

Championship wrestlers and coaches honored

By DICK BOYD

The back-to-back Class 3-2-1A state high school wrestling champions from Norton Community High School and their coaches and managers were honored during halftime of the Norton boys basketball game on Tuesday, March 1 in the Memorial Gym in Norton.

Bruce Poage, the "Voice of the Blue Jays", began by telling the large crowd that this was the first year in Norton's long history of wrestling excellence that the Blue Jays repeated as state champions.

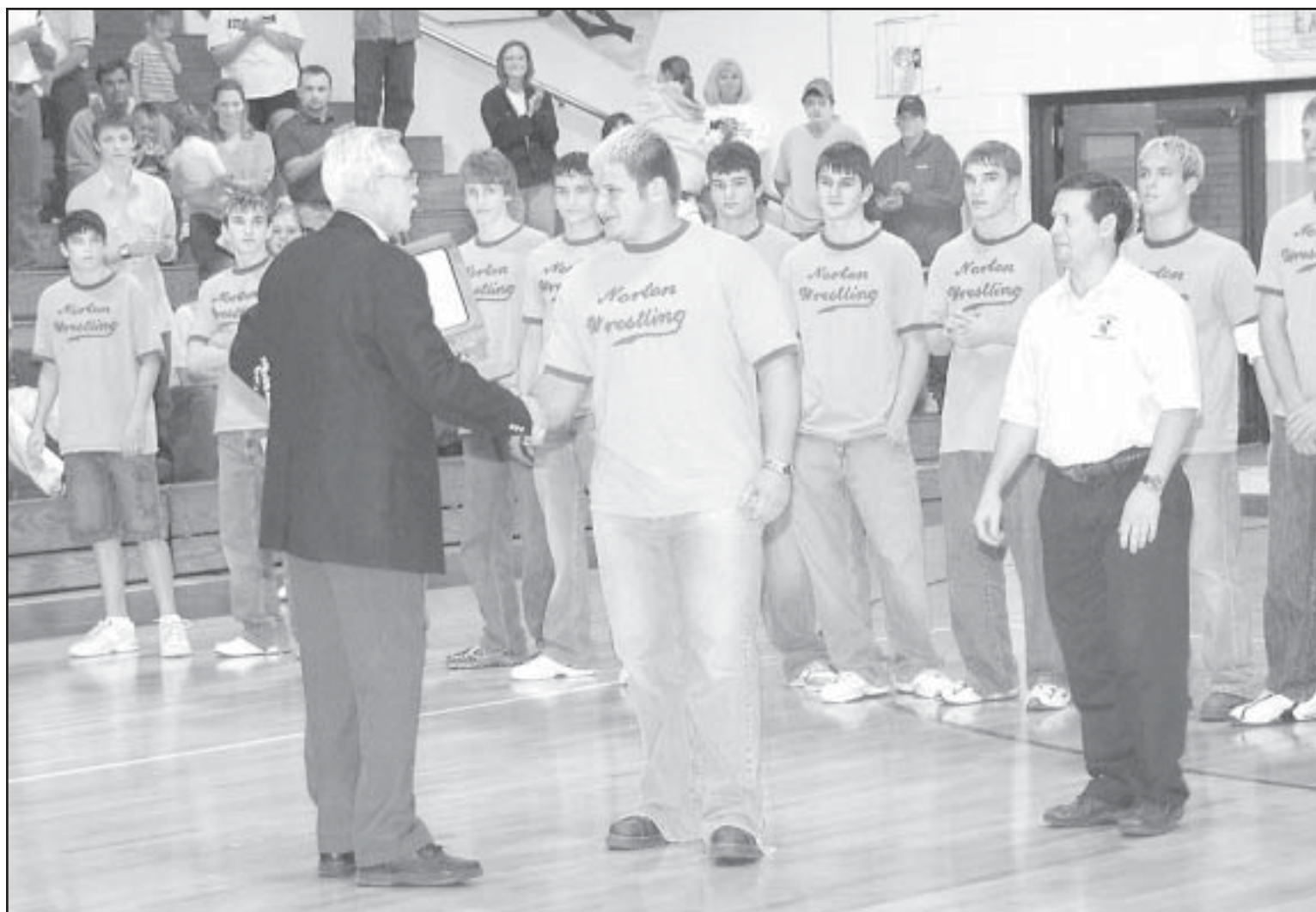
After winning the championship with a 275 pound overtime victory by Michael Sprigg in 2003-'04, the Blue Jays didn't wait until the final match in 2004-'05 but led from start to finish in rolling to the championship and leaving the second-place team trailing by 51.5 points.

"This year's state champions add a new chapter to the already long and rich Norton wrestling tradition," said Poage. "The accomplishments of this year's Blue Jay wrestling team are as impressive as they are extensive."

Poage stated that Norton went undefeated in dual competition and won the Mid-Continent League dual championship for the tenth consecutive year and dominated the league tournament, winning it for the sixth year in a row and ninth out of the past ten years.

He stated that they won five of six invitational tournaments, including the championship of the 48th annual Newton Tournament of Champions. Norton was the smallest enrollment school to ever win this prestigious tournament.

"During the year, Norton met and finished above the eventual Kansas 6A tournament runner-up, the Kansas 5A champions, the



Norton head wrestling coach Bill Johnson and his Blue Jay wrestlers watch with pride as undefeated senior wrestler Michael Sprigg presents the state championship trophy to NCHS Principal Lary Stull following the ceremony honoring the state champions at halftime of the boys basketball game on March 1. — Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Kansas 4A champions and the Oklahoma Class 2A state champions (equivalent of Kansas 4A)," said Poage.

