

Norton wrestlers win third straight state title

By DICK BOYD

With an awesome display of expertise, toughness and determination, Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team powered to their third straight Class 3-2-1A State Tournament Championship on Friday and Saturday in Gross Memorial Coliseum on the campus of Fort Hays State University in Hays.

Leading from start to finish, Norton won three titles in a row for the first time in the storied, tradition rich history of the Blue Jay wrestling program.

At the end of the first day of competition, Norton led second place St. Francis 138.5 to 100 in the team race but the Blue Jays didn't sit on their laurels. They went out and wrestled even harder on Saturday to win the championship by a much larger margin.

With everything over but the shouting in Gross Memorial Coliseum on Saturday evening, Norton had compiled a grand total of 186.5 points to outdistance second place Smith Center by 76.5 points! Finishing in third place behind the Redmen's 110 points was St. Francis with 108, who lost second to Smith Center in the 275 pound match when their unbeaten wrestler suffered his first loss.

Phillipsburg placed fourth overall with 86.5 points, ensuring that three of the top four teams were from the Mid-Continent League.

Fifth place went to Silver Lake with 74, followed by Hoxie, 72; Eureka, 67.5; Beloit, 67.5; Garden Plain, 67; Oberlin, 65; Effingham, 43; Trego Community, 32; Lincoln, 32; Sabetha, 32; St. George-Rock Creek, 32; Hill City, 31; Leoti, 29; Hoisington, 29; Lyons, 28.5; Rossville, 28. Other area teams finished as follows: Oakley, tied for 22nd with 25; Atwood, tied for 28th with 18; Plainville, tied for 33rd with 16; Ellis, tied for 52nd with 3; Stockton, 0; Osborne, 0.

Four champions

Norton had six wrestlers in Saturday evening's championship finals and four won championships. Norton's other three wrestlers medaled as well with two earning third place and one finishing fifth. Two years ago, Norton needed an overtime win by 275 pound Michael Sprigg to edge two-time defending state champion Hoxie 175.5 to 172.5. Nine of 10 Norton wrestlers placed in the tournament that year.

Last year, the Blue Jays didn't wait until the last match to win the state title. They scored 155.5 points compared to 104 for second place St. Francis to beat the Indians by 51.5 points. All nine Norton wrestlers placed.

So, not only did Norton win the championship this year for the third straight year, the Blue Jays had nine state medalists for the third year in a row.

This was Coach Johnson's 15th season as head wrestling coach at Norton. His teams had placed high in the state tournament for years but had never won a state championship until two years ago. It was Norton's first state title since the Blue Jays won the Class 3-A state tournament in 1973.

This year's state champions are senior Clay Madden, 119; junior Nathan Broeckelman, 125; senior Luke Pfannenstiel, 152 and senior Lance Roe, 160.

State runnerups are freshman Zach Bainter, 112 and senior Jeremy Harding, 145.

Placing third and winning the bronze medal were juniors Kent Mann, 130 and Blake VanEaton, 140. Senior Jon Harding placed fifth at 135.

Madden made Norton wrestling history by becoming the Blue Jays' only four-time state champion! He won the 103 pound championship this freshman season and the 112 pound title the last two years.

Roe won his second state championship. He won the 152 pound title last year, was fourth at 135 pounds his sophomore season and fifth at 135 his freshman year.

Broeckelman won the bronze medal at 119 pounds last year after placing second his freshman season.

Pfannenstiel also won his first championship this year. He finished in fourth place last year at 140 pounds. He was injured his sophomore season and placed fifth at 112 pounds his freshman year.

Jeremy Harding competed in the state tournament for the first

time last year when he placed fifth at 135. Twin brother Jon also competed in the state tournament for the first time last season and finished in sixth at 130.

VanEaton also competed in the state tournament for the first time last season and placed sixth at 145 pounds.

Mann competed in the state tournament his freshman year and placed fifth at 103 pounds.

In dominating this year's state tournament, Norton compiled an impressive won-loss record of 35-6, which is 85 percent wins, and a perfect 9-0 pin ratio!

Coach's comments

"This was a state wrestling tournament of a lifetime," said an exuberant Coach Johnson.

"To come in and have six wrestlers in the finals, the most I've ever had, and to have four champions, was tremendous. Going into the finals, we had only lost four matches in two days of wrestling.

"Our final record of wins and pins was more than I could anticipate.

"I'm so proud of all of them but am especially happy for Blake VanEaton and Jon Harding who lost their very first match on Friday and came all the way through the back door to place. Jon lost two one-point matches to Justin York of Smith Center or he would have placed third.

