

Norton third in round robin

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School junior varsity tennis team placed third in the five-team Junior Varsity Round Robin at Goodland on Tuesday.

Goodland won the championship with 29 points, followed by Scott City, 24; Norton, 19; Colby, 18; Tribune, 9.

"We got off to a bad start," said Norton Assistant Coach Shawnee Branek.

"All our girls lost to Scott City in the first round and I know we could have won all of them. We made a lot of errors and just couldn't get our game on track.

"It didn't help that the girls received only a five minute rest in between each match. Some of the girls were suffering from leg cramps by their last matches."

Brianna Nelson played No.1 singles for the Lady Jays and placed third with a 2-2 record. She lost 5-6 (3-7) to Scott City's Tonya Hopkins; lost to Goodland's Jena McCall 1-6; defeated Tribune's Megan Schmidt 6-3 and outpointed Colby's Quinnly Woolfer 6-1.

In No.1 doubles, Norton was represented by Gena Myers and Sara Campbell. They compiled a 1-3 record and placed fourth. They lost 5-6 (6-8) to Scott City's Debbie Kough and Haley Wilcoxson; defeated Goodland's Shonna Webster and Kaitlin Fugelberg 6-5 (7-4); lost to Tribune's Kayla Reynolds and Colleen Fisher 5-6 (5-7) and lost to Colby's Liz Erickson and Gillian Zumbriana 4-6.

Tabitha Vincent played No.2

singles for Norton and placed third with a 2-2 record. She lost to Scott City's Ashlee Sauer 4-6; lost to Goodland's Sandy Johnson 0-6; defeated Morgan Neill, Tribune, 6-0 and outpointed Norton's Hannah Fulton, who was playing for Colby, 6-3.

Playing No.2 doubles for Norton was the team of Tiffany Marx and Valerie Wagoner. They placed second with a 3-1 record. They lost to Scott City's Christine Chambless and Emily Bennion 4-6; defeated Goodland's Kathy Wood and Hannah Blake 6-0; outpointed Tribune's Morgan Moritz and Jennifer Fuller 6-2 and outscored Colby's Cyndi Rothfuss and Emily Dougherty 6-5 (7-4).

"I was impressed with our No.2 doubles team," said Coach Branek.

"They continue to play very well with each other. They actually tied for first place with two other teams. After figuring percentage of games won, they placed second."

Playing No.2 singles for Colby, Hannah Fulton finished in fourth place with a 1-3 record. She lost to Scott City's Ashlee Sauer 1-6; lost to Goodland's Sandy Johnson 0-6; lost to Norton's Tabitha Vincent 3-6 and defeated Tribune's Morgan Neill 6-5 (5-4).

Norton's junior varsity team will play Saturday in the Phillipsburg Junior Varsity Invitational, which begins at 9 a.m.

The varsity team will also compete on Saturday. They will play in the Trego Invitational in WaKeeney, which also begins at 9 a.m.

Norton to host Plainville tonight

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School football team is in a familiar position heading into tonight's 7 p.m. Mid-Continent League football game with Osborne at Travis Field.

The Blue Jays have the same record they had this time last year. Both seasons, they started with a loss to Oakley, win over Plainville and loss to Smith Center. Despite starting with a 1-2 record, Norton won their next seven games before losing to Southeast of Saline and ending with an 8-3 record.

"We've gotten better; now, we have to gain more consistency," Coach Graber told the Norton Blue Jay Booster Club on Wednesday evening.

"We played as well as we have all year in the first half against Smith Center. We have to just keep learning from our mistakes and bounce back this week."

Osborne is 2-1 overall and 1-1 in the league, the same as Norton. The Bulldogs lost 33-0 to Trego in the season opener, then defeated Downs-Lakeside 42-12 before shutting out Hill City 28-0 last Friday night.

So far, the Blue Jays have depended more on the passing game than normal. Senior quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel has completed 24 of 44 aerials for a 54.5 percent completion rate. He has passed for 317 yards and two touchdowns in the three games for an average of 105.7 yards per game.

The Blue Jays rushed for just 56 yards and passed for 129 and had just nine first downs in their season opening 24-3 loss to state-ranked Oakley. In their 29-8 win at Plainville, Norton rolled up 245 yards rushing and added 93 yards through the air for 338 total and had 18 first downs.

In last Friday's 51-13 loss at Smith Center, Norton gained 131 yards rushing and 95 passing for 226 total yards of offense. Norton



Norton junior tailback Blake VanEaton looks for running room against the Redmen during the Jays' game in Smith Center on Friday. Ready to block for VanEaton is sophomore tight end Wes Georgeson, No.23. In the background is Norton senior running back Lance Roe, No.42.

picked up 16 first downs versus Smith Center and played the state-ranked Redmen to 20-7 at halftime.

