

Blue Jay boys finish strong in league tourney

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School boys basketball team proved that they were better than their No.8 seeding in the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament, which concluded on Saturday in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

After losing in the first round to No.1 seed Plainville, the Blue Jays battled from behind on Thursday to defeat No.4 Stockton 36-34 before once again coming from behind on Saturday to defeat No.6 seed Ellis 49-44 and place fifth in the tournament.

Norton trailed 14-7 after one quarter and 23-15 at halftime.

Both teams had their highest scoring quarter in the third as the Blue Jays outscored the Railroaders 18-15 to cut the lead to 38-33. Quinton Porter gave Norton some momentum when he buried a three-pointer at the buzzer!

The fourth quarter was all Norton as they allowed the Railroaders just 2 field goals and 6 points. Porter didn't slow down after hitting the trey to end the third period. He quickly hit two baskets that cut the Ellis lead down to 38-37. Drew Schrum sank two free throws and the Blue Jays were on top 39-38. Schrum stole the ball and passed to Tyus Henson for two more Norton points.

An Ellis basket and two free throws put the Railroaders back on top 42-41. Porter hit another timely basket for the Blue Jays and they regained the lead at 43-42 with 2:48 left in the contest. The two teams traded baskets again as Ellis scored and Conor Cox answered with a Norton basket and a 45-44 lead with 2:10 left. Cox gave Norton some breathing room with a key basket to push Norton ahead 47-44.

Ellis turned the ball over and Schrum drove down court for a layup at the buzzer to make the final 49-44!

"What a great effort by these young men!" said Norton head coach Doug Reusink. "We were down eight points at the half but just kept battling. We had an injury and some foul problems but we had boys step in and play well and get the job done."

"We struggled against their press in the first half but really did a nice job against it down the stretch along with a consistent defensive effort that got us the win."

"Hopefully, we will build on this momentum because we have two tough games next week with Plainville and Phillipsburg."

Quinton Porter was leading scorer for Norton with 17 points on 1 of 4 three point attempts for 25 percent, 6 of 13 two-point tries for 46 percent and 7 of 17 overall for 41 percent. He was



Norton senior guard Drew Schrum put the "icing on the cake" with a driving layup for a basket at the buzzer in the Blue Jays exciting come-from-behind 49-44 win over Ellis to earn fifth place in the Mid-Continent League Tournament on Saturday in Hays. — Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

perfect from the charity stripe, hitting 2 of 2.

Tyus Henson scored 10 points for the Blue Jays. He hit 1 of 1 three-point tries, 2 of 3 two-point tries for 67 percent and 3 of 4 overall for 75 percent. He swished 3 of 4 free throws, also for 75 percent.

Brendan Brenner hit over half of the Railroaders' points as he threw in 25.

As a team, Norton hit 4 of 10 from long range for 40 percent, 15 of 38 two-point tries for 39 percent and 19 of 48 overall for 40 percent.

Ellis swished 1 of 6 from long range for 17 percent, 15 of 48 two point shots for 31 percent and 16 of 54 overall for 30 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton was 7 of 11 for 64 percent and Ellis hit 11 of 16 for 69 percent.

The Blue Jays pulled down 8 offensive and 17 defensive rebounds for 25 total. The Railroaders grabbed 10 offensive, 22 defensive caroms for 32 total.

Quinton Porter was also leading rebounder for Norton with 5, followed by Conor Cox, Tanner Furbush, 4 each; Drew Schrum, 3; Marc Miller, Tyus Henson, Kobie Unterseher, Trever Lewis, 2 each; Jordan Karnopp, 1.

Norton had 9 steals and Ellis had 7 thefts. Porter, Henson, Miller and Schrum each had 2

steals and Lewis has 1.

The Blue Jays had 10 offensive assists. Schrum led with 3, followed by Porter, 2; Henson, Cox, Furbush, Landon Porter, Karnopp, 1 each.

Norton had 18 turnovers and Ellis had 15.

Other team scores

No.1 seed Plainville won the championship with a 47-35 win over No.2 Smith Center.

No.3 seed Oakley defeated No.5 Phillipsburg 60-47 for third place.

No.4 seed Stockton outscored No.7 Hill City 53-46 for seventh.

Norton boys

Breven Sondergaard 1 0 0-0 2, Quinton Porter 6 1 2-2 17, Tyus Henson, 2 1 3-4 10, Marc Miller 0 1 0-0 3, Kobie Unterseher 1 0 0-0 2, Drew Schrum 1 1 2-3 7, Conor Cox 3 0 0-0 6, Tanner Furbush 1 0 0-0 2; Jordan Karnopp 0 0 0-2 0; Totals 15 4 7-11 49

Ellis boys

Brandon Bollig 1 0 0-0 2, Scott Pfeifer 1 0 2-2 4, Alex Towns 1 1 2-3 7, Eli Lohmeyer 2 0 0-0 4, Nick Gehrig 1 0 0-3 2, Brendan Brenner 9 0 7-8 25; Totals 15 11-16 44.

