

Lady Jays take third in the Topside Tip-Off

By Dick Boyd

nortontelegram@nwkans.com
Coach George Rossi's Norton Community High School girls basketball team won third place in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament held in Goodland.

After defeating Wray, Colo. 42-32 on Thursday, they lost 72-28 to Ottawa on Friday, then outscored Sharon Springs 35-24 on Saturday.

McCook defeated Ottawa 59-52 for the championship on Saturday. Oakley outscored Burlington, Colo. 41-32 to win the consolation championship and Wray, Colo. defeated Goodland 47-36 for seventh.

Wray, Colo.

With senior point guard Tawni Griffey leading the way, the Norton Lady Jays won their opening game in the tournament by a 42-32 score over Wray, Colo.

Griffey, who was absent in the season opening loss to Goodland, scored 16 points on 2 of 5 three point tries for 40 percent, 3 of 9 two-point attempts for 33 percent and 5 of 14 overall for 36 percent from the field. She was perfect from the free throw line, where she hit 4 of 4.

Norton led from start to finish. The Lady Jays were on top 13-4 after one quarter, 21-12 at intermission and 30-24 at the third quarter mark.

"This was a big win for a number of reasons," said first year head coach George Rossi. "First, just to show our girls that they can win and we needed a win for down the road and the league tournament.

"Our girls were much more aggressive tonight than in the first game. While we still made way too many turnovers, I felt that we did a better job with the ball in our hands. Our free throws were also improved.

"We need to put in a lot of work on our press and zone defense. We let too many girls get open on the backside and, fortunately for us, Wray missed quite a few easy shots.

"This win over Wray was absolutely a step in the right direction!"

Norton hit more shots from beyond the arc than from closer in to get the offense going in the first quarter. Johnnye Ruder, who is a junior, swished two

three-point baskets and Griffey hit one from long range in addition to a two-point basket. Junior Katelyn Engelbert added a two-point basket.

Griffey hit another shot from beyond the arc in the second period along with a two-point basket. Senior Kamilla Jones added a two-point basket and junior Bailey Ambrosier hit a free throw.

Ruder hit another three-point basket and one from two-point range in the third quarter and Jones became the third Lady Jay to hit from long range when she buried a shot from beyond the arc. Ambrosier added another free throw.

Wray tried fouling in the fourth quarter to get the ball but the strategy didn't work. Norton hit just three baskets in the quarter but also swished 6 of 10 free throws. Griffey hit four charities and a basket, Ambrosier swished two free throws and a basket and Jones hit her third basket of the night.

Ruder also scored in double figures for the Lady Jays. She hit a perfect 3 of 3 three-point attempts for 100 percent, 1 of 8 two-point tries for 13 percent and 4 of 11 overall for 36 percent and 11 points.

As a team, Norton hit 6 of 13 three-point tries for 46 percent, 8 of 38 two-point attempts for 21 percent and 14 of 51 overall for 27 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton hit 8 of 14 for 57 percent compared to 3 of 14 for 21 percent by Wray.

The Lady Jays pulled down 10 offensive and 22 defensive rebounds for 32 total. Wray grabbed 9 offensive and 25 defensive caroms for 34 total.

Leading rebounder for Norton was Engelbert with 8, followed by Ambrosier, 6; Katie Bohl, 4; Jones, 4; Griffey, 3; Darcy Bainter, 3; Alec Melvin, 3; Ruder, 1.

The Lady Jays' aggressive defense blocked 6 Wray shots. Bohl led the way with 2 blocks followed by Griffey, Engelbert, Ambrosier and Ruder, 1 each.

Norton had 10 steals and Wray stole the ball 9 times.

The Lady Jays had 6 offensive assists. Griffey, Bainter, Bohl, Ambrosier, Ruder and Jones each had 1.

Both teams had a lot of turnovers; Wray lost the ball 29 times and Norton 24.

Norton girls

Tawni Griffey 3 2 4-4 16; Katelyn Engelbert 1 0 0-0 2; Bailey Ambrosier 1 0 4-10 6; Johnnye Ruder 1 3 0-0 11; Kamilla Jones 2 1 0-0 7; Totals 8 6 8-14 42.

