

Banquet honors Blue Jay football machine

By DICK BOYD

The players and coaches of the 2006 Norton Community High School football team were honored at the annual football banquet sponsored by the Blue Jay Booster Club on Sunday, Dec. 10 in the school cafeteria.

Guided by first-year head coach Lucas Melvin, the Blue Jays compiled a 7-3 record, tied for second in the Mid-Continent League and were District and Bi-District runnerup.

With the departure of coach Bruce Graber at the end of last season, coach Melvin moved up from an assistant coach position.

Norton hosted two-time Class 2A defending state champion Smith Center at Travis Field. For the past two seasons, the Redmen had outscored opponents by more

than 40 points per game and brought a 27-game winning streak to Norton. The Blue Jay defense was equal to the occasion but the offense had trouble moving. The result was a 14-3 loss but the Blue Jays now knew they could play with anyone. Smith Center went on to another unbeaten season and third straight state championship.

Norton's only other losses were to state-ranked Phillipsburg, whom they tied for second in the league, and defending 3A state champion Southeast of Saline, coached by former Norton player Pat Haxton.

Following a carry-in meal, coach Melvin introduced the team and made comments to the crowd about each player as he called them forward.

Coach Melvin also presented

individual awards, which had been voted on by the players and coaches. For an unprecedented second year in a row, senior tailback and linebacker Blake VanEaton was chosen "Most Inspirational Player," the most prestigious of all the awards.

VanEaton and senior wide receiver, defensive back Nathan Broeckelman were elected team captains. VanEaton was also voted "Most Valuable Offensive Back" and "Most Valuable Linebacker".

Nathan Broeckelman was named "Most Valuable Receiver/Tight End" and "Most Valuable Defensive Back".

Receiving other awards were: senior center Nic Lewis, "Most Valuable Offensive Lineman"; junior tackle Zach Mannel, "Most Valuable Defensive Lineman";

sophomore running back, linebacker Matt Stanley, "Practice Player of the Year"; sophomore running back, linebacker Brad Nuzum, "Scout Team Player of the Year".

Senior members of this year's team were: Nathan Broeckelman, Blake VanEaton, Chris Davis, Brian Juenemann, Nic Lewis, Lucas Bailey, Shane Mapes, Brett Thomson, Matt Engel, Pat Burton and Mark Scheetz.

Coach Melvin thanked the players; assistant coaches Todd Fulton, Jason Jones, Kevin Jilka, and David Stover; managers Ben Kaus, Star Greene and Angela Horacek; students; family members; cheerleaders; band; grounds crew, Kirk Foley, statistics; Blue Jay Booster Club; news media and the entire community for contrib-

uting to the successful season. "The season started last February when I learned that I was the new head football coach," coach Melvin told the crowd. "Some of our players went out for track and many of them got in the weight room."

"In the summer, we competed in the Fort Hays Football Camp. Seventeen of our players participated. The camp consisted of playing other schools of all sizes in seven-on-seven full pad contact games. It was a three-day camp and we got better every day. We also had our own camp and everybody learned a lot."

"Then came the Smith Center game. We played tremendous against a great team and that set the tone for the season. We knew then that we could play with anyone in

the state.

"Our young men played hard in practices and games all season."

"We had a great season but we expect more. We want to build a program that wants to win games but also build better men. The support in this community is great. We had bigger crowds at some away games than the home teams. We have a great administration that is very accommodating to the needs of student athletes."

"We work hard and have a lot of fun together. We're looking forward to the next season."

The senior players presented to coach Melvin a Blue Jay football which they had autographed and a scrapbook with color pictures of the team. They also presented a color picture of the team to each of the assistant coaches.

Two Norton players are 'All-Staters'

By DICK BOYD

Norton Community High School seniors Blake VanEaton and Chris Davis have been selected to the Class 3A All-State Football Team by the Kansas High School Football Coaches Association.

VanEaton, a 5-foot-11 inch, 165 pound tailback and linebacker, was named to the first team on defense.

