Norton girls beat Smith Center in league tournament

By DICK BOYD

Coach Kevin Jilka's No.1 seeded Norton Community High School girls basketball team defeated No.8 seed Smith Center 39-21 in the first round of the Mid-Continent League Tournament on Monday evening in the NCHS Memorial Gym in Norton.

With the victory, Norton extended their unbeaten win string to 9-0.

Smith Center outscored No.9 seed Stockton 33-29 in a feather bracket game on Saturday. Stockton will play at Victoria on Friday per league agreement.

In the other game in Norton's half of the bracket last night, No.5 seed Trego Community defeated No.4 seed Phillipsburg 44-40.

Norton will play Trego in the championship semi-finals at 6 p.m. on Friday in Gross Memorial Coliseum at Fort Hays State University in Hays.

Smith Center and Phillipsburg will play in the consolation bracket at 6 p.m. on Thursday.

"It wasn't very pretty but it was a win," said Jilka.

"We didn't play with any emotion. We were just going through the motions.

"Our defense did a pretty good job by holding them to 21 points but we were outrebounded by a bunch and didn't shoot the ball well from the perimeter.

"We're not playing with much enthusiasm right now and made a lot of silly mistakes tonight. Smith Center gets credit for some of that because they played hard.

"We just have to play better. The good thing is that we won and will get to play on Friday in Hays."

Norton led by only 9-4 after one quarter. Senior point guard Whitney Newell hit two baskets, senior center Chelsea Cox swished a basket and free throw and senior center Becca Ebert hit a basket for Norton in the initial stanza.

Smith Center's only points came on a basket and free throw from junior Dannie Boucher and a free throw by freshman Morgan Lorenzen.

The Lady Jays' best scoring quarter was the second when they outscored the Lady Redmen 16-7 to take a 25-11 halftime lead. Senior guard Karlie Jones and senior guard Klaire Mann each connected on two baskets, Newell hit another basket along with sophomore center Chantille Campbell, Cox scored inside and hit a free throw and Ebert hit a charity.

Smith Center hit just two baskets in the second quarter. Senior Ashley Shellito buried a three-point basket and Boucher hit another two-pointer. Senior Paige Brooks hit two free throws.

The Lady Jays outscored Smith Center 5-2 in the low scoring third quarter which ended with Norton on top 30-13. Cox and freshman guard Laura Lee Baird each hit a basket and Mann swished a charity.

The Lady Redmen's only points came on a lone basket by Boucher.

Norton outpointed Smith Center 9-8 in the fourth quarter. Cox hit two baskets, Baird buried a shot from beyond the arc and senior forward Amber Waggoner hit a basket.

Boucher hit another basket for Smith Center and sophomore Sara Tucker, freshman Jihan Arnold and senior Deb Fricker each hit their only basket of the game in the final stanza.

Cox was the only double figures scorer for Norton. She hit 5 of 6 shots from the field for a sizzling 83 percent accuracy but was only 2 of 7 from the free throw line for a cold 29 percent. She ended with 12 points.

Boucher was leading scorer for Smith Center with 9 points.

Norton senior guard Amber Overlease goes down on the hardwoods as she pulls the basketball out of the hands of a Smith Center girl during last night's Mid-Continent League Tournament win in Norton. Overlease had two steals in the game and the Lady Jays had a total of 12 thefts. Also guarding the Smith Center player was Norton senior guard Karlie Jones, No.32 in the background. Jones led steals for the Lady Jays with four.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

As a team, Norton connected on just 1 of 9 trey tries for 11 percent, 16 of 32 two-point attempts for 50 percent and 17 of 41 overall for 41 percent.

In comparison, the Lady Redmen swished 1 of 4 from beyond the arc for 25 percent, 7 of 30 two-point shots for a cold 23 percent and 8 of 34 overall for 24 percent.

Norton hit 4 of 11 free throws for 36 percent compared to 4 of 9 for Smith Center and 44 percent.

