

Wrestling team set to compete

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team will open the 2009-10 season on Saturday by competing in the St. Francis Tournament, which begins at 9:30 a.m., and the Hoxie Invitational, which begins at 9 a.m.

"We are getting a late start to the wrestling season after a very successful football campaign that saw Norton play in the state semifinals," said coach Johnson.

"I feel that the gridiron success will lead to success on the mat as well. But, it will take awhile to get them in wrestling shape. Look for us to start slowly and improve as the season progresses. Most of our young men will be going to their first tournament after only five practices. Our goal is not the early season tournaments but the state tournament in late February."

After winning the state championship three years in a row, Norton missed the championship by one and one-half points to place third in 2006-07, then finished fourth in the state in 2007-08 and third in the state last season.

The Blue Jays had a 13-2 overall record last year and placed second in the Mid-Continent League with a 7-1 record. Norton also won the championship of the regional tournament.

Coach Johnson is starting his 22nd year as head wrestling coach. His career record is 171-57 and his record at Norton is 165-39.

His assistant coaches are Doug Ray, Shane Miller and Tony Fiscus.

Top wrestlers

Norton returns eight wrestlers with state experience and six wrestlers who have won state medals.

Troy Bainter, 112 pound junior, compiled a 27-5 record last season en route to a state championship. Troy placed third in the state his freshman year.

Zane Perez, 152 pound senior, placed fourth in the state last year, was a state qualifier as a sophomore and placed sixth in the state his freshman season. He had a 34-13 record last year.

Senior Kaenon Keiswetter, 135, was a state qualifier in 2009 and 2007 and placed third in the state his sophomore year. He was 20-5 last season.

Kaid McKenna, 145 pound junior, had a 27-9 record last year when he placed fifth in the state tournament.

Junior Billy Broeckelman, 119, was a state qualifier last year and placed second in the state as a freshman. He was 27-7 last season.

Landon Keiswetter, a 130 pound junior, was a state qualifier last year with a 29-11 record and placed fifth in the state in 2008.

Junior Brett Terrell, a 125 pound junior, compiled a 32-12 record last year and was a state tournament qualifier.

Senior Connor Pfannestiel, 130, was a state qualifier in 2007 and had a 10-8 record last year.

Other returning lettermen and their records last season are: senior Casey Robison, 171, 18-16; junior Jeremy Sproul, 189, 11-8; junior Spencer Shirk, 140, 19-5, injured after Christmas; sophomore R.J. Ellis, 103, 13-20; sophomore Colby Poage, 112, 7-11.

Coach's comments

"Our problem the last two years in the state tournament has been consistency," said coach Johnson. "Of our six Blue Jays who have won state medals, only three of those were won last season by Bainter, McKenna and Perez. In 2007-08, both Keiswetter brothers and Broeckelman brought home state medals. To reach our team goals this season, we need all of these past state medal winners plus others to bring home state medals. We know we have the potential; everyone needs to wrestle well on the same weekend.

"Our strengths will be in the returning state medalists and state qualifiers. The problem will be getting them in different weight classes. For the past few years, about five of our best wrestlers have weighed within 10 pounds of each other and we have not been able to get them all on the varsity team. This season we must have all of them in the varsity line-up, even if they are light for the weight class."

Top newcomers

"Two wrestlers that are not newcomers but maybe our 'silent secrets' are senior Connor Pfannestiel, a 2007 state qualifier, and junior Spencer Shirk," said coach Johnson. "Both of these young men are excellent wrestlers who spent most of last season on the junior varsity. But, when they had a chance to wrestle in the varsity line-up, both had wins over 2009 state medalists. I look for both of these young men to make a big impact in our varsity line-up and compete for state medals."

"Several other former junior varsity wrestlers and freshmen will give our Blue Jays added

depth and a few of these newcomers will be competing for varsity positions in the lower weights. But, as always, these newcomers must prove themselves at the varsity level."

Coach has the credentials

A graduate of Flinthills High School, Rosalia, coach Johnson wrestled for Fort Hays State University. In addition to winning the national championship, he was national runner-up twice and placed fourth once.

