

Gridiron action kicks off

By **DICK BOYD**

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The Norton Community High School football team will begin the 2013 and Mid-Continent League season this Friday night at 7 p.m. when they travel to Smith Center to play the always tough Redmen.

The Blue Jays are coming off an outstanding 2012 season where they compiled a 7-3 record, were champions of the Mid-Continent League and were the Sub-State runner-up.

Having lost nine starters on offense and eight on defense, Norton will be in a rebuilding mode. There are 16 lettermen on the 51 player squad. Two of them received All-Mid-Continent League recognition last season by vote of the league coaches. Senior center Cole Renner, 5'11", 200 pounds, was named to the Mid-Continent League second team. Renner was also a starter at defensive end. Junior defensive tackle Stewart Whitney, 5'8", 170 pounds, received honorable mention from the Mid-Continent League.

Other lettermen and projected starters are senior Tanner Furbush, 165 pounds, running back; senior Austin Hager, 5'10", 150 pounds, cornerback and kicker, junior Wyatt Harting, 6'3", 230 pounds, offensive tackle.

Other returning lettermen are Toby Nickell, 5'8", 175 pound running back, defensive back;

Trever Lewis, 5'8", 140 pound tight end, defensive back; Ethan Ross, 5'5", 125 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Jared Tallent, 5'7", 155 pound running back, linebacker; Travis Cressler, 6', 175 pound offensive lineman, defensive end; Cody Temmel, 5'9", 155 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Kolton Harting, 6', 200 pound offensive lineman, defensive lineman, seniors; Mickey Hahn, 6', 180 pound tight end, linebacker; Kobie Unterseher, 6', 150 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Breven Sondergaard, 6'2", 200 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Jordan Karnopp, 6'1", 175 pound offensive lineman, defensive end, juniors.

Other squad members

Drew Schrum, 6', 160 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Michael Johnson, 5'10", 220 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle, seniors; Kendall Miller, 6', 175 pound quarterback, linebacker; Derick Campbell, 5'9", 150 pound running back, defensive back; Christian Boser, 5'11", 170 pound running back, linebacker; Caysean Campbell, 5'4", 120 pound running back, defensive back; Derek Rowh, 5'7", 145 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Tyler Kuhn, 6'4", 175 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Conor Cox, 6'5", 190 pound tight end, de-

fensive end, juniors; Jordan Dole, 5'11", 200 pound quarterback, defensive end; Jesse Courtain, 5'11", 140 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Gavin Lively, 6', 170 pound running back, free safety; Tevin Brown, 5'11", 160 pound tight end, free safety; Quinton Porter, 5'10", 125 pound quarterback, defensive back; Riley Hager, 5'8", 140 pound running back, defensive back; Ryan Thrailkill, 5'6", 130 pound running back, defensive back; Nick Peterson, 5'10", 185 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Mike Kasson, 5'5", 145 pound offensive lineman, linebacker; James Berry, 6'2", 170 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Alex Hjort, 5'9", 190 pound offensive lineman, defensive lineman; Cameron Heikes, 6', 180 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; D.J. Nickell, 6'2", 215 pound offensive lineman, defensive tackle; Dalton Pfannenstiel, 5'11", 125 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Kyle Bell, 5'8", 125 pound wide receiver, defensive back, sophomores; Landon Porter, 5'7", 115 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Kade Unterseher, 5'9", 110 pound quarterback, defensive back; Tyus Henson, 5'7", 120 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Will Ellis, 5'7", 115 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Trenton Wright, 5'8", 140 pound running back, line-

backer; Jacob Green, 6', 225 pound offensive lineman, linebacker; Layton Miller, 5'10", 145 pound offensive lineman, defensive lineman; Maverick Engel, 5'10", 160 pound offensive lineman, defensive lineman; Koby McEwen, 5'9", 120 pound wide receiver, defensive back; Chris Davis, offensive lineman, defensive lineman; Michael Stewart, offensive lineman, defensive lineman, freshmen.

Coach's comments

"We will be young and inexperienced," said eighth year head coach Lucas Melvin.

"I believe our young men want to do well. We will just need to work very hard to get to where we need to be.

"Our league will be a tough one as always. All the Mid-Continent League teams should be good.

