

Blue Jay boys eliminated in sub-state semi-finals

By DICK BOYD

For the second year in a row, Coach Doug Reusink's Norton Community High School boys basketball team has been eliminated in the semi-finals of the Class 3A Sub-State Tournament by Thomas More Prep of Hays and by the same 50-47 score.

The game was played Friday in Cimarron, the host school.

This year the scenario was a little different, however, as last year the Blue Jays were beaten with a three-point basket by Thomas More Prep at the buzzer and this year Norton trailed much of the game and could have sent the contest into overtime with a three-point field goal as time ran out.

Just as last season, it was a hard fought game but the No. 1 seeded Blue Jays were playing catchup most of the time against the No. 4 seeded Monarchs.

Norton trailed 11-7 after one quarter and by just 22-21 at half-time but the Monarchs outscored them 21-10 in the third quarter and the final stanza began with Norton behind 43-31. To the Blue Jays' credit, they battled back and outscored the Monarchs 16-7 to bring the game down to the wire.

"I didn't think either team played very well in the first half," said Coach Reusink.

"In the second half, we played pretty well and had our opportunities to score but just didn't get the job done. Their size hurt us some.

"We can play better but I couldn't ask for any better effort on our part. We fought to the end."

Norton ended the season with a 15-7 record. The Blue Jays tied for second in the Mid-Continent League and placed third in the league tournament.

In the other semi-final game on Friday, No. 6 seeded Cimarron pulled their second upset of the tournament when they edged No. 2 seeded Holcomb 55-53. Cimarron outscored No. 3 Phillipsburg 54-52 in the first round.

In Saturday's championship finals, Thomas More Prep easily defeated Cimarron 70-52 to earn a berth in this week's State Tournament in Hutchinson. In the girls championship contest, Holcomb defeated Thomas More Prep-Marian 51-46 to advance to the state tournament. Holcomb beat the Norton girls 44-36 in Thursday's semi-finals.

In another boys tournament game of local interest, Osborne handed Trego their first loss of the season by a 73-50 score in the Class 2A finals in Smith Center.

In girls tournament games of

interest, Hoxie remained unbeaten with a 70-59 win over Deerfield in the Leoti sub-state to earn a trip to the state tournament. Hoxie was ranked No. 2 in the state and Deerfield No. 3 at the end of the regular season. The Colby girls also earned a state tournament berth with a 52-37 win over Goodland in the Class 4A state sub-state in Larned and the Trego girls made it to the state tournament with a 52-45 finals win over Oberlin in the 2A sub-state in Smith Center.

Norton held a 5-4 lead with 3:29 left in the first quarter after senior point guard Kyle Kats stole the ball and drove the length of the court and was fouled. He hit both free throws. The Blue Jays' junior center Heath Vincent, who scored for Norton to start the game, hit another basket with 37 seconds left and Norton trailed 11-7 after one stanza.

Senior guard Aaron Overlease accounted for Norton's other point on a free throw.

Overlease stole the ball and drove for two points that tied the score at 13-all with 5:05 remaining in the first half. Maddy scored to tie it at 15-all. Thomas More took a 19-15 lead but Kats hit two free throws and Maddy scored on a layup with 1:30 left to tie the score at 19-all. After a Monarch three-point basket, Vincent scored on a rebound shot at the buzzer to make it a 22-21 game at intermission.

Kats fed Maddy for two-points and Overlease stole the ball and drove for two more to make it a 25-all game with 6:18 left in the third quarter. Thomas More responded with six more points, then Maddy scored and it was 31-27 with 4:23 remaining. The Blue Jays were outscored 12-4 the rest of the quarter, however, as the Monarchs built a 43-31 advantage. Norton's final four points came on a layup by Maddy after an assist from Kats and a layup by Kats after a steal.

