

Norton Thunder ties for ninth in state tourney

By Dick Boyd

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The Norton Thunder 16 and Under girls softball team tied for ninth out of 14 teams competing in the Girls' 16C Fast Pitch State Championship tournament held Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 13-15 in Emporia.

The Norton Thunder drew a bye so played the eventual tournament runner-up Emporia Energy in their first game on Saturday morning and lost 27-2. Later on Saturday morning, they played Moxie of Galena, who eventually tied for fifth, and lost 15-0.

In their closest game, played on Sunday morning, the Norton Thunder lost 14-8 to ThunderStyx of Saint Mary's, who tied with Norton and two other teams for ninth.

Emporia Energy

The game with Emporia Energy lasted two innings. They scored 23 runs in the first inning and four runs in the second inning.

Norton's two runs came in the second inning. Bri Karnopp singled, Sabre Plante and Kristen Burge both walked and Tara Brachtenbach singled. Karnopp and Plante both scored.

Norton had four hits, two

walks and three strike outs. Each getting one hit for Norton were Shauna Gibson, Skyler Davis, Karnopp and Brachtenbach.

Kirstin Georgeson and Bri Karnopp combined for pitching duties for Norton. They allowed 19 hits, 10 walks and no strike outs.

Moxie of Galena

In the game with Moxie, they scored nine runs in the first inning and six in the second inning while holding the Lady Thunder scoreless.

Norton had two hits, one walk and seven strike outs. Karnopp was 2 for 2 for the Lady Thunder.

Moxie collected 15 hits, had six walks and no strike outs.

Bri Karnopp was the Norton pitcher.

ThunderStyx of Saint Mary's

The ThunderStyx scored three runs in the top of the first inning; Norton answered with one run of their own. Gibson, Georgeson and Davis all singled and Georgeson scored.

Five runs by the ThunderStyx in the top of the second made it 8-1. Norton was scoreless in the bottom of the inning and the ThunderStyx also failed to score in the top of the third. Norton was also scoreless in the bottom

of the third

In the top of the fourth, the ThunderStyx added two more runs to extend their lead to 10-1.

The Lady Thunder from Norton had their best inning of the tournament in the bottom of the fourth when they batted around and ran seven runs across home plate to make it a 10-8 game. Kim Bradshaw walked, Karnopp and Ashley Hildebrand both singled, Plante walked, Burge, Gibson and Georgeson all singled, Davis walked and Bradshaw tripled in her second time up in the inning.

All except Plante scored.

Four more runs by the ThunderStyx in the top of the fifth extended their lead to 14-8. Although four Norton runners got on base in the bottom of the fifth, none of them could score.

Norton had 15 hits, three walks and four strike outs. Leading hitters for the Norton Thunder were Shauna Gibson, 3 for 4; Kirstin Georgeson, 3-4; Skyler Davis, 2 for 2 and Ashley Hildebrand, 2 for 3.

Kirstin Georgeson was the Norton pitcher. She gave up 13 hits, walked five and struck out no batters.

The Lady Express, McPherson, won the championship

with a perfect 5-0 record. Emporia Energy was runner-up with a 4-2 mark. Placing third with a 5-2 record were the Salina Shockers and the Wichita Thunder was fourth with a 3-2 record. Tying with Moxie for fifth was the Kansas Heat, Hoisington, with a 2-2 mark. Moxie finished 3-2.

Coach's comments

"While we certainly would have liked to do better at state, we went for the experience," said Norton head coach Brandon Gay. "We are a young team with very little experience outside of northwest Kansas. Between the Hays Tournament and State Tournament, we now have some tournament experience and hopefully can start working on the mental toughness required to win games like that."

"Because we had a bye in the bracket, we played winners all the way through. Our hitting started coming around in the last game but our pitching struggled. Our main pitcher, Kirstin Georgeson, suffered an injury and was only able to pitch one inning on Saturday. She came back Sunday but wasn't able to pitch to her full ability. That made it tough because, in a tournament like this, you have to have good pitching.



