

Blue Jays ready for first kickoff against Oakley

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School football team will open the 2004 season on Friday when they travel to Oakley to play a quality Northwest Kansas League foe.

Kickoff will be at 7 p.m. The Plainsmen are a perennial state playoff team and should provide a strong challenge for the Blue Jays of the Mid-Continent League who lost 18 seniors and 16 starters off last season's 11-1 team which finished the season ranked No. 2 in the state.

"The many changes in the schedule make the season hard to evaluate," said Coach Graber. "Oakley is a very tough opener and then we get Plainville and Smith Center. They are big physical teams. If we survive the first three weeks, we could have another good year."

The last two seasons, Norton has won the Mid-Continent League championship and the district, bi-district and regional championships.

The Blue Jays have eight returning lettermen, all are seniors. They are: Michael Sprigg, offensive and defensive tackle; Aaron Overlease, running back, corner back; Kyle Kats, running back, line-backer; Ryan Maddy, tight end, linebacker; Seth Mills, quarterback, center, defensive tackle; Justin Shirk, tight end, defensive end. Four of the lettermen, Sprigg, Overlease, Kats and Maddy, are three year letter winners.

Sprigg, who will be the defending state heavyweight wrestling champion, should anchor both sides of the line from his tackle position. Sprigg was an honorable mention offensive tackle in the Mid-Continent League both his sophomore and junior season.

Overlease saw limited playing time at tailback last season on Norton's senior-dominated squad but still put up good numbers. He averaged 6.4 yards per carry by gaining 321 yards rushing on 50 carries. He also returned eight punts for 126 yards and a 15.8 yards per return average. At the end of the season, he was named Norton's Gatorade "Rookie of the Year".

Kats was in the same boat as Overlease and shows flashes of brilliance on both offense and defense. He returned 14 punts for 150 yards and a 10.7 yards per return average. From his linebacker position, he recorded 32 tackles.

Maddy led the Norton team in tackles with 80 as a sophomore linebacker when he was chosen second team All-Mid-Continent League, Most Valuable Line-backer and Gatorade "Rookie of the Year". A starter last year, as well, he was overshadowed by senior linebackers but still was named honorable mention All-MCL as well as honorable mention in the MCL as a tight end.

"We had summer camp early to answer some questions about quarterback and wide receiver, especially," said Coach Graber. "I thought we saw great improve-

ment in our passing game that week. I thought Seth Mills took a slight edge that week at quarterback with Kyle Kats working there as well.

"Jason Green showed great ability at running routes and will be in the mix at wide receiver with Nathan Broeckelman, Clay Madden and some other youngsters as well. We are experimenting some with Justin Shirk at wide receiver to give us a bigger target out there, which means he is learning several positions on the offensive side.

At running back, we are going to be small but talented. Aaron Overlease had a great season as a junior and we have Blake VanEaton to throw in there as well. We don't have a true fullback because our guys are so small but Kyle Kats and Lance Roe bring other things to the table.

"We will be smaller up front and not nearly as deep. If Paul Juenemann can come back from his knee injury a year ago, we should be solid with veterans like Michael Sprigg, Blake Hillebrand and Davvid Stanley probably filling three of those spots.

"Defensively, our secondary should be solid with some experience and talent there. Our linebacking corps will be small but we think they will get after people. They'll be led by Ryan Maddy. The defensive line should be anchored by Michael Sprigg, Blake Hillebrand and Justin Shirk.

"We have to grow up quickly and stay healthy. If our guys are hungry to continue the Norton tradition and continue to work like they did in camp, it could be a fun season."

Squad members in addition to the eight lettermen are: Paul Juenemann, Lucas Wiseman, Blake Hillebrand, Aaron Overlease, Kyle Kats, Michael Sprigg, Jason Green, Justin Shirk, Seth Mills, Ryan Maddy, seniors; William Wilhite, Brady Linner, Clay Madden, Luke Pfannenstiel, Heath Vincent, Andrew Ables, Adam Krebsbach, Austin Brooks, Lance Roe, Davvid Stanley, Shane Pfannenstiel, juniors; Jordan Durham, Shane Mapes, Matt Engel, Pat Burton, Lucas Bailey, Aaron Daniels, Chris Davis, Nic Lewis, Mark Scheetz, Blake VanEaton, Perrell Stanley, Nathan Broeckelman, Brett Thomson, Brian Juenemann, sophomores; Jared Cox, Kyle Edgett, Levi Ninemire, Jeff Soderland, Travis Ray, Galen Hillebrand, Ben Rojas, Bryce Engelbert, Zach Mannel, Todd Bolt, Wes Geogeson, Brian Sproul, Preston Herman, Logan Kats, Clay McMullen, Aaron Husted, freshmen.

