

Blue Jays win second straight state championship!

By DICK BOYD

Medaling nine out of nine wrestlers, Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team led from start to finish in the Class 3-2-1A State Wrestling Tournament to win their second championship in a row on Friday and Saturday in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

This is the first back-to-back state wrestling championships in Norton's long tradition of wrestling excellence.

At the end of the two-day wrestling extravaganza, Norton had compiled 155.5 points to outdistance second place St. Francis by 51.5 points. Following the Indians and their 104 point total was Oakley in third with 90.5. Silver Lake finished in fourth with 84, followed by Smith Center, 82; Hoxie, 76.5; Effingham, 71; Beloit, 59.5; Phillipsburg, 47 and Stockton, 44 in tenth.

Other area teams finished as follows: Trego, 18th with 33.5; Oberlin and Plainville, tied for 21st with 30; Thomas More Prep, 25th with 24.5; Atwood, 28th with 21; Osborne, tied for 39th with 9; Hill City, tied for 47th with 4; Ellis, 55th with 2.5.

Norton had three wrestlers in the championship finals and all three won gold medals.

Junior Clay Madden was the 112-pound champion. Madden repeated as the 112 champion and won the 103-pound championship this freshman season.

Junior Lance Roe won the 152-pound title to earn his third state tournament medal. He was fourth at 135 pounds last season and fifth at 135 his freshman year.

Senior Michael Sprigg completed a perfect 37-0 season to win his second straight 275-pound championship. Sprigg is a four-time state medalist, having placed fourth in the Class 4A state tournament his freshman season and second in 3-2-1A his sophomore season.

Three Blue Jays were in the running for a consolation championship. Sophomore Nathan Broeckelman won the bronze medal at 119 pounds after placing second his freshman season.

Finishing in fourth place were junior Luke Pfannenstiel at 140 pounds and sophomore Logan Keiswetter at 103. Pfannenstiel was injured last season but placed fifth at 112 pounds his freshman season. Keiswetter competed in the state tournament for the first time.

Also competing for the first time in the state tournament for Norton were junior twins Jeremy and Jon Harding and sophomore Blake VanEaton. Jeremy placed fifth at 135 and Jon finished in sixth at 130. VanEaton placed sixth at 145.

The Blue Jays compiled an excellent won-loss record of 31-13 and had an outstanding pin ratio of 13-2 in the tournament.

This was Coach Johnson's 14th season as head wrestling coach at Norton. His teams had placed high in the state tournament for years until the Blue Jays edged defending champion Hoxie for the title last year. It was Norton's first state championship since the Blue Jays won the Class 3A state tournament in 1973. Winning a second straight championship this year to make history at Norton was an "awesome" experience, according to Coach Johnson.

"It is exciting to think that all nine of our wrestlers medaled, equalling last year's medal count," said Coach Johnson.

