

# Blue Jay boys get win, but finish seventh

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

Coach Doug Reusink's Norton Community High School boys basketball team, playing with no returning starters and just three lettermen, won their first game of the 2008-'09 season en route to placing seventh in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 11-12-13 in Goodland.

In the opener on Thursday, Norton lost 73-35 to eventual tournament champion Ottawa. In the consolation bracket on Friday, the Blue Jays lost 52-40 to Burlington, Colo. and they defeated Weskan 61-44 on Saturday.

Ottawa defeated McCook 57-47 to win the championship. Sharon Springs outscored Goodland 73-45 to place third and Wray, Colo. defeated Burlington 48-43 for fifth.

## Ottawa

Norton was outscored 22-11 in the first quarter. The Blue Jays' points came on baskets by Ashton Draper, Luke Ninemire, Landon Hamel, J.D. Gall and Zac Dreher and a free throw by Dreher.

Norton scored 9 points in the second quarter with baskets by Draper, Hamel, Zac Dreher and Ninemire and a free throw by Ninemire. Ottawa tallied 23 points to take a 45-20 half-time advantage.

The Blue Jays' only points in the third quarter came on three-point baskets by Dillon McConney and Draper. Ottawa scored 12 more points to extend their lead to 57-26.

Norton scored 9 more points in the fourth quarter on two baskets by Draper and Hamel and a free throw by Ninemire. Ottawa added 16 to their total.

Draper was leading scorer for Norton with 11 points on 1 of 6 three-point shots for 17 percent, 4 of 7 two-point attempts for 57 percent and 5 of 13 overall for 39 percent.

Hamel tallied 8 points on 4 of 8 overall which included a trey miss for 50 percent accuracy.

As a team, Norton hit 2 of 13 from beyond the arc for 15 percent, 13 of 27 two-point tries for 48 percent and 15 of 40 overall for 38 percent.

Ottawa hit 5 of 19 from three-point range for 26 percent, 25 of 52 two-point shots for 48 percent and 30 of 71 overall for 42 percent.

The Blue Jays hit 3 of 10 free throws for 30 percent and the Cyclones swished 8 of 13 for 62 percent.

Norton had 6 offensive and 18 defensive rebounds for 24 total. Ottawa pulled down 22 offensive and 24 defensive caroms for 46 total.

Draper led Norton in rebounds with 6, followed by Dakota Dreher, Landon Hamel, 4 each; Luke Ninemire, Zac Dreher, 3 each; J.D. Gall, 2; Dillon McConney, Marcus Herman, 1 each.

The Blue Jays had 5 steals and the Cyclones had 19. McConney, Draper, Hamel, Gall and Zac Dreher each had 1 steal.

Gall had 2 assists and Hamel had 1. Ottawa had 7 assists.

Norton had 22 turnovers and Ottawa gave up the ball 9 times.

"We did some things better than in our first game with Atwood but are still not very consistent," said coach Reusink.

"We make too many turnovers and we don't block people out on rebounds. We must correct these two things to be in ball games. We have a lot of fundamental errors which can be corrected.

"Ottawa is an outstanding team. They're as good as any team we'll face this year."

## BOX SCORE

### Norton Boys

Dillon McConney 0 1 0-0 3; Ashton Draper 4 1 0-0 11; Luke Ninemire 20-2-36; Landon Hamel 4 0 0-0 8; J.D. Gall 1 0 0-0 2; Zac Dreher 2 0 1-2 5; Game Totals 13 23-8 35.

### Ottawa Boys

Shane Steelman 20-0-4; Adam Maxwell 0 2 2-2 8; Eric Messenger 1 0 0-2; Adam Hasty 5 3 2-2 21; Austin Hasty 2 0 1-1 5; Kevin Barber 8 0 1-1 17; Jake Moore 3 0 1-2 7; Chase Dengel 1 0 0-0 2; James Peoples 3 0 1-3 7; Game Totals 25 5 8-11 73.

### Burlington

Norton outscored Burlington in the second and fourth quarters but lost the game in the third quarter when the Blue Jays were outscored by 13 points.

The Blue Jays trailed 10-6 after one quarter in which Landon Hamel, J.D. Gall and Zac Dreher each hit baskets.

Norton picked up the offense in the second quarter when the Jays outscored the Cougars 14-11 to trail by just 21-20 at half-time. Hamel hit two field goals and two free throws, Ashton Draper drained a three-pointer, Luke Ninemire hit a two-point basket and Dakota Dreher swished two free throws.

The Blue Jays were outscored 18-5 in the third period to make it a 39-25 game. Norton's only points came on two two-point baskets and one from long range by Hamel.