He was chosen the "Outstanding Senior Male Athlete" at Fort Hays State in 1989. He also placed tenth in the wrestling Olympic tri-

als at 114.5 pounds in 1988.

Coach Johnson was inducted in the fall of 1999 into the Tiger Sports Hall of Fame at Fort Hays State University. He has also been inducted into the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame.

In 2005, he was named the Head Coach of the Year in Kansas by the National High School Wrestling Coaches Association.

He was also one of 18 coaches and boosters of high school wrestling named "2005 Man-of-the-Year" by Wrestling USA Magazine.

Sat., Dec. 5 - St. Francis Tournament in St. Francis, 9:30 a.m.
Sat., Dec. 5 - Hoxie Invitational in Hoxie, 9 a.m.
Fri., Dec. 11 - Southern Valley Invitational in Oxford, 3:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 12 - Clay Center Invitational (V) in Clay Center, 9 a.m.
Fri., Dec. 18 - Phillipsburg/Stockton Dual in Norton, 5 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 19 - Holiday Classic in Goodland, 9 a.m.
Fri., Jan. 8 - Mill Valley Dual in Norton, 6 p.m.
Sat., Jan. 9 - J.R. Durham Invitational in Norton, 9:30 a.m.
Thurs., Jan. 4 - Smith Center/Trego Dual in WaKeeney, 6 p.m.
Fri., Sat., Jan. 15-16 - Newton Tournament of Champions, 11 a.m., 9 a.m.
Fri., Jan. 15 - Junior Varsity in Elm Creek Invitational in Elm

Creek, Neb., 2:30 p.m.
Tues., Jan. 26 - Kearney Dual in Norton, 6 p.m.
Sat., Jan. 30 - Junior Varsity in Arapahoe Tournament, 10 a.m.
Sat., Jan. 30 - Mid-Continent League Tournament in Phillipsburg, 10 a.m.
Fri., Feb. 5 - Plainville/Ellis Dual in Ellis, 5 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 6 - Panther Classic (V and JV) in Phillipsburg, 9 a.m.
Thurs., Feb. 11 - Hill City/Osborne Dual in Osborne, 5 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 13 - Colby Junior Varsity Tournament in Colby, 9 a.m.
Fri., Sat., Feb. 19-20 - Class 3-2-1A Regional Tournament, TBA, 1 p.m.
Fri., Sat., Feb. 26-27 - Class 3-2-1A State Tournament in Hays, 9 a.m.

THIRD ANNUAL

100% of Proceeds are Donated to God's Pantry

~2009 Christmas~



COOKIE CONTEST

A fund raiser for God's Pantry

Brought to you by *The Norton Telegram*

with co-sponsorship from

Stitch Up A Storm, Destination Kitchen, End Zone and the Norton Theatre

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

at The Norton Telegram Office
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton

Entries must be received by
10:00 a.m. on December 4
Voting will be from 11:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

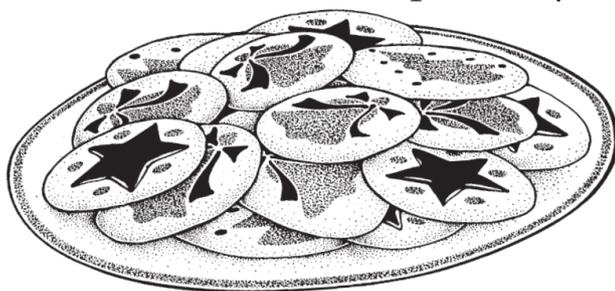
**\$5.00 for each entry;
25 cents for each vote**

WITH UNLIMITED ENTRIES AND
UNLIMITED VOTING ALLOWED

After voting and sampling your favorite cookies for 25¢ per vote, any quantity of cookies can be purchased for 25¢ each (containers will be available)

Anyone can enter, anyone can vote

Cookies must be homemade and have at least 2 dozen per entry



We will also be collecting canned and non-perishable food for God's Pantry



PRIZES

There are two categories — ages 13 and older, and ages 12 and younger. The cookie makers in each category with the most votes will win a prize. There are also prizes for second and third place as well.

Prizes for both age categories have been donated by End Zone, Stitch Up A Storm, Destination Kitchen, the Norton Theatre and *The Norton Telegram*.