"Norton finished first in the most competitive regional tournament in the state, qualifying nine wrestlers for the state tournament, then dominated the state tournament."

The nine Blue Jay wrestlers who

competed in the state tournament, their placing and season records were: junior Clay Madden, 112 pound champion, 33-3; junior Lance Roe, 152 pound champion, 37-1; senior Michael Sprigg, 275 pound champion, 37-0; sophomore Nathan Broeckelman, third, 119 pounds, 30-8; junior Luke Pfannenstiel, fourth, 140 pounds, 31-4; sophomore Logan

Keiswetter, fourth, 103 pounds, 30-8; junior Jeremy Harding, fifth, 135 pounds, 28-9; junior Jon Harding, sixth, 130 pounds, 30-12; sophomore Blake VanEaton, sixth, 145 pounds, 27-16.

Poage also recognized six Norton wrestlers who did not qualify for the state tournament. They were sophomore Kent Mann, 125; senior Corey Look,

160; junior Davvid Stanley, 171; sophomore Perrill Stanley, 189; senior Blake Hillebrand, 215; senior Paul Juenemann, who was the varsity wrestler at 189 all season before suffering a season ending knee injury in the Panther Classic.

Head Coach Bill Johnson was introduced, followed by a thunderous ovation from the Blue Jay fans. "Many thanks to everyone for your support all year," said Johnson.

"Our crowd is always the best in the state without any doubt.

"Every one of our wrestlers sacrificed a lot to bring home the championship trophy.

"It's nice to be the only team in Norton history to win back-to-back state championships. We hope to do our best next year to bring home another one."

Following Coach Johnson's speech, four-time state medalist Michael Sprigg officially presented the 2004-'05 State Championship trophy to Norton Community High School Principal Lary Stull as the crowd roared!

Assistant coaches of the state championship team were Doug Ray and Deyton Hager. Student managers were sophomore Jessica Sprigg and seniors Claudia Lacy and Kelli Johnson.

Four Norton basketball players are named to all-league teams

By DICK BOYD

Norton seniors Ryan Maddy and Kyle Kats and juniors Chelsea Cox and Karlie Jones have been named to the Mid-Continent League All-League Team by vote of the league coaches.

BOYS TEAM

Maddy, a 6-foot-2-inch forward, was named to the first team.

Kats is a 5-foot-10-inch point guard and he was chosen on the second team.

Maddy was leading scorer for Coach Doug Reusink's 15-7 Blue Jays with an average of 16.4 points per contest and was leading rebounder with 162 total for an average of 7.4 per game. He was third high on the team in steals with 35 and fourth high in assists with 50.

Kats was third high scorer with an average of 9.5 points per contest and second leading free throw shooter with a 62 percent average.

By a large margin in both categories, Kats was the team leader in steals with 81 and assists with 134. He also pulled down 89 rebounds for third highest on the team and an average of 4 per game.

Maddy was an all-league second team selection last season and Kats received honorable mention both his sophomore and junior seasons.

GIRLS TEAM

Cox is a 6-foot center and was named to the first team.

Jones is a 5-foot-5-inch guard and she was selected to the second team.

Cox was leading scorer for Coach Kevin Jilka's 17-5 Lady Jays with a 13.4 points per game average and leading rebounder



Kyle Kats



Ryan Maddy



Chelsea Cox



Karlie Jones

with a total of 181 and average of 8.2 caroms per contest. She was third highest in steals with 45 and fourth in assists with 33.

Jones averaged 10.6 points per contest for second high on the team. She was second leading free throw shooter, hitting an average of 62.9 percent from the charity stripe. She tied for team high in steals with 46 and was second high in assists with 53. Jones was fourth high in rebounds with a total of 61 for an average of 2.8 per game.

Cox was also a first team all-league choice and Jones was named to the third team last season.

OTHERS HONORED

Also named to the boys first team with Maddy were: Wade Knapp, 6-foot-8-inch Trego senior; Justin Casey, 6-foot Plainville junior; Nathan Locke, 6-foot-5-inch Trego junior and

R.J. Michel, 6-foot Osborne senior.

Knapp and Casey were both chosen to the first team last year.

On the second team with Kats were: Tyler Turner, Phillipsburg senior; Adam Conway, Osborne senior; Chuck Parks, Ellis senior and Matt Koelsch, Phillipsburg senior.

Receiving honorable mention were Blaise Kriley, Stockton senior; Tyler Ummel, Trego junior; Taylor Jones, Smith Center junior; M.J. Klein, Plainville senior and James Brungardt, Victoria senior.

Named to the girls Mid-Continent League first team with Cox were: Toni Fuller, 5-foot-11-inch Smith Center senior; Courtney Riedel, 5-foot-9-inch Trego senior; Karie Ubelaker, 5-foot-5-inch Osborne senior and Chelsea Dreiling, 5-foot-7-inch Victoria junior.

Selected to the girls second team along with Jones were: Tiffani Long, Hill City senior; Jannica Schultze, Osborne sophomore; Kala Clausen, Osborne senior and Danielle Pfeifer, Ellis freshman.

Receiving honorable mention were: Emily Deines, Trego senior; Jessica Kuhn, Victoria senior; Vanesa Peterson, Smith Center senior; Allison Baughman, Stockton senior and Leah Dinkel, Victoria junior.



Norton coach Bill Johnson accepts the state championship trophy for the second year in a row. — Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

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