

Blue Jay football team ready to take on Broncos

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School football team will try to keep the momentum going from their exciting 42-7 win over Thomas More Prep-Marian last Friday when they host Russell tonight at Travis Field in their second District 10 contest.

The Blue Jays are 5-2 and the Broncos are only 2-5 but Coach Graber told the Blue Jay Booster Club on Wednesday evening that Russell's record is deceiving.

"Russell lost big to Phillipsburg last Friday but that isn't a good indication of Russell's strength," said Coach Graber. "They are much better than Thomas More Prep-Marian. Everything went wrong for them against Phillipsburg. The opening kickoff was returned against them for a touchdown and two straight fumbles led to quick Phillipsburg touchdowns. They had a punt blocked for a touchdown and several more fumbles resulted in Panther touchdowns.

"They do a good job of running their offensive plays. They like to run the trap and next they like to go to the perimeter."

The Broncos play in the North Central Activities Association.

They have 16 lettermen and nine starters returning from last season's 7-3 squad. Senior running back Weston Schurz ran for over 900 yards last season and continues to be their primary back this year. They have lots of experience on both the offensive and defensive lines.

Norton lost 18 seniors and 16 starters off last season's 11-1 playoff team so many Blue Jays have received their first extensive varsity playing time. The experience gained in the first seven games is starting to show in the quality of play by the Blue Jays.

"The win over Thomas More Prep-Marian was our best performance of the year," said Coach Graber. "Our players dominated the line of scrimmage on both offense and defense. We didn't have any minus yardage on offense and our special teams were special. We had some tremendous blocks on punt returns.

"It was an exciting game. Our players on the sidelines were even jumping up and down. It was a good feeling.

"Practices have been great this week so I hope we can keep things going. We appear to be healthy. William Wilhite has returned as a

kicker. Chris Davis has done such a good job in his absence that now we have two good kickers."

Norton has a trio of running backs, either one of whom can take it to the house on any given play. Senior tailback Aaron Overlease, who missed the Thomas More Prep-Marian game due to injury, has rushed for 389 yards. Senior fullback Kyle Kats has gained 382 yards and is averaging 6.9 yards per carry. Sophomore tailback Blake VanEaton, who played in place of Overlease against Thomas More Prep-Marian, has rushed for 261 yards and is averaging 7.9 yards per attempt. Senior quarterback Seth Mills has an accurate throwing arm. He has completed 47 of 80 passes for 572 yards and 58.8 percent accuracy. Senior tight end Justin Shirk has a pair of sure hands. He has caught 17 passes for 246 yards and a 14.5 yards per catch average.

The Blue Jays are led on defense by senior tackle Blake Hillebrand with 58 total tackles, followed by senior linebacker Ryan Maddy, 43; senior tackle Michael Sprigg, 42; junior linebacker Lance Roe, 42; junior defensive back Luke Pfannenstiel, 36 and sophomore linebacker Blake VanEaton, 35.



Norton's offensive right tackle Michael Sprigg, No. 75, and offensive right guard Blake Hillebrand, hidden, blast off the line to knock a Thomas More Prep-Marian player off his feet. The Norton linemen controlled the line of scrimmage, both offensively and defensively, in the 42-7 win on Friday. Advancing downfield is Norton wide receiver Clay Madden, No. 1.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Norton runners go to Regionals

By DICK BOYD

Coach Deyton Hager's No. 4 state ranked Norton Community High School cross country boys team and girls runners will compete in the Class 3A Regional Cross Country Meet on Saturday in Lakin.

Runners from three other state ranked boys teams will also be competing. Ellsworth is ranked No. 1, Holcomb is ranked No. 3 and Lakin is ranked No. 7. In addition, some outstanding individual runners are expected to compete in the 3.2 mile race on the Lakin Municipal Golf Course, located one mile west of Lakin on Highway 50.

In addition to Norton, Lakin, Ellsworth and Holcomb, runners will compete from Anthony-Harper-Chaparral, Cheney, Cimarron, Ellinwood, Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays,

Hoisington, Lyons, Medicine Lodge, Phillipsburg and Sterling. Expected to run for Norton's team score are senior Derek Volgamore, junior Jeremy Harding and sophomores Logan Keiswetter, Jared Engelbert and Kent Mann. Freshmen David Counter and Andrew Black are also scheduled to run for the Blue Jays.

Expected to compete for Coach Hager's Lady Jays are senior Crista Rhoades, juniors Amber Overlease and Karlie Jones and sophomore Morgan Bailey. They will not be competing for a team score since a team consists of five runners.