Norton Girls Thunder pitcher Bri Karnopp looks for the strike zone as she releases the softball during a double-header with a tough Holdrege team in Norton on July 10.

Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

"We are still a young 16 and under team. Our average age is 14 and we will only lose one player next season. I'm really proud of the progress our girls

made this year and, if they make similar progress next year, they will have a very special season."

Norton K-18 third in Regional; qualifies for State Tournament

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton K-18 baseball team placed third in the Regional Tournament held over the weekend in Ellis and was one of four teams from the tournament qualifying for this weekend's Kansas K-18 Baseball Tournament in Lucas.

Norton shutout Goodland 17-0 in their first game on Saturday morning, then lost on Sunday morning to unbeaten and eventual champion Victoria by an 11-1 score. In their final game on Sunday, Norton outscored Colby 11-7 to finish third.

After defeating Norton, Victoria went on to beat Smith Center 28-1 in the championship game. Smith Center outscored Colby 11-2 to reach the title game.

Goodland

The win over Goodland was a tight game for the first three innings. Norton took a 1-0 lead in the top of the third when Mickey Hahn singled, Jacob Green and Josh VanLaeyes both walked and Kobie Unterseher singled and Hahn scored.

In the top of the fourth, Norton added nine more runs by taking advantage of six walks to lead 10-0. Layton Miller and

Brant Cox both walked, Hahn singled, Green, VanLaeyes, Kendall Miller and Trenton Wright all walked, Jace Ruder singled, Layton Miller got on base on an error on his second time up and Cox doubled his second time up. All scored and Miller tallied twice in the inning.

Norton's final seven runs came in the top of the fifth. Jacob Green got things started by blasting a home run. Kendall Miller and Unterseher both singled, Will Ellis, Mitchell Hickman and Layton Miller walked, Cox got on base on a fielder's choice, Hahn tripled. Green walked his second time up as did VanLaeyes.

All except Cox and VanLaeyes scored to make the final 17-0.

Norton had 11 hits, 16 walks and eight strike outs. Leading hitter for Norton was Mickey Hahn, who went 4 for 5 with the bat.

Jacob Green was the winning pitcher for Norton. He pitched four innings, giving up two hits, walking two and striking out nine batters. Jace Ruder pitched one inning, allowing no hits, walking none and striking out one batter.

Coach's comments

"We were a little tight to start the game and missed some scoring opportunities," said Norton head coach Rick Green.

"About the fourth inning, we finally cashed in on some things that gave us trouble earlier and broke the game open.

"Jacob pitched an awesome game, allowing only five base runners and one was intentional. I think they had two balls in play, then Jace came in and did a good job finishing it."

Victoria

Norton had only four hits against the outstanding Victoria team but they also recorded just four hits.

The Blue Jays' only run came in the bottom of the fourth inning when Hahn singled, Green advanced after being hit by a pitch, VanLaeyes singled and Unterseher got on base on a fielder's choice. Hahn scored.

Victoria scored one run in the top of the first and 10 in the top of the third.

Mickey Hahn was 2 for 2 with the bat, Jacob Green was 1 for 1 and Josh VanLaeyes was 1 for 2. Norton also had one walk and five strike outs.

Clint Cole was the losing pitcher. In two and two-thirds

innings, he gave up four hits, walked five and struck out none. Josh VanLaeyes relieved him for one and one-third innings. He allowed no hits, walked four and struck out one batter.

Coach's comments

"We had some errors that really turned the game in their favor," said coach Green. "It was a 1-0 game going into the third and we made five errors that allowed them 10 runs. We can't give any team, let alone good teams, eight outs in an inning. We should have shut them down 1-2-3."

"We actually had as many hits as they did and had several more hard hits right at them."