Norton was outrebounded 27-15. The Lady Jays had 6 offensive and 9 defensive caroms while the Lady Redmen pulled down 13 offensive and 14 defensive boards.

Cox was leading rebounder for Norton with 6, followed by Ebert, 3; Amber Overlease, Campbell, 2 each; Maggie Nielsen, Jones, 1 each.

The Lady Jays' defensive efforts led to 12 steals compared to only 8 thefts by the Lady Redmen. Jones was the leader with 4, followed by Newell, 3; Overlease, Ebert, 2 each; Rachael Lentz, 1.

Norton had 10 offensive assists compared to only 7 for Smith Center. Newell, Mann, Ebert and Jones each had 2, followed by Cox, Baird, 1 each.

Norton suffered 14 turnovers but caused the Lady Redmen to turn the ball over a whopping 23 times.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton girls 39

	FGs 2s	FGs 3s	FTs M-A	TP
Whitney Newell	3	0	0-0	6
Chelsea Cox	5	0	2-7	12
Laura Lee Baird	1	1	0-0	5
Klaire Mann	2	0	1-2	5
Becca Ebert	1	0	1-2	3
Amber Waggoner	1	0	0-0	2
Chantille Campbell	1	0	0-0	2
Karlie Jones	2	0	0-0	4
TOTAL	16	1	4-11	39

Smith Center girls 21

	FGs 2s	FGs 3s	FTs M-A	TP
Morgan Lorenzen	0	0	1-2	1
Sarah Tucker	1	0	0-0	2
Ashley Shellito	0	1	0-0	3
Dannie Boucher	4	0	1-2	9
Paige Brooks	0	0	2-2	2
Rebekah Burgess	0	0	0-1	0
Jihan Arnold	1	0	0-0	2
Deb Fricker	1	0	0-2	2
TOTAL	7	1	4-9	21

Junior high boys win one in league tourney

The Norton Junior High eighth grade boys basketball team beat Smith Center, but lost to Ellis in the Mid-Continent Elementary League Basketball Tournament on Jan. 7 in Plainville.

"We went to Plainville for the start of the league basketball tournament," said coach Lucas Melvin. "The first round pitted us, No. 5 seed, against the Smith Center Warriors, the No. 4 seed. Smith Center had beaten us 34-17 in a regular season game earlier in December.

"We jumped out early to an 8-1 lead in the first quarter and did a good job of rebounding. The second quarter saw the Warriors close the gap to 3 with the Blue Jays heading into half-time with a 12-9 lead. Smith Center took its first lead of the game in the third quarter by outscoring us 9-5, leading 18-17 at the end of three quarters.

"The last quarter was a defensive battle with no points being scored in the final three minutes of the game. J.D. Gall was able to score 4 points though at the beginning of the final quarter and we held Smith Center to 2 points, holding on for the 21-20 win.

"This was a great win for us. We beat a team that defeated us earlier this year and we played much better. Our defense was very good and we did a terrific job of boxing out at times.

"I am very proud of our kids. They worked hard over break and we got better."

Scoring for Norton were Landon Hamel, 6; J.D. Gall, 6; Kaenon Keiswetter, 5; Connor Pfannenstiel, 2; and Ashton Draper, 2.

"We faced Ellis in the second round of the tournament on the same day. Ellis headed into the game as the No. 1 seed and was undefeated during the year.

"The first quarter was not good for us and we were behind 15-4. The second quarter was pretty even and we went into half-time trailing by 10. The first part of the third quarter, we fought back and got to within 5 of Ellis, but the last part of the quarter saw Ellis' press produce turnover and stretch the lead to 16. The last quarter ended with little scoring by either team. We lost the game 44-21."

Scoring for the Junior Jays were Keiswetter, 9; Hamel, 4; Gall, 4; Pfannenstiel, 2; and Robert Derauf, 2.