The Norton varsity boys have won championships this year at the Norton Invitational, Wamego Invitational (site of state meet) and Mid-Continent League Meet in Phillipsburg. They were second in the WaKeeney Invitational and

second in the Wheatland Invitational in Grainfield, their most recent competition. The girls 2 mile race will begin at 2 p.m. and the boys 3.2 mile race at 2:30 p.m.

The top three teams and top ten runners plus top five individuals from non-qualifying teams if they are not included in the top ten will advance to the State Cross Country Meet at Wamego on Saturday, October 30.

"It won't be easy," Coach Hager told the Blue Jay Booster Club on Wednesday evening. "In addition to the ranked teams, other teams have good individual runners as well. We'll have to get out and run. We've had good practices and we think everybody is healthy.

"I've got a lot of confidence in these boys and girls. We've got good morale and I think we'll do well."

Lady Jays set for sub-state tournament

By DICK BOYD

Coach Jill Lively's Norton Community High School volleyball team will compete in the Class 3A Sub-State Volleyball Tournament on Saturday at the high school in Lakin.

The tournament will begin at 2 p.m. and Norton will play in the first match. The No. 5 seeded Lady Jays will play No. 4 seeded Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays. Norton has a 14-14 record and Thomas More Prep-Marian is 19-11.

No. 1 seeded Lakin (36-2) drew a first round bye.

In the second match of the day, No. 2 seed Phillipsburg (19-9) will

play No. 7 seed Medicine Lodge (8-22). The third match will feature No. 3 seed Holcomb (21-12) versus No. 6 seed Cimarron (16-17).

In the semi-finals, Lakin will play the winner of the Norton-Thomas More Prep-Marian match and the Phillipsburg-Medicine Lodge and Holcomb-Cimarron winners will play each other. The semi-finals winners will play for the championship and a trip to the Class 3A State Volleyball Tournament on Friday and Saturday, October 29-30 at the Bicentennial Center in Salina.

The Norton Lady Jay volleyball team has shown improvement every time out in recent weeks. Af-

ter defeating Smith Center and losing to Trego on October 5, they placed second in the Scott City Tournament on October 9, defeated Golden Plains and Logan on October 12 and placed second in their most recent competition last Saturday in the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Plainville.

"We're getting better every time we play," Coach Lively told the Blue Jay Booster Club on Wednesday evening. "In practice, we've been working on the things we need to improve on. We're gaining confidence in our playing abilities.

"We'll have to play our very best on Saturday and, if we do, we'll have a chance to advance."

Volleyball team is 2-0 in triangular

By DICK BOYD

Coach Jill Lively's Norton Community High School varsity girls volleyball team defeated Golden Plains and Logan last Tuesday in Logan.

Golden Plains

Norton defeated Golden Plains 25-20, 25-21.

"The first game was pretty even and was tied 12-12 after six rotations," said Coach Lively. "Aggressive serving, good communication and positive attitudes allowed us to take all the momentum for the rest of the game.

"The second game started with our girls dominating the court. We were ahead 10-5 when we allowed the Bulldogs to jump up 10-13 with a seven point serving streak. We quickly got back in the flow and rallied to win in an assertive way."

Team statistics were: serving, 94 percent, 6 aces; hitting, 86 percent, 24 kills; defense, 5 blocks, 21 digs.

Individual leaders were: Casey Carter, 100 percent, 3 aces; Amber Engelbert, Klaire Mann, Whitney Newell, 100 percent each, serving; Rachael Lentz, Pam Foley led serve receive; Amanda Antrim, Danielle LeClair, Mann passed well during rallies, passing; Chelsea Cox, 9 assists; Carter, 6 assists, setting; Cox, 9 kills; Rebecca Ebert, 4, hitting; Ebert, Cox, 2 blocks each; Newell, 7 digs.

"Our team is really working well together. We are very excited to be playing this well going into the most important part of our season."

Team statistics were: serving, 86 percent, 8 aces; hitting, 84 percent, 20 kills; defense, 3 blocks, 28 digs.

Individual leaders were: Newell, Mann, 100 percent; Carter, 4 aces; Engelbert, 3 aces, serving; Antrim led in serve receive; Engelbert, Cox passed well during rallies, passing; Carter, 7

assists; Cox, 6 assists, setting; Cox, 11 kills; Ebert, Engelbert, 3 each, hitting; Cox, 2 blocks; Newell, 1 block; Newell, Mann, 6 digs each; Engelbert, Lentz, Cox, 4 digs each; LeClair, 3 digs, defense.

Norton finished second in the annual Mid-Continent League Volleyball Tournament on Saturday in Plainville.

The Lady Jays will play in the Sub-State Tournament this Saturday in Lakin.

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