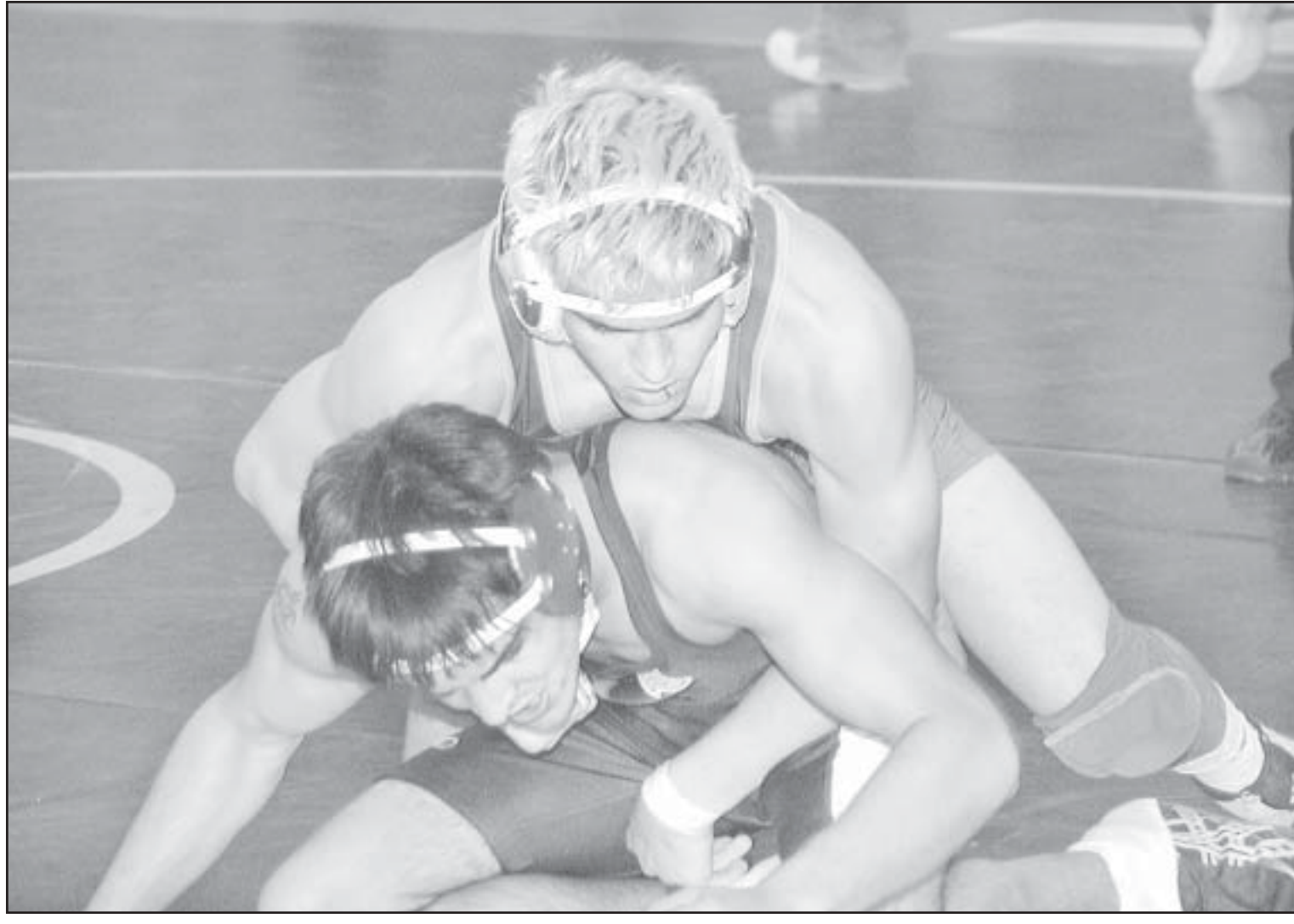
"I am very pleased with the way our boys wrestled. We practiced hard and were prepared. You can't take performance for granted but everything went like clockwork.

"It was the first time here for several of our wrestlers and they did very well. We had good leadership from Michael Sprigg and the others who had competed previously in the state tournament.

"To show how tough our regional was the week before, 13 of the 28 state championship finalists were from our regional."

Norton also ran away with the championship of the regional tournament that was held in WaKeeney.

"Michael's pin in the finals put the exclamation point on a very good season," said Coach Johnson.



Blue Jay junior Lance Roe scores an important two points during his 4-2 decision over Phillipsburg's Catlin Zahorsky in the championship semi-finals of the 152 pound weight class in the Class 3-2-1A state tournament

"We were undefeated in duals and tournaments except for placing second in the Clay Center tournament where we did not have a full team. All the hours we spent together in the practice room paid off."

Also this weekend, Clay Center won the championship of the Class 4A State Wrestling Tournament.

"Many thanks to all the parents of our wrestlers and to all our other fans for the tremendous support we receive for our wrestling program," said Coach Johnson.

"Since sophomore Kent Mann also medaled his freshman season, we will have nine state medalists in the practice room next season compared to six this year. That should help us a lot next season."

Coach Johnson named all nine Norton wrestlers "Wrestlers of the Week".

Assistant coaches on the state championship Norton team were Doug Ray and Deyton Hager. Student managers were Kelli Johnson, Claudia Lacy and Jessica Sprigg.

During ceremonies prior to the parade of champions on Saturday, the Norton Community High School cheerleaders entertained the crowd.

