

# Eight letter winners on Jay ladies' roster

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Kevin Jilka's 2008-'09 Norton Community High School girls basketball team returns eight letter winners, including four starters, from last season's quintet which competed in the Class 3A state tournament.

In addition to winning the Class 3A substate tournament and advancing to the state tournament in Hutchinson, Norton placed second in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland, third in the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament and tied for fourth with Ellis in the league race.

The Lady Jays were impressive in defeating No. 1 seed Sacred Heart of Salina 40-35 to win the substate championship. Norton was seeded No. 6 in the state tournament and played No. 3 seed Wichita Collegiate on opening day. Both teams hit 15 field goals and 9 free throws but three-point shots by Collegiate made the difference and gave Collegiate

a 45-39 win and ended Norton's season at 16-8.

It was the Norton girls first state tournament appearance since 2001 when they placed fourth with an 18-7 record.

Returning starters for Norton are: Taylor Rossi, 5-foot-3-inch senior; Laura Lee Baird, 5'9" senior; KaraJo Jones, 5'9" senior and Hayli Bozarth, 5'10" senior.

Other returning letter winners are: Katharine Roy, 5'8" senior; Ashlie Stewart, 5'3" junior; Amanda Ray, 5'10" junior and Shelby Jones, 5'4" junior.

Other team members are: Lacey Wallingford, 5'10", senior; Kendra Engelbert, 5'8"; Hannah Waggoner, 5'; Lacy Keilig, 5'11"; Raven Brown, 5'5"; Kaitlyn Wolf, 5'11", juniors; Kaylen Rossi, 5'4"; Dustyna Sprigg, 5'8"; Meaghan Peterson, 5'4", sophomores; Sady Keilig, 5'3"; Alyssa Boser, 5'3"; Caren Thomson, 5'7"; Tiffany Eagleburger, 5'3"; Alexis Henson, 5'8"; Erin Terrell, 5'8"; Kylie Nuzum, 5'5"; Fayth Davenport,

5'5", freshmen.

Laura Lee Baird and Hayli Bozarth were both first team all-league selections last season. Baird was also a first team choice as a sophomore and received honorable mention by vote of the team coaches her freshman season.

Baird was leading scorer last season with 16.3 points per contest and led the Lady Jays in free throws by hitting 74.8 percent of her charities.

Baird was also steals leader with 73. Bozarth was right behind Baird in scoring with a 16 points per game average and was the Lady Jays' leading rebounder with 143, or 6 per contest. Bozarth was also the most accurate field goal shooter among the starters with a 56.9 percent average and second high in free throw accuracy with a 69.9 percent average.

KaraJo Jones was second high rebounder with 107, or 4.5 per game. Taylor Rossi was assists leader with 82 and second in steals with 41.

Assistant coaches again this season will be George Rossi and Joan Bolt.

### Coach's comments

"Overall, our practices have gone very well," said coach Jilka, who is beginning his 27th season as the head girls basketball coach at Norton.

"When you have the experience we have coming back that is a big factor plus getting to play in the state tournament last year has really helped our confidence. We now need to play with that confidence this year.

"Our depth is very good. We feel we can go eight deep so we can pressure and get up and down the floor, which is the way we like to play.

"Finding other players to score

this year has been a goal of ours so we are anxious to get the season started to see where we are and what improvements we need to make."

### Long time tenure

In his 26 years as head coach of the Lady Blue Jays, coach Jilka's teams have won 445 games and lost 145 for a 75 percent winning average. Jilka's Lady Jays have averaged 17 wins and just 5.6 losses per season.

Following their fourth place finish in the state tournament in 2000-'01, Coach Jilka's 2001-'02 Lady Jays finished 13-9 and placed fourth in the league. Norton compiled a 12-9 record in 2003-'04 when they tied for second in the league and their season ended with a 56-49 overtime loss to Be-

loit in the substate tournament.

The season ended for the 2004-'05 quintet with a loss to eventual champion Holcomb in the substate tournament. The Lady Jays were 17-5 that year and were undefeated league champions and also league tournament champions.

The 2005-'06 Norton girls compiled an 18-2 record, were undefeated in the Mid-Continent League and runner-up in the league tournament.

Their season came to a sudden close with a 44-33 loss to Riley County in the substate tournament.

The 2006-'07 Lady Jays were 13-7 and also placed third in the league tournament. Their season ended with a 46-42 loss to Oberlin in the substate tournament.

## Boys, girls Blue Jay basketball schedule

Dec. 6 - Atwood V/JV, There, 3 p.m.  
Dec. 11-13 - Goodland Topside Tipoff Tournament  
Dec. 18 - Stockton, There, 5 p.m.  
Dec. 19 - Phillipsburg V/JV/C, Here, 4 p.m.  
Dec. 20 - Quinter JV Tournament, There, 9 a.m.  
Dec. 29-30-31 - Hill City C Boys Tournament, There  
Jan. 6 - Oberlin V/JV, Here, 5 p.m.  
Jan. 9 - Osborne V/JV, There, 4 p.m.  
Jan. 10 - Phillipsburg C Girls Tournament, There, 9 a.m.  
Jan. 16 - Trego Community V/JV/C, There, 4 p.m.