"By winning four state championships, Clay Madden joined a very elite group of great wrestlers. That's an amazing accomplishment and he's a very amazing young man. We didn't want to put any pressure on him, so we told him to just go out and get another title. I've seen wrestlers clutch up when trying to win their fourth."

Bainter wrestled undefeated senior Nash Burtin, Eureka, in the championship finals. He trailed 12-5 entering the third period but lost 16-15 in a wild finish.

"Bainter's match was a mental victory for him," said Coach Johnson. "He did an awesome job of wrestling for a freshman. That match will help his confidence a lot in the future.

"I really appreciate the work ethic of all of our wrestlers and also appreciate the support we receive from the parents, the school administration and the community as a whole."

It was obvious to those present at Saturday's finals that the Norton crowd was, not only the largest from any community, but the most vocal! It was estimated that Norton had around 1,000 fans in the stands cheering for their beloved Blue Jays.

"This was a great way for our seniors to finish but it's also nice to know that we'll have five state medalists in the practice room next year," said Coach Johnson.

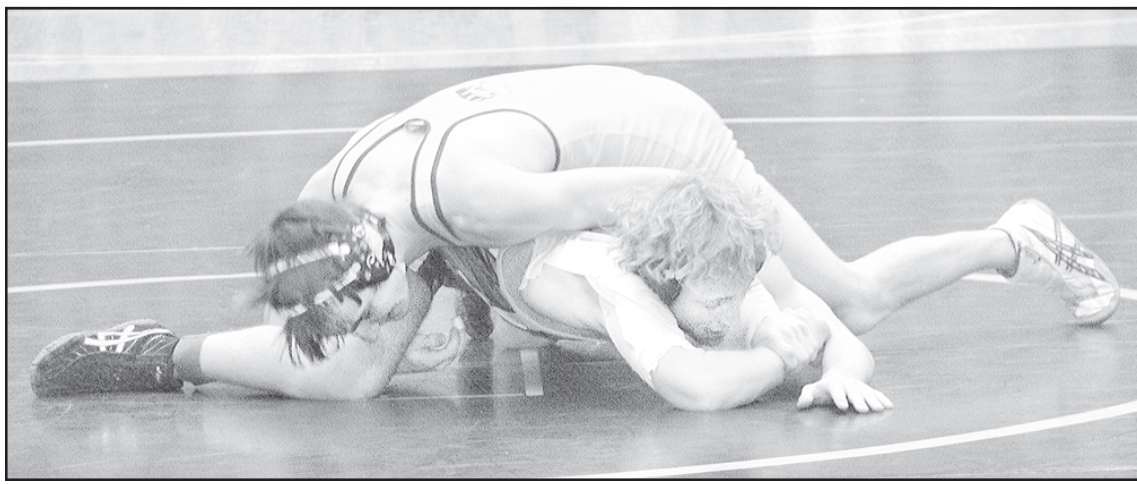
Needless to say, Coach Johnson named all nine Norton wrestlers "Wrestlers of the Week".

Assistant coaches on the state championship Norton team were Doug Ray and Deyton Hager. Student managers were Kayla Douglas, Alexi Wolf, Jessica Sprigg and Lacey Roe.

Individual results

At 119 pounds, Clay Madden pinned Kyle Morey, Sabetha, in 24 seconds of their first round match. Next, Madden pinned Jeremy Vancil, Bluestem, in one minute. In the semi-finals, he shutout Tommy Knapp, Lincoln, 4-0 to reach the championship finals.

For the championship, he wrestled a familiar foe, Trevor Richard, St. Francis, whom he defeated 8-6 in the 112 pound finals last year. Richard gave him a battle again this year but Madden was equal to the challenge. He



Norton's 112 pound senior Clay Madden controls Trevor Richard of St. Francis during Madden's 4-2 win in the championship finals of the state tournament on Saturday evening in Hays. Madden won his fourth state title, a record for Norton wrestling.

took a 4-1 lead in the first period. Neither wrestler scored in the second period and Richard tallied one point on an escape in the third period to make the final 4-2 in favor of Madden.

Madden ended the season with his fourth state championship and a sterling 39-1 record. Madden's only loss this season was to Aaron Ely, Leavenworth, in the prestigious Newton Tournament of Champions, which Norton won for the second straight year. Madden lost a 13-2 major decision to Ely, who was ranked No.1 in the state in Class 6A. Last weekend, Ely won the 6A state championship at 125 pounds with an 11-3 major decision over Almaquer, Olathe North.

