

Cross country places first, second

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School girls and boys cross country teams opened the 2007 season on Thursday by placing first and second, respectively, in the annual Norton Invitational on the Prairie Dog Golf Course south of Norton.

The Lady Jays tallied 23 points to win the championship and Hoxie placed second with 33. They were the only two girls teams.

In the boys division, Ness City scored 42 points to edge Norton for the championship. The Blue Jays had 44 points to finish a strong second ahead of Wheatland, who was third with 92.

GIRLS

Norton junior Laura Lee Baird ran the 2.5 miles in 17 minutes, 19 seconds and placed second behind Aubrey Frederking, outstanding Plainville runner who runs cross country for Ellis. Frederking was timed in 16:31.

Frederking also won the Norton cross country race last year with a 16:37 clocking. Baird was third last year in 17:16 and won the race as a freshman, when the distance was 2.1 miles.

Lady Jay juniors KaraJo Jones and Taylor Rossi battled for the sixth place finish and Jones won it with a time of 18:02. Rossi finished seventh in 18:22. In the same race last year, Rossi placed fifth in 18:05 and Jones was eighth in 18:34.

Norton freshman Kaylen Rossi placed 12th with a time of 18:57 and Lady Jay freshman Dustyna Sprigg rounded out the five woman team with a 14th place finish and time of 19:06.

Other runners for Norton and their finish were: senior Kylie Morel, 19th, 21:02 and sophomore Amanda Ray, 22nd, 21:44.

Jennifer Heim, Hoxie, won the bronze medal with a time of 17:26 and Kayla Field, Northern Valley, placed fourth with a clocking of 17:51.

Jamie Albers, Wheatland, was fifth with a time of 17:58. Eighth place went to Haley Wolf, Ellis, with a time of 18:23. Wolf placed fourth here last year and third in

2005.

Stephanie Eberle, Hoxie, 18:26 and Natasha Gabel, Ness City, 18:46, rounded out the top 10 individuals. Regan Ochs, Hoxie, was 11th in 18:56 and Kayla Zdrov, Oberlin, was 13th in 19:04.

BOYS

Norton junior Zach Bainter was the two-time defending champion of the Norton Invitational but he was edged for the gold medal in the boys 3.1 mile run by Colton McNinch, Ness City.

McNinch was timed in 17:34 and Bainter won the silver medal with a clocking of 17:43. Bainter covered the distance in 18:37 last year and 18:45 his freshman year. Blue Jay sophomore Chris Maddy placed seventh with a time of 19:23. He was 15th last year in 20:09.

Norton junior Jordan Bebb was ninth in 19:36. Bebb placed 13th last year in 20:03.

Winning 15th place was Norton senior Luke VanSki in 19:56. Rounding out Norton's five-man team was senior David Counter in 20:32 for 19th place.

Other Norton runners were freshman Troy Bainter, 21st, 20:54 and junior Josh Gallentine, 44th, 23:49.

Rounding out the top 10 finishers were: Andrew Richards, Oberlin, third, 18:51; Drake Reynolds, Phillipsburg, fourth, 19:00; Corey Heier, Hoxie, fifth, 19:02; Bryce Marble, Northern Valley, sixth, 19:18; Brandon Basgall, Wheatland, eighth, 19:30; Josh Snodgrass, Ness City, tenth, 19:41.

Norton had four junior varsity runners. They placed as follows: freshman Cole Archer, tenth, 23:55; sophomore Grant McClymont, 12th, 24:32; sophomore Matt Miller, 15th, 25:25 and sophomore Adam Myers, 26th, 28:47.

Stanton Nelson of Northern Valley placed eighth in the junior varsity race with a clocking of 23:38.

Coach's comments

"I was very pleased with our performance on Thursday, especially the performance of our freshman runners," said new



Lady Jay junior Laura Lee Baird, finished strong to place second in the 2.5 mile race in an excellent time of 17 minutes, 19 seconds during the annual Norton Invitational Cross Country meet last Thursday at the Prairie Dog Golf Course south of Norton.

Norton head cross country coach Tom Hehn.

"Kaylen Rossi and Dustyna Sprigg ran in the varsity race and performed like veterans. They didn't let the pressure bother them."

"Troy Bainter ran strong in the boy's varsity race and Cole Archer had an excellent time in the junior varsity event."

"Our girls ran well to win the varsity race. Laura Lee Baird finished second overall and our fifth place girl came in less than two minutes behind her."

"If they can avoid injuries, I think our girls team will have a very successful season."

"On the boys side, we have two runners dealing with injuries. Despite injuries, our boy's varsity team finished second, just two points behind a solid Ness City squad. I'm confident our boys will

also have a very successful season."

The Norton boys are ranked No. 8 in Class 3A in the Jim Maska Preseason state rankings, the Wheatland boys are ranked No. 6 in Class 1A and the Ness City boys are ranked among the others in Class 1A.

Next action

Norton will compete Saturday in the prestigious Wamego Cross Country Invitational at the Wamego Country Club.

The course layout will be the same as will be run in October for the state meet.

The 1-2-3A girls race will begin at 11:30 a.m. and the 1-2-3A boys race will start at 12 noon.

The girls will run four kilometers and the boys will run five kilometers.

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Volleyball Huskies have reason to smile

The Northern Valley volleyball Ladies traveled to Ransom to take on league foes Kensington and Western Plains and played with more zip in their feet which allowed the Huskies to cover the floor more and as a result came away smiling. — twice.

