

Basketball boys pick up overtime victory 65-57

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Doug Reusink's Norton Community High School boys basketball team fell way behind early but kept fighting, got back in the game and eventually defeated Stockton 65-57 in overtime on Friday evening in Mid-Continent League play in Stockton.

The game was postponed from December due to inclement weather.

The Blue Jays found a lid on the visitors' basket early in the contest and did not hit a single field goal in the first quarter. Trailing 15-1 after the first period, Norton played Stockton on even terms in the second quarter and outscored the Tigers 17-16 to cut the deficit to 13 points at 31-18.

Blue Jay defensive pressure held Stockton to just 8 points in the third quarter; meanwhile, Norton continued to warm up on the offensive end, hitting 15 more points to cut the Tiger lead to 6 points at 39-33.

Stockton tallied 13 points in the fourth quarter but Norton poured

in 19 points to tie the score at 52-all at the end of regulation and send the game into overtime.

Momentum continued to build for the "Fighting Blue Jays" in the extra period. They limited Stockton to just one field goal and five points to outscore the Tigers 13-5 and win by eight points!

Sophomore wing/post Dakota Dreher hit a free throw for Norton's only first quarter point

Junior point guard Landon Hamel gave the Norton offense a jump start in the second quarter when he hit 9 of the Blue Jays' 17 points on two baskets from beyond the arc, a two-point basket and one free throw.

Junior guard J.D. Gall buried two treys, Hamel hit a trey and two-pointer and junior guard Ashton Draper hit two two-point baskets for the Jays in the third quarter.

Hamel's three-point radar continued to be on target in the fourth quarter when he buried three more long range shots and hit 4 of 4 from the charity stripe for 13 more points.

Hamel also hit a two-point basket and 4 of 6 charities, senior post Zac Dreher hit a field goal and free throw and Draper hit a basket and 2 of 2 free throws for Norton's 13 points in the overtime.

"In the first quarter, we were doing good things but just could not hit shots," said coach Reusink. "Once shots started to fall, our confidence grew, which picked up our defensive intensity and eventually got us back into the game."

"Down the stretch of regulation and overtime, our young men played with confidence and made big plays and especially hit our free throws, which we had not been shooting well all game."

"Late in the fourth quarter and in the overtime, they took some bad shots and we shot the ball well."

"The biggest difference in this game is we did not quit once we got behind, which is something we have not done all season."

Leading scorer for Norton was Hamel with 33 points. He hit 6 of 10 from long range for a sharp shooting 60 percent, 3 of 6 two-

point shots for 50 percent and 9 of 16 overall for 56 percent accuracy. He also hit 9 of 13 free throws for 69 percent.

Gall had 15 points on 4 of 7 from beyond the arc for 57 percent, 1 of 2 two-point tries for 50 percent and 5 of 9 overall for an outstanding 56 percent as well. Gall hit 1 of 5 from the charity stripe for 20 percent.

Draper was a third double figure scorer for the Blue Jays with 12 points on 5 of 12 from two-point range for 42 percent and 2 of 2 free throws. He missed 2 three-point shots and ended 5 of 14 in field goals for 36 percent.

Leading scorer for Stockton was Andrew Niblock with 18 points. Cory Post added 13.

As a team, Norton hit 10 of 21 shots from beyond the arc for 48 percent, 10 of 24 two-point tries for 42 percent and 20 of 45 overall for 44 percent.

Stockton swished 1 of 6 long range shots for 17 percent, 21 of 35 two-point attempts for 60 percent and 22 of 41 overall for 54 percent.

From the free throw line, the Blue Jays connected on 15 of 33 for 46 percent. The Tigers hit 12 of 20 charities for 60 percent.

Norton grabbed 8 offensive and 16 defensive rebounds for 24 total. Stockton pulled down 9 of offensive and 17 defensive caroms for 28 total.

Draper was leading rebounder for the Blue Jays with 7, followed by Gall, Zac Dreher, 5 each; Dakota Dreher, 3; Hamel, 2; Jordan Wahlmeier, Tye Nickell, 1 each.

Norton had 10 steals compared to 5 for Stockton. Hamel and Zac Dreher were theft leaders with 3 each, followed by Draper, 2; Wahlmeier, Gall, 1 each.

The Blue Jays were credited with 14 offensive assists compared to 18 for the Tigers. Hamel was assists leader with 6, followed by Nickell, 4; Gall, 2; Dakota Dreher, Draper, 1 each.