Coach Clint Merritt's Osborne Bulldogs were dominant against Hill City on both offense and defense. They rushed for 387 yards on 76 carries for a 5.1 yards per carry average and had six yards passing. The Bull Dog defense held the Ringnecks to 27 yards rushing on 22 attempts and 17 passing yards.

Osborne had 18 first downs and Hill City had 4.

Osborne's senior tailback Casey Corbett, a second team All-Mid-Continent League selection on both offense and defense, where he is a defensive back, watched from the sideline after suffering an injury during the week. The week before, he rushed for 252 yards in the victory over Lakeside.

Corbett's substitute, junior Brady Lund, rushed for 194 yards on 29 carries against Hill City.

Osborne has eight returning senior starters on offense and seven returning senior and junior starters on defense.

"Clint Merritt, who played for Smith Center, has done a great job of teaching them how to block and tackle," said Coach Graber.

"They will come in and hit us so we need to be ready and to be physical. They will have confidence playing us since we are just 1-2 and they are 2-1."

Volleyball team goes 1-2 at Stockton

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School volleyball team defeated Stockton but lost to Hill City and Hoxie on Tuesday evening in Stockton.

Hill City

Norton played Hill City first and lost to the Ringnecks 18-25, 25-19, 16-25.

"The Hill City match was the first match we had played in 14 days due to an idle week in our schedule," said Coach Jill Lively.

"Although it is not a good excuse for the way we played, I think it did play a factor in our sluggishness on the court.

"As a team, we served an excellent 93 percent but we struggled to play our aggressive style of ball.

"Hill City played a good match. In fact, they swept the quadrangular, beating Hoxie and Stockton, too."

Statistic leaders for Norton were: serving — Alexi Wolf, Klaire Mann, Rebecca Ebert, Maggie Nielsen, 100 percent; Rachael Lentz, 2 aces; passing — Amanda Antrim, 1.92; Mann, 1.91; setting — Chelsea Cox, 15 assists; Wolf, 13; hitting — Cox, 12 kills; Ebert, 6; Newell, 4; Lentz and Naomi Streck, 3 each; defense — Antrim, 15 digs; Mann, 14; Wolf, 6; Lentz, 5.

Hoxie

The Lady Jays played Hoxie next and lost 24-26, 16-25.

"Hoxie has a couple of good players who did a lot for their team," said Coach Lively.

"Our blockers did a nice job of making some quick adjustments to shut down their quick attack. We hit more aggressively than we had earlier in the evening but, overall, we didn't pass or play defense well enough to turn things around."

Statistic leaders for Norton were: serving — Wolf, 3 aces, 100 percent; Lentz, 100 percent; passing — Streck, Cox, Ebert, 2.0 each; setting — Wolf, 9 assists; Cox, 7; hitting — Cox, 7 kills; Newell, 5; Lentz and Ebert, 2 each; blocking — Streck, Lentz, Cox, 1 each; defense — Mann, 4 digs; Antrim and Cox, 3 each; Wolf, 2; Ebert, 1.

Stockton

In their final match of the evening, Norton's Lady Jays defeated Stockton 25-18, 25-12.

"We came out against Stockton with a better outlook in general," said Coach Lively.

"Although our skill technique still wasn't what it should be, our communication and attitude made a big difference.

"Our focus before our next matches will be on teamwork, attitude and hustle."

Individual statistic leaders for Norton were: serving — Antrim and Darci Darling, 100 percent; Cox, 3 aces; Antrim, 2; passing — Mann, 2.0; setting — Cox, 7 assists; Wolf, 5; hitting — Cox, 6 kills; Lentz, Newell, Ebert, 3 each; Streck, Darling, 1 each; blocking — Lentz and Ebert, 2 each; Nielsen, 1; defense — Mann, 7 digs; Antrim, Cox, 2 each.

Junior varsity football defeats Smith Center

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School junior varsity football team defeated Smith Center 18-12 on Monday in Norton to extend their unbeaten record to 3-0.

The Redmen won the coin toss and elected to receive the ball to begin the game. Smith Center pounded the ball down field on a 75-yard touchdown drive but the two-point conversion try was no good.

Norton took over on the 45-yard line but fumbled on third down and the Redmen recovered. The rest of the quarter was a defensive battle.

The second quarter began with the Blue Jays taking possession of the ball after a punt. On the first play of the quarter, quarterback Logan Kats threw a pass and it was intercepted. The Blue Jays dug down deep and stopped the Redmen on a quarterback sack by defensive end Brett Thomson and linebacker Matt Stanley.