"Smith Center's longtime head coach Roger Barta has retired and has been replaced by Darren Sasse, who has been an assistant coach.

"They'll probably do some different things and should have a lot of returning players.

"We will have to play hard against them."

Assistant coaches

Assistant coaches this season are Tony Fiscus, Jeremy Hawks, Ben Gordon and Terrell Lane.

Managers are Jarrett Wente, Andrew Bashford, Cruz Leon,

Norton Community High School Football Schedule

Varsity

Friday, Sept. 6 - Smith Center (A) 7 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 13 - Goodland (H) 7 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 20 - Plainville (A) 7 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 27 - Oberlin (H) 7 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 4 - Ellis (H) 7 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 11 - Colby (A) 7 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 18 - Minneapolis (H) 7 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 25 - Beloit (A) 7 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 31 - Phillipsburg (H) 7 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 5 - Bi-District (A) TBA
Saturday, Nov. 9 - Regional (A) TBA
Friday, Nov. 15 - Sectional (A) TBA
Friday, Nov. 22 - Sub-State (A) TBA
Saturday, Nov. 30 State (A) TBA

Junior Varsity/C Team

Monday, Sept. 9 - Smith Center (H) 5:30 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 16 - Goodland (A) 5:30 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 23 - Plainville (H) 5:30 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 30 - Oberlin (A) 5:30 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 7 - Hays High C Team (A) 3 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 7 - Hays High (A) 5 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 14 - Colby (H) 5:30 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 17 - McCook C Team (A) 5 p.m.
Monday, Oct. 21 - Phillipsburg (A) 5:30 p.m.

Trenton Sprague and Owen Brown. Cruz Leon and Trenton Sprague will also be filmers. Rick Green will keep statistics.

Coach Melvin's background

Coach Melvin is a graduate of Colby High School. He attended Hutchinson Community College for two years and Fort

Hays State University for two years and played football all four years.

For 15 years in Norton, he was a junior high and high school track and football assistant coach and has been the head football coach the past seven seasons.

Runners to hit the ground running

By **DICK BOYD**

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The Norton Community High School cross country teams will begin the 2013 season by hosting the annual Norton Cross Country Meet on Thursday at the Prairie Dog Recreation Golf Course south of Norton.

The meet will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the junior varsity race and will continue with the girls varsity race at 5 p.m. and the boys varsity race at 5:30 p.m.

The boys will run 3.1 miles and the girls will run 2.5 miles.

Team medals will be awarded to the top three girls and boys teams. Individual medals will go to the top 15 varsity girls and boys and the top 10 junior varsity girls and boys.

Competing, in addition to Norton, will be teams from Ellis, Hill City, Hoxie, Natoma, Northern Valley, Oberlin, Phillipsburg, Plainville, Stockton, Trego and Wheatland.

The Norton girls and boys

both won the Norton Invitational championship last year for the fourth year in a row and it was the seventh championship in a row for the Lady Jays.

George Rossi returns as head coach of both teams for the fifth straight year. He has welcomed seven girls and six boys to this season's squads.

Returning letter winners from last season's state runner-up girls team are: Katelyn Engelbert, senior, top 2012 time, 17:05; Darcy Bainter, senior, top 2012 time, 16:45; Marisa Maddy, senior, top 21012 time, 17:50; Sierra Griffith, junior, top 2012 time, 16:38; Molly Maddy, sophomore, top 2012 time, 17:28.

Other members of the girls team are junior Burgandy Sorter and sophomore Raenee Patterson, top 2012 time, 17:25.

Returning boys lettermen from last season's third place state finish are: Marc Miller, senior, top 2012 time, 17:28; Alec

Hager, senior, top 2012 time, 17:55; Dalton Vanover, junior, top 2012 time, 18:25; Brendon Frack, sophomore, top 2012 time, 17:44.

Other members of the boys team are Weston Erbert, sophomore, top 2012 time, 21:35 and Nate Hartwell, freshman.

The Norton girls earned seven meet championships and the Blue Jay boys won three meet championships with two runner-up places last season.

In 2012, the Norton girls were Mid-Continent League cross country champions for the fifth year in a row and the Blue Jay boys won the league crown for the ninth year in a row!

