

Lady Jays win volleyball opener

Norton junior Teslee Nickell sets the volleyball for a potential kill by one of her teammates during Norton's match with Northern Valley on Friday evening in Almena.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



By Dick Boyd

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The Norton Community High School volleyball team opened the 2011 season under the guidance of new head coach Kevin Jilka by winning the championship of a quadrangular meet at Northern Valley on Friday evening.

The Lady Jays defeated Lakeside 25-17, 25-10; outscored Plainville 25-18, 25-19 and beat Northern Valley 25-20, 21-25, 25-17.

"Obviously, it was a great start of the season for us," said coach Jilka.

"Our girls played hard and hustled all night long. We made a lot of hustle plays that kept us on top.

"We played a lot of different combinations and thought our girls handled it very well.

"As a coaching staff, we couldn't be more proud of the way we played overall tonight.

"Hopefully, our players un-

derstand we still have work to do and we need to get better.

"We go to Osborne on Tuesday to play Colby and Osborne. They will be very tough opponents and we need to be ready to play."

Lakeside

Senior Erin Terrell was the leader in kills with 16, followed by junior Alec Melvin, 3; sophomore Johnnye Ruder, sophomore Bailey Ambrosier and junior Teslee Nickell, 1 each.

Ruder led in serving aces with 3, followed by senior Caren Thomson and Melvin, 1 each.

Assists leader was Nickell with 4, followed by Thomson, 2; Melvin, 1.

Plainville

Terrell led in kills again, this time she had 18 and was followed by junior Bri Karnopp and Nickell with 1 each.

Senior Mariah Farber led in serving aces with 2, followed by Ruder, 1.

Ruder was also leader in as-

sists and blocks with 1 for each category.

Northern Valley

Once again, Terrell was the kills leader. She had 12 kills, followed by Melvin, 4; Thomson, 3; Nickell, 2.

Terrell also led in serving aces with 3, followed by senior Kylie Nuzum, 2; Thomson, Melvin, Nickell, 1 each.

In the digs department, Nuzum and Thomson led with 8 each, followed by Terrell, 6; Melvin, 4; Farber, 1.

Nickell led in assists with 6, followed by Nuzum and Ruder,

5 each; Terrell, 1.

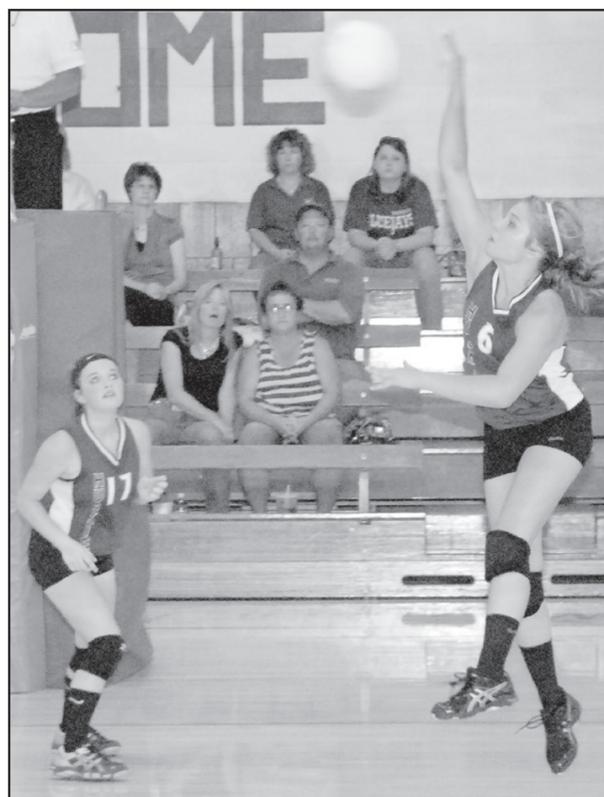
Ambrosier led blocks with 1.

Next action

Norton will travel to Osborne today to play Colby and Osborne in both varsity and junior varsity matches, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Varsity matches will be played in the South Gym. Order of matches is: Osborne vs. Colby, Colby vs. Norton, Osborne vs. Norton.

Junior varsity matches will be played in the High School Gym. Order of matches is: Osborne vs. Colby, Colby vs. Norton, Osborne vs. Norton.



Northern Valley junior Erika Chandler hits the volleyball over the net during the Lady Huskies' match with Norton on Friday night in Almena. Her teammate at left is freshman Makayla Smith.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Huskies host volleyball quadrangular

By Chuck Zimmerman

To use the words of the famous Mayberry station attendant Gomer Pyle "Surprise, Surprise, Surprise."

This was the thought of the day as the Lady Huskies opened the 2011 Volleyball season at home hosting a quad against state-ranked Plainville, upper division 1A Lakeside and 3A Norton.

The Ladies played Plainville (who earlier in the week had been ranked in the top seven in Class 2A) first and came out a little timid [realize we are playing two seniors, two juniors and three freshmen who have never played in a varsity high school game] but as the set went on we started to gain some confidence and started to whittle away at the Cardinal lead until we surged ahead and won 25-23 to start the season off on a surprising note.

To top off the first game in the second set, we played with the gained confidence and did not let Plainville get too close and won 25-20 upsetting a state ranked team in our first contest of the season.

We then took on upper division Lakeside and had our hands full as they were quick and fundamentally sound. We struggled at first, getting behind by seven early but started to adjust to the speed of their game and gradually came back to only lose by

the score of 21-25.

That we came back and got close just told our group that we could play with the same speed and with the same intensity as the Knights and we started out in the second set with a lead and held on to win the second set, 25-18.

