

Blue Jay boys in semis

By DICK BOYD

The No.2 seeded Norton Community High School boys basketball team outscored No.7 seed Oberlin 55-33 in the first round of the Class 3-2-1A Substate Basketball Tournament on Monday evening in the Stull Gymnasium in Norton.

The victory extended the Blue Jay record to 14-6 and ended the Red Devils' season with a 1-18 record.

In other first round games, No.1 seed Belleville received a bye, No.4 seed Salina/Sacred Heart defeated No.5 seed Beloit 47-41 and No.3 seed Phillipsburg outscored No.6 seed Ellsworth 54-46. Beloit ended the season 10-11 and Ellsworth finished with a 7-14 record.

Norton will play Phillipsburg (13-7) in the semi-finals tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the Newlin Gym in Phillipsburg, the host school. In the other semi-finals game at 6 p.m. in Phillipsburg, Belleville (18-3) will play Sacred Heart (12-9). The winners will play Saturday in Phillipsburg at 7:30 p.m. to decide the tournament's entry in the Class 3A State Tournament in Hutchinson next week.

In Monday's win over Oberlin, Norton held a 7-0 lead after senior guard Jared Engelbert hit a three-point basket and senior forward Nic Lewis and junior forward Preston Herman each hit two-point baskets in the first quarter.

The Red Devils got on the scoreboard in the second quarter with 11 points but the Blue Jays scored 14 to take a 21-11 halftime lead. Six different Norton players scored in the second quarter. Junior point guard Logan Kats buried a three-pointer and a two-point basket; senior guard Brian Juenemann, senior post Blake Wolf, junior guard Jared Cox and Herman each hit two-point baskets and junior forward Wes

Georgeson connected on a free throw.

A 17-10 third quarter in the Blue Jays' favor extended their advantage to 38-21. Herman hit three baskets, Engelbert and Kats each hit a pair and Lewis swished a basket and free toss.

Norton hit a repeat 17 points in the final quarter and Oberlin responded with 12. Kats ripped the nylons with a basket and three free throws, Engelbert buried his second three-point basket of the night, Georgeson hit three baskets and sophomore post Zac Dreher swished two charities as the Blue Jays stretched their final margin of victory to 22 points.

"We did not shoot well at all and didn't hit our free throws but we played hard," said Norton head coach Doug Reusink.

"We had already beaten them twice so we needed a peak effort to keep them from slipping up on us."

Kats was leading scorer for Norton with 14 points. He was 1 of 7 from beyond the arc for 14 percent, 4 of 6 on two-point attempts for 67 percent and 5 of 13 overall for 38 percent. From the free throw stripe he was 3 of 4 for 75 percent.

Herman and Engelbert each scored 10 points. Herman was a net-smoking 5 of 7 for 71 percent from the field but missed all four free throw tries. Engelbert hit 2 of 8 from long range for 25 percent, a perfect 2 of 2 two-point shots and 4 of 10 overall for 40 percent accuracy.

Georgeson was also extremely accurate from the field, hitting 3 of 4 tries for 75 percent. He was 1 of 2 from the charity stripe and finished with 7 points.

Leading scorer for Oberlin was Kurt Olson with 9 points.

As a team, Norton hit 3 of 15 three-point tries for 20 percent, 19 of 40 two-point attempts for 48

percent and 22 of 55 overall for 33 percent.

Oberlin connected on 4 of 10 from beyond the arc for 40 percent, 9 of 30 two-point tries for 30 percent and 13 of 40 overall for 33 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton swished 8 of 24 for a cold 33 percent and Oberlin connected on 3 of 7 for 43 percent.

The Blue Jays edged the Red Devils 33-30 in the rebounding department. Norton pulled down 15 offensive and 18 defensive rebounds and the Red Devils grabbed 6 offensive and 24 defensive boards.

Wolf and Lewis were individual leaders with 7 rebounds each, followed by Engelbert, Herman, 5 each; Georgeson, 4; Kats, Juenemann, 2 each; Cox, 1.

Norton players blocked 7 shots. Wolf and Dreher led with 2 each, followed by Kats, Georgeson, Herman, 1 each.