Ottawa

Norton met an excellent Ottawa team in the championship semi-finals on Saturday and the Lady Jays were overwhelmed 72-28.

Ottawa held quarter leads of 24-9, 45-15 and 60-19.

Tawni Griffey hit a basket and free throw, Bailey Ambrosier scored on four free throws and Alec Melvin hit a basket for Norton in the first quarter.

Griffey's two baskets from beyond the arc accounted for the Lady Jays' points in the second period.

Katelyn Engelbert swished a three-point basket and Ambrosier hit a charity toss for Norton's third quarter points.

Griffey finished the game in the fourth period with a three and a two-point basket while Ambrosier and Kamilla Jones each hit a two-point basket.

"We knew Ottawa would be very tough but it was a buzz saw," said coach Rossi.

"Fortunately, we still have all of our arms and legs.

"Ottawa is the best team we have played in a long time. They were very sound.

"Our girls did not give up and we did do some good things.

You just can't play with any hesitation against a team like Ottawa. Hopefully, we can use this to learn how to play a more aggressive form of basketball. Being more aggressive and stronger is something we will be spending a great deal of time on in practice, along with everything else we need to improve on."

Griffey was leading scorer for Norton with 14 points on 3 of 9 shots from beyond the arc for 33 percent, 2 of 7 two-point tries for 29 percent and 5 of 16 overall for 31 percent along with 1 of 2 free throws.

As a team, the Lady Jays hit 4 of 13 three-point shots for 31 percent, 5 of 21 two-point tries for 24 percent and 9 of 34



Norton senior point guard Tawni Griffey dribbles past a Sharon Springs defender during the Lady Jays' win over the Lady Wildcats on Saturday to place third in the Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland. Griffey led Norton in scoring in the tournament.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

overall for 26 percent. Ottawa made 4 of 5 from long range for 80 percent, 25 of 51 two-point shots for 49 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton hit 6 of 17 for 35 percent compared to 10 of 17 for 59 percent by Ottawa.

The Lady Jays had 5 offensive and 10 defensive rebounds for 15 total. Ottawa pulled down 15 offensive and 21 defensive caroms for 36 total.

Leading rebounder for Norton was Ambrosier with 4, followed by Jones, 3; Griffey, Bainter, Melvin, 2 each; Engelbert, Peyton Renner, 1 each.

Norton had 6 steals and Ottawa had 12.

The Lady Jays turned the ball over 25 times compared to 16 for Ottawa.

Norton girls

Tawni Griffey 2 3 1-2 14; Katelyn Engelbert 0 1 0-0 3; Bailey Ambrosier 1 0 5-14 7; Alec Melvin 1 0 0-0 2; Kamilla Jones 1 0 0-1 2; Totals 5 4 6-17 28.

Sharon Springs

To win third place, Norton played very good defense and shot just well enough to defeat Sharon Springs 35-24.

The Lady Jays led 10-3 after the first quarter but each team hit just one field goal in the second period to make it a 12-5 game at halftime. A 10-8 third quarter score in favor of Norton made it 22-13 and Norton also

outscored Sharon Springs 13-11 in the final stanza.

Bailey Ambrosier hit a basket and free throw, Kamilla Jones and Darcy Bainter each hit baskets and Tawni Griffey hit a three-point basket in the first quarter. Ambrosier hit Norton's only second period bucket.

In the third period, Katelyn Engelbert hit two baskets while Griffey and Ambrosier each hit one and Jones added two free throws.

Griffey tallied on two shots from beyond the arc and a two-point basket in the fourth quarter. Ambrosier finished with three free throws and Jones hit another basket.

"It's a good thing there are not style points in basketball because this win was not pretty. But, it was a victory and we will take that over style any day.

"We came into the game missing three players but the girls we had played their hearts out.

"Our defense was very good in the second quarter but we went on a very long scoring drought. We were able to move the ball better in the second half and did a much better job of shooting.