At the Regional Meet in Cimarron, both girls and boys qualified for the state meet for the fourth year in a row. The Lady Jays were regional champions and the Blue Jay boys placed runner-up for the third straight year.

The Norton girls placed run-

ner-up in the State Cross Country Meet last season and the Blue Jay boys finished third in the state.

Coach's comments

"Both our girls and boys return the top four runners from last year," said coach Rossi. "With many teams in the state also returning top runners, the competition will be stiff.

Katelyn, Darcy and Marisa are three strong seniors on our team and two-time all-state runner Sierra is a junior and was our No.1 runner on last year's team.

"Our boys return our top four runners in Marc, Alec, Dalton and Brendon and freshman Nate has looked good in practice so far.

"Both of our teams hope to defend their Mid-Continent League titles, our girls the regional championship and our boys the regional runner-up or better."

Coaches' backgrounds

Norton Cross Country Schedule

Thursday, Sept. 5 - Norton Invite (H) 4:30 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 14 - Wamego Invite (A) 11 a.m.
Thursday, Sept. 19 - Hays Invite (A) 3:45 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 26 - Hill City Invite (A) 5 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 28 - Rim Rock Classic in Lawrence 9 a.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 1 - Oberlin Invite (A) 5 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 10 - MCL Meet in Phillipsburg 4:30 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 17 - Lakeside Invite (A) 4 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 26 - Regional Meet (A) TBD
Saturday, Nov. 2 - State Meet - Lawrence TBD

Coach Rossi coached junior high football for 21 years and is in his 26th year as junior high track coach.

He was also the assistant girls basketball coach at Norton Community High School for 22 years before moving up to the head girls coaching position last season.

Coach Rossi has a bachelor's degree in geology from Mesa State in Grand Junction, Colo. and his teaching certificate from

Colorado State University, Fort Collins.

His assistant coach is Lindsey Bailey. A 1999 graduate of Decatur Community High School, she received her bachelor of science degree from Fort Hays State University in May, 2003. She is starting her third year as the high school assistant cross country coach and just finished her eighth year as a junior high assistant track coach.

Norton Lady Jays suffer defeat during first two matches

By **DICK BOYD**

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The Norton Community High School girls volleyball team opened the 2013 season on Friday with two close losses to Plainville and Northern Valley in Plainville.

"Even though we came away with two losses, our team has made great gains over the past two weeks," said first year head coach Christine Thompson.

"With only two or three returning varsity players and a new coaching staff, our varsity team has done a wonderful job of preparing themselves for the season.

"Our first playing date has shown us that we still have a lot to work on but it also proved we are going in the right direction. I feel we were pretty

evenly matched with the teams we played. The little errors we made kept us from coming away with two wins.

"I feel confident that after we play a little more, the errors will decrease and our players will start to feel more confident in themselves and that will make us more successful."

Northern Valley

Norton defeated Northern Valley 25-22 before losing 22-25 and 18-25.

Baylee Miller led serving aces with 3, followed by Adrienne Hager, 2; Katie Bohl and Bailey Ambrosier, 1 each.

Johnnye Ruder was tops in setting assists with 17, followed by Miller, 2; Peyton Renner, 1.

Bohl and Caitlyn Cox were tops in kills with 6 each, followed by Bailey Ambrosier, 4;

Casey Ambrosier, 3; Miller and Ruder, 1 each.

Digs leader was Bailey Ambrosier with 2; Bohl had 1.

Bohl and Renner each had 2 blocks; Casey Ambrosier, Miller, Cox and Bailey Ambrosier had 1 each.

Plainville

The Lady Jays lost 23-25 and 17-25 to Plainville.

Ruder led serving aces with 3, followed by Miller, 2; Bohl and Hager, 1 each.

Ruder led in setting assists with 14; Miller had 1.

Kills leader was Bohl with 6, followed by Cox, 5; Miller and Ruder, 2 each; Bailey Ambrosier and Casey Ambrosier, 1 each.

Bohl had 4 digs, followed by Baily Ambrosier, 2; Renner and Cox, 1 each.

Junior varsity

The Norton junior varsity volleyball team defeated Northern Valley 25-16 and 25-18 but lost to Plainville 19-25, 18-25.