Coach Graber is beginning his tenth year as head football coach at Norton and his 31st year overall. His coaching record in Norton in nine years is an enviable 76-15. His assistant coaches again this year are Kevin Jilka, Todd Fulton, Lucas Melvin and Jason Jones.

Student manager is Jared Mindrup. Kirk Foley keeps statistics and Clayton Cox videotapes the games.



Coach Rossi puts his Junior Jays through a tough workout Monday afternoon in preparation for their first game Thursday at 6:30 p.m. The Junior Jays will meet Plainville on the road. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Huskies ready to play Triplains

The Northern Valley Huskies football team is fired up and ready to get the season started with this Friday's opening game again Triplains in Winona.

Twenty-ninth year-coach Chuck Fessenden, along with assistant coaches Abner Williams and Jason Dibble, is starting this year off good with nine players who have experience. Coach Fessenden said the team also has good sight and speed, and some decent depth.

However, he said the team's weakness will probably be the lack of a big running back.

Coach Fessenden thinks his top players — junior Joey Copper, senior Jesse Hilburn, senior Thomas Ostmeyer and junior Clarke Nelson — will do a lot to lead the team to victory.

Copper, a quarterback, is returning from last year with 143 carries for 698 yards, seven touchdowns, and 47 of 77 completed passes for 680 yards.

Hilburn is a returning running back/centerback who had 149 carries for 836 yards, 11 touchdowns and 11 completed catches for 199 yards last year.

Ostmeyer, a running back, holds 51 carries for 308 yards, five touchdowns, and 13 catches for 237 yards from last year.

Nelson is a running back who brought in 63 tackles and 91 assists last year.

Others on the 2004 team are: senior Chris Lee; juniors Cody Lowry, Brynton Anderson, Frans Laubscher, Scott Shearer, Chad Husted, Tom Bartley, Avery Thalheim, Josey Shearer, Zac Miller, Braden Kersch, Cole Kinderknecht and Andrew Sheley; sophomores Cameron Duede, Chance Miller, Henry Griffiths and Chase Miller; and freshmen Blake Johnson, David Harris, Richie Kersch, Bryce Marble and Justin Lee.

Gun club holds shoot

The Prairie Powder Packers met for its Aug. 22 meeting and held a shooting competition.

Leather medal awards were given to the top three shooters. Tim Bashford, Manhattan, took first in the bobcat target; Michael Snodgrass, Norton, second; and Gary Matson, Norton, third.

In the 25-yard miscellaneous, five-shot target competition, Janet Anthony, Oberlin took first; Michael Snodgrass, second; and Gary Matson, third.

Dale Carlson was first in the 50-yard bull target; Gary Matson, second; and Michael Snodgrass, third.

Michael Snodgrass took home first in the gong competition. There was a tie between Dale Carlson and Gary Matson. A coin toss gave Mr. Carlson, second, and Mr. Matson, third.

The club's next meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 19.

It will host a shoot on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 9-10.

Dues are due and new membership cards are required in order to have access to the range. The Packers invite anyone who enjoys shooting to join. Membership is \$10 per family for a year.

For more details call Kay Snodgrass at 785-877-3647.

Coach Fessenden said his team's goal for the year is to win the district games. To do that, he said beating Palco and Logan will be key. Also, the team needs to stay healthy throughout the season.

He said they are starting out the season by playing Triplains first, and then Golden Plains. Both are teams that will be new to Northern Valley.

He said their third game of the season against Kensington should be their toughest match-up.

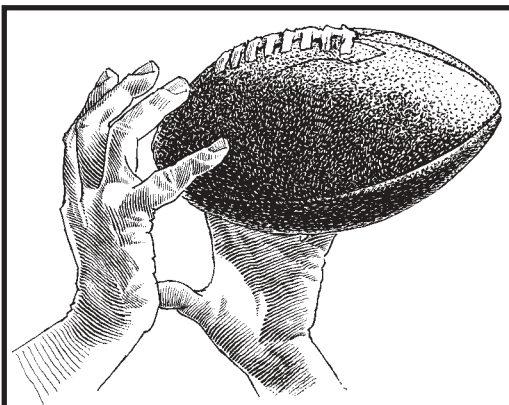
Friday's game is set to begin at 7 p.m. at Winona.

