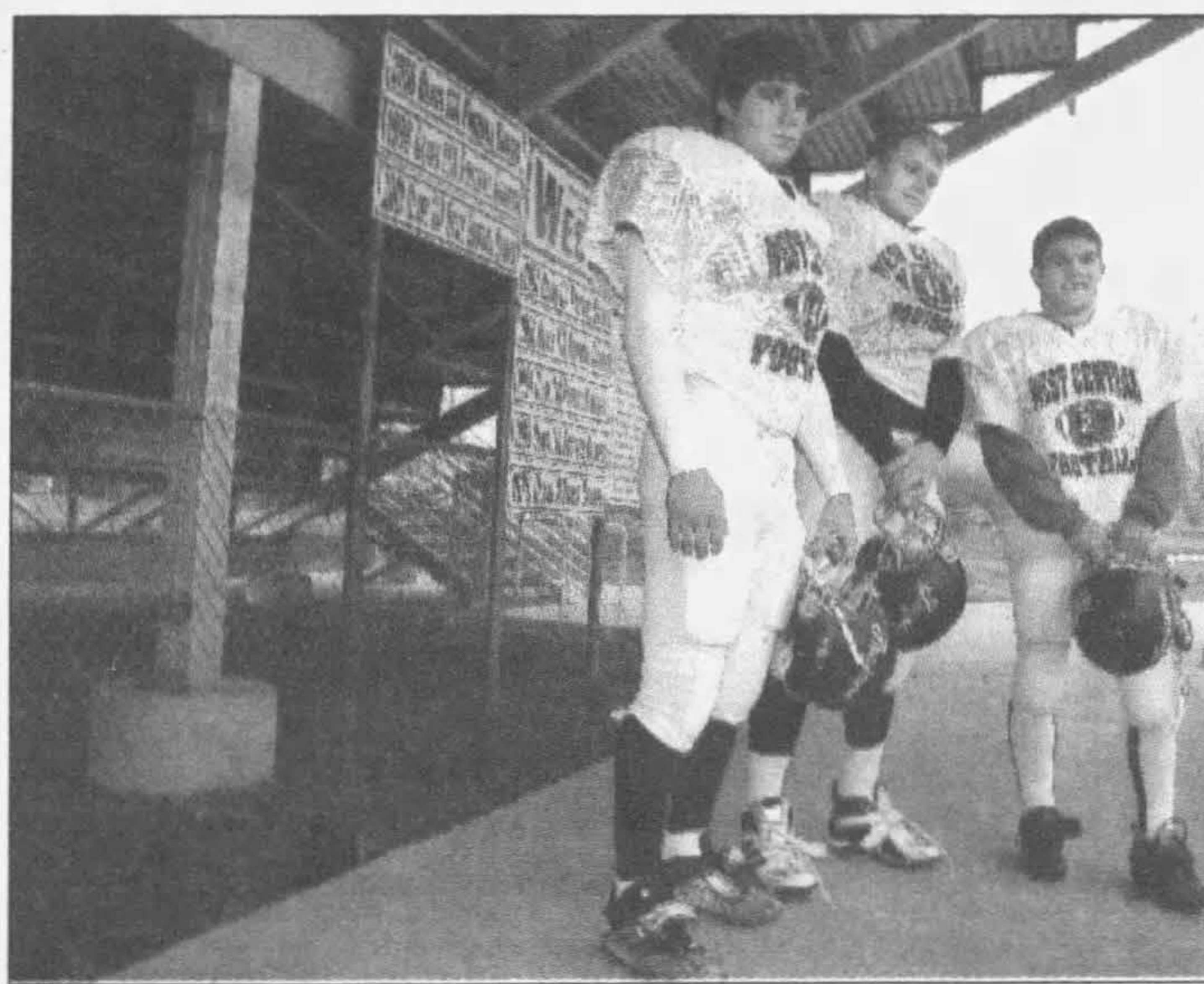
The current senior class also includes key players such as halfback Daryl Peterson and offensive lineman Dustin Edberg.

See **WEST CENTRAL**, page 6A



TOP: Coach Jim Uttecht talks with players Wednesday as light fades over the West Central practice field. The Trojans play Hot Springs for the state Class 11A football championship tonight. A title would be West Central's eighth in 11 years.

RIGHT: Kyle Kadinger, Derek Zacharias and James Lemke (from left) stand under the bleachers at West Central High School. The football team's seven state titles are listed on the walls there. The three teammates seek a fourth straight championship as the Trojans play Hot Springs tonight at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.



