

# Wow! Lady Jays stage remarkable comeback



Norton sophomore guard Laura Lee Baird hit a jump shot at the top of the key during the Lady Jays' exciting come-from-behind 54-50 victory over Oberlin on Tuesday evening in Oberlin. Baird hit 14 points, pulled down 5 rebounds and had 5 steals.

-- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

By DICK BOYD

The final score on Tuesday night in Oberlin was the Norton Community High School girls basketball team 54, the Oberlin girls 50.

If you missed the game, you don't know that coach Kevin Jilka's Lady Jays trailed by 20 points at halftime and by 13 with one quarter remaining.

With less than five minutes left in the game, Norton was still behind by seven points but, incredibly, the Lady Jays shutout the Lady Red Devils the rest of the game while scoring 11 unanswered points to ensure Norton's biggest comeback victory of the season!

The two halves were like two different games. Oberlin came out hitting most of what they shot and dominating the boards en route to an unbelievable 23-11 advantage after one quarter and built on the lead in the second period to take what seemed like a commanding 37-17 halftime lead.

But, things were different when the two quintets emerged from the locker rooms and began to play in the second half. The teams seemed to trade roles as the Lady Jays started hitting and rebounding aggressively and the Lady Red Devils started missing shots they had hit the first half.

"We didn't play well at all in the first half," said coach Jilka. "We came out flat and played with no confidence. They outthusted us, out rebounded us and beat us in every way.

"In the second half, we made a couple of shots and got some confidence. They started missing and that boosted our confidence. We had a great comeback that showed a lot of courage. We made our free throws down the stretch and everything worked out well at the end.

"We need to play with more ambition at the start. We can play all the time like we did in the second half; we just have to have more confidence.

"This was a huge win for us on the road."

Most of Norton's first quarter points came on three baskets by sophomore post Hayli Bozarth. She picked up three early fouls, however, and didn't play much more in the first half.

Sophomore guard Laura Lee Baird, who hit three three-point baskets in the game, gave a preview of things to come by burying a trey. Sophomore post KaraJo Jones added a two-point basket.

Things went from bad to worse for Norton in the second quarter when the Lady Jays hit just six points on a basket and two free throws by Jones and a basket by senior post Maggie Nielsen.

Norton played on even terms with Oberlin through most of the third quarter but a final surge by the Lady Jays in the last two minutes set the stage for the Lady Jays' incredible fourth quarter rally. With Norton trailing 46-26, junior guard Megan Kats hit her only basket of the game with 1:35 left,

sophomore guard Taylor Rossi stole the ball and drove the length of the court for her second basket with 1:10 showing.

Nielsen knocked the ball away from an Oberlin player and Baird buried a three-pointer with just 10 seconds on the scoreboard to cut the lead to 46-33 at the end of the period.

Tricia Dorshorst hit a basket for Oberlin to start the fourth quarter but the Lady Red Devils didn't score again until the 4:50 mark. Meanwhile, Nielsen hit a two-point basket, Baird and Rossi each scored from beyond the arc and Jones hit two free throws to cut the Oberlin lead to 48-43.

Lauren Fortin hit what turned out to be the Lady Red Devils' final basket. Bozarth hit two free throws, Jones connected on a charity, Rossi hit a two-point basket, Oberlin turned the ball over and Kats hit two free throws to bring Norton within one point at 50-49 with 1:43 remaining in the game.

The Norton defense kept Oberlin from getting the ball inbounds and Bozarth scored two points inside to boost the Lady Jays into a 51-50 lead with 1:17 left. Then, Baird stole the ball, drove the length of the court and was fouled. With ice water in her veins, she hit both charities with 1:02 remaining to put Norton on top 53-50.

The Lady Jay defense forced a backcourt violation by the Lady Red Devils and Rossi was fouled. She hit a free throw with 21 seconds left to make the final 54-50 as the Norton fans roared their approval!

The Norton win avenged a 56-51 loss to Oberlin in Norton on Thursday, Jan. 25.

Norton extended their season record to 10-5. Oberlin is now 9-8.

Baird and Bozarth led Norton in scoring with 14 points each. Bozarth hit 6 of 11 shots for 55 percent and was a perfect 2 of 2 from the charity stripe. Baird hit 3 of 8 from long range for 38 percent, 1 of 8 two-point shots for 13 percent and 4 of 16 overall for 25 percent. She was 3 of 4 from the free throw line for 75 percent.

Rossi added 10 points on 1 of 5 from beyond the arc for 20 percent, 3 of 8 two-point shots for 37 percent and 4 of 13 overall for 31 percent.

Fortin and Dorshorst led Oberlin with 15 points each and Sarah Murray added 13.

As a team, Norton hit 4 of 17 trey tries for 24 percent, 15 of 36 two-point shots for 42 percent and 19 of 53 for 36 percent.

Oberlin hit just 1 of 10 long range shots for 10 percent, 21 of 34 two-point tries for 54 percent and 22 of 49 overall for 45 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton swished 12 of 15 for an excellent 80 percent while Oberlin connected on just 5 of 9 for 56 percent.

The Lady Jays had 7 offensive and 13 defensive rebounds for 20 total. The Lady Red Devils pulled down 11 offensive and 26 defen-

sive boards for 37 total.

Jones led Norton in rebounds with 7, followed by Rossi, Baird, 5 each; Bozarth, 2; Kats, 1.

The Lady Jays had 13 steals compared to just 3 by the Lady Red Devils. Baird had 5 thefts, followed by Rossi, 3; Kats, Bozarth, 2 each; Nielsen, 1.

