

Norton Legion team wins Zone Tournament

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The Norton American Legion baseball team overcame a week of hot temperatures and driving rain to defeat some excellent teams and win the Legion Zone Tournament Championship on Saturday evening with an impressive 12-5 victory over Goodland.

The championship continued the "Blue Jay winning tradition" and propelled Norton into this week's State American Legion Tournament, which begins Wednesday in Ottawa.

Norton will be one of seven zone champions competing for the state championship along

Andrew Ellis hit the ball and reached base on an error but Bainter scored. Brett Terrell singled and Maddy scored. Millan and Miller both singled and Ellis and Terrell both scored to put Norton ahead 7-2. Goodland switched pitchers again before the inning ended, putting Garth Helton on the mound.

Goodland was three up, three down in the bottom of the fourth stanza.

The Blue Jays did not score in the top of the fifth but Goodland added two runs in the bottom of the inning to narrow the Norton lead to 7-4.

Norton was also scoreless in the top of the sixth and Goodland

Keiswetter both singled, Dreher and Cook both walked, Brett Terrell advanced on an error. Millan and Dalton Miller were both hit by a pitch and walked. McKenna, Keiswetter, Dreher and Cook crossed home plate to put Norton on top 9-0.

Again, Colby was held scoreless in the bottom of the third inning.

Norton was unable to score in the top of the fourth and Colby was batting in the bottom of the fourth when a very heavy rain caused postponement of the rest of the game until Friday at 6 p.m.

When the game was resumed on Friday, Colby scored four runs before the fourth inning was completed, cutting the Norton lead to 9-4.

The Blue Jays were unable to score again but one Colby run in the bottom of the fifth and one in the bottom of the seventh was not enough to catch Norton who finished as a 9-6 winner and advanced in the winner's bracket.

Norton had eight hits, nine walks and five strike outs.

Leading hitters for Norton were McKenna and Keiswetter, both of whom were 2 for 3 with the bat.

Trey Millan was the Norton pitcher. He was relieved by Dalton Miller in the sixth inning.

Colby had eight hits, six walks and nine strike outs.

Sharing pitching duties for Colby were Zack Stones and Brock James.

"We jumped on Colby early and with some good hitting luck were ahead 9-0 when the rain hit," said

coach Scott Ellis.

"Colby came back the next night, which I figured they would, but we played well enough to win. Trey Millan and Dalton Miller pitched great."

Colby dropped down to the loser's bracket and lost 4-2 to Goodland, a team they had beaten earlier in the tournament.

The win by Goodland advanced the Cowboys to a game with Norton later on Friday night.

Loss to Goodland

Goodland was able to shutout Norton 9-0, which set up the championship game on Saturday to decide who would represent the Zone in the State Tournament in Ottawa.

Goodland scored one run in the second inning, three in the second, one in the fifth and four more in the sixth inning.

Norton had four hits, no walks and five strike outs.

The Blue Jays' leading hitter was Keiswetter, who was 2 for 3 at the plate.

Tug Keiswetter was the Norton pitcher; Spencer Shirk relieved him in the top of the sixth inning. Goodland had nine hits, four walks and eight strike outs.

Only six innings were played due to the eight run lead after five innings rule.

Garth Helton was the Goodland pitcher.

"Goodland played a flawless game on Friday night," said coach Ellis. "They hit the ball well and made every play, even catching our hard hit balls."

Coach's comments



The Norton Legion's Chris Maddy slides across home plate to score one of five runs the Blue Jays tallied in the top of the fourth inning against Goodland to break a 2-all tie on Saturday at John Ryan Field.

- Telegram photos by Dick Boyd

"It was a great tournament," said coach Ellis. "We play great at home."

"We knew our pitchers and what they could do. We knew Brett and Troy would beat Osborne, that Spencer and Tug would beat Smith Center, that Trey and Dalton would beat Colby. We then figured on Tug and Spencer getting that last win."

"We got a lucky seed in the tournament. When I played football for Norton Community High School, our head coach Melillo always told us you have to be good to put yourself in a position to be

lucky. We took advantage of our good third seed.

"We play well at home. John Ryan Field is a special place for me. I watched it being built and was fortunate enough to play on it. John Ryan Field is now a special place for these boys as well."

"We leave for Ottawa on Tuesday at 1 p.m. We play Pratt on Wednesday at 1 p.m."

"We are very excited to have this opportunity. We will be ready to play."

The Norton team will stay in the Travelodge in Ottawa during the tournament.



The Norton Legion's Dakota Dreher slams a single in the top of the second inning during the Blue Jays' 12-5 Zone championship win over Goodland on Saturday at John Ryan Field in Norton.

- Telegram photos by Dick Boyd

with the host team Ottawa. Norton will play in the first game of the tournament. Norton's opponent will be Pratt in a 1 p.m. game at the Orli Cox Sports Complex at the corner of Highway K-68 and Beech in Ottawa.