Kats started the final stanza by draining a three-point shot and drilling two free throws to cut the Monarch lead to 43-36. Following two Thomas More Prep free throws, Kats fed senior forward Justin Shirk for two points. Maddy was fouled and hit a free throw, Kats buried two more charities to make it a 45-41 game with 3:33 left.

After a Thomas More timeout, they scored inside but Maddy responded with a two-point basket for the Blue Jays to make the score 47-43 with 2:55 remaining. A Thomas More free throw extended



Norton senior point guard Kyle Kats drives with the ball in heavy traffic to score in the Blue Jays' 50-47 loss to Thomas More Prep in the Class 3A Sub-State Tournament semi-finals on Friday in Cimarron. Kats finished his prep

career with 17 points, six rebounds, seven steals and three assists. The Monarchs' Trevor Schmidt is on defense.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

been fun coaching them.

"Thanks to all the parents and our fans for their support throughout the season."

Kyle Kats completed his high school basketball career with 17 points, six rebounds, seven steals and three assists. Kats hit just 1 of 6 from beyond the arc for 17 percent but was 3 of 6 from two-point range for 50 percent accuracy and 4-12 overall for 33 percent. From the free throw line, he was a perfect 8 of 8 for 100 percent accuracy.

Ryan Maddy finished his prep career with 13 points, seven rebounds and two steals. He missed all six three-point tries but was 6 of 14 from two-point range for 43 percent. He also hit 1 of 5 free throws.

Aaron Overlease completed his high school career with 7 points, two rebounds, four steals and two assists. He missed both three-point attempts but hit a perfect 3 of 3 two-point tries for 100 percent. He was also 1 of 2 from the charity stripe.

Brandon Bieker was leading scorer for Thomas More Prep with 12 points.

As a team, Norton hit just 1 of 15 trey tries for 7 percent, 17 of 32 two-point attempts for 53 percent and 18 of 47 overall for 38 percent.

The Monarchs swished 3 of 6 from long range for 50 percent, 16 of 34 two-point tries for 47 percent and 19 of 40 overall for 48 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton connected on 10 of 16 for 63 percent and Thomas More Prep hit 9 of 11 for 82 percent.

The Blue Jays were outrebounded 26-22. Norton grabbed 9 offensive and 13 defensive caroms and Thomas More Prep pulled down 6 offensive and 20 defensive boards.

Maddy was leading Norton rebounder with 7, followed by Kats, 6; Shirk, Vincent, 3 each; Overlease, 2; Mills, 1.

Shirk blocked 1 shot.

The Blue Jays had 13 steals in the game. Kats led with 7, followed by Overlease, 4; Maddy, 2.

The Blue Jays had 8 offensive assists. Kats led with 3, followed by Nathan Morse, Overlease, 2 each; Mills, 1.