With the loss to Madden, Richard ended his season with a 30-4 record.

Knapp placed third at 119 with a 4-0 decision over Vancil. Rayson Brachtenbach, Hill City, whom Madden pinned to win the regional championship a week earlier, placed fifth by pinning Aaron Weatherhead, Belleville, in 4:20.

At 125 pounds, Nathan Broeckelman pinned Ross Eidman, Chase County, in 1:20 of their first round match. Next, he won a 9-4 decision over David King, Hesston. In the semi-finals, he decisioned Kyle Cook, Hoisington, 4-1 to reach the championship finals.

He wrestled Wyatt Bechtel, Eureka, for the gold medal. The score was tied 2-2 after one period but Broeckelman led 7-5 after the second period. Broeckelman led 9-6 with time running out in the third period. Bechtel got a late takedown to cut the final score to 9-8 in Broeckelman's favor.

Broeckelman finished the season with an outstanding 40-2 record. His only losses were to the Class 5A and Class 4A state champions. He lost a 4-3 decision to Nick Nothern, Salina South, in the championship of the Newton Tournament of Champions. Last weekend, Nothern decisioned Great Bend's Joe Schridde 3-1 to win the 5A title.

Broeckelman's only other loss this season was to Blake Fisher, Andale, in the Clay Center Invitational. Broeckelman pinned four opponents but Fisher pinned five, including Broeckelman. Fisher won the Class 4A state championship this past weekend with a 5-2 win over Kevin Callahan, Baldwin. Andale also won the Class 4A state team championship.

Matt Migchelbrink, Atwood, placed third by pinning Travis Rempe, Smith Center, in 2:59. Cook placed fifth with a 4-1 decision over Joe Olson, Trego.

At 152 pounds, Luke Pfannenstiel pinned Nash Volker, Stafford, in 1:30 of their first round match. Next, he decisioned Marc Madison, West Elk, 5-4 to give Madison only his third loss of the season. In the semi-finals, he wrestled Jason Corwin, Silver

Lake, who had only three losses. It was another hard fought battle but Pfannenstiel edged Corwin 5-4 to reach Saturday night's championship finals.

Pfannenstiel wrestled Andrew Bina, Hillsboro, who brought a 36-2 record into the match. Pfannenstiel took a 4-1 lead by the end of the first period and extended it to 6-2 in the second period. Pfannenstiel continued to dominate his opponent in the third period and ended with a 12-3 major decision to win the gold medal.

Pfannenstiel finished the season with an excellent 33-6 record.

Corwin won third place with a 7-2 decision over Denton Bailey, Oberlin. Michael Schamberger, Hoxie, placed fifth by pinning Matt Hyman, Beloit, in 1:46.

At 160 pounds, Lance Roe pinned Trent Stevenson, Ellsworth, in 1:18 of their first round match. Next, he won a 16-8 major decision over Bryant Speer, Effingham. In the semi-finals, Roe wrestled Jake Nichols, Smith Center, whom he had defeated in the championship finals of the Durham Invitational, dual with Smith Center and Mid-Continent League Tournament.

Nichols gave Roe the closest match he had all year but Roe decisioned him 3-2 to reach the championship finals. Gabe Smull of St. Francis wrestled Roe for the gold medal but it was no contest; the championship match was really in the semi-finals. Using his excellent takedown technique, Roe took an 8-3 lead in the first period, expanded it to 11-4 in the second period and finished with a 17-8 major decision to win the gold medal and his second state championship. Roe also decisioned Smull 17-6 to win the regional championship.

Roe completed an outstanding 37-1 season record. His only loss was in the Clay Center Invitational to Brendan Lund, Clay Center, the eventual third place finisher in the Class 4A state tournament. Roe avenged the defeat by Lund by decisioning him 9-3 in the Newton tournament championship finals.

Nichols won an 8-0 major decision over Speer for third place. Dalen Ryan, Lincoln, placed fifth with an 8-6 decision over Cody Austin, Remington.

At 112 pounds, Zach Bainter

pinned Zach Fergus, Wichita Independent, in 38 seconds of their first round match. Next, he won a 12-5 decision over Trevor Rempe, Smith Center. In the semi-finals, he handed Aaron Patton, Wellsville, his third defeat with a fall in 3:16.