Norton had 12 turnovers and the aggressive Blue Jay defense caused Stockton to turn the ball over 25 times.

Junior varsity

The Norton junior varsity boys

team was defeated 55-13.

Norton trailed by quarters 19-2, 31-4 and 43-6.

Leading scorer for Norton was Marcus Herman with 7 points, followed by Jordan Wahlmeier, Dillon McConney, Tye Nickell, 2 each. Adam Murchie led Stockton with 14 points.

Next action

Norton will travel to Smith Center today for more Mid-Continent League action. Games will be played between C-team girls, girls and boys junior varsity and girls and boys varsity teams, beginning at 4 p.m.

BOX SCORE

Norton Boys

Dakota Dreher 002-62; Ashton Draper 502-212; Landon Hamel 369-1333; J.D. Gall 141-515; Zac Dreher 101-33; Game Totals 101015-3365.

Stockton Boys

Dustin Kriley 200-04; Trevor Winters 013-56; Cory Post 405-513; Scott Voss 204-58; Ethan Kriley 400-18; Andrew Niblock 900-418; Game Totals 21112-2057.

Lady Blue Jays pin 75-21 loss on Stockton Tigers

By DICK BOYD

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Everything fell into place, including the ball into the basket, on Friday night for the Norton Community High School girls basketball team as they breezed to a 75-21 Mid-Continent League victory over Stockton in Stockton in a makeup game postponed in December due to inclement weather.

Coach Kevin Jilka's Lady Jays left the nets smoking with 59 percent shooting, hit 50 percent from the free throw stripe and out rebounded the Lady Tigers 30 to 10.

"This was a very businesslike win," said coach Jilka "We were very proud of our girls keeping their concentration on the game

and not looking ahead.

"Offensively, we executed very well all night and shot the ball extremely well."

"Defensively, we did a great job. Anytime you hold a team to 21 points, it is a great effort."

"This will be a busy week for us with two important league games against two outstanding opponents. We play Smith Center this evening and Hill City on Friday. We just need to keep playing hard like we have been and we will be fine."

Norton jumped out to a 19-5 lead by the end of the first quarter. Junior point guard Ashlie Stewart buried two three-point shots, senior post Hayli Bozarth hit four two-point baskets, senior guard Laura Lee Baird connected

on a three-point shot and senior forward Lacey Wallingford hit a two-point basket for the Lady Jays in the first period.

A 22-8 second quarter in Norton's favor extended their advantage to 41-13 at intermission. Wallingford buried two shots from long range, Bozarth hit a basket and three free throws, senior guard KaraJo Jones swished two baskets, junior post Amanda Ray hit a basket and charity, Baird and junior guard Hannah Waggoner each hit a two-point basket in the second quarter.

Bozarth continued to hammer away inside in the third quarter when she hit three more baskets and a free throw. Wallingford continued to shoot with accuracy and put in another trey and two more two-point baskets. Jones added two more baskets, Baird hit another basket and two charities and Ray connected on a basket in the period to total 24 points and extend the lead to 65-19.

Norton scored just 10 more points in the fourth quarter but Stockton added just 2 on 2 free throws to extend the final margin of victory to 54 points. Junior post Kaitlyn Wolf hit two baskets, junior post Lacy Keilig and Waggoner each hit a basket and Stewart swished two charities in

the period.

Bozarth was leading scorer for Norton with 20 points on a red hot 8 of 9 from the field for a blistering 89 percent accuracy and 4 of 8 free throws for 50 percent.

Wallingford finished with 15 points, also on very accurate shooting. She connected on 3 of 5 from beyond the arc for 60 percent, 3 of 4 two-point tries for 75 percent and 6 of 9 overall for a net smoking 67 percent. She missed her only two free throws.

Leading scorer for Stockton was Hayley Strutt with 9 points.

As a team, the Lady Jays connected on 6 of 11 long range shots for 55 percent, 24 of 40 from two-point range for 60 percent and 30 of 51 overall for a sharp shooting 59 percent.

Meanwhile, Stockton hit just 1 of 10 from long range for 10 percent, 6 of 20 two-point tries for 30 percent and 7 of 30 overall for 23 percent.

From the free throw line, the Lady Jays were accurate on 9 of 19 for 50 percent and the Lady Tigers connected on 6 of 12 tries, also 50 percent.