Next action

Norton girls and boys will return to regular Mid-Continent League action this evening at Plainville.

First action is at 6:45 p.m.



Lady Jay freshman post Caitlyn Cox goes inside to score a basket during Norton's 55-44 Mid-Continent League Tournament consolation semi-final win over Plainville on Thursday in Stockton. The victory allowed Norton to advance to Hays on Saturday for the finals of the tournament in Gross Coliseum. In the background is senior guard Katelyn Engelbert. — Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Lady Jays defeat Plainville Cardinals in Mid-Continent League tourney

By DICK BOYD

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The No.5 seeded Norton Community High School girls basketball team held off a determined No. 8 seed Plainville for a Mid-Continent League Tournament consolation semi-final 55-44 win on Thursday at neutral site Stockton.

The win sent the Lady Jays to Hays for the fifth place game at 12 noon on Saturday at Gross Memorial Coliseum versus No.6 seed Oakley, a 61-49 winner over No.7 Stockton on Thursday in Stockton.

There were a lot of fouls in the game and both teams were very accurate at the free throw line. Norton ended up hitting 18 of 24 charities for 75 percent and Plainville swished 14 of 18 for 78 percent

It was a close game for three quarters as Norton held quarter leads of 14-12, 25-21 and 40-38. The Blue Jays finished strong, limiting the Lady Cardinals to just 6 points on three field goals in the final stanza while scoring 15 more points themselves.

Free throws made a big differ-

ence in the fourth quarter when Norton hit 9 of 13 from the stripe. Plainville missed their single free throw attempt in the fourth period.

"This was a hard fought victory," said Norton head coach George Rossi. "Our girls battled and battled the entire game and hit some big shots and huge free throws in the fourth quarter."

"We had a cold night with outside shooting but posts Katie, Bailey and Caitlyn did a great job on both ends of the floor."

"We have struggled at the line this year but that was a bright spot in this game. This group is so resilient during tough times. I get on them and they respond by playing with grit and determination."

"We still make silly turnovers that we must eliminate. Our question after the Phillipsburg game was how we would come out tonight and I am really happy with how we responded."

Katie Bohl was leading scorer for Norton with 13 points on 5 of 15 field goal attempts for 33 percent and 3 of 4 free throws for 75 percent. Bailey Ambrosi-

er and Caitlyn Cox each added 12 points.

Bailey hit 3 of 7 field goal tries for 43 percent and 6 of 9 charities for 67 percent. Caitlyn scored on 4 of 6 two-point tries for 67 percent and hit 4 of 5 free throws for 80 percent.

Leading scorer for Plainville was Kim Junkermeier with 9.

As a team, Norton hit just 1 of 14 tries from beyond the arc for 7 percent, 17 of 46 two-point attempts for 37 percent and 38 of 60 overall for 30 percent.

Plainville missed both three-point tries and hit 15 of 47 overall for 32 percent.

The Lady Jays pulled down 16 offensive and 16 defensive rebounds for 32 total. The Lady Cardinals grabbed 12 offensive and 26 defensive caroms for 38 total.

Bohl was leading rebounder for Norton with 9, followed by Cox, Bailey Ambrosier, 7 each; Darcy Bainter, 3; Katelyn Engelbert, 2; Marisa Maddy, 1; Hanna Brooks, 1; Casey Ambrosier, 1; Baylee Miller, 1.

The very aggressive Norton defense had 18 steals in the

game. Bailey Ambrosier and Johnny Ruder each had 5 thefts, followed by Caitlyn Cox, 2; Katelyn Engelbert, 2; Hanna Brooks, 1; Darcy Bainter, 1; Katie Bohl, 1; Miah Melvin, 1.

Plainville recorded 11 steals. While Norton had 18 turnovers, Plainville lost the ball 31 times!

Engelbert had 4 of Norton's 10 offensive assists. She was followed by Bailey Ambrosier and Ruder, 2 each and Maddy and Bainter, 1 each.

Norton girls

Caitlyn Cox 4 0 4-5 12, Katelyn Engelbert 2 0 0-0 4, Darcy Bainter 0 1 2-2 5, Katie Bohl 5 0 3-4 13, Bailey Ambrosier 3 0 6-9 12, Johnny Ruder 3 0 3-4 9; Totals 17 1 18-24 55.