PHOTOS BY VAL HOEPPNER / ARGUS LEADER

Inside

► **TITLE TRADITION:** West Central's seven state crowns, 6A

Sports

► **PREVIEWS:** A look at each of today's four title games at the DakotaDome - times and predictions, 1, 3, 5C

Online

► For scores, game briefs and photo gallery, go to argusleader.com

Bad back? Ditch hard mattress, study says

BY EMMA ROSS
Associated Press

LONDON - Contrary to popular belief, a firm mattress may not necessarily be best for the back, new research suggests.

Doctors have traditionally recommended hard beds for people with lower-back pain, but that advice has been based on scarce evidence.

Now, the first substantial study has found that people who slept on medium mattresses were twice as likely to report an improvement as people using firm ones.

Experts said the study, published this week in *The Lancet* medical journal, does not mean everyone would benefit from a medium mattress, and that trial and error is still the best way to choose. Anyway, there are no standardized gauges for the firmness of a mattress.

"This has been very poorly studied in the past," said Dr. Scott Boden, professor of orthopedics and director of the Emory Spine Center at Emory University in Atlanta.

See **MATTRESSES**, page 7A

Attacks in Iraq chill troop commitments by Japan, S. Korea

Inside

BY BASSEM MROUE
Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Japan put off a decision Thursday on sending troops to Iraq, a day after the deadliest attack on coalition forces since the war, and South Korea capped its contribution at 3,000 soldiers - new setbacks to U.S. hopes for easing the pressure on its forces.

U.S. troops pounded suspected guerrilla targets in the capital for a second consecutive night under a new "get-tough" campaign against the insurgency. And the top American administrator, L. Paul Bremer, headed back to Baghdad after two days of White House talks with orders that Iraqis should

take more responsibility for governing.

On the eve of a visit to Tokyo by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Japan decided the time isn't right to send its forces to Iraq, indicating its deployment might be delayed until next year.

Japan had hoped to send troops to Iraq to help rebuild the country by the end of 2003, but chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda backed off, saying Iraq is still too unstable.

"Japan has said it wants to think about the timing" of its deployment, said national security adviser Condoleezza Rice. "We understand that."

South Korea also decided to limit its contri-

butions to 3,000 troops, President Roh Moo-hyun said. South Korea also ordered its 464 troops in southern Iraq to suspend operations outside coalition bases. Denmark also rejected a push by two Danish soldiers' unions to bolster its 410-member force by 100 more troops.

Many countries and agencies in Iraq, including Spain, the Netherlands, the United Nations and the international Red Cross, have been reconsidering their presence since they became targets.

The reassessments came after Wednesday's suicide truck bombing at a base for Italian forces in the southern city of Nasiriyah killed at least 32 people - 18 of them Italians.



Donald Rumsfeld

► **INSURGENTS:** Only about 5,000 armed opponents threaten security in Iraq, U.S. says.
► **GOVERNING:** Iraqi council tries to meet a U.N. deadline for political plans.
STORIES: 10A