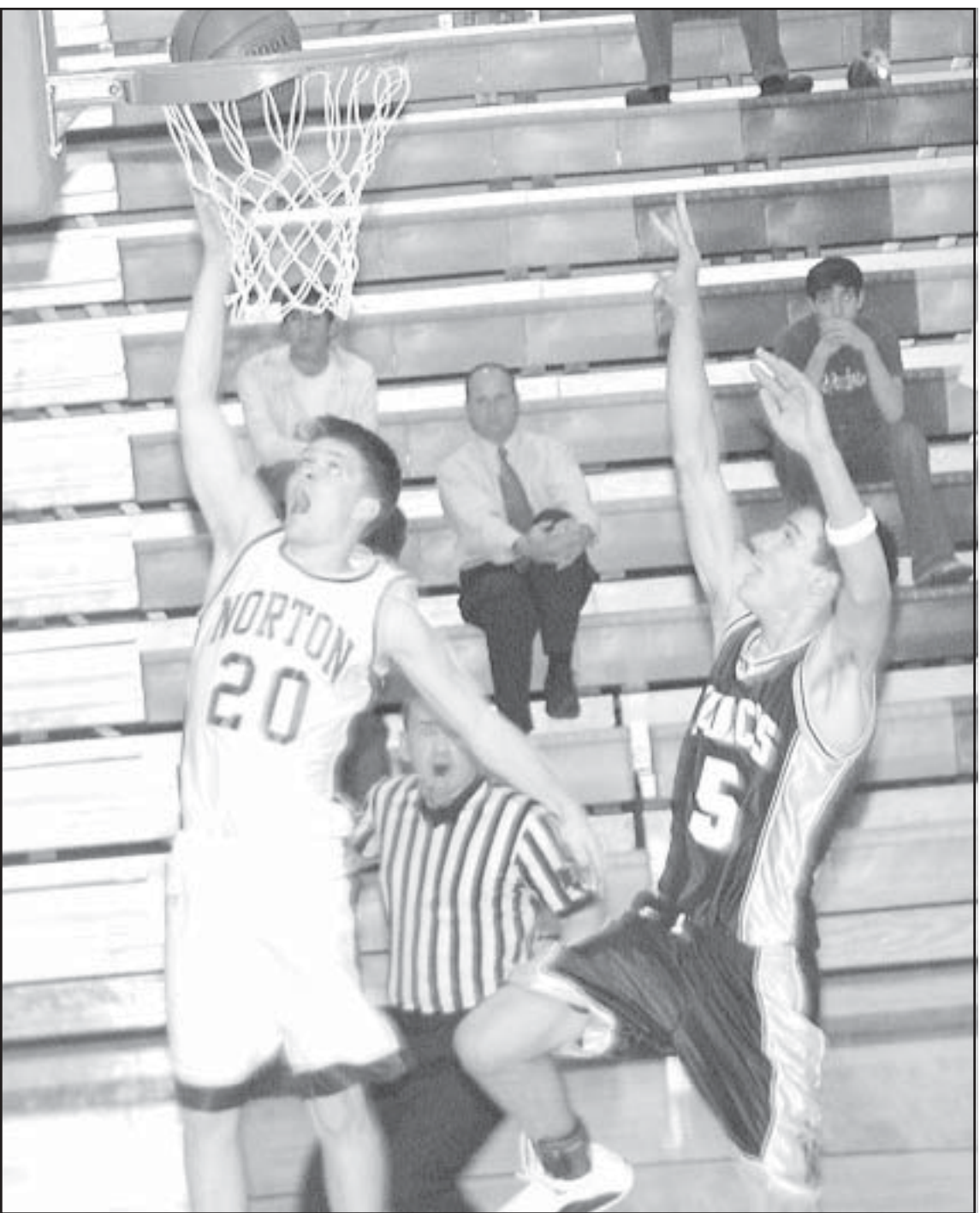
Norton had 15 turnovers but caused the Monarchs to turn the ball over 19 times.

GAME STATISTICS
Norton boys 47

	FGs	FTs	TP
	2s	3s	M-A
Nathan Morse	1	0	0-0
Kyle Kats	3	1	8-8
Aaron Overlease	3	0	1-2
Ryan Maddy	6	0	1-5
Justin Shirk	1	0	0-1
Heath Vincent	3	0	0-0
TOTALS	17	1	10-16

Thomas More Prep boys 50

	FGs	FTs	TP
	2s	3s	M-A
Chase Schippers	3	1	0-0
Kyle Hammerschmidt	2	1	2-2
Nolan Hoffman	3	0	0-0
Trevor Schmidt	1	0	2-2
Nick Felder	1	1	3-4
Elie Nsabinora	1	0	0-0
Brandon Bieker	5	0	2-3
TOTALS	16	3	9-11



Norton senior guard Aaron Overlease scores on a layup after stealing the ball during the Blue Jays' 50-47 loss to Thomas More Prep in the Class 3A Sub-State Tournament on Friday in Cimarron. Overlease completed his high school career with seven points, two rebounds, four steals and two assists. Trailing him is the Monarchs' Nolan Hoffman.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

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