Jan. 17 - MCL Feather Bracket Games TBA  
Jan. 19 - MCL Boys Quarterfinal Games, TBA  
Jan. 20 - MCL Girls Quarterfinal Games, TBA  
Jan. 23 - MCL Semi-Final Games, in Hays, TBA  
Jan. 24 - MCL Tourney Finals, in Hays, TBA  
Jan. 27 - Goodland V/JV/C, Here, 4 p.m.  
Feb. 2 - Colby C B/G, Here, 6 p.m.  
Feb. 3 - Smith Center V/JV/C, There, 4 p.m.  
Feb. 6 - Hill City V/JV/C, Here, 4 p.m.  
Feb. 10 - Oberlin V/JV, There, 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 17 - Hoxie V/JV, There, 6:30 p.m.  
Feb. 20 - Ellis V/JV, Here, 5 p.m.  
Feb. 23 - Plainville V/JV, Here, 5 p.m.  
Feb. 24 - Colby V/JV/C, There, 4:30 p.m.  
March 2 - Sub-State Girls Quarterfinals, Holcomb  
March 3 - Sub-State Boys Quarterfinals, Holcomb  
March 5 - Sub-State Girls Semifinals, Holcomb  
March 6 - Sub-State Boys Semifinals, Holcomb  
March 7 - Sub-State Finals, Holcomb  
March 11-14 Class 3A State Tournament, Hutchinson

## Boys' roster includes 3 lettermen

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Doug Reusink's Norton Community High School boys basketball team has three lettermen returning from last season's squad which compiled a 15-7 record.

Last year's Blue Jays placed third in the Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland to begin the season, third in the Mid-Continent League Tournament and third in the league race with a 6-2 record.

Norton reached the semi-finals of the substate tournament, where they lost a 56-53 game to a strong Sacred Heart of Salina quintet to finish their season.

Returning for the Blue Jays this season will be lettermen Zac Dreher, a 6-foot-2-inch senior; Landon Hamel, a 5'9" junior and J.D. Gall, a 5'10" junior.

Dreher averaged 4 points per game and 2.7 rebounds last season.

Hamel averaged 3.7 points and 2.3 rebounds and Gall scored an average of 2.4 points and pulled down 1.7 rebounds per contest.

Other squad members are: Ashton Draper, 6'; Marcus Herman, 5'7", juniors; Dakota Dreher, 5'10"; Luke Ninemire, 5'10"; Cole Archer, 5'1", sophomores; Jordan Wahlmeier, 6'; Dillon McConney, 5'10"; Zach Hartwell, 5'4"; Tye Nickell, 5'7"; Alec Gilgenbach, 6'4", freshmen.

### Coach's comments

"We return no starters from last season so will be very inexperienced," said coach Reusink.

"Our three returning lettermen will need to step up as their roles change from coming off the bench to leaders on the floor.

"We also have a couple of injuries to boys we expected to play, which means we will probably have a couple of freshmen giving us playing time at the varsity level.

"I think the league will be very tough with Phillipsburg, Trego and Hill City at the top with some very talented players returning. The rest of the league will be right behind them with at least two or three starters returning.

"If we can survive our brutal schedule before Christmas and develop some young players along the way, hopefully we will be competitive by season's end."

Coach Reusink's assistant coaches again this season are David Stover and Todd Fulton. Student managers are Hannah Fulton and David Cressler.

### Veteran head coach

Coach Reusink is beginning his 30th year of coaching high school boys teams and has compiled an overall record of 435 wins and 194 losses for an outstanding 69.2 percent victory record. This is an average of 15 wins and 6.7 losses per year.

Under the tutelage of coach Reusink, the 2002-'03 Norton quintet won the Class 3A state basketball championship with a 22-5 record and the 2003-'04 squad was also outstanding, compiling an 18-4 record. The 2004-'05 Blue Jays were 15-7.

The Norton boys' 2005-'06 record was 12-8 and they finished second in the Mid-Continent League tournament. In 2006-'07 squad was 14-7, tied for second in the league and placed second in the league tournament.

Coach Reusink's overall record in Norton is 221 wins and 148 losses.



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## THE NORTON TELEGRAM

## Vs. Atwood

# Basketball teams open Saturday on the road

The Norton Community High School girls and boys basketball teams will open their 2008-'09 season on Saturday versus Atwood in Atwood.

The girls varsity game and boys junior varsity game will begin at 3 p.m., followed by the boys varsity and girls junior varsity game at approximately 4:30 p.m.

The varsity contests will be played in the main gym and the junior varsity contests in the auxiliary gym, both in the same building.

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