

# Blue Jays second, third at state cross country

By DICK BOYD

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Coach George Rossi's Norton Community High School girls and boys cross country teams placed runner-up and third place, respectively, in the Class 3A State Cross Country Meet on Saturday at Rim Rock Farm, north of Lawrence.

"We were really proud of our girls, who ran their hearts out today," said coach Rossi. "We told our guys to run all out and see what happens and they really came out strong."

Douglass repeated as the girls champion with 76 points, followed by Norton, 94; Salina Sacred Heart, 121; Pleasant Ridge, 129; Riley County, 141; Southeast of Saline, 146; Sabetha, 159; Osage City, 176; Hays TMP, 200; Cimarron, 225; Fredonia, 266; Pittsburg-SMC, 270.

Hutch Trinity was the boys champion with 75 points, followed by Scott City, 110; Norton, 123; Holcomb, 133; Riley County, 136; Southeast of Saline, 139; Wellsville, 165; Marion, 173; Sabetha, 192; Cherokee-SE, 219; Silver Lake, 221; Burlington, 226.

This was the fourth straight year that both the Norton girls and boys have qualified as teams for the state meet. Last year, the Lady Jays also placed runner-up and the boys were fourth in the state meet.

A week ago, the Norton girls won the Regional championship and the boys were runner-up.

Also this season, the Norton girls won the Norton Invitational for the seventh year in a row and the boys won it for the fourth straight year. Also, the Norton girls won the Mid-Continent League championship for the fifth year in a row and the Norton boys were league champions for the ninth straight year.

## GIRLS

Sophomore Sierra Griffith led the Norton girls to the finish line with a personal record time of 16:38 and 18th place finish to earn a medal.

Second fastest for the Lady Jays was senior Julia Kent, who was timed in 17:02 and placed 26th. She was followed by junior Darcy Bainter, 17:10, 29th; junior Katelyn Engelbert, 17:18, 32nd and freshman Molly Maddy, 17:31, 37th.

Also running for the Norton girls were senior Kamilla Jones, 17:37, 43rd and junior Marisa Maddy, 18:10, 66th.

"We knew that Douglass could win but we believed we had a shot at them and it just did not work out," said coach Rossi. "Our average time was faster than last year and five of our seven girls ran an average of 30 seconds faster than they did last year but this year's race was blazing fast."

"Sierra Griffith set a personal best and also became a two time All-State runner despite having a touch of stomach flu."

"Julia, Darcy, Katelyn, Molly, Kamilla and Marisa all ran very good races."

"This team comes out race after race and competes with everything they have. We have had a target on our back all year and we were able to fight it off every race."

"Douglass had not had a full team until the regional race but their top four girls all placed in the top 15 last year and they medaled all four again this year. We just don't have the speed to match that. We did beat some outstanding teams for second. Pleasant Ridge had beaten us at Rim Rock earlier and Sacred Heart and Riley County ran very close to us in other races."

The top ten girls runners were: Jordan Puvogel, Hiawatha, 15:30.60, first; Emily Sechrist, Hillsboro, 15:35.10, second; Heather Ruder, Hays-TMP, 15:44.50, third; Klair Gibson, Douglass, 15:52.50, fourth; Stacy Pachta, Riley County, 15:56.50, fifth; Suzie Wright, Douglass, 15:59.20, sixth; Aundrea Koger, Osage City, 15:59.50, seventh; Allison Stutterheim, Southeast of Saline, 16:01.00, eighth; Brenda McCollum, Leon-Bluestem, 16:01.40, ninth; Alex Elmore, Salina Sacred Heart, 16:12.30, tenth.

## BOYS



Norton senior John Renner ran a season best time Saturday in the Class 3A State Cross Country Championships at Rim Rock Farm, north of Lawrence. His time sealed the third place trophy for the Blue Jays.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Junior Marc Miller was fastest for the Norton boys with a personal record time of 17:28 and 13th place to earn a medal.

Blue Jay freshman Brendon Frack ran an outstanding race with a personal record time of 17:44 and 22nd finish. He was followed by junior Alec Hager, personal record 17:55 and 30th; sophomore Dalton Vanover, personal record 18:25, 45th and senior John Renner, season best 19:15, 77th.

Also running for Norton were junior Keith Sander, season best 20:25, 95th and senior Ryan Bainter, 21:05, 97th.

"Marc Miller had a personal record time and became an All-State runner," said coach Rossi.

"Brendon Frack was the fastest freshman in 3A and nar-

rowly missed a medal with a personal record. Alec Hager also set a personal record on the tough Rim Rock course. Dalton Vanover improved his time from last year by over a minute and set a personal record. John Renner ran a season best time and was our fifth runner who sealed up the third place trophy over the No.1 ranked Holcomb Longhorns.

"This is the first time since 2006 and only the second time our boys have brought home a trophy from state. These young men laid it all on the line and it paid off. They have had a good season but placing at state is the icing on the cake. We are very, very proud of them!"

The top ten boys runners were: Cory Donley, Salina Sa-



With hair flying, Norton junior Katelyn Engelbert competes Saturday for the Norton Lady Jays during their runner-up finish in the Class 3A State Cross Country Championships at Rim Rock Farm, north of Lawrence.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

cred Heart, 16:03.50, first; Alex Conn, Beloit, 16:15.80, second; Johnny Adamson, Pittsburg-SMC, 16:32.10, third; Cordell Goering, Hutch Trinity, 16:36.90, fourth; Joey Meyer, Scott City, 16:39.40, fifth; Jordan Hett, Marion, 16:45.50, sixth; Wyatt Ratzlaff, Phillipsburg, 16:45.70, seventh; Tony Weber, Pleasant Ridge, 16:51.60, eighth; Edgar Gutierrez, Hutch Trinity, 17:05.80, ninth; Jonah Aspegren, Wichita Independent, 17:07.30, tenth.

## Outstanding seniors

"We lose five outstanding seniors: Kamilla Jones, Julia Kent, Steph Hager, Ryan Bainter and John Renner," said coach Rossi.

"This is a very special group as all except Steph were freshmen when I became the head coach so we have been through a lot."

"Kamilla and Julia brought home trophies all four years and Julia was a two-time All State runner. Kamilla had a terrific

senior year, improving in every meet she ran.

"Steph joined us her junior year and worked hard every day in practice."

"Ryan is a young man every coach would want on their team. He has so much heart and works hard every day and just gives it his all. John did not have his best year but he came through in the state meet with a season best that brought home the trophy. What a way to end your career!"

## Many Thanks

"Thank you to the staff and students at NCHS and NJHS for the state sendoff," said coach Rossi. "Thank you to the Booster Club, cheerleaders and parents for the goodies. Thanks to Mr. Mann, Mr. Perez and Mr. McEwen for their outstanding support of the cross country program."

"Thanks to the parents, students, fans and alumni who attended the race Saturday. You were the best, loudest and most active fans on the course. Your support means everything to our team."

"For those who have never been to a cross country meet, you need to go. It is unlike any other sport."

"Thank you to Dick Boyd and the Norton Telegram for the great coverage all year and thanks to Deena Wente and KQNK for the weekly radio broadcast. Norton is blessed to have such great coverage of all the school activities."

"Thanks to Lindsey Bailey for being the best assistant coach ever and to my wife, Sue, for all her support."

"And, above all, thanks to the team for making this another outstanding year for Blue Jay Cross Country!"

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Nov. 6

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