

# Competition was tough for Lady Jay roundballers

By DICK BOYD

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Second year head coach George Rossi's 2013-14 Norton Community High School girls basketball team had only two returning starters and that limited their chances in this part of the state where there are a number of state ranked teams every year.

The Lady Jays battled hard all season and had a number of losses where they played well for a half or three quarters but couldn't quite put a whole game together. The result was a season record of 8-13 after losing their final five games.

"This was a fun group of girls," said coach Rossi. "They worked hard and are great girls. Our five seniors will be missed. These girls gave it their all the entire season. The younger girls did a good job as well. Many thanks to everyone who supported us this year."

Coach Rossi also noted that the five seniors, Bailey Ambrosier, Katelyn Engelbert, both of whom were returning starters, Darcy Bainter, Johnnye Ruder and Marisa Maddy were all chosen as Academic All-State by the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association.

There were eight returning letter winners on the team. In addition to the five seniors, they were junior Katie Bohl and sophomores Peyton Renner and Hanna Brooks.

Assistant coaches again this season were Joan Bolt and Cheri Brooks. Raenee Patterson returned as a student manager and was joined by Dakota Rose in that position.

The Lady Jays opened the season in Goodland on Friday, Dec. 6. Norton kept up with Goodland in the first half and trailed by one point 18-17 at intermission. A six-point third quarter was not enough and the Lady Cowgirls won 42-25. Freshman Caitlyn Cox was high scorer with 6 points.

"I was concerned by the possibility of turnovers in this first game; unfortunately, my fears came true," said coach Rossi.

Norton became more familiar with the road to Goodland the next weekend when the Lady Jays competed in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament. On Thursday, Norton lost 59-47 to Sharon Springs. Norton led 38-31 after three quarters but hit only two field goals in the final stanza. Ruder led scoring with 12 points.

On Friday, Norton played Burlington, Colo. and won 41-35. It was 18-all at halftime but Norton led 27-22 after three periods. Norton had balanced scoring

with Bohl hitting 12 points, followed by Ruder, 9; Ambrosier, 8. "It was a great feeling getting that first win under our belts," commented coach Rossi.

In Saturday's consolation bracket, the Lady Jays felt good again when they defeated Wray, Colo. 56-53 in overtime to place fifth in the tournament. It was a close game throughout with Norton trailing 22-23 at half-time and leading 36-35 after three quarters. With ice water in her veins, Bainter hit two free throws with 13 seconds left in regulation to tie the game at 49-all and send it into overtime.

"It was a fantastic win with many big moments," said coach Rossi. Bainter and Bohl each hit 17 points.

The Lady Jays returned home on Tuesday, Dec. 17, hosted Stockton and treated the hometown fans to their third straight victory. Four different Lady Jays buried three-point shots in a 58-21 Mid-Continent League victory! Ruder hit 5 of 10 treys for 15 points; Bainter swished 4 of 5 from long range for 12 points; freshman Miah Melvin hit 2 of 4 from downtown and freshman Baylee Miller also swished a trey.

"We shot great and played good defense and our bench also did a great job," said coach Rossi.

The competition got tougher again on Friday, Dec. 20 when Norton traveled to Phillipsburg to play the Lady Panthers. Norton played well and trailed by just 10 points at halftime before outscoring Phillipsburg in the second half. The Lady Panthers survived with a 46-40 win. Ruder scored 16 points and Bainter added 12. "I was proud of how we hung in and fought back," said coach Rossi as Norton's record evened at 3-3.

Norton began the new year on Tuesday, Jan. 7 with a 59-39 win at Cambridge, Neb. With Ruder hitting from the outside and Bohl from inside, Norton was very impressive. Ruder hit 53 percent from the field and ended with 22 points. Bohl was 9 of 10 for a net-smoking 90 percent and scored 25 points! As a team, the Lady Jays hit 16 of 25 two-point shots for 64 percent! They also had 17 steals and 15 assists!

It was time for the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament and Norton was seeded No. 5. Phillipsburg was the No.4 seed so the Lady Jays traveled once again to Panther Land on Monday, Jan 13. This time around, Phillipsburg took an early lead and extended it with 50 percent shooting in a 56-26 victory. Ruder led Norton with



Norton senior guard Darcy Bainter dribbles past a Colby defender during the Lady Jays' 47-41 win over a quality Lady Eagle opponent in the Stull Gym during the recently concluded season. Darcy was a steady performer for Norton during her four years.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

7 points.