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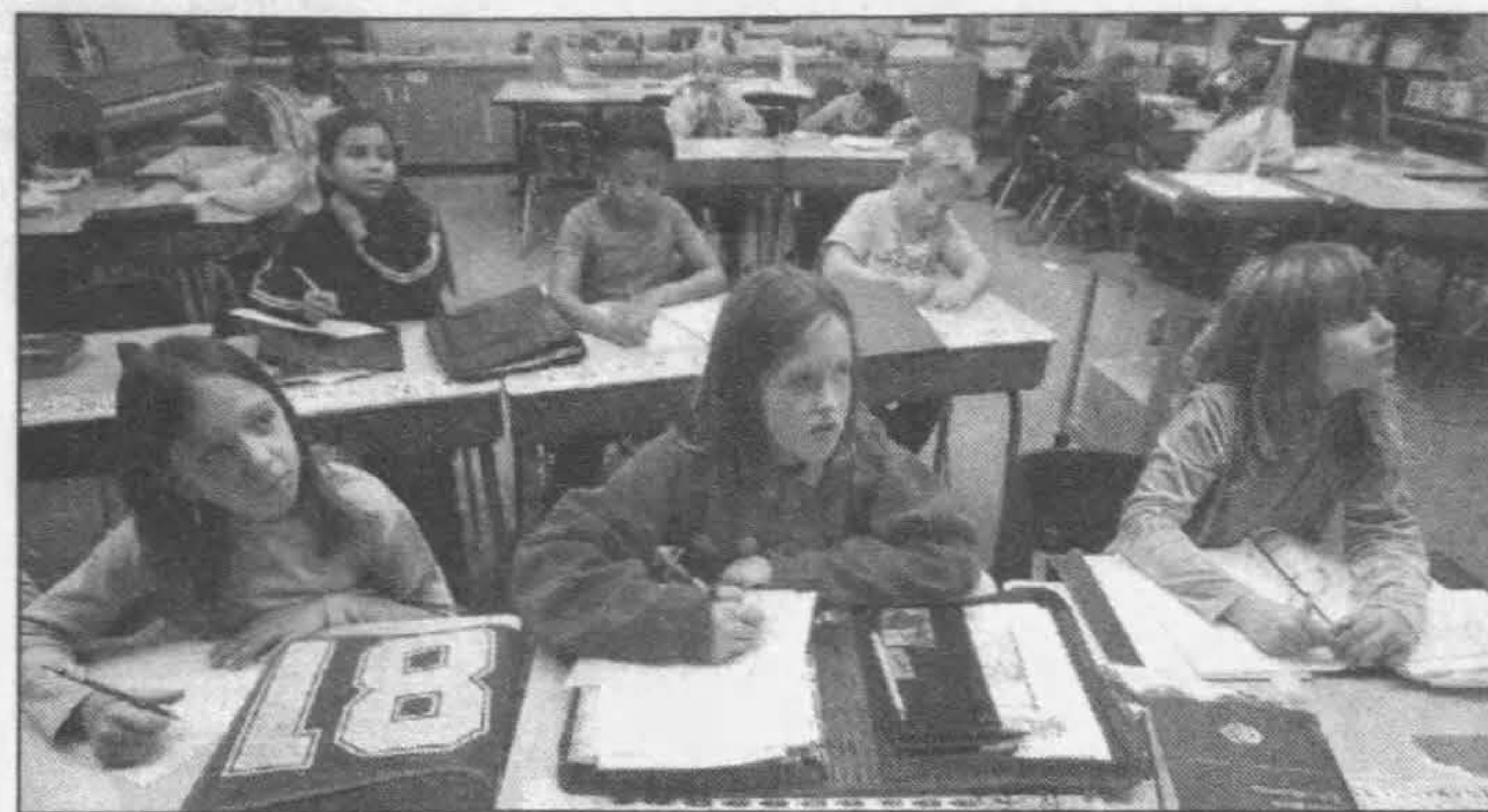
Light rain
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Full report, 2A

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LLOYD B. CUNNINGHAM / ARGUS LEADER

Fourth-graders at Hawthorne Elementary School listen to their teacher, Kirk Zeeck, during writing class Thursday afternoon. The students in the front row (from left) are Erica Sandoval, Breanne Postma and Brooke Burkel. Fourth- and eighth-graders in schools across South Dakota scored well in tests for "the nation's report card."

Tests: Only one part of story, teacher says

Continued from 1A

"Our teachers need some supportive words right now," she said. "About 70 percent of our children are living in poverty conditions, and we have some language barriers as well. All those pieces go into play. No Child Left Behind is a huge challenge."

The NAEP tests students from all backgrounds, with subgroups for those with limited English skills and learning disabilities. Socioeconomic factors, racial identities and other variables also are considered.

"This is the only apples-to-apples comparison that's out there," said Rick Melmer, the state's education secretary. He credited teachers and administrators for their hard work, as well as parents, who prepare children to learn and spend hours helping with homework. "We should be excited about the progress our students are making."

South Dakota's white students are keeping pace with their peers nationwide, and Native American students in the state show only a slight gap in reading compared to those across the United States.

But native students in South Dakota lag seven to 10 points behind their national demographic in math. And there is another, greater disparity. The state's white students averaged 27 to 30 points higher in reading and 24 to 33 points higher in math than did Native American students.

Those races were the only two with a large enough state sample to register in national comparisons. Previously tested states showed a modest closing of gaps in math achievement among white students and their black and Hispanic counterparts.

Because of the way the scale is constructed, a score of 250 out of 500 does not generate a 50 percent — an F on any teacher's report card. For example, fourth-graders tested in reading would be at the basic level with a score of 208 to 237, considered proficient in the 238 to 267 range, and advanced at 268 and higher. Ranges for each achievement level vary by grade and by subject.

Only the reading and math components were given this year. The full NAEP series also tests science, writing, geography, history and other skills. The math portion last was used nationally in 2000, the reading portion, in 2002.

