

Championship wrestling team honored

By DICK BOYD

The back-to-back Class 3-2-1A State Champion Norton Community High School Wrestling Team was honored during the annual banquet on Sunday at the American Legion.

This was the first year in Norton's excellent wrestling history that the Blue Jays repeated as state champions.

After winning the championship with a 275-pound overtime victory by Michael Sprigg in 2004, the Blue Jays led from start to finish this season, rolling to the championship and defeating the second place team by 51.5 points.

This season's team 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 ten years.

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

During the year, Norton met and finished above the eventual Kansas 6A tournament runner-up, the 5A champions, the 4A champions and the Oklahoma Class 2A state champions, which is equivalent of Kansas 4A.

The Blue Jay wrestlers won the championship of the most competitive regional tournament in the state, qualifying nine wrestlers for state, then dominated the state tournament.

The Blue Jays who competed in the state tournament 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, 35 pounds, 28-9; junior Jon

Harding, sixth, 130 pounds, 30-12; sophomore Blake VanEaton, sixth, 145 pounds, 27-16.

Six wrestlers, who did not qualify for state, were instrumental in the Blue Jays' success this season. They are sophomore Kent Mann, 125; senior Corey Look, 160; junior Davvid Stanley, 171; sophomore Perrill Stanley, 189; senior Blake Hillebrand, 215; senior Paul Juenemann, 189, who suffered a season ending knee injury in the Panther Classic.

Following a potluck meal, Head Coach Bill Johnson spoke to the wrestlers, parents and fans and presented awards.

"We had a great, great year with just one little second place finish at the Clay Center Tournament," said Coach Johnson.

"Many thanks to the parents, fans and my wife, Joy, and the rest of my family for your support. We have a great fan base.

"Thanks to my assistant coaches Doug Ray and Deyton Hager and student managers for all your help and to our wrestlers for such a memorable season.

"It's not easy to win 75 to 80 percent of your wrestling matches, as our young men do. They are very dedicated to improving and always doing their best.

"At the same time, we don't want them to get complacent. That's why I send them to other states out of season to compete and experience how good wrestlers are in other places.

"Parents, you've loaned your young men to us and we hope we treat them like you would like for us to treat them.

"The best compliment we have received about our wrestlers is that they are great people in addition to being great athletes. We like to hear this."

Sprigg, a four-time state medalist and two-time state champion, won the "Most Outstanding Wrestler" award.

Sprigg was the varsity team points leader with 196. He scored 647 points in four years to break the previous record of 634 points set by Jeff Boyle, who wrestled in



Corey Look, Norton's 160 pound senior wrestler, received the prestigious "Coach Durham Award" during the annual NCHS Wrestling Banquet. The award is based on hard work, sportsmanship, academics and good citizenship. Look is shown here dominating Trego's Taylor Dirks during his 16-1 technical fall victory in the Blue Jays' dual win over the Golden Eagles on January 13 in Norton.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

1994-'97. Boyle still has the single season record of 211.

Sprigg also had the most falls with 25. Boyle still holds the season record with 28, which he did twice, but Sprigg took over the career record with 82. Boyle had held the record with 77.

Sprigg's perfect 37-0 season record is the best in Norton wrestling history.

Coach Johnson also announced that Sprigg has been named to the first team of the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association Academic All-State Team. He has a 3.88 grade point average.

Named "Most Improved Wrestler" was junior 135 pounder Jeremy Harding.

Receiving the "Coach Durham Award" was senior 160 pounder Corey Look. The award is based on hard work, sportsmanship, academics and good citizenship.

The "Underdog Match Winner

of the Year" Award was won by freshman Brian Sproul for his win by a fall over state-ranked Todd Kendrick, Scott City, in the Goodland Dual Tournament.

For the second straight year, Sprigg won the "Most Exciting Match of the Year" Award. He decided the Class 6A state champion Tyler Jessen, Wichita Northwest, 7-5 in overtime in the Newton Tournament.

The "Key Match of the Year" Award winner was senior Paul Juenemann. A first-year Norton wrestler, he pinned T.J. Hawkins, Goodland, to ensure the Blue Jays' championship in the Goodland Dual.

The "Most Promising Freshman of the Year" Award winner was Todd Bolt. Winning the "Outstanding Sophomore of the Year" Award was two-time state medalist Nathan Broeckelman.

The "Junior Varsity Wrestler of

the Year" Award went to freshman Travis Ray.

"Most Improved Junior Varsity Wrestler" Awards went to sophomores Jared Bebb and Michael Ward.

Classroom "Academic Award" winners were Travis Ray, 3.3, freshman; Nathan Broeckelman, 3.67, sophomore; Brady Linner, 3.6, junior, and Sprigg.

Receiving special "Coaches Awards" were senior wrestlers Blake Hillebrand and Paul Juenemann, both first-year wrestlers.

"These two young men realized that wrestling builds character and that anyone with any size or shape body can wrestle," said Coach Johnson.

"They made an amazing sacrifice for our team.

"These awards are in recognition of them helping us continue our tradition of wrestling excel-

lence at Norton."

The other two seniors on the team, Sprigg and Look, wrestled four years and received special plaques for their dedicated service to the wrestling team.

Senior managers Kelli Johnson and Claudia Lacy also received recognition awards.

