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**(S.D.)- Hardrocker Football Releases 2014 Schedule**

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(Rapid City, SD)- After an impressive 6-4 overall record in 2013, the South Dakota School of Mines football team begins its two-year stint in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC). The Hardrockers will then have a permanent home with the rest of SD Mines Athletics in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC) starting in 2016.

"It's great that the Hardrockers were able to find a conference and we are extremely excited to be a part of the RMAC," said Hardrocker football head coach Stacy Collins. "But before that happens we have a commitment to the GNAC and right now our focus is on that great league and more importantly the 2014 season."

The Hardrockers start out the year against their two biggest rivals --- which are both in the RMAC.

SD Mines kicks off the season in the friendly confines of O'Harra Stadium taking on Colorado School of Mines (Golden, Colo.) on Sept. 6 followed by a trip up to Spearfish, S.D., for the 129<sup>th</sup> meeting against Black Hills State on Sept. 13.

"We plan to set the tone early for the 2014 campaign and I see no better way than playing your two biggest rivals," Collins said. "Colorado Mines and BHSU are always circled on the calendar and fans are sure to get their money's worth right out of the gate."

The Hardrocker 'M-Day' homecoming game is slated for Sept. 20 against the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The UW Falcons are an NCAA Div. II program currently in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference who

finished 2013 with a 0-10 overall record.

SD Mines finishes its non-conference schedule with a rematch against William Jewell University (Liberty, Mo.). The Hardrockers have faced the WJU Cardinals (member of the Great Lakes Valley Conference) the previous two seasons and it is becoming quite the matchup between these two programs. Each squad has a record-setting win under its belt. This year's bout will be in Missouri on Sept. 27.

GNAC play begins for South Dakota Mines on Oct. 4 with the Hardrockers traveling Arcata, Calif., to face the Humboldt State Lumberjacks. Humboldt was blanked last year, ending the year with a 0-10 overall mark.

SD Mines first GNAC home game is slated for Oct. 11 against Central Washington University. The CWU Wildcats, from Ellensburg, Wash., finished last season with a 7-3 record and third place in the GNAC standings.

The 'Rockers are then off to Canada to face Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC, on Oct. 18. The Simon Fraser Clan won just three games in 2013, but did close out the season with a victory.

SD Mines is back home on Oct. 25 welcoming the defending GNAC champions, the Azusa Pacific Cougars from Azusa, Calif. The Cougars finished 2013 with a 9-1 record and were also crowned the 2013 National Christian College Athletic Association Victory Bowl Champions (defeated Greenville, 67-0).

The Hardrockers last road trip is Nov. 1, as SD Mines travel west to St. George, Utah, to battle the Dixie State Red Storm, who posted a 4-6 record in 2013.

SD Mines finishes up the 2014 season with two home games. The first is a non-conference matchup with the Southwest Baptist University Bearcats (Bolivar, Mo.). Southwest Baptist competes in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) where the Bearcats finished with a 1-9 overall record in 2013.

The final game of the 2014 season is Nov. 15 at O'Harra Stadium against GNAC opponent Western Oregon. The Western Oregon Wolves are from Monmouth, Ore. In 2013 the Wolves were the GNAC runners-up, earning a 7-3 overall record.

"There's a lot of diversity on this year's schedule," Collins said. "Not only do we have the opportunity to compete for a conference championship, we also get the chance to compete against programs in other Div. II conferences from difference regions of the country. It's going to be great for our student-athletes as well as our Hardrocker fans."