

# Legion ushers in season with four games

By **DICK BOYD**  
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The Norton American Legion baseball team opened the 2008 season with two hard fought five inning games with Alma, Neb. on Sunday at John Ryan Field.

**Alma**  
The locals lost 3-2 in the first contest and lost the nightcap 8-6.

"We lost our No.1 starting pitcher Logan 'Stretch' Keiswetter because of an out-of-town job situation and Chris Davis, who aged out and is helping coach this season," said Norton head coach Joe Durham. "So, pitching for this year's team is going to be by committee. Making his first pitching start for us was Brian Spooner, who moved here with his parents from Colorado. Not knowing what to expect from a player who is a regular catcher and infielder, I hoped to get four to five innings out of him and we got that and a little extra."

Spooner allowed one run in the top of the first and one in the top of the third but Norton was unable to score and trailed 2-0. In the bottom of the fifth inning, the Blue Jays rallied to tie the score when Blake Wolf walked, Jordan Durham singled and Spooner helped his pitching cause by doubling both Wolf and Durham home to tie the score at 2-2.

Alma's Dillon Kauk singled in the top of the seventh. Jordan Durham relieved Spooner on the mound and struck out the next two batters before an error allowed Kauk to score on a close play at home to give Alma a 3-2 lead.

Norton was unable to tally in the bottom of the inning.

"Overall, I was very pleased with our effort but not the final score," said coach Durham. "We let too many scoring opportunities get away from us." J. Boehler was the winning pitcher. He allowed seven Norton hits, walked four and struck out 11. Spooner was the losing pitcher. He allowed just three hits and walked seven batters. Brian Ulmer was the leading hitter for Norton, smashing a double and two singles in three times at bat.

In the nightcap, Alma took a 1-0 lead in the top of the first inning but Norton scored three runs in the bottom of the stanza to take a 3-1 advantage. Garrett Tacha, who is from Hoxie and started on the mound for the Blue Jays, led off with a single, followed by a single by Blake Wolf and single by Spooner. Tacha, Wolf and Spooner all scored.

Alma tied the score at 3-3 with two runs in the top of the third. In the bottom of the inning, Jacob Bracht walked and Spooner blasted a home run to push the Blue Jays ahead 5-3.

"We had the lead and I was looking for a closer so I replaced Tacha with Logan Runnion in the top of the fourth but my plan backfired," said coach Durham.

Taking advantage of five walks and two hits, Alma scored five runs in the inning to take an 8-5 lead.

## Legion Schedule

June 1 Alma, Neb. 5 and 7 p.m. Here  
June 2 WaKeeney 6 and 8 p.m. Here  
June 6, 7, 8 Goodland Tournament  
June 10 Osborne 6 and 8 p.m. There  
June 12 Phillipsburg 6 and 8 p.m. Here  
June 15 Colby 2 and 4 p.m. Here  
June 17 Stockton 6 and 8 p.m. There  
June 20, 21, 22 Holdrege Tournament  
June 24 Smith Center 6 and 8 p.m. There  
June 27 Minden, Neb. There  
June 29 Scott City 3 and 5 p.m. Here  
July 1 Alma, Neb. 6 and 8 p.m. There  
July 3 Smith Center 6 and 8 p.m. Here  
July 5 WaKeeney 5 and 7 p.m. There  
July 6 Osborne 3 and 5 p.m. Here  
July 7 Curtis, Neb. 6 and 8 p.m. Here

Norton scored one additional run in the bottom of the fifth but it was too little too late and Alma won their second game of the evening. Kauk was the winning pitcher. He gave up six hits, walked three and struck out one Norton batter.

Tacha gave up one hit for Norton and walked none. Runnion allowed two hits and walked five and was the losing pitcher.

Leading hitter for Norton was Spooner with a home run and single in three times at bat. Tacha had two singles in two official times at the plate.

"Sometimes you over coach and that is exactly what I did in the second game," said coach Durham. "I should have left Garrett in but I was worried about his arm strength as he hadn't pitched much this year."

### WaKeeney

The Blue Jays didn't have to wait very long for their first victories of the season. On Monday, they hosted WaKeeney and defeated them 6-4 and 13-8.

In the opener, WaKeeney scored two runs in the top of the first but Norton responded with three in the bottom of the inning and never trailed again. Tacha led off with a single, Wolf doubled, Durham walked and Matt Stanley singled. Tacha, Wolf and Durham all scored. Norton scored another run in the bottom of the third when Wolf walked, stole

second and scored on a single by Matt Stanley. Another run came across home plate for the Blue Jays in the bottom of the fifth when Durham tripled and scored. Norton extended their lead to 6-2 in the bottom of the sixth when Ulmer and Runnion both walked, Luke Ninemire singled and Ulmer scored.