The Blue Jays had 12 steals and forced 21 turnovers. Kats and Georgeson each had 3 thefts, followed by Juenemann, Herman, 2 each; Wolf, Lewis, 1 each.

Norton had just 10 turnovers in the contest. The Blue Jays had 19 offensive assists. Kats led with 9, followed by Juenemann, 5; Wolf, 3; Engelbert, Herman, 1 each.

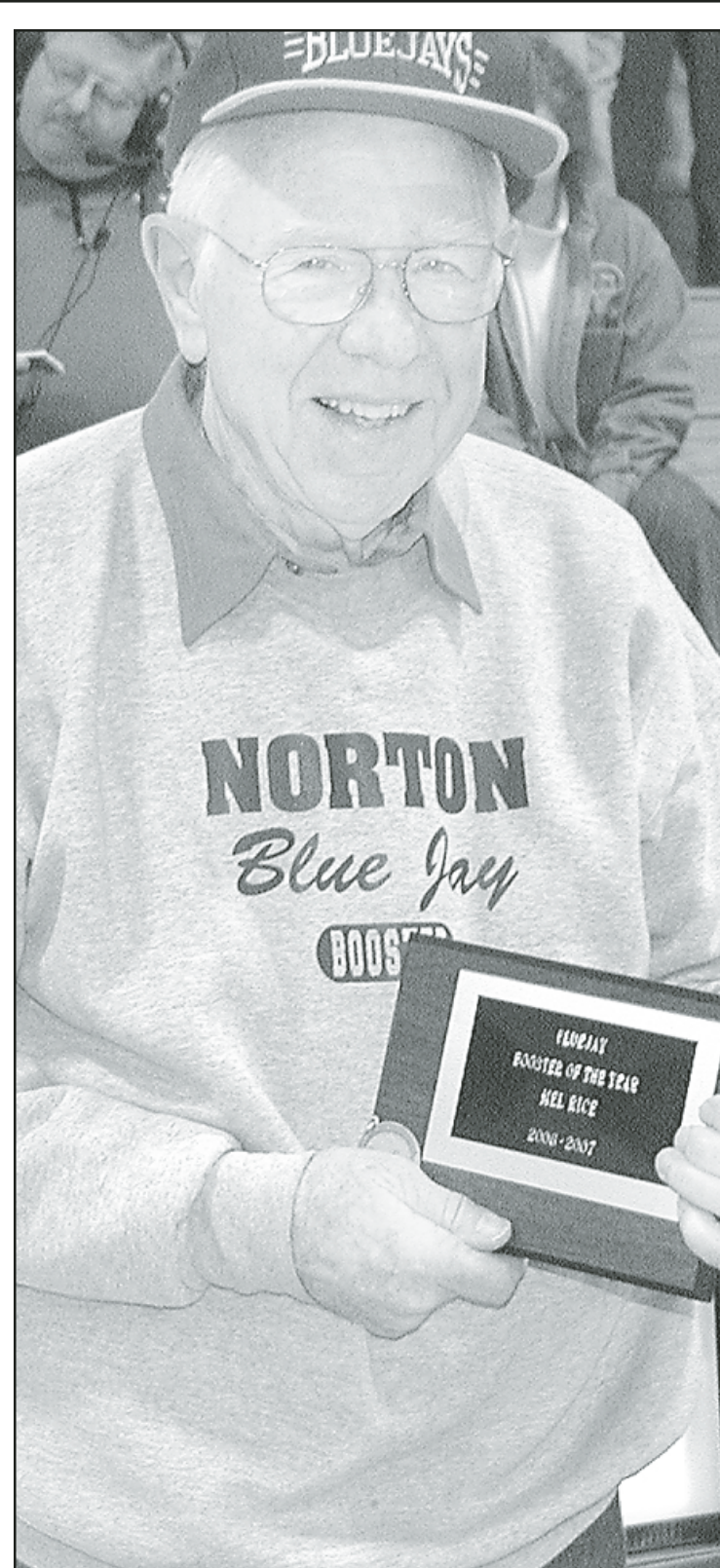
BOX SCORE

Norton Boys 55

Jared Engelbert 2 2 0-0 10; Logan Kats 4 1 3-4 14; Brian Juenemann 1 0 0-0 2; Blake Wolf 1 0 1-2 3; Jared Cox 1 0 0-2 2; Wes Georgeson 3 0 1-2 7; Nic Lewis 2 0 1-6 5; Zac Dreher 0 0 2-4 2; Preston Herman 5 0 0-4 10; Total 19 3 8-24 55.