"Our girls were excited to win our first game," said Norton assistant coach Traci Uehlin. "We played hard."

Statistics for the 25-16 win over Northern Valley were: serving - Cayanna Campell, 5 points (2 aces); Lexi Hartwell, 5 points (3 aces); Erin Archer, 3 points; Nickala O'Hare, 2 points (2 aces) and Miah Melvin, 1 point; kills - Melvin, 1; Lauren Mordecai, 1; top passers - Melvin and O'Hare.

Statistics for the 25-18 victory were: serving - Hanna Brooks, 4 points (1 ace); Campbell, 4 points (2 aces); Hartwell, 4 points (1 ace); O'Hare, 2 points (2 aces); Archer, 2 points; kills

- Brooks, 2; Melvin, 1; Archer, 1; Mordecai, 1; top passer - O'Hare; blocks - Kristen Dole, 1; Mordecai, 1.

"We played hard and hustled well against Plainville," said coach Uehlin.

"We missed serves and had trouble with serve receive against two tough servers that left us short of points.

"Our girls should be proud of their first showing this season."

Statistics for the 19-25 loss to Plainville were: serving - Melvin, 6 points (1 ace); O'Hare, 2 points (2 aces); Hartwell, 1 point; kills - Brooks, 1; O'Hare, 1; Jena Risewick, 1; top passers - O'Hare, Melvin, Archer; blocks - Brooks, 1; Dole 1.

Statistics for the 18-25 loss to Plainville were: serving - Melvin, 4 points (1 ace); O'Hare, 4

points (1 ace); Brooks, 2 points (2 aces); Archer, 1 point; kills - Dole, 2; top passer - O'Hare; blocks - Dole, 2.

Next action

Norton will host Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays, Colby and Holcomb in both varsity and junior varsity play today.

Starting at 4 p.m., varsity matches will be played in the NCHS Stull Gym and junior varsity matches in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym.

Order of matches is TMP vs. Holcomb, Holcomb vs. Colby; TMP vs. Norton; Colby vs. TMP and Colby vs. Norton.

Norton will play at Stockton next Tuesday when Osborne and Phillipsburg will also be opponents. Matches will begin at 4 p.m.

Lady Huskies split first two matches played in Plainville

By **Mike Stephens**

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The Northern Valley Lady Huskies played their first volleyball match of the season against the Plainville Cardinals on Friday night in Plainville.

The Lady Huskies found that they need to work on their court coverage a little more, according to coach Kirsten Baird. The Cardinals prevailed 25-22 and

25-16.

In the second match against the Norton Lady Blue Jays the Huskies came away with the win. Norton would take the first set 22-25, but Northern Valley would rally taking the next two sets 25-22 and 25-18.

"We played much better volleyball (in the second match). Serve receive was good and we covered the court. This year

our girls show a lot of athleticism and they work together as a team," said Baird.

The Lady Huskies will be in action again this Friday at 5 p.m. against the Alma Lady Cardinals, in Alma, Neb.

The roster for the 2013 Lady Huskies volleyball team is as follows:

#1 Linying "Anita" Wang, junior - 5'2"

#3 Kylie Kinderknecht, freshman - 5'8"

#4 Shilo Cline, junior - 5'2"

#5 Talia Lowry, sophomore - 5'6"

#6 Shayna Vincent, sophomore - 5'9"

#7 Brooke Baird, sophomore - 5'7"

#9 Alyssa Bryant, junior - 5'1"

#10 Makayla Smith, junior

-5'1"

#11 Elexsa Anderson, sophomore -5'3"

#12 Tea Van Patten, junior - 5'6"

#13 Jinjuta "Mook" Prathipthong, sophomore - 5'7"

#14 Kortney Cunningham, junior - 5'11"

#15 Gia Laurin, freshman - 5'5"

#16 Khrianna Van Patten,

junior - 5'5"

#17 Sarah Baird, sophomore - 5'7"

#21 Brooke Hammond, senior - 5'5"

#23 Brianna Martin, sophomore - 5'6"

#24 Allison Keith, sophomore - 5'2"

Head coach: Kirsten Baird

Assistant coach: Tammy Vincent