In the championship finals, Bainter wrestled unbeaten senior Nash Burtin, Eureka. The first period ended 3-3 but Burtin took a 12-5 lead in the second period. Bainter rallied in the third period and outscored Burtin 10-4 but lost a 16-15 decision and placed second.

Bainter compiled a 25-3 season record. His first loss was in the Newton Tournament of Champions by a 6-4 score to Micah Ankenman, Hutchinson, who finished third in the Class 6A state tournament. Ankenman is the son of Tom Ankenman, former three-time state champion from Norton.

Bainter's only other loss was 3-2 in the regional championship match to Dustin Zahorsky, Phillipsburg, who placed fourth in the state tournament when he lost a 6-3 decision to Patton. Rempe placed fifth by pinning Cody Merriman, Onaga, in 4:38.

At 145 pounds, Jeremy Harding won a 15-7 major decision over Frankie Moran, Horton, in the first round. Next, he faced unbeaten Cody Hazard, Lyons, who brought a 32-0 record into the match. It was a tough match but Harding decisioned Hazard 4-3 to hand him his first defeat. In the semi-finals, Harding pinned Tyson Utech, Herington, in 5:13. It was only the third loss for Utech.

In the championship finals, Harding faced Jason Pyle, Sabetha, a defending state champion with a 32-1 record. Harding wrestled hard but was unable to score on Pyle, who led 5-0 after one period, 7-0 at the end of two periods and won a 9-0 major decision.

Harding completed the season with a 27-5 record.

Jordan Gienger, St. Francis, placed third with an 11-5 decision over Ryan Patterson, Garden Plain. Hazard placed fifth with a 9-2 decision over Utech.

At 130 pounds, Kent Mann started the tournament with a major decision 9-0 shutout of Dallas Eshleman, Stafford. Next, he decisioned Aron Culbertson, Fredonia, 4-2 in overtime. In the

semi-finals, he lost a 4-1 decision to Bret Swoyer, Rock Creek. In the consolation bracket, Mann shutout Cody Eaton, Bennington, 4-0 to reach the consolation championship match where he wrestled Keaton Taylor, Silver Lake.

Mann trailed 2-0 after one period but tied the score at 2-all in the second period and outscored Taylor 3-2 in the final period to win a 5-4 decision and a bronze medal.

Mann compiled a 29-8 record this season.

Tyler Baker, Hoxie, ended the season with a perfect 45-0 record. He pinned Swoyer in 4:33 of their championship match. Swoyer ended the season 39-3. Jeremy Chase, Hill City, placed fifth with a 4-2 decision over Eaton.

At 140 pounds, Blake VanEaton lost his first round match by a 7-4 score to Jacob Deiter, Silver Lake, and dropped into the consolation bracket. He won a 9-0 major decision over Andy Davis, Bluestem; decisioned Jordan Meyer, Sabetha, 5-4; won an 11-1 major decision over Jordan Daerr, Garden Plain and won a 16-5 major decision over Travis Conrad, Wabaunsee, to reach the consolation championship match.

VanEaton wrestled Eric Cress, Goessel, and dominated the match to place third. VanEaton led 2-0 after one period, 4-1 after two periods and won a 6-2 decision.

VanEaton finished the season with a 35-9 record. Travis Warner, Smith Center, completed the season 36-2, by winning the championship with a 6-1 decision over Jonathan Richards, Oberlin.

At 135 pounds, Jon Harding also lost his opening round match and had to go directly into the consolation bracket when Justin York, Smith Center, edged him 8-7. Harding rebounded with a 16-0 technical fall over Jake Price, Caney Valley; a 14-0 major decision over Charlie Holub, Marion and a fall in 1:54 over Darrell Melcher, Herington. In the consolation semi-finals, Harding met York for the second time in the tournament. They had another hard fought match but York won 6-5 this time.

That loss dropped Harding into the fifth place match versus Cris Carstenson, Rock Creek. Harding dominated the match. He led 4-2 after one period, 7-2 at the end of the second period and 9-5 at the end of the match to earn the fifth place medal.

Harding compiled a 32-14 record this season.

York placed third with a 6-5 decision over Kade Bloom, Phillipsburg. Brad Esterl, Beloit, won the championship with an 8-3 decision over Dylan Loyd, St. Francis. Esterl finished the season 40-2 and Loyd was 34-3.