Oberlin Boys 33

Lucas Juenemann 0 1 0-0 3; Seth Ritter 0 0 1-2 1; Jobey Black 1 1 0-0 5; Logan Fortin 1 2 0-0 8; Sam Stapp 1 0 1-2 3; Kurt Olson 4 0 1-2 9; Andy Gilliam 1 0 0-1 2; Nolan May 1 0 0-0 2; Total 9 4 3-7 33.



Norton's Mel Rice had a big smile for the fans as he was applauded Monday evening after receiving the "Blue Jay Booster of the Year" award from the Norton Blue Jay Booster Club.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Top Jay

By DICK BOYD

Mel Rice of Norton has been named the 15th recipient of the "Blue Jay Booster of the Year" award, presented annually by the Norton Blue Jay Booster Club.

Mr. Rice received a plaque for the honor prior to the Norton-Oberlin boys basketball game in the Stull Gymnasium on Monday evening. Making the presentation on behalf of the Blue Jay Booster Club was Trent Richmond.

A former teacher for 30 years in the Norton school system, Mr. Rice was the "Voice of the Blue Jays" on the public address system for Norton high school sports for most of that time.

Since retiring, he has continued to support Norton Community High School sports and other activities.

"Mel has been and continues to be a strong supporter of our young people and, for this, the Booster Club presents this award to him," current "Voice of the Blue Jays" Eric Farber told the crowd as Mr. Rice received his award. Mr. Rice received a long and loud ovation from the fans.

The award is made possible by a memorial in honor of the late Tommy Davison, who was considered to be the ultimate Norton Blue Jay sports booster. The award is based upon nominations by the booster club members of persons who have gone above and beyond as a fan of Norton sports.

Mr. Rice's name will be engraved along with the names of previous winners on a plaque in the high school gym.

Loss ends girls' season

By DICK BOYD

The No.3 seeded Norton Community High School girls basketball team played hard but 6 points in each of the first and fourth quarters weren't enough as they lost 46-42 to No.6 seeded Oberlin in the first round of the Class 3A Substate Tournament on Monday evening in the Stull Gymnasium in Norton.

The loss ended Norton's season with a 13-7 record and extended Oberlin's record to 12-8.

In other first round girls games, No.2 seed Belleville moved to 16-5 with a 51-32 win over No.7 seed Ellsworth, who finished the season 11-10 and No.4 seed Sacred Heart/Salina defeated No.5 seed Phillipsburg 53-43. Sacred Heart is now 14-7 and Phillipsburg ended 12-8.

No.1 seed Beloit received a bye and took a 16-5 record into the 6 p.m. semi-finals game with Sacred Heart in the Newlin Gym in Phillipsburg on Thursday. In the other semi-finals game on Thursday, Belleville played Oberlin at 7:30 p.m. in Phillipsburg.

The winners of Thursday's games will play at 6 p.m. on Saturday in the championship finals in Phillipsburg to determine next week's entry from this substate in the Class 3A State Tournament in Hutchinson.

In Monday night's game in Norton, the Lady Jays hit just two baskets in the first quarter, both were three-point shots by sophomore guard Laura Lee Baird. Oberlin scored 10 to take a four-point lead.

The Lady Jays' shooting warmed up a little in the second quarter when they scored 15 points but the Lady Red Devils' 13 points left them with a 23-21 lead at halftime. Scoring for Norton in the second quarter were Baird, with another basket from beyond the arc, a two-point basket and a free throw; sophomore post Hayli Bozarth with three two-point baskets and sophomore post KaraJo Jones with a two-point basket and free throw.

Norton put together another solid 15 point third quarter while holding Oberlin to 12 to take a 36-35 lead. Baird hit her fourth three-point basket, a two-pointer and a

charity toss. Sophomore guard Taylor Rossi hit the scoring column for the first time and did it in a big way with two shots from beyond the arc. She also added a free throw. Norton's other third quarter points came on a basket by Bozarth.