Colby

Colby took a 1-0 lead in the top of the first inning but Norton responded with four runs in the bottom of the second stanza. Layton Miller walked, Cox got on base on a fielder's choice, Hahn singled, Green doubled and VanLaeyes got on base on a fielder's choice. All except VanLaeyes scored.

In the top of the third, Colby scored three runs to tie the score at 4-4.

Norton edged ahead 5-4 with another run in the bottom of the

third. Ruder got on base on a fielder's choice, Layton Miller got on base on an error, Cox walked and Hahn singled. Ruder scored.

Two more Colby runs in the top of the fourth put the Eagles ahead 6-5 but Norton took an 8-6 lead with three more runs in the bottom of the inning. VanLaeyes singled, Unterseher was hit by a pitch and advanced, Ruder got on base on an error and Layton Miller singled. All except Miller scored.

Colby did not score in the top of the fifth and the Blue Jays tacked on two more runs in the bottom of the inning to extend their lead to 10-6. Hahn, Green, Kendall Miller and Unterseher all singled and Hahn and Green scored.

Colby managed one more run in the top of the sixth and Norton added one in the bottom of the inning to make it 11-7. Hahn and Green both singled and Hahn scored.

Colby was three up, three down in the top of the seventh and Norton won 11-7.

The Blue Jay bats were really active in the game. Norton had 15 hits, five walks and two strike outs. Leading hitters

for the Blue Jays were Mickey Hahn and Jacob Green, both of whom were 4 for 5 with the bat.

Jacob Green was the winning pitcher. He hurled all seven innings, giving up eight hits, walking three and striking out 12 batters.

Coach's comments

"Against Colby, our boys were still a little sluggish from the loss," said coach Green. "We missed several scoring opportunities early and let them stay in the game with some defensive blunders."

"Jacob threw a complete seven inning game for the first time in his career and allowed seven runs but only one or two of them were earned."

"Overall, I am happy for our boys as they achieved our main goal and that was to advance to the State Tournament. We have some work to do to prepare this week to be successful."

Next action

The Kansas K-18 Baseball Tournament will be held this Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday in Lucas.

Norton's opening game will be versus Beloit at 6:30 p.m. on Friday.

Legion team completes regular season; competing in Zone Tourney

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton American Legion baseball team completed their regular 2012 season on Monday night, July 16 at John Ryan Field by splitting a double-header with Smith Center.

After losing the opener 3-0, the Blue Jays also trailed in the nightcap before rallying in the bottom of the sixth to win 12-8.

First game

The only runs scored in the first contest came when Smith Center tallied three runs in the top of the fourth after two singles and several Norton errors. Norton had two runners on base in the first, second and sixth innings but was unable to cross home plate.

The Blue Jays had four hits, three walks and eight strike outs. Dakota Dreher, Dalton Miller, Jacob Brooks and Toby Nickell each had one hit, all singles.

Trey Millan was the losing pitcher for Norton. He hurled five innings and gave up six hits, walked none and struck out eight batters. He was relieved by Tug Keiswetter in the final two innings. He allowed one hit, walked none and struck out one batter.

Second game

Smith Center scored one run in the top of the first inning but Norton responded with two in the bottom to lead 2-1. Millan and Dreher both walked,

Keiswetter singled, Andrew Ellis walked, Trever Lewis got on base on an error and Jordan Wahlmeier walked. Millan and Keiswetter both scored.

