



Lady Jay sophomore point guard Tawni Griffey went up for a layup during Norton's valiant effort to defeat Hill City in the championship game of the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Hays on Saturday. On defense for the Lady Ringnecks was Kelsey Keith., No. 14.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

# Norton Lady Jays upset state ranked Smith Center quintet

By DICK BOYD  
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The No. 4 seeded Norton Community High School girls basketball team was equal to the challenge Friday night when they upset the No. 1 seeded and No. 2 state ranked (3A) Smith Center quintet 39-32 in the championship semi-finals of the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

It was the first loss for Smith Center this season and put Norton in Saturday's championship finals versus No. 2 seed and No. 1 state ranked (2A) Hill City.

On the strength of 10 points on 5 baskets by Smith Center's McKenzie Benoit in the first quarter, the favored Lady Red took an 18-10 lead after one quarter. Norton's points in the period came from two baskets from beyond the arc by sophomore guard Tawni Griffey, a two-point basket by junior post Erin Terrell and two free throws by senior guard Dustyna Sprigg.

It turned out to be by far Smith Center's best scoring quarter of the game as the Lady Jay defense kicked in and limited the Lady Red to just 14 more points the rest of the game!

With Griffey and Sprigg leading the way, Norton outscored Smith Center 15-5 in the second quarter to lead 25-23 at halftime. Griffey hit another trey and two two-point baskets and Sprigg hit two two-pointers and two charity tosses. Junior post Caren Thomson also hit a two-point basket.

The Lady Jay defense was also equal to the occasion in the second half where they held Smith Center scoreless in the third quarter and allowed them only 9 points in the final stanza.

Norton scored just 6 points in the third period on two baskets by Griffey and one by Thomson but extended the lead to 31-23.

The Lady Red did not give up without a fight and cut the Norton lead to 32-29 with 58 seconds left. Sprigg was fouled with 48 seconds remaining and hit both charities to seal the deal!

Griffey hit two free throws, Sprigg hit another charity and Terrell put the punctuation on the victory with a layup on a fast break with 2 seconds left!

"It's always tough playing Smith Center," said Norton head girls basketball coach Kevin Jilka. "We were down by eight points after one quarter but worked hard to get the lead by halftime. We gained some confidence and played well in the second half. Our defense did a great job in the second half; keeping them from scoring in the third quarter was great. We got defensive stops when we needed them."

"We also made our free throws down the stretch. I'm so proud of our girls' tremendous effort!"

Griffey was leading scorer for the Lady Jays with 19 points on a net-smoking 3 of 4 from beyond the arc for 75 percent, 4 of 11 two-point tries for 36 percent and 7 of 15 overall for 47 percent. She was also 2 of 3 from the charity stripe for 67 percent.

Sprigg was also in double figures for Norton with 11 points on 2 of 4 from the field for 50 percent and 7 of 10 charities for a very accurate 70 percent.

Top scorer for Smith Center was Benoit, who hit only one more basket in the game after swishing five in the first quarter and ended with 12 points.

As a team, Norton hit 3 of 6 from long range for 50 percent, 10 of 32 two-point tries for 31 percent and 13 of 38 overall for 34 percent.

The Lady Red missed all 6 trey tries, hit 14 of 42 two-point field goal tries for 33 percent and were 14 of 48 overall for 29 percent.

The Lady Jays made 10 of 18 free throw attempts for 56 percent and the Lady Red hit 4 of 8 for 50 percent.

Norton had 5 offensive and 16 defensive rebounds for 21 total and Smith Center grabbed 8 offensive and 16 defensive caroms for 24 total.

Thomson and Terrell led Norton in rebounds with 7 each, followed by Griffey, 4; Sprigg, 2; Rossi, 1.

The Lady Jays had 14 steals compared to just 8 for the Lady Red. Terrell was the leader with 7 thefts, followed by Thomson, 4; Rossi, 2; Sprigg, 1.

Both teams had 5 offensive assists. Rossi had 2 and Griffey, Terrell and Thomson each had 1.

The Lady Jays had 4 charges taken. Rossi had 2, Terrell and Thomson had 1 each.

Norton had 21 turnovers and Smith Center had 19.

## GAME STATISTICS

### Norton Girls

Tawni Griffey 4 3 2-3 19; Kaylen Rossi 0 0 1-2 1; Erin Terrell 2 0-3 4; Dustyna Sprigg 2 0-7 10 11; Caren Thomson 2 0-0 4; Game Totals 10 3 10-18 39.

### Smith Center Girls

Sydney Benoit 4 0 1-2 9; Carley Ohmstede 1 0 0-2; Whitney St. Clair 0 0 3-4 3; Sara Timmons 2 0 0-4; McKenzie Benoit 6 0 0-2 12; Tangie Hileman 1 0 0-2; Game Totals 14 0 4-8 32.

# Norton forced to settle for runner-up against Hill City

By DICK BOYD  
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Coach Kevin Jilka's No. 4 seeded Norton Community High School girls basketball team upset No. 1 seed Smith Center in the semi-finals of the Mid-Continent League Tournament on Friday but had to settle for runner-up after failing to upset No. 2 seed and No. 1 state ranked Hill City (2A) in a 55-44 game on Saturday night in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

Both teams hit 17 field goals in the finale but Hill City swished 10 shots from beyond the arc for 3 points each and Norton hit just 6. The Lady Ringnecks also went to the free throw line more times and hit 11 of 12 charities.

Hill City hit four shots from long range in the first quarter when they took an 18-10 lead. Norton played them even the next two quarters before putting

the Lady Ringnecks on the free throw line in the fourth quarter where they hit 7 of 8 charities to extend the final margin of victory to 11 points.

Despite playing good overall defense, the Lady Jays were also outrebanded 29-21.

"Most of the time we defended pretty well," said coach Jilka. "But, we just got killed on the boards."

"Despite the fact we got down by eight points in the first quarter, we didn't quit and came within five points in the second quarter."

"I'm proud of our girls. We had a chance but didn't hit the big shots we needed and made too many little errors to win a big game like this. Hill City had been there before and knew what to do."

"We'll have to learn from it and move on. We have to get ready for a good Goodland team on Tuesday."

Norton is now 8-4 for the season.

Norton freshman guard Katelyn Engelbert was the leading scorer for Norton with 13 points. She buried three shots from three-point range and another two-pointer in Norton's 15 point second quarter and added a two-point basket in the fourth quarter. Engelbert hit 3 of 5 from beyond the arc for 60 percent accuracy and 2 of 3 two-point baskets for 67 percent and was 5 of 8 overall for 63 percent shooting!

Second high scorer for the Lady Jays was senior guard Dustyna Sprigg with 12 points. She scored in all four quarters. Sprigg hit a basket in the opening quarter, two in the second quarter, two and a free throw in the third quarter and a free throw in the final stanza. She hit 5 of 9 field goal attempts for 56 percent and 2 of 4 from the charity stripe for 50 percent.

The Lady Jays' third double figure scorer was sophomore point guard Tawni Griffey with 10 points. She hit a trey and two-point shot in the first quarter, a two-point basket in the third quarter and another trey in the final stanza. Griffey hit 2 of 8 from long range for 25 percent, 2 of 6 two-point shots for 33 percent and 4 of 14 overall for 29 percent.

Leading scoring for the Lady Ringnecks were Kelsey Keith with 18 points and Lexi Hardiek with 16 points.

As a team, Norton hit 6 of 17 three-point tries for 35 percent, 11 of 28 two-point attempts for 39 percent and 17 of 45 overall for 38 percent. Hill City connected on 10 of 24 from beyond the arc for 42 percent, 7 of 26 two-point tries for 27 percent and 17 of 41 overall for 41 percent.

Norton hit 4 of 8 free throws for 50 percent and Hill City swished 11 of 12 for 92 percent.

The Lady Jays had 5 offensive

and 16 defensive rebounds for 21 total. Hill City pulled down 10 offensive and 19 defensive caroms for 29 total.

Leading rebounder for Norton was Terrell with 9, followed by Sprigg, 6; Jones, 4; Rossi, Thomson, 1 each.

Norton had 12 steals and Hill City had 9. Kamilla Jones had 3 thefts, followed by Griffey, Engelbert, Terrell, Sprigg, 2 each; Thomson, 1.

Both teams had 12 offensive assists. Jones led with 5, followed by Rossi, 4; Griffey, 2; Sprigg, 1.

Both teams had 17 turnovers.

### Scores of other games

Smith Center edged Plainville 38-37 to place third, Phillipsburg defeated Osborne 41-37 to finish in fifth and Ellis outscored Trego 55-36 to place seventh in the league tournament.

### Next action

Norton girls and boys will host Goodland in non-league action today.

Games will begin at 4 p.m. in the Wilmett Kirk Memorial Gym with the boys C-team game followed by the junior varsity boys game.

The junior varsity girls game will be played at 4:45 p.m. in the NCHS Stull Gym.

The varsity girls game will follow at the regular time of 6:15 and will be followed by the boys varsity contest.

## GAME STATISTICS

### Norton Girls

Tawni Griffey 2 2 0-10; Katelyn Engelbert 2 3 0-0 13; Erin Terrell 1 0 2-4 4; Dustyna Sprigg 5 0 2-4 12; Kamilla Jones 0 1 0-0 3; Caren Thomson 1 0 0-2; Game Totals 11 6 4-8 44.

### Hill City Girls

Kelsey Keith 3 3 3-4 18; Sheranda Brown 0 1 0-0 3; Blair Nickel-son 0 2 2-8; Lexi Hardiek 0 4 4-16; Tayler Money 1 0 2-4 4; Haley Dinkel 3 0 0-0 6; Game Totals 10 11-12 55.

# Northern Valley boys basketball team loses to Thunder Ridge Friday night

By DANA PAXTON  
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Last Friday the Northern Valley boys varsity basketball team took on Thunder Ridge and lost 53-40.

The Huskies started the game in the first quarter by sinking two three pointers. Colton Lowry and Dusty Eagleburger were the scorers. Thunder Ridge also hit a three point shot along with five, 2 pointers to take the lead 13-6.

During the second quarter, the Huskies picked up the pace scoring 12. Phillip Compton and Gunnar Hays each hit a three point shot followed by Austin Herman and Tyler Montgomery each sinking a two point shot. Eagleburger added to the Husky tally with two of three free throws. Thunder Ridge slacked off a bit scoring seven, three, 2 pointers and one free throw. The first half

ended with Thunder Ridge leading 20-18.

In the third quarter the Huskies continued scoring. Lowry and Eagleburger were the only Huskies to score, each hitting a two and a three pointer. Thunder Ridge kept up their momentum and scored 14 points with a three pointer, five, 2 pointers and one free throw giving them a much larger lead of 34-28.

The Huskies maintained their scoring. Twelve points were put on the board, a two point basket and two free throws by Lowry followed by Eagleburger with a three point shot, Herman and Montgomery with two each and Compton with one of two free throws. Thunder Ridge held on to their lead by scoring 19 more points. six, 2 pointers and seven out of 14 free throws winning the game 53-40.

Husky head coach Chuck Fesenden said, "It was another hard fought game between us and Thunder Ridge. We gave them too many shots on the inside. As a result their field goal percentage was too high. We need to develop an offensive threat on the inside. We are depending too much on our perimeter game."

The leading rebounder was Lowry with six, followed by Eagleburger and Montgomery with five each. Leading assists was Brant Tharman with five.

It was a close game in junior varsity play against Thunder Ridge. Thunder Ridge took the win 46-45. The leading Husky scorers were Phillip Compton with 13 followed by Tyler Montgomery, 8 and Jordan Barid 7. The leading rebounder was Hunter Chandler with 6.

## High School Sports This Week



### WRESTLING:

Norton vs. Kearney Dual in Kearney ..... 5 p.m. Today  
Norton Varsity in Mid-Continent League Tournament in Plainville ..... 10 a.m. Saturday  
Norton Junior Varsity in Arapahoe Invitational in Arapahoe, Neb ..... 10 a.m. Saturday

### BASKETBALL:

Norton vs. Goodland in Norton C-team boys, JV boys in Wilmett Kirk Gym at 4 p.m.  
JV girls, V girls, V boys in NCHS Stull Gym ..... 4:45 p.m. Today  
Norton vs. Smith Center in Smith Center ..... 5 p.m. Tuesday  
Northern Valley vs. Logan in Logan ..... 4 p.m. Today  
Northern Valley vs. Heartland Christian in Almena ..... 4 p.m. Friday  
Northern Valley vs. Alma, Neb. in Alma ..... 4 p.m. Tuesday  
Logan vs. Northern Valley in Logan ..... 4 p.m. Today  
Logan vs. Thunder Ridge in Logan ..... 4 p.m. Friday  
Logan vs. Stockton in Stockton ..... 5 p.m. Tuesday