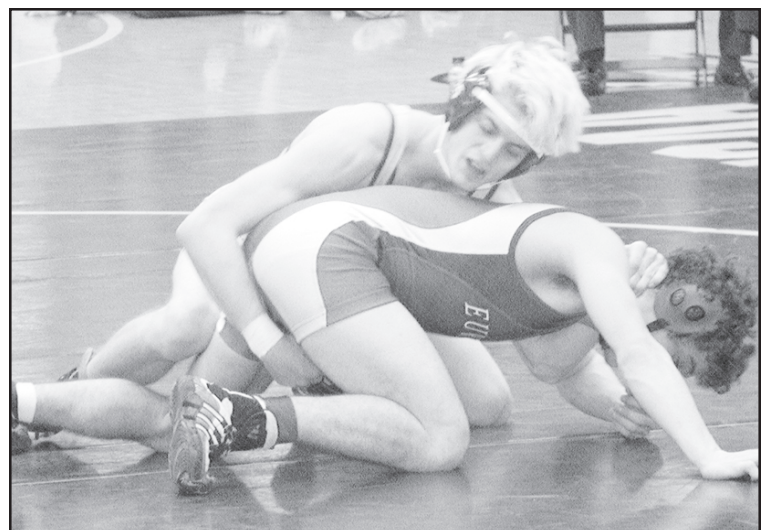
At 103 pounds, Collin Hase, Silver Lake, won a 13-2 major decision over previously unbeaten Zach Cemen, Phillipsburg, to win the championship. Hase ended the season 41-1 and Cemen was 35-1. Cole Zoglman, Garden Plain, placed third with a 10-2 major decision over Dan Weigel, Plainville. Zoglman also finished the season 35-1.

At 171 pounds, James Wright, Beloit, won the championship with an 11-4 decision over Derek Oswald, Effingham. Wright finished the season 31-4. Terry Urban, Oberlin, placed third with a 3-2 overtime win over Matt McGinty, Southeast of Saline.

At 189 pounds, Michael Malay, Trego, won the championship with a 5-1 decision over Braxton Berning, Leoti. Malay finished the season 32-4. Jeren Scheer, Garden Plain, placed third with a 2-0 shutout of Cody Jarvis, Phillipsburg. Scheer ended the season 37-2.

At 215 pounds, Steven Foster, Sedgwick, decisioned Aaron Racette, Oakley, 8-6 to win the championship. Foster ended the season 35-1 and Racette was 24-2 for the season. Tim Erwin, Hoxie, placed third with a 7-3 decision over Jordan Bliemeister, Cimarron. Erwin finished the season 43-3.

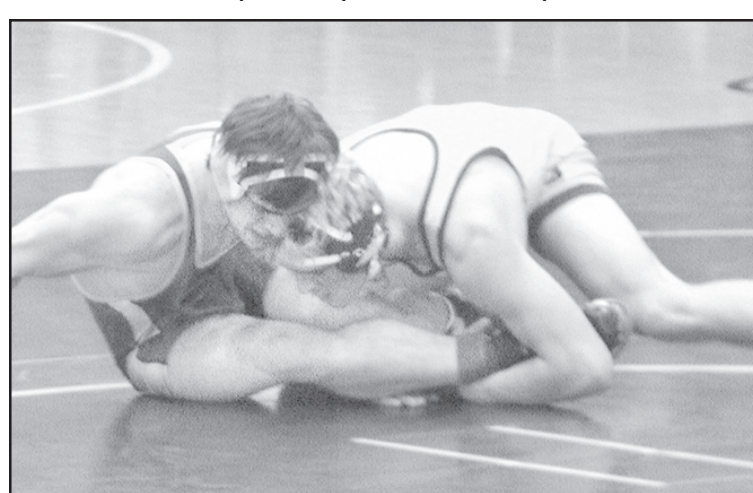
At 275 pounds, Duane Zlatnik, Rossville, pinned previously unbeaten Brennon Wilger, St. Francis, in 3:54 to win the championship. Zlatnik ended the season 39-2 and Wilger was 34-1. Jacob Schneider, Hoisington, placed third with a 6-4 decision over Dave DeMars, St. Mary's. Schneider finished the season 32-2.



Blue Jay junior Nathan Broeckelman decisioned Wyatt Bechtel, Eureka, 9-8 to win the championship at 125 pounds in the state tournament on Saturday evening.



Norton senior Luke Pfannenstiel is near a pin of Andrew Bina, Hillsboro, during Pfannenstiel's 12-3 major decision in the championship finals at 152 pounds.



Blue Jay senior Lance Roe takes Gabe Smull, St. Francis, down to the mat during Roe's 17-8 major decision at 160 pounds to win the championship in the state tournament.