Lauren Fortin was the heroine for Oberlin in the game. She stole the ball three times and hit layups off all three and also buried a three-point basket to hit all of the Lady Red Devils' points but two in the fourth quarter.

Fortin started the quarter with a steal and basket, then Baird scored to put Norton back on top 38-37. Fortin hit a trey with 5:43 left, then stole the ball and drove for another layup with 4:50 showing to give the Lady Red Devils a 42-38 advantage. Bozarth hit a free throw for Norton but Fortin stole the ball again and drove for two more points that put Oberlin ahead 44-39 with 1:55 left in the game.

Baird stole the ball and drove for two crucial Norton points to make it 44-41 with 1:05 showing. Tricia Dorshorst hit 1 of 2 charity tosses for the Lady Red Devils with 36 seconds left. Baird was fouled with 26 seconds remaining and hit a free throw to make it a 45-42 game. The Lady Jays had to continue to foul in hopes of getting the ball back. Lacey Ream hit one final free throw for Oberlin with 3 seconds left. Norton was unable to come up with any more points on baskets or free throws as the clock ran out on the game and the season for the Lady Jays with a four-point loss.

"It's a tough substate and we didn't play well enough to win," said Norton head coach Kevin Jilka.

"We didn't attack their zone defense in the first half and had 11 turnovers. We did a little better the second half but our youngness showed up in the fourth quarter. We gave up six points on steals and layups in that final quarter.

"We played hard but we didn't handle the late game situation very well. The mental aspect of the game hurt us throughout the season but we got better later in the year.

"When you start four sophomores and a junior that inexperi-

ence shows up.

"Give Oberlin credit for coming in and beating us twice this year on our home court.

"Being 13-7 and placing second in the Mid-Continent League with a team that had no returning starters says quite a bit about this group of girls. It's tough for their season to end but, when they look back at what they accomplished this season, they will be pretty proud of themselves."

Baird was the leading scorer for Norton with 23 points. She hit 4 of 8 from beyond the arc for 50 percent, 4 of 11 two-point tries for 36 percent and was 8 of 19 overall for 42 percent accuracy.

Bozarth added 9 points on 4 of 9 from the field for 44 percent and 1 of 2 charities for 50 percent. Rossi tallied 7 points on 2 of 3 from long range for 67 percent and 1 of 3 from the charity stripe for 40 percent. She missed both two-point attempts.

Fortin was leading scorer for Oberlin with 15 points. Sarah Murray had 12 points in three quarters but did not score in the final stanza.

As a team, Norton hit 6 of 14 shots from three-point range for 43 percent, 9 of 28 two-point tries for 32 percent and 15 of 42 overall for 36 percent.

Oberlin connected on 3 of 10 treys for 30 percent, 15 of 36 two-point attempts for 42 percent and 18 of 46 overall for 39 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton swished 6 of 12 for 50 percent and Oberlin connected on 7 of 13 for 54 percent.

Norton was outrebounded 28-21.

Jones and Bozarth each had 7 rebounds, followed by Ashley Colip, 3; Baird, Rossi, 2 each.

BOX SCORE

Norton Girls 42

Taylor Rossi 0 2 1-3 7; Laura Lee Baird 4 4 3-5 23; KaraJo Jones, 1 0 1-2 3; Hayli Bozarth 4 0 1-2 9; Total 9 6 6-12 42.

Oberlin Girls 46

Lauren Fortin 4 2 1-4 15; Sarah Murray 4 0 4-4 12; Kim Wessel 1 0 0-0 2; Lacey Ream 0 1 1-2 4; Heather Williams 0 0 0-1 0; Tricia Dorshorst 4 0 1-2 9; Emmie Pauls 2 0 0-0 4; Total 15 3 7-13 46.

Norton suffers 28-point loss to Colby

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School boys basketball team lost by just two points, 47-45, to Colby in the first game of the season in the Topside Tipoff Tournament in Goodland, but the Jays didn't come anywhere close to beating the Eagles in the final game of the regular season on Tuesday, Feb. 20 when they lost 62-34 in Colby.

"We did not play very well in this game from the beginning," said head coach Doug Reusink.