"We are maturing as a team and are still in the younger stages. Going 2-1 in the Goodland tournament is a very big step for us."

Griffey was leading scorer for Norton with 13 points on 3 of 7 from beyond the arc for 43 per-

cent, 2 of 4 two-point tries for 50 percent and 5 of 11 overall for 45 percent.

Ambrosier scored 10 points on 3 of 7 field goal tries for 43 percent and 4 of 9 free throws for 44 percent.

As a team, Norton hit 3 of 8 three-point tries for 38 percent, 10 of 29 two-point attempts for 34 percent and 13 of 37 overall for 35 percent.

The Lady Jays grabbed 8 offensive and 23 defensive caroms for 31 total compared to 7 offensive and 18 defensive rebounds for 25 total for Sharon Springs.

Engelbert led Norton in rebounding with 9, followed by Griffey, Bainter, 8 each; Ambrosier, 5; Jones, 1.

Norton had 5 offensive assists; Jones had 3 and Griffey had 2.

The Lady Jays had 18 turnovers and the Lady Wildcats lost the ball 16 times.

Norton girls

Tawni Griffey 2 3 0-1 13; Katelyn Engelbert 2 0 0-0 4; Darcy Bainter 1 0 0-0 2; Bailey Ambrosier 3 0 4-9 10; Kamilla Jones 2 0 2-2 6; Totals 10 3 6-12 35.

Next action

Norton will travel to Stockton this evening to begin Mid-Continent League play at 4:45 p.m.

Norton wrestlers fourth in Clay Center Tournament

By Dick Boyd

nortontelegram@nwkans.com
The Norton Community High School varsity wrestling team placed fourth in the very tough Clay Center Invitational Tournament on Saturday.

Although the Blue Jays are ranked No.1 in the state in Class 3-2-1A, they were up against some talented opposition.

Garden City, who is ranked No.1 in the state in Class 6A, won the tournament with 178 points. Junction City, the No.2 state ranked team in Class 6A, placed runner-up with 118 points. They were followed by Holton, 108; Norton, 94; Salina South, 75; Marysville, 72; Beloit, 66; Rock Creek, 37.5; Clay Center, 35.5.

Norton entered 11 of the 14 weight classes. Five Blue Jays were in the finals of their weight classes but placed runner-up. They were sophomore Caysean Campbell, 106; junior Ethan Ross, 112; junior Alec Hager, 126; senior John Risewick, 132 and junior Cole Renner, 170. Norton senior Lucas Engel placed third at 220. Junior Branson Addington at 120, sophomore Jared Tallent at 138 and senior Jared Bohl at 160 all placed fifth in their weight classes.

Senior Eli Bozarth wrestled at 145 but was injured and had to default.

Sophomore Kendall Miller also wrestled for Norton at 152.

The Blue Jays compiled a 28-16 win-loss record and had a 14-5 pin ratio.

Wrestler of the Week

The Norton coaches named Cole Renner "Wrestler of the Week" as a reward for coming back from an 0-2 record at Hoxie and coming within seconds of a championship at Clay Center.

Coach's comments

"Overall, we wrestled a little flat," said coach Johnson. "We didn't show the killer instinct that we showed at Hoxie. From the first round, we didn't have that extra energy. Our wrestlers know they need to be mentally prepared when they walk in the gym.

"The competition was much tougher than at Hoxie and we weren't up for the challenge. As a result, we were sub-par for our expectations. But, the good news is that it's early in the season. If we thought we were good, we got our wings clipped. What's nice is that we consider every competition before regionals as practice.

"We learned a lot from some of our losses at Clay Center. It was good that we had five wrestlers in the finals. They lost but every one of their opponents are extremely tough.

"We did have some sickness and Eli's default lost us points he would have won."

Individual matches

106 - Caysean Campbell won a 10-0 major decision over Lake Deam, Junction City; pinned Luke Martin, Clay Center in :26; was pinned in 2:32 by Michael Prieto, Garden City; won a 3-2 decision over Chris Deters,



Norton junior Cole Renner is pictured above during his 170 pound 7-5 decision over Tyler Mcgaha, Salina South, in the Clay Center Invitational Tournament on Saturday. Renner placed runner-up in this tough tournament and was named "Wrestler of the Week" by the Norton coaches for his performance.