The loss sent Norton to Stockton on Thursday to play No.8 seed Plainville, who lost to No.1 seed Hill City in the first round. It was a close game for three quarters with Norton leading 40-38 after three periods. The Lady Jays outscored the Lady Cardinals 15-6 in the final stanza to win 55-44. "We hit some big shots and huge free throws in the fourth quarter," said coach Rossi. Norton's record was now 5-4.

After beating Plainville, Norton traveled to Hays on Saturday to play in Gross Memorial Coliseum versus No.6 seed Oakley. Norton jumped out to an early lead on the strength of three baskets from beyond the arc by Bainter but had trouble hitting the basket the rest of the game and lost 55-37 to place sixth. Ruder led Norton with 14 points.

Norton traveled to Plainville on Tuesday, Jan. 21 in hopes of defeating the Lady Cardinals again but they had other plans. The Lady Jays fell behind early and couldn't catch up in a low-scoring 32-28 loss. Norton hit just 24 percent from the field compared to 37 percent for Plainville. Bohl led Norton with 12 points.

The competition didn't get any easier as Phillipsburg came to town on Thursday, Jan. 23 for

the third meeting between the two rivals. The Lady Jays were beaten for the third time by the more athletic Lady Panthers by a score of 49-32. Bohl led Norton with 10 points.

Norton played their second game at home for quite awhile when they hosted Trego on Tuesday, Jan. 28 and once again treated the local fans to a big win. The final score was 61-47! Ruder led the way in scoring with 25 points and 6 of 12 baskets from beyond the arc! "We played four quarters of much better basketball," said coach Rossi. "We shot well but played good defense, too."

Winter weather took over and caused the postponement of a game in Norton with Colby until Monday, Feb. 10 and a game in Norton with Smith Center until Monday, Feb. 24.

Play resumed for Norton on Friday, Feb. 7 when the Lady Jays traveled to Hill City. It was a tale of two halves. Norton led at halftime but was unable to stop a Hill City rally in the second half and lost 41-37. Ruder hit 11 points; Bohl and Bainter each scored 10.

On Monday, Feb. 10, Norton hosted Colby in the postponed contest and it was another good showing for the hometown quintet. The Lady Eagles had been state ranked in Class 4A but the Lady Jays didn't let that scare them. Norton led most of the way, then fought off a Lady Eagle rally attempt to win 47-41.

"This was our biggest win of the season," said coach Rossi. "It's been a long time since we've beaten Colby!" Ambrosier hit 15 points and Bohl scored 11. Norton hit 54 percent of their two-point shots!

After the big win over Colby, Norton's girls had a little trouble getting fired up at Oberlin on Tuesday, Feb. 11 but survived a tough test from the Lady Red Devils and returned with a 40-36 victory to even their record at 8-8. Bohl scored 14 points and Ambrosier added 10.

From this point until the season's end, competition got much tougher for the Lady Jays. On Fri., Feb. 14, they hosted the state ranked Osborne five who went on to place third in the state tournament. Norton played three great quarters but it wasn't enough in a 61-52 loss. Norton trailed by just 47-43 at one point in the fourth quarter. Bohl scored 13 points and Bainter added 12. "Although we had one bad quarter, I'm proud of the way we played," said coach Rossi. "A couple of turnovers and their three pointers cost us but we battled back to within four points."

Competition increased on Tuesday, Feb. 18 when Norton hosted the No.1 state ranked and unbeaten Hoxie quintet. Norton led 8-5 with 4:50 left in the first quarter but Hoxie took over from there and won 64-26. Bohl and Bainter scored 5 points each. Hoxie hit 56 percent from the field and 80 percent from the charity stripe. The Lady Indians continued on to repeat as undefeated state champions!

Norton traveled to Ellis on Friday, Feb. 21 and did not play well in a 57-30 loss. The Lady Jays hit just seven baskets and had 35 turnovers. Bohl hit 9 points and Ambrosier scored 7. "It was a very disappointing game," said coach Rossi. "It was by far our worst outing of the season."

On Monday, Feb. 24, the Lady

Jays hosted Smith Center in the game postponed from Feb. 4. Norton stayed with the Lady Red for one half but couldn't keep up after intermission in a 44-35 loss. It was "Senior Night" for Norton. Honored with their parents were the five senior players plus cheerleader Brandy Davis and yell leader Jared Shelton.

"We played very hard but they were more physical than us," said coach Rossi. "I hate to see these senior girls go. They're very special to me."