Norton pulled down 14 offensive and 16 defensive rebounds for 30 total. The Stockton quintet grabbed 6 offensive and 4 defensive caroms for 10 total.

Leading rebounder for Norton was Bozarth with 8, followed by Wallingford, 7; Baird, Jones, 4 each; Stewart, Wolf, Ray, 2 each; Waggoner, 1.

The Lady Jays had 15 steals compared to just 3 for the Lady Tigers. Leading the way with 3 each were Wallingford, Stewart and Baird, followed by Jones, Ray, 2 each; Waggoner, Wolf, 1 each.

Norton was credited with 14 offensive assists compared to 4 for Stockton. Wallingford was the leader with 4, followed by Baird, Jones, Bozarth, 3 each; Ray, 1.

Norton had 19 turnovers compared to 29 for Stockton.

Junior varsity

The Norton junior varsity girls quintet defeated Stockton 48-23.

The score was tied at 7-all after one quarter but Norton held a 25-12 lead at intermission. The young Lady Jays extended their lead to 43-14 by the end of the third quarter.

Leading scorer for Norton was Kaylen Rossi with 11 points, followed by Lacy Keilig, Kaitlyn Wolf, 8 each; Sady Keilig, 7; Kendra Engelbert, 6; Dustyna Sprigg, 4; Meaghan Peterson, Erin Terrell, 2 each.

Katie Baughman, Kacey Scott and Rebekah Niblock each scored 4 points to lead the Lady Tigers.

"It took us a bit before we found our rhythm tonight," said Norton assistant girls coach George Rossi.

"The first quarter, we just stood and looked at each other, then we decided to play and things took off."

"Our girls are getting better at doing the things we want them to do."

Next action

Norton will travel to Smith Center today for more Mid-Continent League play. Games will be between the C-team girls, girls and boys junior varsity and girls and boys varsity teams, beginning at 4 p.m.

BOX SCORE

Norton Girls

Lacey Wallingford 330-215; Hannah Waggoner 200-04; Ashlie Stewart 022-28; Laura Lee Baird 212-49; Lacy Keilig 100-02; KaraJo Jones 400-08; Kaitlyn Wolf 200-04; Hayli Bozarth 804-820; Amanda Ray 201-25; Game Totals 2469-1875.

Stockton Girls

Carlee Lindsey 013-36; Hayley Strutt 401-29; Jenny Nelson 000-30; Amber Kriley 001-21; Jana Conger 101-23; Brenna Schlaegel 100-02; Game Totals 616-1221.

Super season for former Blue Jay wrestler at Army

By DICK BOYD

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Michael Sprigg, a senior wrestler at Army and former state champion for Norton Community High School, is having an outstanding season for the Black Knights with a 24-9 record currently in NCAA mat action.

Army placed second as a team in the 40th annual New York State Wrestling Championships in Oswego, N.Y. on Friday, Jan. 16.

Michael finished runner-up at 285. He started the tournament with a 15-0 technical fall in 4:10 over NYU's Mark Shirland and a 5-2 decision over Cornell's Taylor Moore to reach the semi-finals. Following a 3-2 decision over Ithaca's Joe Goetz, Sprigg lost a 5-3 decision in the championship match to Columbia's Ryan Flores.

Michael also placed third in the same tournament his freshman year when he finished with a 16-18 overall record and received honorable mention freshman All-American recognition.

Most recently, Army defeated Brown 21-16 and Harvard 30-11 in duals on January 25. Michael won both of his matches. He won an 11-3 major decision over Zach Zdrada, Brown, and decisioned Spencer DeSena, Harvard, 7-3.

The Black Knights will return to action on Saturday, Feb. 7 when they defend their team title at the All-Academy Championships, hosted by VMI in Lexington, Va.

In his sophomore season, Michael compiled a 9-10 record and placed sixth in the same New York tournament.

He was injured much of his junior season and ended with a 3-5 record.

Michael graduated from Norton Community High School in 2005. He was ranked as high as 15th nationally by W.I.N. Magazine, compiled a 129-18 career record with the Blue Jays while wrestling for head coach Bill Johnson.

He was a two-time state champion, runner-up one year and fourth place in his other trip to the state tournament.

Michael finished fourth at

heavyweight in the 2005 NHSCA Senior National Championships to earn All-America honors.

He was a member of the National Honor Society while at Norton Community High School.

Michael is the son of Charla and David Sprigg, Norton.

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