A 15-13 fourth quarter in Norton's favor wasn't enough for a Blue Jay rally to win. Hamel and Jordan Wahlmeier each hit a two-point and three-point basket, Dakota Dreher and Draper each hit a two-point basket and Ninemire added a free throw.

Leading scorer for Norton was Hamel with 20 points on 2 of 5 from beyond the arc for 40 percent, 6 of 11 two-point attempts for 55 percent and 8 of 16 overall for 50 percent and 2 of 5 free throws for 60 percent.

As a team, Norton swished 4 of 17 from beyond the arc for 24 percent, 11 of 40 two-point attempts for 28 percent and 15 of 57 overall for 26 percent.

Burlington hit 3 of 9 treys for 33 percent, 16 of 33 two-point tries for 49 percent and 19 of 42 overall for 45 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton was 7 of 15 for 47 percent and

Burlington was 11 of 16 for 69 percent.

The Blue Jays had 25 rebounds, 12 offensive and 13 defensive. The Cougars grabbed 5 offensive and 30 defensive caroms for 35 total.

Zac Dreher was leading rebounder for Norton with 7, followed by Draper, Hamel, 6 each; Ninemire, 3; Dakota Dreher, 2; Marcus Herman, 1.

Norton had 11 steals and Burlington had 6. Wahlmeier, Hamel and Gall each had 3 thefts and Draper and Dakota Dreher had 1 each.

Draper and Gall each had 1 assist. Burlington had 5 assists.

The Blue Jays turned the ball over just 12 times while causing the Cougars to turn the ball over 23 times.

"We played well at times against Burlington but lost our composure and let things get away from us in the third quarter," said coach Reusink.

"Our inside players had trouble against the taller Burlington players and we just didn't shoot it well enough on the perimeter to make the difference.

"We fought hard to the end, which we had not done previously."

## BOX SCORE

### Norton Boys

Dakota Dreher 1 0 2-5 4; Jordan Wahlmeier 1 1 0-0 5; Ashton Draper 1 1 0-0 5; Luke Ninemire 1 0 1-2 3; Landon Hamel 6 2 2-5 20; J.D. Gall 1 0 0-0 2; Zac Dreher 1 0 0-0 2; Game Totals 12 4 5-12 40.

### Burlington Boys

Chandler Reams 1 0 2-4 4; Luke Prochaska 4 0 4-4 12; Dylan Pralle 0 3 0-0 9; Stetson Corman 1 0 0-0 2; Canaan Reeverts 4 0 4-8 12; Dalton Rico 2 0 0-0 4; Nolan Queen 4 0 1-1 9; Game Totals 16 3 11-17 52.

### Weskan

Twenty-two points in the first quarter and 23 in the third quarter were all Norton needed to defeat Weskan for the Blue Jays' first win of the season.

J.D. Gall burned the nets in the first period with four two-point field goals and a free throw. Landon Hamel hit a trey and two two-point baskets. Ashton Draper added a field goal and two free throws and Dakota Dreher drained two charities to give the Blue Jays a 22-8 lead.

Norton had trouble buying a basket in the second quarter when the Jays were outscored 12-4 to make Norton's half-time lead 26-20. Hamel hit a field goal and Dakota Dreher swished two charities in the period.

The Blue Jays came out of the locker room fired up after intermission and poured in 23 points in the third quarter while limiting Weskan to 15 to extend their lead to 49-35. Hamel led the way with four two-point baskets and two free throws. Gall hit two field goals and a free throw, Draper swished a field goal and two charities and Dakota Dreher and Zac Dreher each hit a basket.

Norton also outscored Wes-



Norton's Dakota Dreher and an Ottawa player battled for possession of a loose basketball during the Blue Jays' opening game of the Topside Tip-Off Tournament last Thursday in Goodland.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

kan 12-9 in the fourth period. Hamel and Zac Dreher each hit two more baskets, Draper added one two-pointer and Gall hit two charities.

Hamel led Norton in scoring with 23 points on 1 of 3 from beyond the arc for 33 percent, 9 of 15 two-point attempts for 60 percent and 10 of 18 overall for 56 percent accuracy. He was perfect on 2 free throws.

Gall added 16 points to the Norton cause. He missed all six three-point tries but found the range on 6 of 11 two-point shots for 55 percent and ended with 6 of 17 for 35 percent overall. He also hit 4 of 8 from the charity stripe for 50 percent.

Draper was also in double figures. He hit 10 points on 3 of 8 overall, which included three misses from long range, for 38 percent and was a perfect 4 of 4 from the free throw line for 100 percent.

As a team, the Blue Jays hit 1 of 12 from beyond the arc for 8 percent, 22 of 46 two-point tries for 48 percent and 23 of 58 overall for 40 percent.