The Jays played Hill City yesterday for third place.

Norton County Weather – January 17th – 21st

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
55/23	63/25	45/20	38/18	43/20

Normal High: 42
Normal Low: 16

Sunrise: 7:56 to 7:58 A.M.
Sunset: 5:42 to 5:46 P.M.

A passing system yesterday just produced strong winds and didn't have any effect on the mild January temperatures. Today and tomorrow we will see highs 10-20 degrees above normal. A 2nd front Thurday night and Friday may squeze out some light rain or snow across the area, but chances are better that the dry and mild weather will continue. The dryness is not so unusual this time of the year, but the continued 50 and 60 degree temperatures are not normal!

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Eighth grade boys' rematch with Panthers ends with second win

The Norton Junior High School eighth grade boys basketball team finished their regular season with a rematch against the Phillipsburg Panthers on Jan. 5. The Junior Jays won the game 29-22.

"The varsity game was a rematch from November when we beat the Panthers at home 30-22," said coach Lucas Melvin. "The game started and so did the Phillipsburg scoring. The Panthers came out hot and scored 14 points in the first quarter, while holding us to one bucket.

"Then we fought back, led by Landon Hamel, who had missed the last five games with a broken thumb. Landon scored 11 straight points, counting the two he had at the end of the first quarter.

"Kaenon Keiswetter also made a 3-pointer in the second quarter. Our defense stiffened, holding Phillipsburg to just 2 points. We had fought back and gotten within 2 before intermission, 14-16.

"The third quarter saw the Panthers add 1 to their lead, going into the fourth quarter up 22-19. Our defense then stiffened in the last quarter, shutting down Phillipsburg completely and keeping them scoreless. We scored 10 in the final quarter to complete the comeback and win 29-22.

"This was our first game since Dec. 10 and in the first quarter you could tell we hadn't had a game for a month. The kids showed great composure by coming back from a 14-2 deficit. We fought and fought and didn't give up. It was a lot of fun and great to see our kids leave it on the court."

Leading scorers were Hamel with 15 points, J.D. Gall with 7, Ashton Draper with 4, and Keiswetter with 3.

The junior varsity played two quarters and lost 10-7.

Ronne Tafoya had 4 points, Justin Chandler scored 2 and Chris Maddy chipped in 1.

Northern Valley Junior High girls beat Kensington 38-17; boys lose

The Northern Valley Junior High girls basketball team beat Kensington 38-17 on Jan. 5, but the Husky boys lost 35-24 to the Goldbugs.

Girls

"The girls played a good game against Kensington to improve their record to 9-0," said coach Jim Cole. "They used their full court press to jump out to a 14-2 first quarter lead.

"We did a good job of pushing the ball up the court for lay-ups. We played solid defense the whole game.

"The B-team girls played well, winning 12-4 in a shortened game."

Alison Cole led scoring for the A-team with 14 points, followed by Christina Anderson, 10; Megan Cole, 6; Kayla Field, 2; Karen Wenzl, 2; Miriah Florence, 2; and C.J. Woodmansee, 2.

On the B-team, Kenzie Chandler led with 6 points, followed by Woodmansee with 4 and Staci Dole with 2.

Boys

"The boys lost both the A- and B-team games with Kensington," said Cole. "The Huskies played hard, but need to improve their ball handling and shooting. We are improving with each game, but need to be more consistent on both offense and defense."

Jacob Gallentine led scoring for the A-team with 8 points, followed by Dusty Eagleburger, 6; Colton Lowry, 5; Michael Callaway, 3; and Austin Herman, 2.

The B-team lost 26-14.

Brandon Towery led scoring with 6 points, followed by Herman, 4; Gunnar Hays, 2; and Skyler Harris, 2.

The Junior Huskies and Lady Huskies will host Eastern Heights in Almena on Thursday, Jan. 19. The first game is set to start at 4:30 p.m.

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