Special thanks from Coach Johnson went to underclassmen managers Kayla Douglas, Alexi Wolf and Jessica Sprigg, chief statistician.

All four senior wrestlers received special awards from Coach Johnson and they presented a gift certificate to him.

The "Fan of the Year" Award went to Frances and Wesley Whitney.

"They were always in the stands no matter where we went to wrestle," said Coach Johnson. "They beat us there many times.

"For years, they were fans watching their own sons and grandsons wrestle but now they follow us because they love the sport of wrestling."

"Thanks, boys, for all the wrestling excitement," Frances said. "We enjoyed every minute of it."

Winners of the "Wrestler of the Week" Awards during the season were: Lance Roe, Hoxie Invitational; Travis Ray, Alma Junior Varsity Tournament; Todd Bolt, junior varsity at Southern Valley Invitational; Nathan Broeckelman and Jeremy Harding, Clay Center Invitational; entire team, Goodland Holiday Classic (varsity and junior varsity); Blake VanEaton, Jake Durham Invitational; Davvid Stanley, Newton Tournament of Champions; Corey Look, junior varsity at Elm Creek Invitational; Kent Mann, Mid-Continent League Tournament; Logan Keiswetter, varsity, and Bryce Engelbert, junior varsity, Panther Classic; Nathan Broeckelman, Hill City-Osborne dual; Michael Ward, Colby Junior Varsity Tournament; Clay Madden, Regional Tournament; entire team, State Tournament.

The first father-son practice was

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Northern Valley boys take first, girls place second

The Northern Valley High School track and field teams competed in the Eastern Heights Invitational Tuesday.

The Huskies grabbed first place with 131 points, while the Lady Huskies came in second with 98 points.

Placing for Northern Valley were:

BOYS

- Thomas Ostmeyer — long jump, first, 18-feet, 4.75 inches; 100-meter dash, second, 11.56 seconds; and 200-meter dash, fourth, 24.50
- Joey Copper — 110-meter hurdles, first, 16.43; triple jump, third, 40-8.5 inches; and 300-meter hurdles, fourth, 45.12.



Northern Valley senior Jesse Hilburn clears the bar and goes on to place second with a leap of 5'10" in the high

jump competition at the Eastern Heights Invitational held in Logan on Tuesday.

— Telegram photo by Susie Marble



Janelle Fritz, Northern Valley senior, strides toward the finish line in the 3,200 meter run at the Eastern Heights Invitational on Tuesday. Janelle placed second in the 3,200 meters and was fourth in the 1,600 run.

— Telegram photo by Susie Marble

- Bryce Marble — 3,200-meter run, first, 12:17.90; 1,600-meter run, fourth, 5:26.07; 300-meter hurdles, fifth, 50.37
- Avery Thalheim — javelin, first, 165
- Clarice Nelson — pole vault, first, 10
- Jesse Hilburn — 300-meter hurdles, second, 44.0; high jump, second, 5-10; and 110-meter hurdles, third, 17.18.
- Cody Lowry — 1,600-meter run, second, 5:25.38
- Blake Johnson — 3,200-meter run, fifth, 13:46.93; 1,600-meter run, 5:59.
- Chase Miller — 110-meter hurdles, sixth, 20.76; long jump, 15-1
- Henry Griffiths — triple jump, sixth, 36-7; 400-meter dash, 1:00.
- Andrew Sheley — discus, sixth, 126-2; javelin, 134-7; shot put, 39-4.5
- Chris Lee — 100-meter dash, 14.03; 200-meter dash, 28.97
- Cody Hardy — 100-meter dash, 14.53; 400-meter dash, 1:09.84; long jump, 15-3
- Chance Miller — 400-meter dash, 1:04.7; shot put, 33-2; javelin, 127-2
- Casey Dole — 800-meter run, 2:30
- Cameron Duede — discus, 89-11.5
- The 4x800-meter relay team of Lowry (2:17), Thalheim (2:24), Marble (2:14) and Dole (2:26),

- first, 9:22.53
- The 4x100-meter relay team of Ostmeyer, Hilburn, Copper and Griffiths, third, 46.85
- The 4x400-meter relay team of Dole (60.74), Chase Miller (64.12), Thalheim (58.68), and Lowry (58.68), fifth, 4:02.26
- Lindsey Graham — discus, first, 111-8; shot put, first, 33-5.75; and javelin, third, 94-11
- Kelli Cole — high jump, first, 5; 100-meter hurdles, third, 18.72; 300-meter hurdles, third, 55.19; and triple jump, sixth, 29-10.75
- Joni Hilburn — pole vault, first, 7-9

- Janelle Fritz — 3,200-meter run, second, 14:03.87; 1,600-meter run, fourth, 6:21.59
- Jessie Redeker — 100-meter dash, third, 14.31; 200-meter dash, third, 29.34; long jump, sixth, 14-1
- Amanda Hopkins — triple jump, fifth, 29-11
- Jessica Largent — 100-meter dash, 16.15; 200-meter dash, 34.03
- The 4x800-meter relay team of Andrea Lowry (2:46), Fritz (2:45), Hopkins (2:51) and Hilburn (2:53), first, 11:16.25
- The 4x400-meter relay team of Redeker (70.71), Lowry (72.95), Hopkins (69.87), and Largent (77.84), fourth, 4:51.60