- Courtesy photo by Angie Hager

Marysville and pinned Randall Bates, Salina South, in :06.

113 - Ethan Ross pinned Dylan Collette, Junction City, in 1:00; lost a 3-0 decision to Josh Goepfert, Marysville; pinned Efrain Sanchez, Garden City, in :56 and pinned Efrain Sanchez, Junction City, in 1:29.

120 - Branson Addington was pinned in 3:56 by Matt Urritia, Garden City; pinned Hunter Demars, Clay Center, in :26; won an 8-0 major decision over Randall Thomas, Rock Creek; was

pinned in 5:14 by Hunter Price, Holton.

126 - Alec Hager pinned Christian Silvestre, Salina South, in :53; pinned Alec Castillo, Garden City, in 3:13; won a 13-4 major decision over Jonah Lutz, Holton; was decisioned 8-2 by Mark Reiss, Rock Creek and pinned Bryce Zachary, Beloit, in :52.

132 - John Risewick pinned Zac Reick, Rock Creek, in 2:37; pinned Tyler Rockwell, Marysville; was edged 7-5 by Tevin

Briscoe, Garden City; pinned Amir Mcfarthing, Junction City, in 1:44 and won by injury default over Justin Rieschick, Holton, in 3:38.

138 - Jared Tallent lost an 8-5 decision to Aj Hurtado, Garden City; won a 6-3 decision over Brycin Freeland, Salina South; lost a 13-6 decision to Lucas Lovvorn, Holton and edged Carter Wessling, Beloit, 7-5.

145 - Eli Bozarth lost a 4-3 decision to Lane Lassier, Holton; injury defaulted to Ezio Voeghtly, Junction City, in 2:47.

152 - Kendall Miller lost a 5-2 decision to Gabe Ware, Clay Center; lost a 5-0 decision to Andrew Millsapp, Junction City and won a 7-4 decision over Mason Baum, Holton.

160 - Jared Bohl was pinned in 3:02 by Andrew Rieschick, Holton; won a 5-2 decision over Cole Hoover, Salina South; won an 8-1 decision over Josh Nelson, Marysville and was pinned in :34 by Jeryl Denton, Junction City.

170 - Cole Renner won a 5-4 decision over Brandon Goering, Rock Creek; won a 7-5 decision over Tyler Mcgaha, Salina South; lost a 4-3 decision to Micah Felton, Junction City and pinned Dave Luebcke, Marysville, in 1:33.

220 - Lucas Engel pinned Lody Black, Clay Center, in 4:13; won an 8-3 decision over Samson Apodaca, Garden City; won a 9-6 decision over Casey Hilton, Marysville and was edged 4-2 by Grant Flemming, Salina South.

Next action

Norton varsity wrestlers will be very busy this weekend.

On Friday, they will compete in the Mid-Continent League Round Robin Tournament in Phillipsburg, beginning at 3 p.m.

Competing, in addition to Norton and Phillipsburg, will be teams from Ellis, Smith Center, Osborne, Hill City, Stockton, Plainville and Trego Community.

There will be five rounds of wrestling.

A plaque will be awarded to the top team and medals will be awarded to the top four wrestlers in each weight class.

On Saturday, the Blue Jay wrestlers will compete in the Goodland Holiday Classic Tournament in the Max Jones Fieldhouse, beginning at 9 a.m.

Competing, in addition to Norton and Goodland, will be teams from Trails, Colo.; Colby; Burlington, Colo.; Hugoton; Leoti; Scott City; Springfield High School, Colo. and Ulysses.

Teams will wrestle duals in two pools with the finals consisting of duals between the best teams from each pool.

Team plaques will be awarded to the first, second and third place teams. A medal will be awarded for the fastest pin of the day.

A medal will also be given to the tournament's most outstanding upper and lower weight wrestlers.