

# Cowboys take third in Topside, defeat Norton

By Tom Betz  
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The Cowboys came from behind in the second half of the Topside Tip-Off third place game Saturday afternoon to defeat Norton 49-41 and even their season record to 2-2.

In the first half of the game the Cowboys had trouble scoring against the Norton Bluejays who led 12-4 after the first and 21-12 at halftime.

When the Cowboys came back out for the second half there appeared to be a change as Goodland began to find the range and to play as a team. The Cowboys comeback was sparked by the shooting of Ryan Hillmer who led the Cowboys scoring with 19 points getting eight in the third quarter and eight in the fourth quarter. Taylen Smith was a close second with 18 points scoring eight in the third quarter and four in the fourth.

The Cowboys outscored the Bluejays 20-12 in the third quarter to be one point behind the Bluejays, 33-32, going into the final quarter.

With the hot shooting and team play the Cowboys outscored the Bluejays 17-8 in the fourth for a 49-41 win. In the final quarter Gage Ihrig and Gunner Helton had key baskets to help the Cowboys take the lead and keep it. Ihrig had a three-point basket in the fourth

and Helton had a basket in the first minute.

Helton opened the fourth with a basket and Hillmer hit to give the Cowboys a 37-33 lead. Hillmer hit two more baskets to give the Cowboys a 41-35 lead with less than five minutes left.

Norton seemed to go cold and made a few turnovers giving the Cowboys more chances including a basket by Smith to make it 43-35 with under three left. Hillmer made it 45-35 with 2:30 left, but Norton's Jordan Wahlmeier hit to cut it to 45-37 with 2:13 left.

Smith was fouled with 1:29 left and made the first of two free throws to make it 46-37.

With one minute left Hillmer was fouled and his first free throw bounced on the rim and fell through making it 48-39. With 30 seconds left Norton's Tye Nickell fouled out and put Hillmer back at the free throw line where he made the first to make it 49-39.

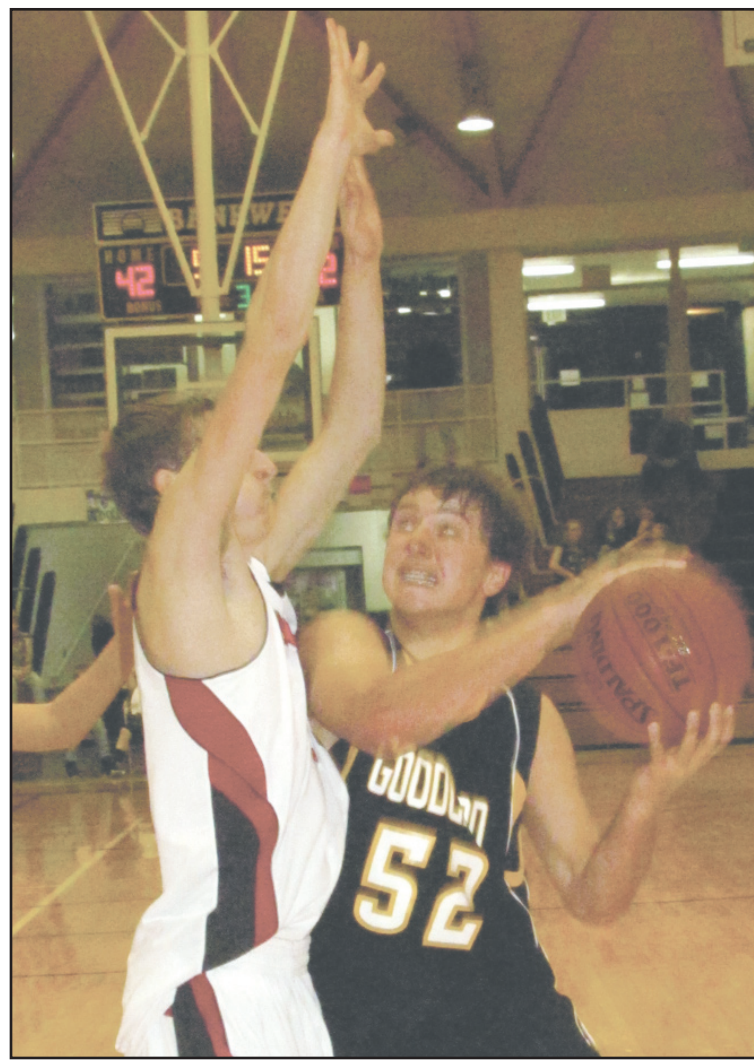
Coach Raymer pulled his starters and Norton pulled theirs for the final 20 seconds. Norton's Dillon McConney hit the final basket to make it 49-41. Cowboy Parker Sieck got the final rebound and held the ball for the final seconds for the Cowboys win.