In the third set the heat of the day got to us as we were playing our second game in a row to Lakeside playing their first. We just ran out of steam and lost 16-25.

In our final match of the day we played county neighbor 3A Norton. We again had to adjust to the strength of our opponent, with Norton they have a "thumper" that our freshmen have never had to play against but again as the set went on our whole team made an adjustment and we started to come back but lost the first set 20-25.

And, just like with Lakeside we realized we could handle Norton's style of play if we just relied on what is taught in practice. The ladies responded very well, handling the power hitters the Blue Jays threw at us and we won the second set 21-25.

In the third set, we learned a valuable lesson. Mistakes in close games will cost you a victory. We made too many errors in this third set and Norton took advantage and won 17-25.

Over all we had a surpris-

ing day, to say the least. A very inexperienced team taking on three bigger schools and actually holding their own in each contest and defeating a state-ranked team.

This year's team consists of senior Ashley Constable, who had a very good day in her overall play with many attacks that the opponents couldn't handle. Also a senior is Melissa Hawks, primarily our defensive specialist who also hits for placement. Melissa had a good day also getting the ball to our setter so we could start our combinations.

Juniors Erika Chandler, is one of our main hitters. Erika had many power hits while mixing in some off speed attacks to keep the defenses off balance, which scored us quite a few points. Haley Graham, also a Junior, had a very fine day with serving to spots that our opponents had trouble returning, passing and hitting when it was called for.

Our Freshmen class consists of Shilo Cline, who is serving as a defensive specialist. Kortney Cunningham will be patrolling the net, blocking and hitting while also playing defense. Kortney had a good first day of competition while only being able to practice four days because of an injury.

Makayla Smith will be our setter this season and had a very fine day as her team mates did

a good job of getting the ball to her so she could deliver a hit-table set to the hitters. She also had a good day of serving (as did our whole team). Khrianna Van Patton, our fourth freshman, did a remarkable job in all areas, serving straight line serves, passing with good accuracy and even spiking the ball with authority to get her team some very valuable points.

Again, a very good opening day even though we came away with a 1-2 record we proved to ourselves that we could play with good teams and adjust to different styles of play and be successful.

Blue Jay tennis team takes fifth

By Dick Boyd

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Coach Jim Green's Norton Community High School tennis team opened the 2011 season on Saturday with a fifth place finish in the annual Trego Varsity Round Robin Tournament in WaKeeney.

Tribune won the championship with 26 points, edging runner-up Trego with 24 points and third place Phillipsburg, who scored 22 points.

Fourth place went to Russell with 19 points and Norton scored 16, followed by Colby, 11; Mixed (Os/N4/W4), 14; Mixed (P3/R3/W3), 8.

Junior Tawni Griffey played No.1 singles for Norton and picked up where she left off last season when she went undefeated to win the Class 3A state championship.

Tawni shut out Rhett Brown, Russell, 6-0; shutout Megan Reding, Tribune, 6-0; shutout Kristen Lorenc, Russell, 6-0 to reach the finals where she shutout Sage Ratliff, Phillipsburg, 6-0 to win the gold medal.

"Tawni marched through her opponents with a workman like precision," said coach Green.

"She met Sage Ratliff of Phillipsburg in the first place match and again won 6-0 to stay unbeaten and earn nine team points for us.

"Tawni is our only player returning from last year's varsity."

Sophomore Haley Wallingford and junior Katie Koch played No.1 doubles for the Lady Jays and placed sixth.

They lost 6-3 to Brittini Hayes and Desi Branick, Russell; lost 6-0 to Kely Crittenden and Courtney Nemechek, Tribune, before defeating Abigail Buchholz, Trego and Cassidy Roth, Phillipsburg, 6-3. In the finals, they lost to Laurie Beard and Shelbie Christensen, Phillipsburg, 6-1, to place sixth.

"Haley and Katie are playing together for the first time," said coach Green.

"They got off to a slow start but improved during the day. Their sixth place finish added four points to our team score."

Playing No.2 singles for Norton was junior Sierra Black. She lost 6-0 to Kelli Gudenkauf, Russell; was outscored 6-2 by Baily Harris, Tribune and outscored Cheyenne Phillips, Trego, 7-5. She outscored Hanna Geibler, Colby, 6-1 in the finals to place fifth.

"Sierra is playing her first matches on the varsity," said coach Green.

"She was able to win one match in pool play and then also win the match for fifth place, which added three points to our

team score."

Norton sophomores Rickete Green and Ashley Hildebrand played No.2 doubles for Norton. The lost 7-5 to Taylor Hamel and Abby Dreher, Russell; lost 6-2 to Evin Smith and Megan Robertson, Tribune and lost 6-4 to Ellie Sherwood and Shaylee Flax, Trego. In the finals, they lost 6-4 to Bridget Bickner and Sara Lamm, Colby, to place eighth.

"At No.2 doubles, we have two more players that are new to our varsity," said coach Green.

"Ashley and Rickete played three very close matches. Just a few points made the difference between winning and losing."

Norton sophomore Jessica White played No.1 singles for one of the mixed teams. She lost 6-4 to Kylie Dunn, Trego; lost 6-0 to Sage Ratliff, Phillipsburg; and lost 6-2 to Megan Schroeder, Colby, and lost 6-4 to Kristen Lorenc, Russell in the finals.

Next action

The Norton Lady Jay tennis team will be busy the next week. They will play in the Varsity Invitational in Hays on Thursday, beginning at 3 p.m.; travel to Colby on Saturday for the Lady Eagles' tournament, beginning at 9 a.m. and play in the Phillipsburg Invitational next Tuesday, beginning at 1 p.m.

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