The pool of states voluntarily giving the exams expanded in 1990, with 40 states participating in any one portion. South Dakota was the last state to hold out on giving the exams, which are carried out by in-state evaluators trained and paid by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

No Child Left Behind ensures this will not be South Dakota's only assessment. The law requires fourth- and eighth-graders in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions be tested in math and reading every two years. This time around, 685,000 students in 13,600 public and private schools took part, making it the largest to date.

Nearly every state with a NAEP history showed significant improvement in math scores. More than seven in 10 fourth-graders and almost as many eighth-graders now achieve at a basic level or better. But more than two-thirds of the students still can't do math at the level they should, based on federal standards.

Reading results nationally were comparable to those in 2002. Reaching further back, however, fourth-graders today had more mastery than did fourth-graders in 2000. Eighth-graders have been consistent throughout the past three assessments.

Joanne Reiner, guidance counselor and testing coordinator for the Freeman School District, predicts the state's students will build on this initial success.

"I'm prouder than ever to be an educator in South Dakota," she said. "We always seem to be at the bottom of statistics lists, whether they be for teacher pay or money spent per child. It's nice to finish at the top."

South Dakota teachers might well feel as if they live and die by

Nation's report card

South Dakota this year became the final state to take part in the National Assessment of Educational Programs, known as "the nation's report card." The reading and math portions of the test were given to 12,207 fourth- and eighth-graders in the state in January, February and March.

Below is a look at how South Dakota students compare to those in bordering states and nationwide. The figures represent percentages of students who scored at the "proficient" or higher level in each category.

South Dakota	
4th reading	33
8th reading	34
4th math	39
8th math	35
North Dakota	
4th reading	32
8th reading	34
4th math	39
8th math	36
Minnesota	
4th reading	37
8th reading	42
4th math	37
8th math	44
Nebraska	
4th reading	32
8th reading	33
4th math	35
8th math	32
Iowa	
4th reading	35
8th reading	35
4th math	36
8th math	33
Montana	
4th reading	35
8th reading	31
4th math	37
8th math	35
Wyoming	
4th reading	33
8th reading	39
4th math	34
8th math	32
United States	
4th reading	30
8th reading	31
4th math	30
8th math	27

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, administered by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Test results online

Reports from the National Assessment of Educational Progress' reading and math portions, released Thursday, are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> online. Search by state or nationwide.

test scores. A much larger group of students in grades 3 through 8 take Dakota STEP tests across the state each year. And individual school systems can mandate their own assessments, such as the writing skills test recently carried out in the Sioux Falls School District.

On the national test, South Dakota's eighth-graders did particularly well in math. Students scored an average of 285, compared to the national average of 276. Eighth-grade readers posted a 270 average to the national 261.

Fourth-graders averaged a score of 237 in math, three points above the nation's mark, and a 222 average in reading to the national average of 216.

Hawthorne's Larson, while thrilled with South Dakota's showing, cautioned against judging schools solely on test scores.

"The measure and the quality of a school is so much more than that," she said. "That's the piece that No Child Left Behind is leaving behind. We need to think about how we are raising our children. It's wonderful to raise them to be good readers and mathematicians, but are they becoming productive workers and members of society? That's what the world is expecting us to create, and we have to know that academics are teaching children today what they need to succeed in the world of tomorrow."

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Reach reporter Jennifer Sanderson at 575-3625.

West Central: 4th straight title at stake

Continued from 1A

When the group arrived in 2000, West Central was coming off its last playoff loss — a 12-0 setback to Vermillion in the state quarterfinals.

"We had a three-peat before they got here, and we're starting two sophomores now, so it's a continuing thing," said Uttecht, a Tripp native who has a 222-64 record in 28 years as the school's head coach. "Coming up through the system, though, we knew they were special kids."

Lemke, Zacharias and Kadinger all contribute heavily on offense and defense, and each is considered a potential NCAA Division II recruit. In terms of leadership, they set the tone for the Trojans to win 10 consecutive games after a stunning home loss to Madison in the season opener.

"We started off with pretty big heads, because we had already won three state titles," said Kadinger, an offensive lineman who sparks the defense from his linebacker spot.

"But that brought us back down pretty quickly. We learned that it wasn't going to come easy. You have to work for everything you get."

With that in mind, the senior Trojans plan to make the most of tonight's DakotaDome experience — with a historic fourth consecutive title on the line.

"I can't imagine that they would have a letdown in the last game of their career," said Uttecht, whose program has produced 58 all-state players and 22 straight nonlosing seasons. "These kids have come too far to let that happen."