"We battled the Kensington Goldbugs in the first match and allowed them to take a very large lead of 20 to 8 before we got our legs back under us from the long bus ride. Then we started to play and even though we lost 18-25 we at least showed ourselves we were the ones stopping us, not them," said coach Chuck Zimmerman.

In the second game, the Huskies' passing was much improved, which led to better setting which resulted in some much anticipated power from the hitters. Kensington could not hold the Northern Valley girls in check and they battled their way to a hard fought 28-26 win to set up the third and deciding game.

Another battle with both teams making the other fight for all it had and in the end with, again, great saves from the defensive specialists to keep the ball off the floor the Huskies scrambled to take the final game 25-23.

"Our serving was much, much

better as we served 93 percent with 10 aces. Perfect servers were Stephanie Tubbs, Joni Hilburn, Alison Cole and Karen Wenzl. Our leaders in serving aces were Tubbs, with 5 and Jessica Largent with 3," the coach said.

Coach Zimmerman said the passing was improved just by the fact that "we did not let the ball hit the floor without some teammate on the floor trying to keep it off. This resulted in some tremendous digs and dives by our group to keep the ball alive, which we returned to the Goldbugs side and they were, evidently, stunned that we got it up and did not return it themselves. Joni Hilburn and Alison Cole were our leading passers as they both passed at a 2.0 rate."

Because the passing was better, the setting was upgraded a notch also. Megan Cole has become the team's sole setter, until a teammate returns from the "injured reserve list."

Megan, said the coach, did a better job of getting the ball to our hitters, as the hitting numbers will show, because the passes to her were better.

The Husky hitters came out of their shells on this night starting with Kensington. Stephanie Tubbs struggled early but came on strong as the night went on having 1 kill in this match. Jessica Largent was on fire as she kept the Kensington team moving to get to her spikes. Jessica was 14 of 16 with 7 kills. Alison Cole was the workhorse of the group as she attempted 33 spikes and came away with 13 kills.

The ladies also came alive at the defensive net as the team recorded 8 stuff blocks with Alison getting in on 5 while Tubbs stuffed 2 and Largent 1.

Next, the Huskies took on Western Plains who had defeated Kensington earlier in the evening. "Early on we found Western

Plains' strength and neutralized it. Next, we discovered their weakness and capitalized on it. The result was a very satisfying 25-13, 27-25 victory.," coach Zimmerman said.

"Serving was again very good, although our serving stats show we were very, very good I'll just say we did well with 8 aces and a percentage of well over 90," he said.

"Our passes for the most part were again better, but we must continue to improve as we will play some very good teams in the near future and we will need to be covering the floor the very best that we can."

"Our setting was improved even from the games before as Megan continues to become more comfortable with this new role for her."

"Our hitters took another step forward in this match. We did not spike as many but our percentage was up and our rate of kills was up," the coach said.

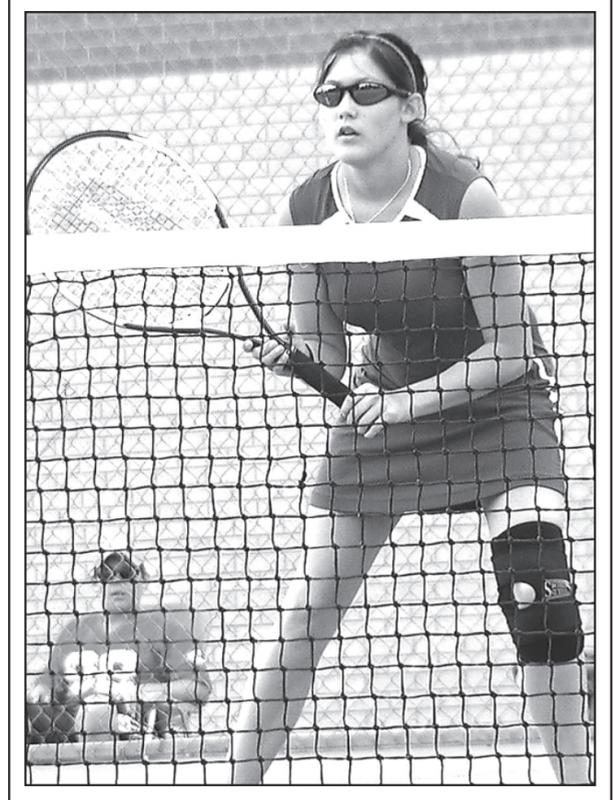
Tubbs came to life in this one with good sets from Megan as Stephanie had 6 kills on 11 of 14 spikes. Alison Cole 16 of 19 with 8 kills and Largent, again, was Miss Consistency as she only missed 1 with 4 kills.

The team recorded 5 stuff blocks with Tubbs getting 2.

"Probably the best thing that happened on this night was the fact that we did not quit. We were behind in the games with Kensington and fought our way back. This is what every coach looks for, is their team tough enough to withstand some rough times and fight their way back and win, OR do they roll over and quit," said the coach.

"Well, hopefully that has been answered. I know they can — they know they can, so from now on we will fight to the end and what ever happens (win or lose) our opponents will know they were in a fight."

Anticipation



Norton junior Hannah Fulton prepared for an overhead smash while up at the net during the recent Trego varsity round robin tourney in WaKeeney.
- Photo for The Telegram by Dennis Maybon

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