VanEaton was the Blue Jays' leader in all-purpose offense yards for the second straight season. He gained 973 yards rushing on 137 attempts for 7.1 yards per carry and 11 touchdowns. He caught three passes for 52 yards and one touchdown and averaged 17.3 yards per reception. He also returned 13 kickoffs for 242 yards and an 18.6 yards average. VanEaton totaled 1,267 yards of offense.

From his linebacking position, VanEaton was second high tackler for Norton with 57 solos, 18 as-

sists, 75 total tackles.

VanEaton also received all league recognition from the Mid-Continent League coaches for the third year in a row. This season, he was named first team on both offense and defense.

Davis, a 6', 165 pound punter, kicker, fullback and linebacker, was named to the first team as a punter. He was the Blue Jay punter for the third straight season. Davis punted 30 times this season for 929 yards and a 31 yard average.

He also kicked off 40 times for 1,537 yards and a 38.4 yard average.

Davis also kicked 20 of 33 extra point tries and 1 of 3 field goal attempts.

From his fullback position, Davis was third in rushing and all-purpose yards. He carried the ball 59 times for 389 yards and a 6.6 yard average and four touchdowns. He caught six passes for 66 yards and an 11 yard average. He had three kickoff returns for 28

yards. Davis had 483 total all-purpose yards.

Davis was sixth high tackler for Norton with 23 solos, 13 assists, 36 total tackles.

Davis also received all-league recognition for the third straight year. He was chosen first team as a kicker and was also named to the second team as a punter.

Other players honored

Also honored by the Coaches Association on defense were: Gary Nagel, 5'11", 225 pound lineman, Ellsworth; Brandon Ming, 6'2", 210 pound lineman, Scott City; Garrett Nikkel, 6'4", 235 pound lineman, Cheney; Randy Perales, 5'9", 250 pound lineman, Holcomb; Ben Kruse, 6'1", 170 pound back, Ellsworth; Daniel Rumpf, 6', 185 pound back, Conway Springs; Doug Beaton, 6'3", 195 pound back, Southeast of Saline; Derek Fisher, 6'2", 180 pound back, Garden Plain; Nathan Matzen, 6', 195 pound linebacker, Garden Plain;

Dan McKee, 5'9", 205 pound linebacker, Halstead; Nick Hardesty, 6', 195 pound linebacker, Southeast of Saline.

Offensive selections were: Ryan Sooter, 6'2", 255 pound lineman, Halstead; Michael Kibbe, 6'5", 260 pound lineman, Conway Springs; Jakob Schomacker, 6'5", 295 pound lineman, Cheney; Skyler Suther, 6'2", 265 pound lineman, Rock Creek; Daniel Schneider, 6'2", 258 pound lineman, Hoisington; Bryson Flax, 6', 180 pound wide receiver, Southeast of Saline; Zac Stetler, 6'5", 210 pound wide receiver, Hoisington; Scott Pauly, 6', 175 pound running back, Conway Springs; Lance Jones, 6'1", 185 pound running back, Burlington; Steven Foster, 6'2", 240 pound running back, Sedgwick; Corbin Kuntzsch, 6'4", 190 pound quarterback, Scott City.

Connor Anderson, 6'2", 175 pounds, Wichita Collegiate, was named the kicker on the team.

Former Norton champ captures all-star match

By DICK BOYD

Clay Madden, Kansas State University freshman from Norton, was invited to compete in the All-Star Classic wrestling dual hosted by the National Wrestling Coaches Association on Nov. 10 in the Dallas Convention Center, Dallas, Texas and came away a winner.

The top NCAA Division I wrestlers were invited to compete in the all-star event and many of the matches featured No. 1 versus No. 2. Wrestlers from college club teams and some from Division II and Division III squads were also invited in order to showcase other

wrestling levels in the United States.

Madden, the only four-time state wrestling champion in Norton's storied history of wrestling, chose not to wrestle in college but is an assistant wrestling coach at Manhattan High School. He was invited to compete in one of the exhibition matches and, after he stepped on the mat, it was evident that he had forgotten little of what he had learned during his championship career.