Zacharias' choice

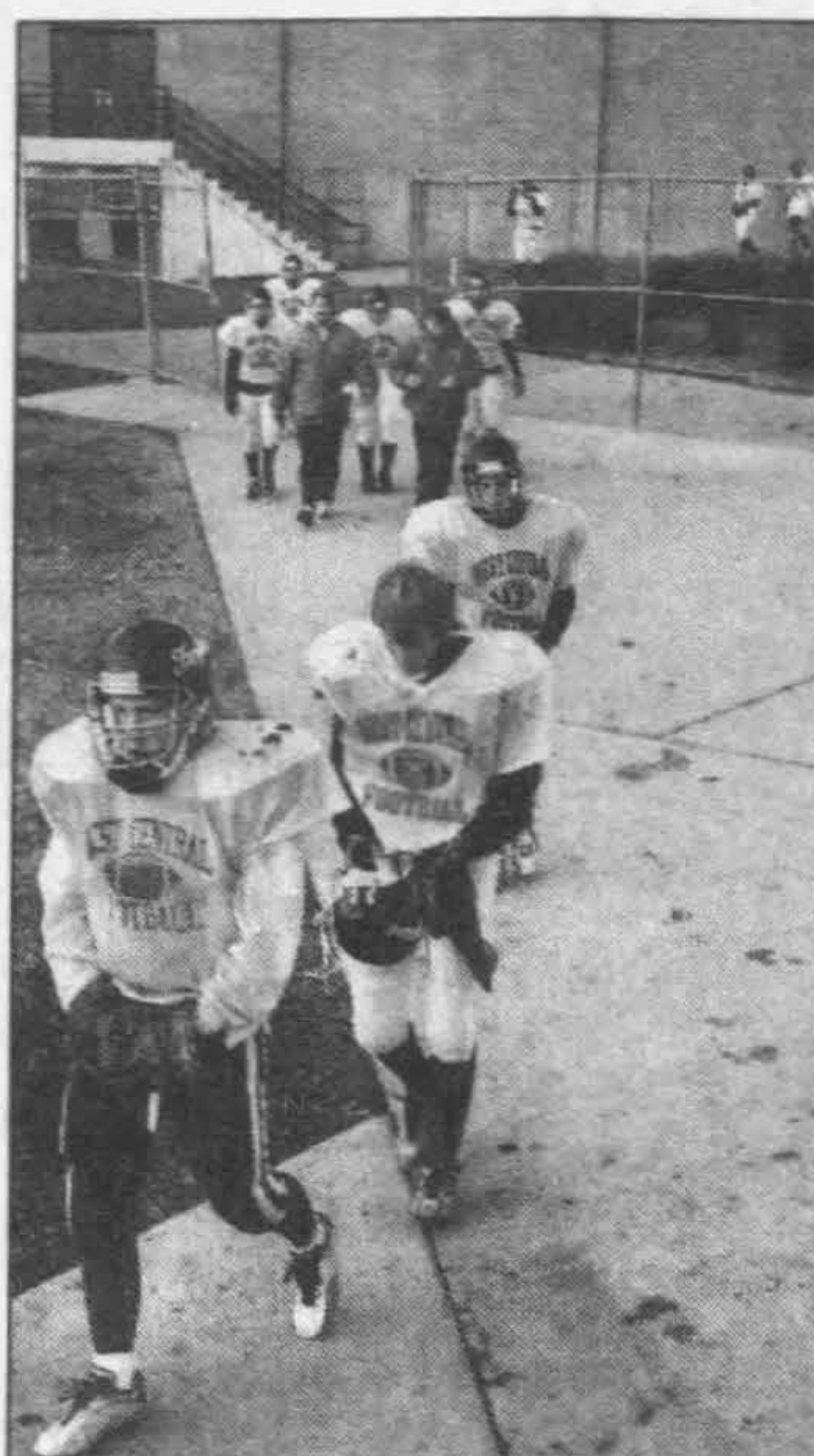
Though his older brothers played at West Central in the 1980s, Zacharias appeared destined to attend Roosevelt High School after his family moved to Sioux Falls.

But he couldn't resist the small-town flavor and big-time success at West Central, which has about 380 students and serves Hartford and Humboldt.

"I knew this was going to be a good football team, and Roosevelt was having trouble at the time, so I made the choice to come out here," said Zacharias, whose family still lives in Sioux Falls.

"Uttecht spotted me and knew who I was, but I felt like more of a number at Roosevelt. Here at West Central, everybody has a name and the coaches know everybody. It's more like a family."