NORTHERN VALLEY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

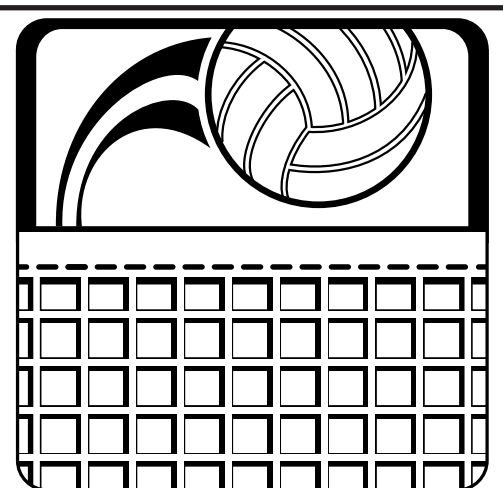
- Friday, Sept. 3. — Triplains, Winona, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 10 — Golden Plains, Rexford, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 17 — Kensington, Kensington, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 24 — Western Plains (Ransom), Almena, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 1 — Palco, Almena, 7 p.m.*
- Friday, Oct. 8 — Logan, Logan, 7 p.m.*
- Monday, Oct. 18 — Arapahoe (JV), Almena, 6 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 22 — Eastern Heights, Almena, 7 p.m.*
- Thursday, Oct. 28 — Natoma, Almena, 7 p.m.*
- Tuesday, Nov. 2 — Bi-District, TBA
- Saturday, Nov. 6 — Regionals, TBA
- Friday, Nov. 12 — Sub-State, TBA
- Saturday, Nov. 20 — State, TBA

*District games

Go, Norton Blue Jays!



CHEER FOR THE
Norton
Blue Jays
vs.
Oakley
Plainsmen
Friday,
September 3
7:00 P.M.
IN OAKLEY



FOLLOW THE
Lady Jays
Volleyball Team
versus
Osborne/Colby
Beginning 5 p.m.
Tonight, Tues., Aug. 31
Varsity Matches
NCHS Memorial Gym
Junior Varsity Matches
Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym

Good Luck to the NCHS Blue Jay Tennis Team

Versus Osborne and Plainville in Plainville, Beginning at 3 p.m. Today, Tuesday, August 31; Versus Colby in Colby on Saturday, Sept. 4, Beginning at 9 a.m.

Cross Country Team

Norton Cross Country Invitational Meet 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 2, PDRA Golf Course South of Norton

SUPPORT THESE BLUE JAY BOOSTERS...
THEY ARE EAGER TO SERVE YOU!

- ACCOUNTING: Zwickle's Accounting
- ALUMINUM EXTRUSION:
New Age Industrial Corp. Inc.
- ATTORNEYS: Worden Law Office
- AUTOMOTIVE-SALES, SERVICE & ACCESSORIES:
City Motors Inc. and Walter Motor Company
- BANKS:
First State Bank; First Security Bank; the Bank
- DRUG STORES: Moffet Drug Store; Pamida Pharmacy
- FEED, SEED, GRAIN, PRODUCE:
Norton County Co-op Association
- NEWSPAPERS: Norton Telegram

Norton High School

FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- Friday, Sept. 3, Oakley High School (T), 7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 10, Plainville High School, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 17, Smith Center High School, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 24, Osborne High School (T), 7 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 1, Stockton High School, 7 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 8, Ellis High School (T), 7 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 15, Thomas More Prep (T), 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 22, Russell High School, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 28, Phillipsburg High School (T), 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 2, Bi-District Play Off (TBA), 7 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 6, Regional Play Off (TBA)
- Friday, Nov. 12, Sectional Play Off (TBA)
- Friday, Nov. 19, Sub-State Play Off (TBA)
- Saturday, Nov. 27, State Championship (Emporia) (TBA)

JUNIOR VARSITY

- Tuesday, Sept. 7, Oakley High School, 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, Sept. 13, Plainville High School (T), 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, Sept. 20, Smith Center High School (T), 6 p.m.
- Monday, Sept. 27, Osborne, 6 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 4, Stockton High School (T), 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 11, Phillipsburg High School, 6:30 p.m.