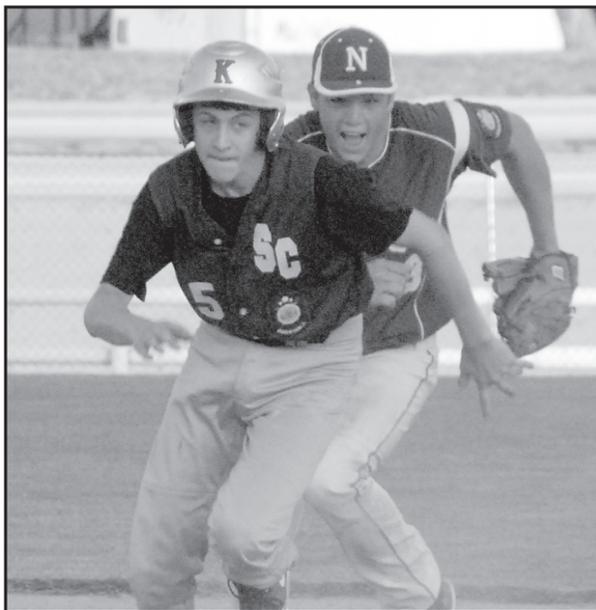
The Redmen were scoreless in the top of the second and the Blue Jays added two more runs to extend their lead to 4-1. Travis Cressler doubled. Millan singled him home and also scored in the inning.

Smith Center also failed to score in the top of the third inning and Norton added one more run to make it 5-1. Ellis singled, Lewis walked, Wahlmeier was hit by a pitch and advanced. Ellis scored.

Smith Center closed the gap to 5-4 with three runs in the top of the fourth. Norton did not score in the bottom of the inning and the Redmen took a 6-5 lead with two more scores in the top of the fifth.

Norton was unable to tally in the bottom of the fifth and the visitors added two more runs in the top of the sixth to extend their lead to 8-5.

The Blue Jays were equal to the occasion in the bottom of the sixth as they batted around on four hits and three walks to score seven runs and jump ahead 12-8. Ellis was hit by a pitch and advanced, Lewis and Wahlmeier both walked. Brooks singled, Cressler walked and Millan, Dreher and Keiswetter all singled.



Norton's Tug Keiswetter chases a Smith Center runner who was caught between second and first base during the second game of the double-header here on Monday, July 16. Tug was successful in catching the runner and tagging him out.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

All except Keiswetter scored.

Smith Center was three up, three down in the top of the seventh and Norton won 12-8.

The Blue Jays had eight hits, 10 walks and two strike outs. Leading hitters for Norton were Trey Millan, 2 for 3 and Tug Keiswetter, 2 for 4.

Dalton Miller pitched five innings for Norton, allowing five hits, walking three and striking out five batters. Andrew Ellis relieved him for one inning, giving up one hit, walking two and striking out one batter. Ellis was the winning pitcher. Tug Keiswetter relieved him for the

top of the seventh and preserved the win by not allowing any hits or runs and striking out one batter.

Norton's final regular season record was 17-7.

Coach's comments

"We played well tonight in both games," said Norton head coach Scott Ellis.

"We did not win the first game because of my coaching mistakes."

"In the second game, we played hard and slugged our way to a victory."

"I was very proud of the way our boys played. They were two good games against a good team from Smith Center."

Next action

Norton is competing this week in the Division AA Zone Tournament, which is being held at Memorial Field in Goodland.

Playing, in addition to Norton and Goodland, are teams from Ellis, Ulysses and Colby.

Norton has the best record and is seeded No.1. Teams were seeded prior to games played last week. The other seedings are: Ellis, No.2, 11-6; Ulysses, No.3, 12-13; Colby, No.4, 12-15 and Goodland, No.5, 3-11.

Norton drew a first round bye and played Goodland late Sunday evening. Goodland had defeated Colby earlier in the day. The Blue Jays lost to Goodland 8-6 and will drop into the loser's bracket.

In the lower bracket, Ulysses and Ellis both drew byes. On Sunday, Ulysses defeated Ellis. Colby and Ellis played at 6 p.m. Monday and Norton played the winner of the Colby-Ellis game at 8 p.m. Monday.

A win by Norton Monday evening would advance the Blue Jays to a game this evening versus the loser of the game between Goodland and Ulysses earlier this evening. Champoomnship play will be Wednesday evening.

It is a double elimination tournament with the winner advancing to the State American Legion Baseball Tournament on August 1-5 in Sabetha.

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