The Smith Center game was the last in the regular season. Sub-State Tournament play was upcoming with Hoisington as the host. Norton was seeded No.7 and traveled to No.2 seed Minneapolis on Tuesday, March 4. Norton was in the game in the first half but lost out with a poor third quarter in a season-ending 51-34 loss. Minneapolis led by just 20-16 at halftime. Norton was outscored in the third quarter and outscored Minneapolis 16-12 in the final stanza but it was too little, too late.

"We were beaten by a better and more aggressive team," said coach Rossi.

### Season statistics

Leading scorers for Norton this season were Katie Bohl with an average of 9.4 points per game and Johnnye Ruder with an average of 9.2 points. Next came Darcy Bainter with 5.8 points per contest and Bailey Ambrosier with a 5.7 point average. Katelyn Engelbert tallied 4.3 points per game.

Bohl had the highest field goal percentage, hitting 48 percent of her attempts.

Ruder was most accurate from the free throw line, swishing 58 percent. Bainter hit 48 percent and Bohl tallied on 47 percent from the charity stripe.

Bohl was the leading rebounder for Norton, pulling down a total of 127 caroms, followed by Bailey Ambrosier, 97, Engelbert, 89; Caitlyn Cox, 79 and Bainter, 62.

Ruder led in offensive assists with 57. Engelbert had 35 assists, Bainter 22 and Bailey Ambrosier 21.

Ruder also led in steals with 35 while Bailey Ambrosier and Bainter had 29 thefts each and Engelbert had 25.

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### "Rhyme Time"

- Across**
- Sheep sounds
  - Robert Frost work
  - \_\_\_ video (Internet sensation)
  - Singer Fitzgerald
  - Not pro-
  - Pleasant smell
  - Another person
  - John and Jane and Jim and Janet
  - Anger
  - Dir. away from SSW
  - "I don't think so"
  - Tiny crawler
  - Gin and \_\_\_
  - Pitching great \_\_\_ Ryan
  - Roasted garlic has it
  - Eminem songs
  - Church seat
  - Kind of resin
  - Individual
  - He has a carrot nose and coal eyes
  - Golfer's peg
  - Swipe
  - Possesses
  - Writing instruments for brave crossword solvers
  - Kind of bee
  - Perspiration
  - Bowling alley parts
  - Charlotte of "The Facts of Life"
  - \_\_\_ and flow
  - Wal-Mart founder Walton
  - "Bravo!"
  - Deodorant brand
  - Shout in a deep voice
  - Japanese 5-Across
  - Section
  - "The King \_\_\_"
  - Expensive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14				15					16				
17				18					19				
20				21			22	23		24			
25			26				27			28			
			29		30	31				32	33	34	
35	36	37			38				39				
40				41				42	43		44		
45				46				47			48		
49							50	51		52			
				53						54	55	56	57
58	59	60		61				62	63		64		
65				66			67	68			69		
70							71				72		
73							74				75		

- Down**
- Suit
  - Oldsmobile model
  - Director Woody
  - Actor Mineo
  - Chess piece that can become a queen
  - "This one's \_\_\_!"
  - Greek letter
  - Tiny fish
  - "Jump" rock group
  - Nest egg money
  - Tomato named for an Italian city
  - "I agree!"
  - Final
  - "\_\_\_ upon a time..."
  - TV alien
  - Types to online, for short
  - "Where do we go from here?"
  - Snooze
  - Medical professional, for short
  - Actor DiCaprio, or a zodiac sign
  - Mark a ballot
  - Beasts of burden
  - Bread choices
  - Optimistic, like an outlook
  - Money before a poker hand
  - Lemon or orange covering
  - Reduced the progress of
  - \_\_\_ and cheese
  - Inquire
  - Roker and Michaels
  - School org.
  - Spider's home
  - NBA great Kareem Abdul-\_\_\_
  - "Tickled" doll of the 1990s
  - Not a soul
  - Keep away from
  - \_\_\_ stone (unchangeable)
  - Crowd cheers
  - "I smell \_\_\_!"
  - One of the Great Lakes
  - Wintertime fun
  - "Poor me!"
  - Pres. Eisenhower
  - Before
  - Used to be

### Sudoku Puzzle #3226-M

	1		2		3	4	
2	5		6			7	
		8	9		5	1	
	9	4				6	
1							5
	5			7		8	
	2	9		5	6		
5		3		4			9
	3	6		1			5

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