While Lemke eclipsed the 1,000-yard rushing mark with speed and agility this season, the 215-pound Zacharias accomplished the feat with brute force. The fullback's punishing runs set the tone for a double-wing attack that averaged more than 275 rushing yards a game.



VAL HOEPPNER / ARGUS LEADER

West Central High School football players stream out of the locker room toward the practice field Wednesday night as they prepared for tonight's Class 11A state title game against Hot Springs.

"He's probably the strongest fullback we've ever had," Uttecht said. "He runs straight ahead and over you."

Recently, though, Zacharias has tried to add style to his technique after years of charging into the backs of offensive linemen, who often absorbed more punishment than the defense.

"I've seen how Lemke can make cuts and get better yardage, so I've been trying to do that," he said. "I'm trying to save my guys, because I usually run into their backs. I just cut around them now, and that helps."

As a defensive end, Zacharias has tallied 90 tackles for an imposing unit that has posted five shutouts while allowing less than 130 yards per game.

"We usually match him up against the opposing team's strength, and he's our strength," Uttecht said.

Kadinger's sacrifice

There was a time when Kadinger was slated to fill the coveted varsity fullback spot in West Central's offense.

But after playing the position in junior high, he agreed to accept the less glorified role of offensive lineman when Zacharias arrived on the high school scene.

"That shows you how unselfish he is," said Uttecht of the 220-pound Kadinger. "He was willing to move to a guard position to put the team above himself, and he's become one of best guards we've ever had."

Kadinger teams with the 220-pound Edberg to bust open holes for Lemke, Zacharias and Peterson — providing the blue-collar basis for West Central's success.

"We've been been together since seventh grade," said Kadinger of the offensive line. "It was a dream of mine to play varsity football, and (moving to guard) allowed me to start as a sopho-

Seven championships

West Central has won seven state Class 11A football championships in 10 years. Here are those titles and the teams they defeated:

- 1993: Winner 20-14
- 1996: Belle Fourche 43-7
- 1997: Sisseton 50-0
- 1998: Winner 34-7
- 2000: Belle Fourche 47-14
- 2001: Lead 33-0
- 2002: Lead 42-7

more, so it worked out well. A lot of people expect state championships in Hartford, and we've been able to have that success."

As an inside linebacker on defense, Kadinger has made 90 tackles after accepting the tutelage of former all-state standout Matt Norgaard, who graduated after leading the Trojans to their 2001 state title.

"He taught me a lot of what I know today," said Kadinger, who will probably play linebacker in college. "When I was a sophomore, he'd show me little things and I'd pick up on them, and I've been using them ever since."

Lemke: Little big man

Despite standing 5-foot-7 and weighing only 155 pounds, Lemke sports a big appetite for state championships.

In addition to winning three football titles as Uttecht's big-play performer, he has captured two individual wrestling crowns — including an undefeated season at 140 pounds as a junior.

Lemke has received NCAA Division I interest as a wrestler from Big 12 programs Missouri and Oklahoma, but he hasn't decided which sports he wants to pursue after high school.

For three years, he has lit up

opposing teams as the most flashy and elusive member of West Central's backfield, using extra effort to make up for lack of size. In 2003, Lemke has rushed for 1,225 yards and 16 touchdowns, which doesn't surprise his coach.

"Everybody knows what a phenomenal athlete he is, but he's also exceptionally strong," Uttecht said. "He's small, but he benches three times his weight. He can pass, catch, block and tackle, so he's the full package. The only disadvantage he has is his height. He's a great leader and very humble, so he doesn't look for any glory. In fact, I think it even bothers him."

While growing up watching the Trojans build a tradition with halfbacks such as Phil Meehan and Brett Schmeichel, Lemke eagerly awaited his chance and then made the most of it.

"As a kid, you always talk about going to the dome and winning a state championship," said Lemke. "But to get four of them? That would be a pretty big accomplishment. It's more than I ever dreamed of getting."

These seniors, after all, have shown the ability to exceed even the most lofty of expectations. By losing only four games in four years, they have treated West Central's tradition with care and made history in the process.

In the moments after their final home game, Monday's 46-14 semi-final victory over Winner, the legacy lured Lemke once again.

"I waited until everyone left and then sort of looked at the lights after the game — because it was my last time on that field," he said. "That was pretty special, but we've got one more game left to play. We definitely want to go out with a victory to prove that our senior class can do it again."

Reach sports reporter Stu Whitney at 977-3922.

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