Individual results

At 112 pounds, Clay Madden wrestled Marcus Daerr, Garden Plain, and pinned him in 52 seconds. Then, he shutout Tommy Knapp, Lincoln, 6-0. In the championship semi-finals, he wrestled Nash Burton, Eureka, who brought a 35-1 record into the match. Madden decisioned Burton 9-6 to reach the championship finals against Trever Richard, St. Francis.

It was a rematch of the regional finals where Madden pinned Richard in just 1:32. This time, Richard was able to give Madden a better match. A wild first period ended with Madden leading 8-6. Neither wrestler scored in the final two

periods and Madden earned his third straight state championship.

Madden ended the season with a 33-3 record. Richard ended with a 36-3 record.

Burtin placed third with a 9-3 decision over Knapp. Mark Samuelson, Oakley, placed fifth with a 7-3 decision over Paul Berry, Cherryvale.

Lance Roe won a 20-3 technical fall in 4:19 of his 152 pound first round match with Dustin Williams, Lyons. Next, he decisioned Andy Linscott, Effingham, 11-6.

In the championship semi-finals, he beat Catlin Zahorsky, Phillipsburg, 4-2, to reach the finals versus Spencer Burns, Cimarron. Both wrestlers had just one loss. Roe led 6-3 after one period, 9-3 after two periods and won the championship with an 11-5 decision.

He completed the season with a 37-1 record. Burns finished 38-2.

Tom Kriley, Smith Center, placed third with a 2-1 decision over Zahorsky. Jeremy Mellies, Silver Lake, placed fifth with a 9-0 decision over Scott Miller, Oberlin.

At 275 pounds, Michael Sprigg pinned Dave DeMars, St. Mary's, in 3:22, then pinned Curtis Vandermate, Fredonia, in 56 seconds. In the championship semi-finals, he won 10-2 over Matt Niehues, Onaga, to reach the finals against Ty Brunswig, Trego. They had wrestled twice before this year. The first time Sprigg pinned Brunswig in a dual and the second time was in the regional finals when Sprigg prevailed 5-1.

This time, Sprigg led 2-1 after the first period and 4-2 after two periods. Sprigg dominated the third period, stretching his advantage to 5-2 and 7-2 before allowing an escape to make it 7-3. With time running out on him, Brunswig tried a takedown but it backfired and Sprigg took him to the mat.

in Hays. With the victory, Roe qualified for the state championship match where he won the gold medal with an 11-5 decision over Spencer Burns, Cimarron.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Jake Boor, Sylvan, who had just one loss for the season until Brunswig edged him 3-2 in the semi-finals, placed third with a 5-3 decision over Niehues. Gabe Walz, St. Francis, finished in fifth place with a fall in 52 seconds over Kolt West, Caney Valley.

Nathan Broeckelman advanced to the championship semi-finals at 119 before losing. In the first round, he pinned Cody Eaton, Bennington, in 1:10 and in his next match he won a 6-3 decision over previously undefeated Brett Swoyer, Rock Creek.

In the semi-finals, he lost 13-2 to Matt Migchelbrink, Atwood. In the consolation bracket, he shutout Keaton Taylor, Silver Lake, 2-0 to advance to the consolation championship where he wrestled Kyle Cook, Hoisington and won a 7-3 decision to place third.

He finished with a 30-8 record.

Paul Owings, Plainville, won the championship with a 5-2 decision over Migchelbrink. Swoyer placed fifth with a 6-2 decision over Keaton Taylor, Silver Lake.

At 103 pounds, Logan Keiswetter pinned Cody Merriman, Onaga, in 1:28, then pinned Brad Augustine, Beloit, in 2:13. In the semi-finals, he lost a 2-1 decision to Collin Hase, Silver Lake. In the consolation bracket, he decisioned Brendan Harshman, Cottonwood Falls, 11-5 to reach the consolation championship match versus Dane Kepka, Lyons. Keiswetter lost 4-3 to place fourth.

He ended the season 30-8 record.

Pat Mosley, Wichita-Independent, won the championship by pinning Hase in 3:42. Harshman placed fifth with an 11-4 decision over Zach Cemen, Phillipsburg.

Luke Pfannenstiel won a 13-8 decision over Coy Cox, Southeast of Saline, in his first 140-pound match. Next, he pinned Jeff Jones, Leon-Bluestem, in 1:27. In the

semi-finals, he was pinned in 1:37 by Tracy Jordan, Beloit. In the consolation bracket, he beat Jordan Gienger, St. Francis, 4-3 to reach the consolation championship match against Brady LaMar, Silver Lake. LaMar scored the only point and Pfannenstiel placed fourth.