WaKeeney scored twice in the top of the seventh but couldn't catch the Blue Jays, who earned the 6-4 victory. Tacha pitched the entire game for Norton, allowing eight hits, striking out seven batters and walking just one. Losing pitcher was Carr. He gave up seven hits, walked four and struck out nine batters.

Matt Stanley was leading hitter for Norton. He hit two singles in three times at the plate.

"WaKeeney hasn't had Legion baseball in many years. It was nice to see them play and they played hard," said coach Durham.

"They jumped on us early and took the lead but it was nice to see our players respond and regain the lead," said coach Steve Jeltz.

Coach Durham gave two new pitchers a chance to start the second game. Matt Stanley started on the mound for the Blue Jays and gave up two runs on two walks and no hits in the top of the first.

Norton scored one run in the bottom of the inning when Stanley singled and scored. WaKeeney faced Luke Ninemire on the



Norton Legion shortstop Matt Stanley fired the ball to first base after fielding a grounder during the Blue Jays' double header win over WaKeeney. Stanley is an outstanding hitter and led the Blue Jays with his bat in both games.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

mound for Norton in the top of the second and scored five runs on four walks and two hits. In the bottom of the inning, the Blue Jays ran across a single run as Ninemire hit safely and Brett Pulec singled and Ninemire scored to make it 7-2.

"Matt had never pitched before but, in practice, he's been throwing strikes so, looking for more pitching help, we wanted to see what he could do in a game," said coach Chris Davis. Playing catcher for Norton was a new addition, Skylar Harris from Alma.

"Another new addition, Luke Ninemire from Lenora, pitched for the first time in the second inning," said coach Jeltz. "He was raw but one thing we noticed was he has a lot of potential and he threw strikes."

The veteran Durham finished the game on the mound for the Blue Jays.

Norton scored three more runs in the bottom of the third to cut the Golden Eagle lead to 7-5. Wolf hit safely, Durham walked, Spooner singled, Runnion singled, Ninemire doubled and Wolf, Durham and Runnion all scored.

WaKeeney padded their lead with a run in the top of the fourth to make it 8-5 but Norton scored a run in the bottom of the inning to keep the deficit at two runs. Stanley doubled, Wolf singled and Stanley scored in the stanza.

Durham continued to pitch very well and made the Golden Eagles go down one-two-three the rest of the way. Meanwhile, the flood gates opened on the visitors, who saw Norton score seven big runs in the bottom of the fifth inning to rally for a 13-8 win!

Runnion got things going with a double, Aaron Pulec, Brett Pulec, Ulmer all walked, Stanley dou-

bled, Durham walked, Spooner hit safely, Runnion, Andrew Soderlund, Aaron Pulec and Brett Pulec all walked. Runnion, Aaron Pulec, Brett Pulec, Ulmer, Stanley, Durham and Spooner all scored.

Durham was the winning pitcher, giving up just one hit, walking one and striking out 10 batters.

Norton had 11 hits and nine Blue Jays walked. Leading hitter for Norton was Stanley with three hits in four times at bat. Wolf went 2 for 4, Runnion 2 for 3 and Ninemire 2 for 2 at the plate.

### Next action

Norton will play today, Saturday and Sunday in the Goodland Tournament.

## LODGE NOTICES

**American Legion**  
Harmonson Redd  
Post No. 63  
Second and Fourth Monday  
Gil Otter, Commander

**Eagles Lodge**  
FOE 3288  
Second and Fourth  
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.  
Dennis Gilhousen, President  
Lee Smith, Secretary

**Sons of the**  
American Legion  
Fourth Monday  
7:30 p.m.  
James Railsback, Commander  
Doyle Brooks, Adjutant

**Veterans of**  
Foreign Wars  
Reg. 7:00 p.m.  
First Mon. of each Month  
Curt Archibald, Commander  
Joe Ballinger, Quartermaster

**I.O.O.F.**  
No. 157  
Meet at Eagles Club  
First and Third Thursday  
Each Month at 7:30 p.m.  
Horace Collins, Noble Grand  
Randy Knoll, Secretary

## 71st Annual Flint Hills Rodeo - June 6, 7 and 8

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2pm Rodeo Sunday  
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"Military Day"  
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