Cowboys Coach Don Raymer said he felt the Cowboys played more like a determined team in the



Cowboy Parker Sieck battled through the Weskan Coyotes for one of his two baskets in the win on Thursday. Sieck had five points in the win.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News



Cowboy Taylen Smith tried to get a shot against McCook on Friday in the semifinal round of the Topside Tip-Off. The Cowboys finished third defeating Weskan on Thursday, 73-50, losing to McCook 72-52 and defeating Norton 49-41 on Saturday.



Cowboy Ryan Hillmer led the team scoring in all three games with 21 points against Weskan, 17 points against McCook and 19 points against Norton. Hillmer was the S&T Long-Distance Shootout winner with 13 three-point baskets in one minute.

second half and said he hopes they can build on that effort.

#### Cowboys lose to Bison

On Friday the Cowboys found themselves on the short end of the semi-final round game against the McCook Bison losing 72-52.

In the first quarter the Cowboys had trouble getting shots with Hillmer getting five points on a field goal and a three-point basket. Gage Ihrig had a free throw and a three-point basket and Sieck had a basket to account for the 11 points, but McCook had 22 points.

The Cowboys battled back in the second to be down by five, 34-29, at halftime. The Cowboys outscored the Bison 18-12 in the second quarter.

In the third quarter McCook got things going again outscoring the Cowboys 22-10 to lead 56-39 going into the final quarter.

The Cowboys came out in the final quarter trying to use three-point baskets to close the gap with two three-point baskets by Ihrig and one by Hillmer to keep the cowboys within 10 at 58-48 with five minutes left.

The Bison scored the next 10 points to lead 68-48 with 2:30 left and 70-48 with 1:47 left. Cowboy Blaine Luther hit a basket with one minute left to make it 70-50, Sieck

was fouled with five seconds left and made both free throws to make the final 72-52.

Hillmer led the Cowboys with 17 points including three three-point baskets. Gage Ihrig was in double figures with 13 and most of his points coming on four three-point baskets and one free throw.

#### Cowboys defeat Coyotes

In the tournament opening game on Thursday the Cowboys defeated the Weskan Coyotes 73-50 to advance to the semi-finals on Friday.

The Cowboys led 16-11 after the first quarter and 35-24 at halftime.

The Cowboys took charge in the third quarter to lead 50-39. The Cowboys kept the pressure on to lead 62-47 with four minutes left.

In the final few minutes the Coyotes were forced to foul and Gage Ihrig had two free throws, Caleb Fugelberg had a basket and Helton got the final basket to give the Cowboys a 73-50 win.

Hillmer led the Cowboys scoring with 21 points. Gage Ihrig was close with 20 points. Smith had 19.

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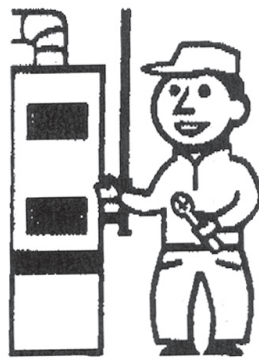


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