Pfannenstiel's season record was 30-5.

Kenny Tyler, West Elk, ended the season with a 38-0 record. He beat Jordan 6-4 in the championship finals. Scott Gregory, Herington, placed fifth with a 6-2 decision over Gienger.

At 135 pounds, Jeremy Harding pinned first round opponent Jason Corwin, Silver Lake, in 4:13. Next, he pinned Kade Bloom, Phillipsburg, in 2:54. In the semi-finals, he wrestled unbeaten and defending 125-pound state champion Levi Younkin, Oakley and lost a 7-1 decision. In the consolation bracket, he wrestled Corwin again and lost a 2-0 decision. He won fifth place by pinning Keanan Kroetsch, Lyons, in 2:27.

He ended the season at 28-9.

Younkin won 5-2 over Cale Farber, Hoxie, and finished the season with a 31-0 record. Farber was the 119-pound champion last year. Corwin placed third by pinning Travis Warner, Smith Center, in 1:40.

Jon Harding beat Randy Miller, Onaga, 8-6 in the first round at 130 pounds. Next, he lost 11-4 to Simon Orozco, Ellsworth. In the consolation bracket, he pinned Dallas Eshleman, Stafford, in 3:50 and won a 12-3 major decision over Cris Carstenson, Rock Creek.

In the consolation semi-finals, he wrestled Tait Weatherbee, Thomas More, and was pinned in 3:45. He lost an 11-4 decision to Ryan Patterson, Garden Plain, to place sixth. He ended the season with a 30-13.

Jason Pyle, Sabetha, won the championship with a 5-0 decision

over Cody Garvin, Baxter Springs. Orozco won third place with a 5-3 win over Weatherbee.

At 145 pounds, Blake VanEaton lost his first round match by 8-3 to Nolan Strawder, Burlington. In the consolation bracket, he pinned Jake Livesay, Lincoln, in 3:07; won a 6-4 decision over Jamie Smith, Minneapolis and wrestled Denton Bailey, Oberlin, and edged him 6-5 to reach the consolation semi-finals where he wrestled Cody Sprang, Effingham. Sprang won 11-4 and VanEaton wrestled Brad Rachow, Phillipsburg, for fifth place and lost a 5-1 decision to place sixth.

He finished the season with a 27-17 record.

Shawn Kuhlman, Oakley, and Michael Schamberger, Hoxie, wrestled for the championship in a repeat of their regional championship match which was won 8-4 by Kuhlman. This time, it took two overtimes but Kuhlman won 6-2. Sprang placed third with a 3-2 decision over Justin Hejny, Hoisington.

Tyler Baker, Hoxie, won the 125-pound championship by pinning Brad Esterl, Beloit, in 4:55. Dylan Loyd, St. Francis, placed third with a 9-3 win over Justin York, Smith Center. Joe Olson, Trego, placed fifth with a 7-3 decision over Jeff Peterson, Oskaloosa.

In the 160-pound division, Nick Newell won the first ever state wrestling championship by a Mankato High School athlete. Mankato has never had a wrestling team but, after three years as a basketball player, Newell decided to wrestle his senior year. He wrestled the season with Beloit but had to wrestle under the Cougar colors at state. He decisioned Jeff Doering, Minneapolis, 8-2 to win the championship and finish the season 35-3.

Courtney Nightengale, Cimarron, placed third with a 9-2 decision over Kyle Spencer, Hesston. Chuck Knapp, Lincoln, placed fifth with an 8-5 decision over Cody Austin, Whitewater-Remington.