Plainville girls

Shania Werner 1 0 5-6 7, Malory McQueen 3 0 2-2 8, Lyric Dewey 3 0 0-0 6, Allison Sears 0 0 1-2 1, Kim Junkermeier 3 0 3-5 9, Brianna Casey 3 0 2-2 8, Courtney Crawford 2 0 1-1 5; Totals 15 0 14-18 44.

Blue Jay victory over Stockton Tigers advances Norton

By DICK BOYD

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The No.8 seeded Norton Community High School boys basketball team proved that they're better than the lowest seed in the Mid-Continent League Tournament on Thursday with a hard-fought 36-34 victory over No.4 seed Stockton on the Tigers' home court!

The game was close throughout with Norton leading 10-6 after the first quarter, Stockton on top slightly at 14-12 at intermission and the Tigers still leading 26-23 after three periods.

Norton's Tanner Furbush, who had hit just two field goals and one free throw in the first three quarters, started the final period with a big basket that matched a Stockton field goal. Stockton added a free throw but Furbush responded with another basket to cut the Tiger lead to 29-27.

A Stockton free throw with 4:27 left, put the Tigers on top 30-27. Stockton held off the Blue Jays with another basket to make it 32-27. Furbush got inside for a basket and Quinton

Porter buried a basket from beyond the arc that tied the score at 32-all with 2:53 left.

After a furious minute and a half when neither team scored, Porter came through again. This time it was a two-point basket and Norton led 34-32. As the scoreboard clock ticked down, Drew Schrum was fouled. Unusual for Drew, he had not yet scored in the game. This was his final chance with 6.9 seconds left. He came through as he hit nothing but net on both charities to increase the Norton lead to 36-32.

The game wasn't over yet, however. A Stockton player was fouled on a three-point shot so the official awarded him three free shots. He hit the first charities but missed the third intentionally, hoping his team could get a rebound shot for a tie and overtime but it was unsuccessful and the Blue Jays were the 36-34 winners!

"This was a great win and one we really needed," said Norton head coach Doug Reusink. "It was another good defensive effort by our young men which

has been what we have done consistently this season and need to continue.

"The difference today is we did things we needed to do down the stretch offensively to win. We had boys step up and make shots and free throws late. It was nice to see them step up under pressure to get the win. Hopefully, we can build on



this."

Tanner Furbush was leading scorer for Norton with 5 of 10 field goals for 50 percent and 1 of 2 from the line for 11 points. Quinton Porter ended with 9 points on 1 very important three-point basket on 4 tries, 2 of 6 from two-point land for 33 percent and 2 of 2 free throws.

Marc Miller added 8 points on 2 of 6 trey ties for 33 per-

cent, 1 of 1 two-point tries and 3 of 7 overall for 43 percent.

Leading scorer for Stockton was Andrew Bellerive with 14 points; Jaden Williams added 12 points for the Tigers.

As a team, Norton swished 3 of 17 three-point attempts for 18 percent, 11 of 33 two-point tries for 33 percent and 14 of 50 overall for 28 percent.

Stockton found the range on 2 of 16 trey tries for 13 percent, 12 of 26 two-point attempts for 46 percent and 14 of 42 overall for 33 percent.

From the free throw line, the Blue Jays hit 5 of 6 for an outstanding 83 percent compared to 4 of 7 for Stockton for 57 percent.

Norton pulled down 8 offensive and 14 defensive rebounds for 22 total. Stockton grabbed 7 offensive and 21 defensive caroms for 28 total.

Nine different Norton players pulled down at least one rebound. The leader was Tanner Furbush with 5, followed by Conor Cox, 4; Breven Sondergaard, Quinton Porter, Marc Miller, Kobie Unterseher, Drew

Schrum, Trever Lewis, 2 each; Tyus Henson, 1.

Norton had a season low of 4 turnovers compared to 14 for the Tigers.

The Blue Jays also had 9 steals while Stockton had just 3. Furbush, Lewis and Miller each had 2 thefts; Porter, Schrum and Cox each had 1.

Porter and Schrum each had 3 of Norton's 7 offensive assists; Cox had 1.

Cox also blocked 2 shots and Furbush rejected 1.

Other team scores

In other game played in the consolation bracket on Thursday in the neutral site of Stockton, No.6 seeded Ellis defeated No.7 Hill City 64-60.

Norton boys

Quinton Porter 2 1 2-2 9, Marc Miller 1 2 0-0 8, Drew Schrum 0 0 2-2 2, Conor Cox 3 0 0-0 6, Tanner Furbush 5 0 1-2 11; Totals 11 3 5-6 36.

Stockton boys

Andrew Bellerive 6 0 2-4 14, Reed Stephens 0 1 2-3 5, Christian Hamel 0 1 0-0 3, Jaden Williams 6 0 0-0 12; Totals 12 2 4-7 34

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