Madden wrestled at 133 pounds and won an 11-3 major decision over Clay Silver of UT at Arlington.

Husky athlete honored

Kelli Cole, 5-foot-8-inch senior volleyball player for Northern Valley High School, received honorable mention on the 2006 All-Area Volleyball Team selected by the *Salina Journal*.

Cole was chosen earlier to the first team of the All-Cheyenne Conference Volleyball Team by the conference coaches.

Other area players honored by the *Journal* were: Tricia Dorshorst, Oberlin, first team; Megan Dennis, Oakley, second

team; Callie Baalman, Oakley; Rexanne Schilowsky, Phillipsburg; Heather Williams, Oberlin, third team; Jamie Alexander, Hill City; Rebekah Burgess, Smith Center; Megan Cahoj, Atwood; Lauren Fortin, Oberlin; Demi French, Osborne; Amber Hockman, Phillipsburg; Alecia Zimelman, St. Francis, honorable mention.

SportsLine 877-3361

Colby's head football coach leaving at semester

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Colby School District is again looking for a head football coach.

The school board approved the resignation of coach and strength training instructor Bob Ray at its Dec. 18 meeting.

In addition to the resignation, Ray will be fined \$500 for breaking his contract early.

Ray is expected to leave at the end of the current semester to be-

come an assistant football coach at McPherson College. Ray coached Colby to a 1-8 record last season, his only season at Colby.

Board member Stan Molstad also asked about Ray's supplemental contract. That contract was for Ray to be an assistant track coach in spring 2007. That supplemental contract is now void but Ray will still be compensated for his regular teaching duties.

"We still owe him some money," said superintendent Kirk

Nielsen. The board will get an accounting of the amount owed to Ray at its January meeting.

Because Ray is leaving at the end of the semester, a long-term substitute teacher may be needed to fill his position.

District financial officer Jo DeYoung said some one could be hired permanently, but a substitute is a more likely solution.

Substitute teachers are paid \$81 a day, a rate set by board policy.

After 30 days, pay increases to the beginning-teacher rate of \$163.10 a day.

DeYoung said Ray worked 88 days of his contract, 99 days are left.

Seventh boys finish with 5-5 record

The Norton 7th grade boys had their hands full, playing two tough opponents in one day (Dec. 9). They lost to Beloit 38-32 and to Smith Center 43-26.

"Beloit was a very good team and I thought we had a great game with them," said coach Jim Myers. "The kids gave a great effort, but just came up a little short," he said.

Scoring — Jordan Wahlmeier 8; Tye Nickell 7; Joe LeClair 10; Casey Temmel 5; and Seth Antrim 2.

LeClair was rebounding leader with 14 (8 offensive and 6 defensive). Nickell led in rebounding with 6.

Norton shot 47 percent from the floor (15 of 32) and 44 percent from the line (7 of 16).

Beloit was 50 percent from the field (16 of 32) and 50 percent from the line (7 of 14).

Vs. Smith Center

"Smith Center really packed it in, using a zone and didn't give our post any room to operate."

"We just couldn't hit enough outside shots," coach Myers said.

"The kids worked extremely hard in the game, but ran out of steam in the second half."

"Two tough games in one day were hard to handle," the coach said.

Scoring — Wahlmeier 5; Dillon McConney 8; Nickell 7; LeClair 2; and Trey Millan 4.

McConney shot at a 57 percent clip, connecting on 4 of 7 field goals. Rebounding leaders were Nickell and LeClair with 5 each.

The Blue Jays were 11 of 32 from the field for 34 percent and 4 of 10 from the line for 40 percent.

Smith Center was 16 of 32 from the outside for 50 percent and 10 of 20 from the stripe for 50 percent.

The 7th graders finished the season with a 5-5 record.

Coach Myers thanked Clayton Cox for helping with the 7th grade boys this year.

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