All first round games will be played on Wednesday. Following the Norton-Pratt game, Doniphan County will play Clifton-Clyde. Beginning at 6:30 p.m., Baldwin City will play Seneca and the nightcap will follow between Ottawa and Iola.

It is a double elimination tournament. A win by Norton on Wednesday would advance them to play the winner of the Doniphan County/Clifton-Clyde game at 6 p.m. on Thursday. A loss would drop them into the loser's bracket to play the loser of the Doniphan County/Clifton-Clyde game at 10 a.m. on Thursday.

Games in both the winner's bracket and loser's bracket will be played on Friday with the championship game set for Saturday at 2:30 p.m.. If another game is needed to decide the champion, it will be played at 10 a.m. on Sunday.

Zone Tourney scores

En route to the zone championship, Norton defeated Osborne 16-6 on Sunday, outscored Smith Center 14-11 on Tuesday, defeated No.1 seed Colby 9-6 in a game that began Thursday and was completed Friday due to heavy rain, lost to Goodland 9-0 on Friday but soundly defeated Goodland 12-5 on Saturday.

Victory over Goodland

Unhappy with their 9-0 loss the night before, the Blue Jays came to their home John Ryan Field ready to defend it and determined to beat the team that shut them out.

Norton was designated the guest team in the contest with Goodland. Neither team scored in the first inning. In the top of the second, Tug Keiswetter was hit by a pitch and advanced, Dakota Dreher singled, Troy Bainter was also hit by a pitch and walked and Chris Maddy drove Keiswetter home on a fielder's choice.

In the bottom of the second, Goodland loaded the bases but was unable to score.

Norton scored one more run in the top of the third when Trey Millan and Dalton Miller singled him home to make it 2-0.

Goodland kept it close in the bottom of the third inning with two runs on one hit and two errors to tie the score at 2-all.

In the top of the fourth, Dreher and Troy Bainter both walked and Chris Maddy singled to center field to drive Dreher home. At this point, Gunner Helton was replaced on the mound for Goodland by Reed Bellamy.

added one run in the bottom of the inning to narrow the lead to 7-5. Norton left fielder Dalton Miller kept Goodland from scoring more than one run when he caught a fly ball at the fence for the final out!

Norton put the pressure on Goodland in the top of the seventh with five more runs to extend their lead to 12-5. Bainter got on base on a fielder's choice, Maddy got on base on an error and both young men scored when Ellis singled to right field!

Terrell singled, Millan got on base on an error, Miller singled and Shirk doubled and Terrell, Millan and Miller all scored.

The Goodland nine was unable to mount an attack in the last of the seventh and the Blue Jays celebrated the win and the zone championship!

Norton bats had plenty of wood on the ball as they pounded out 13 hits. Millan and Miller were each 3 for 5 at the plate and Terrell and Shirk were each 2 for 5.

Norton also had five walks and six strike outs.

Spencer Shirk pitched the entire game for the Blue Jays. He gave up five hits, walked three and struck out six batters.

Sharing pitching duties for Goodland were Gunner Helton, Reed Bellamy and Garth Helton.

"To be honest, Saturday's game with Goodland started Friday when our pitcher Spencer Shirk got the last two outs in our loss," said Norton head coach Scott Ellis. "He walked off the field and told me he would beat them Saturday night and that is what he did. He pitched the whole game against a very good hitting team. He pitched great and we strung together our hits to give him a comfortable lead the entire game."

"We had a 7-5 lead in the top of the seventh inning with runners at second and third and Andrew hit one to right field to score two runs. That basically opened the flood gates. We tacked on three more runs after that. Spencer breezed through the bottom of the seventh to earn the victory!"

Norton over Colby

In Thursday's 9-6 win over No.1 seeded Colby, the Blue Jays got a great start when they scored five runs in the top of the first, where they batted due to being designated the visiting team.

Trey Millan and Spencer Shirk both walked, Kaid McKenna singled, Tug Keiswetter walked and Dakota Dreher, Troy Bainter and Tyler Cook all singled. All except Bainter and Cook scored.

Colby did not score in the bottom of the inning and neither team scored in the second stanza.

Norton padded their lead with four more runs in the top of the third inning. McKenna and

CONGRATULATIONS

Norton American Legion Baseball Team

on Your AA

Zone Championship!!



THE 2011 NORTON AMERICAN LEGION ZONE CHAMPION BASEBALL TEAM – From left, front row: Troy Bainter, Dakota Dreher, Spencer Shirk, Dalton Miller, Chris Maddy, Zach Hartwell, Andrew Ellis; back row: Brett Terrell, Tug Keiswetter, Vaughn Newman, Tyler Cook, Head Coach Scott Ellis, Trey Millan, Assistant Coach Mike Terrell, Assistant Coach Shawn Miller. Not pictured: Kaid McKenna and Lane Bigge. NOTE: Norton was designated the guest team for the championship game in which they defeated Goodland.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

**Best of Luck in the State Championship
Tournament this week in Ottawa!
Harmonson-Redd Post No. 63
Norton American Legion**