Norton had 15 assists and Oberlin had 14. Rossi was assists leader with 6, followed by Kats, 5; Jones, 2; Baird, Nielsen, 1 each.

The Lady Jays had just 8 turnovers and the Lady Red Devils turned the ball over 18 times.

### Junior varsity

The Norton junior varsity girls lost to Oberlin 37-31.

Norton trailed by quarters 13-10, 24-16 and 28-25.

Leading scorer for Norton was Shelby Jones with 11 points, followed by Ashlie Stewart, 8; Courtney Cox, Amanda Ray, 4 each; Haley Jones, 3; Lacy Keilig, 1.

Leanna Sheaffer led Oberlin with 17 points.

"This was a hard one to lose," said Norton assistant coach George Rossi.

"Basically, we were outthusted for the first 28 minutes. We gave a great effort the last four minutes but came up short.

"We just need to play hard all the time. Our girls are doing a great job and they will bounce back."

### Next action

Norton will play Atwood in Norton today, beginning at 5 p.m.

The junior varsity girls will begin action at the NCHS Stull Gymnasium, followed by the varsity girls and varsity boys games.

The junior varsity boys contest will begin at 5 p.m. at Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym.

### BOX SCORE

#### Norton Girls 54

Taylor Rossi 3 1 1-2 10; Laura Lee Baird 1 3 3-4 14; Maggie Nielsen 2 0-0 4; Megan Kats 1 0 2-2 4; KaraJo Jones 2 0 4-5 8; Hayli Bozarth 6 0 2-2 14; Total 15 4 12-15 54.

#### Oberlin Girls 50

Lauren Fortin 6 1 0-0 15; Sarah Murray 6 0 1-2 13; Heather Williams 1 0 0-0 2; Tricia Dorshorst 6 0 3-4 15 Emmie Pauls 2 0 1-3 5; Total 21 1 5-9 50.

## Damar hands junior high girls a loss

The Northern Valley A-team junior high girls lost 29-24 to Damar in the GNEC Tournament at Logan on Feb. 3.

The Huskies trailed 10-2 at the end of the first period, 14-5 at halftime and 18-7 at the end of three frames.

The Huskies outscored Damar in the final period, 17-11 but that wasn't enough to erase the deficit.

Scoring for the Huskies were Stack Dole with 8, Ashley Constable 6, Kayla Field 4 and Erika Chandler and Katie Stillion 3 each.



"The girls played their final game of the season and in the final quarter they played their best team basketball of the season," said Coach Largent.

"We have been overmatched as far as height is concerned all sea-

son, and once again this proved to be the determining factor of the game," he said.

"Throughout this season the girls have played with great energy, effort and intensity, and it has been an honor and pleasure to have coached these girls," the coach said.

"Additionally, I want to thank my three 8th graders — Staci Dole, Kenzie Chandler and Kayla Field — for their leadership on and off the court this season," Coach Largent said.

The girls ended the season 1-8.

## Girls bow to Logan Trojans, 34-7

The Northern Valley Junior High girls lost 34-7 to Logan in the A-team game at Alma, and 19-10 in the B-team action on Feb. 1.

Logan led in all quarters, 11-0 in the first, 15-2 at half, 29-4 in the third and 34-7 at the final buzzer.

Scoring for the Huskies were Ashley Constable, Kenzie Chan-

dler and Kenzi Husted, all with 2 points and Cassie Field 1.

Scoring for the B-team in their 19-10 defeat, were Olivia Lowry, Kynzie Stevens, McKinsey Evans and Kenzi Husted, all with 2, and Erika Chandler and Regan Simpson with 1 apiece.

Coach Largent said, "The (A-

team) girls ended their regular season against a very good Logan team. They continue to play with energy and effort; however, our lapses in execution on both ends of the court still cause us problems.

The B-team played very hard and shot 75 percent from the line and they continue to improve."

## Boys capture two wins over Logan

The Northern Valley Junior High boys took two wins from Logan in Alma on Feb. 1.

The A-team won by 2 (30-28) and the B-team by 18 (41-23).

The A-team ended regular-season play with a sparkling 9-0 record and the league crown. The B-team concluded its season with a shining 6-1 mark.

In the A-team contest, Northern Valley took a first quarter 7-5 lead, increased that lead at halftime to 16-10, and went into the final period with a 23-17 advantage.

Only in the fourth quarter did Logan score more points (11-7). Both teams popped in 7 in the third frame.

Scoring for the Huskies were Colton Lowry with 11, Dusty Eagleburger 10, Bryant Tharman 7 and Brian Siard 2.

For the Logan Trojans, Brady Tien scored 12, Mark Pakkebieer 10, Charlie Becker 4 and Tracy Archer 2. Logan ended its regular season with a 6-6 record.

In the B-team game, the Huskies outscored Logan in the first three periods, 10-2, 13-5 and 14-8. The Trojans were 8-4 in the final frame, for a final score of 41-23.

Scoring for the Huskies were Zane Miller with 9, Gunnar Hays 5, Caleb Bach 5, Matt Dole 4, Skyler Harris 4, and 2 each for Tyson Callaway, Dillon Hogan, Phillip Compton, Daniel Field, Calen Bach, Nate Land and Tyler Montgomery.

Scoring for Logan were Thomas Oles, with a season-high 9 points, Brandon Kats 8 and Sean Newlan and Coy Leggett 2 each. The B-team ended its season with an 0-10 mark.

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To set up an appointment, or learn more about the opportunity, please contact the newspaper's publisher, Tom Dreiling, at (785) 877-6908 (daytime) or 877-3823 (evenings).

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