Norton began a drive but it stalled and they had to punt. On this Redmen possession, Thomson broke through the line on third down and caused a fumble. Defensive tackle Perrell Stanley recovered the pigskin for the Blue Jays. Norton took advantage of the break and Kats scored on a 10 yard option run to tie the score at 6-all. The two-point conversion failed and the score remained tied.

Norton forced a three-and-out by Smith Center after the kickoff but, on Norton's first down, Kats threw his second interception of the night. The Jays' defense stepped up and intercepted a pass

to stop the Redmen, who were in Norton territory, and the first half ended in a 6-all tie.

The third quarter was a defensive battle with neither team able to cross the 50-yard-line and the final quarter began with the game still deadlocked 6-all.

To begin the fourth quarter, Smith Center had the ball and took it down field for the go-ahead touchdown. The Blue Jay defense stopped the extra points try by the Redmen and they led 12-6.

The Blue Jays responded with a touchdown drive of their own. Kats completed a 10-yard pass to wide receiver Travis Ray. On the next play, Kats and Ray connected again but this time the play covered 40 yards! The Smith Center defense stiffened and the Blue Jays faced a fourth and goal situation. The Kats-to-Ray combination came through again as Kats hit Ray in the corner of the end zone to tie the game at 12-all. Norton's two-point conversion try was no good.

After the ensuing Norton kickoff, the Redmen began a drive but it was stopped short by defensive back Brian Juenemann who intercepted a pass with 38 seconds left and returned the ball to the Norton 45-yard line. Norton had no remaining timeouts so the Blue Jay offense had to speed up in an attempt to beat the clock and score a winning touchdown. On the first play, Kats rolled out and passed to tailback Todd Bolt who was run out of bounds on the Smith Center 35.

On the next play, Kats connected with Bolt on a flare out of

the backfield. With time running out, Bolt made a tremendous run as he sprinted down the sideline, tight rope walking the out-of-bounds line. Bolt dived into the end zone but the officials ruled that he was out of bounds on the 1-yard-line with 11 seconds remaining. Kats carried the ball on a quarterback sneak and followed his linemen into the end zone for the go-ahead touchdown. The two-point conversion attempt was no good but the Blue Jays were ahead 18-12 with 8 seconds left.

Norton squib kicked to the Redmen and the Smith Center receiver almost broke loose but Kats made a great tackle on the sideline.

With time for one more play, the Redmen tried a deep pass but it fell incomplete and Norton earned a stunning 18-12 victory.

"I was very proud of our players' efforts tonight," said Coach Lucas Melvin.

"We fought and fought and never gave up. It was a very exciting win for us.

"Whenever you come down to the very end to decide the game and you win, it is fun, especially when it is against a strong rival.

"Our players really stepped up and played well."

The Norton junior varsity football team will travel to Osborne on Monday for a 6 p.m. kickoff.

Junior varsity volleyball beats Stockton

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School junior varsity volleyball team defeated Stockton but lost to Hoxie in matches played Tuesday in Stockton.

Hoxie

Norton played Hoxie first and suffered their first loss of the season by scores of 25-22, 18-25, 6-15.

"It was one of those matches where whatever could go wrong, did go wrong," said Norton Coach

Peggy Cox.

"Basically, we arrived, we played, we lost. End of story. Nothing else needs to be said."

Only serving statistics were available at press time. Norton served 84 percent as a team. Individual statistics were: Hayli Bozarth, 10-12, 2 aces; Sara Lentz, 10-11, 1 ace; Katharine Roy, 4-6, 1 ace; Brianna Felton, 7-8; Courtney LeClair, 3-4; Courtney Cox, 7-8, 1 ace.

Stockton

The Lady Jays bounced back from their loss to Hoxie to defeat Stockton 25-14, 25-17.

"Our serving was a weak point but we capitalized on Stockton's errors," said Coach Cox.

"This was not a memorable match since we were just focusing on getting our fundamentals back in line. It was just one for the win column."

Norton served only 80 percent as a team. Individual serving statistics were: Bozarth, 6-7; Lentz,

8-9; Roy, 10-13, 4 aces; Felton, 1-2; LeClair, 2-3, 1 ace; Cox, 4-5, 1 ace; Haley Jones, 5-6, 2 aces; Morgan Kauten, 3-4, 2 aces.

The Norton girls will play Colby and Atwood on Tuesday in Colby. Matches will begin at 4:30 p.m.

The Norton varsity's first match will be versus Colby in the high school gym.

The Norton junior varsity team will begin play with a match versus Colby in the elementary school gym.

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