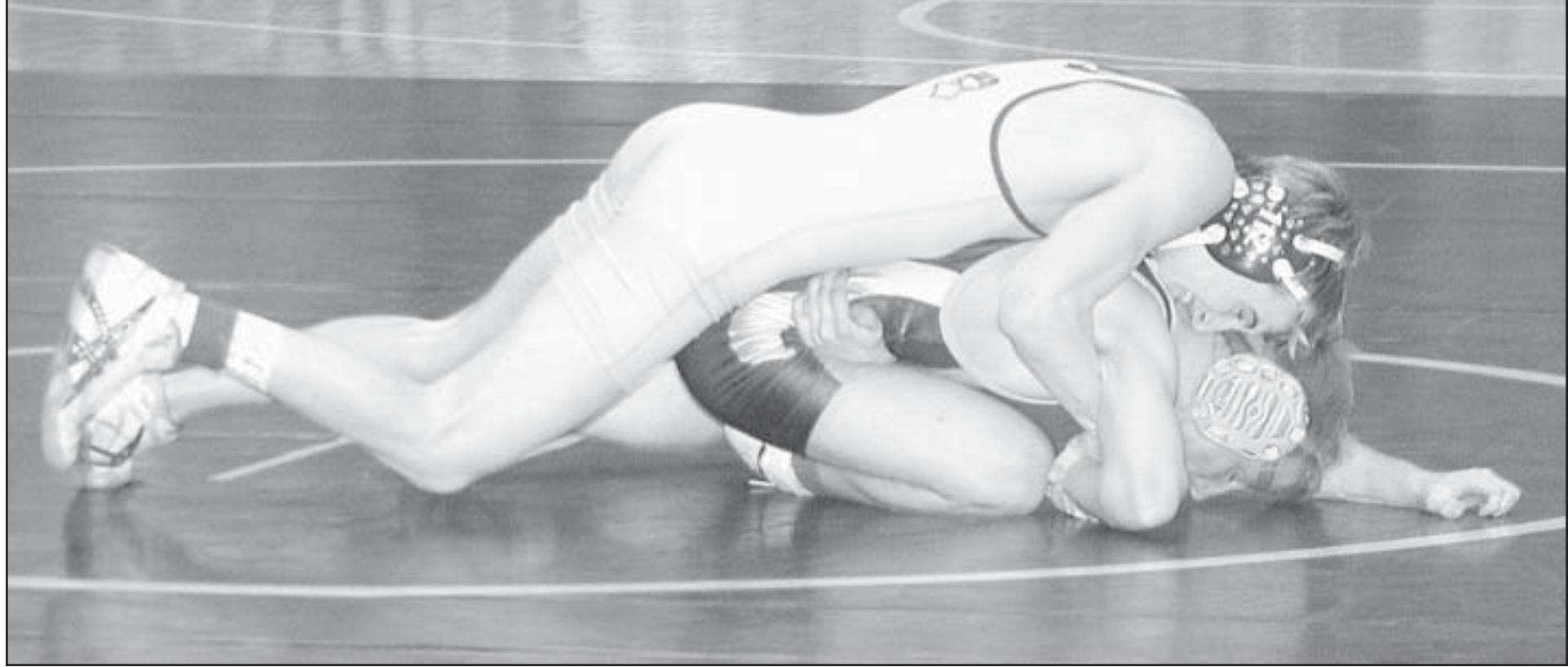
Dustin Foster, Sedgwick, completed an undefeated season at 171 pounds with a 4-2 decision over Austin Kingsbury, Smith Center. Foster ended the season with a 34-0 record and Kingsbury ended with a 37-2 record.

Derek Ross, St. Francis, placed third with a 6-1 decision over Blake Alexander, Effingham. Jeff Dennis, Oakley, placed fifth by pinning Joe Day, Eureka, in 2:25.

Chris Pursel, Effingham, won the 189-pound championship by pinning Justin Hall, Stockton, in 2:49. Eric Larsen, Lincoln, placed third with a 4-3 decision over Jere Scheer, Garden Plain. Dustin Spears, Osborne, placed fifth with a 7-3 decision over Adam Depler, Marion.

It took Chris Pulec, Stockton, an overtime period to defeat Steven Foster, Sedgwick, brother of Dustin, 6-4 to win the 215 pound championship. Pulec ended the season 26-2 and Foster finished 32-2. Derek Vonada, Sylvan Unified, placed third with a fall in 1:57 over Allyn Platner, Sabetha.

Brennon Wilger, St. Francis, placed fifth with a 2-1 decision in two overtimes over Adam Rorabaugh, Smith Center.



Norton junior Clay Madden controls Trever Richard, St. Francis, during his 8-6 decision over Richard in the 112 pound championship

match of the Class 3-2-1A state tournament in Hays to win his third state championship.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd