

Blue Jays boys had a successful season

By **DICK BOYD**
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 Coach Doug Reusink's Norton Community High School boys basketball team returned six lettermen, including their top two scorers, from last year's team and finished the 2010-11 season with an identical 12-9 winning record.

The season included a number of exciting wins with fourth quarter rallies and several close losses to state ranked teams. In the end, they lost their initial game in the Sub-State Tournament to Ellsworth, a team they beat in every statistic except the final score.

The top two scorers returning for the Blue Jays were 5'11" senior guard Terrell Lane and 6'3" junior post Jordan Wahlmeier. Lane averaged 14.9 points per game and was leading rebounder with 9.6 per contest. Wahlmeier was second in both, hitting 11 points per game and grabbing 5.6 rebounds per contest.

The other four returning lettermen were 5'11" senior forward Dakota Dreher; 5'9" junior guard Tye Nickell, 6' junior guard Dillon McConney and 6'2" sophomore forward Jacob Brooks.

The Blue Jays opened the season by competing in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Dec. 9-10-11. In the opening round, they took on McCook, the eventual runner-up in the tournament, and suffered an 87-36 loss to an excellent three-point shooting team. McConney was leading scorer for Norton with 14 points.

In the consolation bracket, the Blue Jays played Burlington, Colo. on Friday. Norton led 17-11 after one quarter and the score was tied 35-35 after three quarters but Burlington free throws made the difference in the final stanza and they won 54-47. Wahlmeier led in scoring with 15 points and Lane hit 12.

Norton placed seventh with their best game of the tournament, an 80-63 victory over Sharon Springs. Wahlmeier led scoring with 28 points, which included 11 of 15 free throws. Brooks tallied 18 points.

Wahlmeier was named to the All-Tournament Team. On Thursday, Dec. 16, Norton

traveled to unbeaten Stockton to play one of the top teams in the Mid-Continent League as well as the state. The lead changed hands many times before the Blue Jays finally lost 55-53. Brooks was top scorer with 20 points.

The next night, Norton entertained longtime rival Phillipsburg in their second league game of the season. The Blue Jays were still warmed up from their close game with Stockton and rolled to an impressive 26-point win by a score of 62-36. Lane hit 56 percent from the field and finished with 22 points; Brooks added 13.

The new year began with Norton hosting another longtime rival, Oberlin, in the NCHS Stull Gym on Tuesday, Jan. 4. It was a very close contest with just a few points separating the two teams throughout. In fact, Norton led 39-38 late in the game but Oberlin pulled it out by a 43-41 score! Lane led Norton in scoring with 13 points.

On Friday, Jan. 7, Norton traveled to Osborne for another Mid-Continent League game. Again, the Blue Jays stayed within striking distance of the Bulldogs but lost 51-43. Lane hit 16 points and Wahlmeier scored 15.

Unbeaten and No. 5 state ranked Plainville came to town for another league contest on Tuesday, Jan. 11. The Blue Jays played the Cardinals close for two quarters but needed four to upset the visitors and lost 68-44. Wahlmeier hit 7 of 10 field goal tries and finished with 17 points; Brooks added 11.

On Friday, Jan. 14, Norton traveled to WaKeeney for a league game with Trego Community. The Blue Jays led all the way in a 56-37 victory. Wahlmeier scored 23 points and Lane added 19.

The next night, Saturday, Jan. 15, Norton returned to WaKeeney to play Trego in a feather bracket game for the upcoming Mid-Continent League Tournament. In an almost identical contest, Norton won 63-36. Lane scored 21 points, Wahlmeier 14 and McConney 10.

On Monday, Jan. 17, the Blue Jays played their best game of the season against No. 1 seed and undefeated Plainville at Plainville in the first round of the league tourney. Norton came within



Terrell Lane, 5'11" senior guard, puts up a jump shot over Hill City defenders during Norton's 48-42 victory over Hill City in the fifth place game of the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays on Saturday, Jan. 22. - Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

seconds of beating a team that had outscored them by 24 points in Norton earlier.

Norton led 62-61 after a free throw by Wahlmeier with 5.6 seconds left in the game but a shot at the buzzer by a Cardinal earned them the 63-62 victory. "This loss was a heartbreaker," said coach Reusink. Wahlmeier scored 19 points, Lane hit 15 and McConney 13.

No. 1 seed Plainville continued on to defeat No. 2 seed Stockton for the tournament championship in the battle of the unbeaten.

The loss to Plainville dropped Norton into the consolation bracket of the tournament. The Blue Jays played Smith Center on the Redmen's home court and came through with a thrilling 76-65 victory in overtime! Lane hit 25 points, Wahlmeier added 19, Nickell tallied 11 and McConney 10. It was the first time in the season, but not the last, for Norton

to have four double figure scorers in a game.

The win over Smith Center sent Norton to Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays for the fifth place tournament game on Saturday, Jan. 22 versus Hill City. The Blue Jays didn't need any free throws in the game but didn't need any in a 48-42 victory. Wahlmeier and Lane both scored 16 points.

On Tuesday, Jan. 25, Norton hosted Goodland and defeated the visiting Cowboys in three overtimes! Yes, three overtimes! Both teams shot well but Norton's free throws made the difference. Again, Norton had four scorers in double figures. Lane hit 9 of 10 free throws on the way to scoring 26 points. Wahlmeier tallied 21, Brooks hit 15 and Nickell scored 10 points. As a team, Norton hit 18 of 25 charities.

Norton was supposed to return to regular season Mid-Continent League play on Tuesday, Feb.

1 but inclement weather caused postponement of the game in Smith Center until Thursday. The Blue Jays didn't need an extra period this time to beat the Redmen again on their home court. This time, Norton's three-point baskets were the key. With three Blue Jays scoring from beyond the arc and hitting 10 of 20 treys, Norton outscored Smith Center 55-41. Lane led the way with 22 points, 6 of 10 trey tries contributing to his total. Wahlmeier hit 14 points and Brooks added 12.

On Friday, Feb. 4, Norton returned to normally friendly NCHS Stull Gym to play Hill City in another MCL contest. The Ringnecks had not forgotten the Blue Jays' 48-42 win over them in the league tournament and they pulled out a 47-41 victory in a game that was closer than the final score. Norton trailed 41-39 at one point in the latter stages. McConney led Norton in scoring with 14 points, Brooks tallied 10.

On Tuesday, Feb. 8, Norton did not get an opportunity to avenge their 43-41 loss to Oberlin earlier in Norton when a trip to play the Red Devils was canceled due to inclement weather.

The Blue Jays traveled to Atwood on Friday, Feb. 11 and broke open a close game to win 68-43. Brooks led Norton in scoring with 23 points, followed by Wahlmeier with 19 and Lane with 14.

Norton traveled to Hoxie on Tuesday, Feb. 15 and led the Indians all the way in a 56-52 victory. A three-point basket by Hoxie at the buzzer cut the final margin of victory. McConney led Norton with 15 points, Wahlmeier hit 14 and Brooks 10.

Friday, Feb. 18 was "Senior Night" for Norton and they hosted Ellis in the NCHS Stull Gym. Honored prior to the game were seniors Dreher, Ninemire, Archer and Lane and student manager David Cressler and parents. It was a good night for the Blue Jays as they defeated the Railroaders 57-51. Norton trailed by a few points for three quarters but outscored Ellis 18-11 in the final stanza to extend their record to 11-8. Nickell scored a career-high 17 points, Brooks tallied 13 and Wahlmeier hit 12.

The regular season ended with a special evening in Colby on Tuesday, Feb. 22. The Blue Jays defeated the Eagles 66-58 in a game in which the two teams traded baskets for three quarters before the Blue Jays broke it loose with an 18-9 fourth quarter in their favor. In coach Reusink's 20 seasons as head coach of the Norton boys squad, it was Norton's first win in Colby! Lane led Norton in scoring with 18 points; Brooks added 14.

Heading into the Class 3A Sub-State Worth Tournament, Norton had won 10 of their last 12 games and was seeded No. 4.

The Blue Jays hosted No. 5 seed Ellsworth on Tuesday, March 1 in the NCHS Stull Gym. Norton jumped out to an early lead and ended up outrebounding, having fewer turnovers, making more steals and having more assists than the Bearcats but not outscoring them. The visitors won 70-57, ending Norton's season quicker than they had hoped. Wahlmeier scored 18 points, Brooks, 14; Lane, 13 and Nickell, 11.

"We'll miss our seniors," said coach Reusink. "They are good young men.

"Overall, we had a great group of young men. They were a lot of fun."

Coach Reusink thanked the players, fans, assistant coach David Stover and student manager Bryan Henry for all they did for the team this season.

Season statistics
 As a team, the Norton boys averaged 56.7 points per game this season, compared to opponents' 54.3 points. The Blue Jays hit 41.9 percent of their field goal attempts and opponents swished about the same at 40.5 percent. From the free throw line, the Blue Jays connected on 59 percent while opponents hit 57.3 percent.

The Blue Jays had 191 steals on defense for an average of 9.1 per contest. The Norton defense caused 316 opponent turnovers for 15 per contest.

Norton had 271 offensive assists which is 13 per game.

The Blue Jays grabbed a total of 689 rebounds during the season for an average of 32.8 per contest.

BOWLING

Ladies Inter-City Week of Feb. 14

Team Standings: BEB and Associates, won 18 lost 2; Nelson Brothers, won 12 lost 8; Animal Health, won 10 lost 10; Logan Gals, won 10 lost 10; Geezeretts, won 7 lost 13.

Individual Game High Scratch: Geneva Tier, 174; Charlene Hildebrand, 156; Carol Ross, 155. With Handicap: Geneva Tier, 243; Charlene Hildebrand, 241, Judy Luft, 234.

Individual Series High Scratch: Geneva Tier, 441; Carol Ross, 398; Judy Luft, 368. With Handicap: Geneva Tier, 648; Carol Ross, 611; Charlene Hildebrand, 610.

Team Game High Scratch:

BEB and Associates, 441; Nelson Brothers, 395; Logan Gals, 369. With Handicap: BEB and Associates, 630; Nelson Brothers, 612; Logan Gals, 611.

Team Series High Scratch: BEB and Associates, 1142; Nelson Brothers, 1058; Logan Gals, 996. With Handicap: Logan Gals, 1722; Nelson Brothers, 1709; BEB and Associates, 1709.

Week of Feb. 20

Team Standings: BEB and Associates, won 21 lost 3; Logan Gals, won 14 lost 10; Nelson Brothers, won 13 lost 11; Animal Health, won 11 lost 13; Geezeretts, won 10 lost 14.

Individual Game High Scratch: Kathleen Berlier, 190; 183; 164. With Handicap: Kathleen Berlier,

250; 243; Evah Dougherty, 239.

Individual Series High Scratch: Kathleen Berlier, 537; Jackie Griffey, 425; Evah Dougherty, 390. With Handicap: Kathleen Berlier, 717; Evah Dougherty, 627; Carol Ross, 589.

Team Game High Scratch: BEB and Associates, 415; 403; 391. With Handicap: Logan Gals, 609; BEB and Associates, 604; 592.

Team Series High Scratch: BEB and Associates, 1209; Nelson Brothers, 1041; Logan Gals, 1015. With Handicap: BEB and Associates, 1776; Logan Gals, 1738; Geezeretts, 1699.

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