Weskan swished 2 of 8 from long range for 25 percent, 16 of 49 from two-point land for 33 percent and 18 of 57 overall for 32 percent.

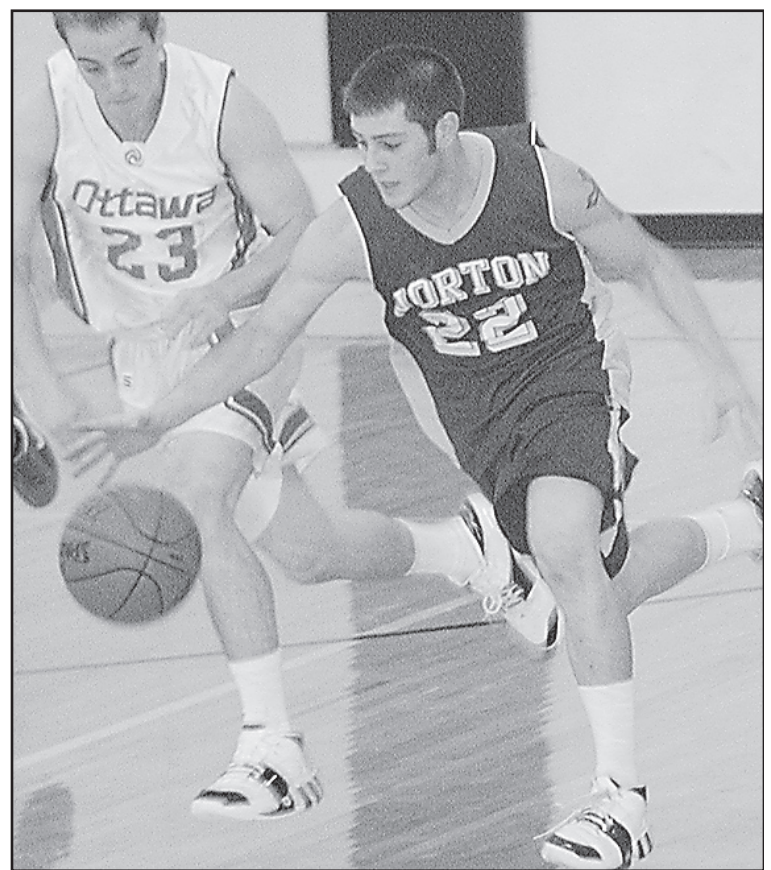
From the charity stripe, Norton hit 14 of 22 for 64 percent and Weskan connected on 6 of 13 for 46 percent.

Norton had 15 offensive and 27 defensive rebounds for 42 total. Weskan grabbed 16 offensive and 22 defensive caroms for 38 total.

Draper had a double-double with 13 rebounds, followed by Dakota Dreher, 7; Luke Ninemire, 6; Landon Hamel, 5; J.D. Gall, Zac Dreher, 4 each; Tye Nickell, 2; Marcus Herman, 1.

The Blue Jay defense had 13 steals and Weskan had just 1 theft. Hamel had 7 thefts, followed by Zac Dreher, 4; Gall, 2.

Norton had 10 assists compared to 3 for Weskan. Hamel led with 5, followed by Ninemire, 4; Gall, 1.



Norton's Landon Hamel drove for the basket during the Blue Jays' opening game of the Topside Tip-Off Tournament against Ottawa in Goodland last Thursday. Hamel was Norton's leading scorer in the tournament with 51 points in three games.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

The Blue Jays had 14 turnovers while causing Weskan to lose the ball 22 times.

"We got off to a good start but again failed to maintain any type of consistency on either end of the floor," said coach Reusink.

"We were pleased to get the win. Our boys deserved it and I was happy with our effort.

"We must work to execute better and we still need to find some people we can count on off the bench.

"Landon Hamel was named to the All-Tournament Team, which was well deserved."

## BOX SCORE

### Norton Boys

Dakota Dreher 10 4 5-6; Ashton Draper 3 0 4-4 10; Luke Ninemire 0 0 0-2 0; Landon Hamel 9 1 2-2 23; J.D. Gall 6 0 4-8 16; Zac

Dreher 3 0 0-1 6; Game Totals 22 1 14-22 61.

### Weskan Boys

Matt Kuykendall 0 2 0-2 6; Derek McKinney 2 0 3-4 7; Nathan McKinney 1 0 1-2 3; Garrett Reiss 1 0 0-1 2; Zach Hilgemann 1 0 0-0 2; Cody Pancake 4 0 2-2 10; Dakota Reiss 7 0 0-2 14; Game Totals 16 2 6-13 44.

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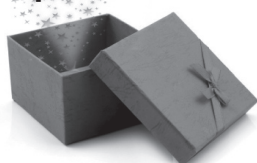
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