"We had no energy and played terrible defensively and you just can't do that against a good team on the road."

The loss dropped Norton's season record to 13-6.

Norton trailed by quarters 11-6, 27-19 and 45-25.

Logan Kats was leading scorer for the Blue Jays with 9 points on 2 of 6 two-point shots for 33 percent and 5 of 6 free throws for 83 percent. He missed both trey tries.

Jared Engelbert and Nic Lewis each added 8 points. Lewis hit 4 of

9 shots for 44 percent and Engelbert hit 2 of 5 from beyond the arc for 40 percent, 1 of 1 two-point tries and 3 of 6 overall for 50 percent.

Leading scorer for Colby was Ethan Stover with 16, followed by Trey Barnett with 12 points and Stephen Dinkel with 10.

As a team, Norton hit 2 of 7 from three-point land for 29 percent, 11 of 33 two-point tries for 33 percent and 13 of 40 overall for 33 percent.

Colby swished 3 of 11 trey tries for 27 percent, 20 of 38 two-point attempts for 53 percent and 23 of 49 overall for 47 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton converted 6 of 9 for 67 percent and Colby hit 13 of 16 for 81 percent.

Norton was outrebounded 29-14. The Jays had just 4 offensive and 10 defensive rebounds while the Eagles grabbed 9 offensive and 20 defensive caroms.

Juenemann and Cox led Norton in rebounds with 3 each, followed by Kats, Wolf, 2 each; Engelbert, Wes Georgeson, Lewis, Preston

Herman, 1 each.

Lewis had 3 of Norton's 4 blocks and Wolf had the other block. The Blue Jays had a season low 2 steals. Juenemann and Georgeson had 1 theft each.

Norton had just 9 assists. Kats and Engelbert had 3 each, Wolf had 2 and Juenemann had 1.

Both teams had 7 turnovers.

Junior varsity

Norton lost the junior varsity contest by a 53-14 score.

The young Blue Jays trailed by quarters 10-7, 27-7 and 40-12.

BOX SCORE

Norton Boys 34

Jared Engelbert 1 2 0-0 8; Logan Kats 2 0 5-6 9; Blake Wolf 0 0 1-2 1; Wes Georgeson 3 0 0-1 6; Nic Lewis 4 0 0-0 8; Preston Herman 1 0 0-0 2; Total 11 2 6-9 34.

Colby Boys 62

Trevor Siebert 2 1 0-0 7; Ethan Stover 4 2 2-2 16; Trey Barnett 4 0 4-6 12; Stephen Dinkel 4 0 2-2 10; Anthony Rohr 3 0 2-2 8; Levi Schlick 3 0 2-2 8; Tyson Miller 0 0 1-2 1; Total 20 3 13-16 62.

Lady Eagles best Blue Jays, 68-41

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School girls basketball team ended the regular season on Tues., February 20 with a 68-41 loss to Colby on their home floor.

The loss dropped Norton to 13-6 for the regular season and extended the state-ranked Lady Eagles' record.

Norton trailed by quarters 20-17, 36-26 and 56-33.

"We ran into a very good team tonight," said Norton head coach Kevin Jilka.

"Offensively, we did some nice things. We just missed some easy shots in the first half that could have kept it close.

"They just wore us down in the second half.

"Defensively, we need to play better.

"Colby really shot the ball extremely well all night long and it was just one of those nights.

"Our girls did a nice job of handling their full court pressure and attacking it. We just didn't finish."

Leading scorer for Norton was Hayli Bozarth with 14 points. She hit 6 of 17 shots for 35 percent and was 2 of 2 from the charity stripe.

Lissa Mazanec led Colby with 20 points; Paige Stephens added 19.

As a team, Norton hit 4 of 9 from long range for 44 percent, 12 of 40 two-point tries for 30 percent and 16 of 49 overall for 33 percent.

Colby swished 2 of 6 from long range for 33 percent, 29 of 53 two-point attempts for 55 percent and 31 of 59 overall for 53 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton hit 5 of 8 for 63 percent and Colby connected on 4 of 6 for 67 percent.

Norton had 9 offensive and 13 defensive rebounds for 22 total. The Lady Eagles pulled down 10 offensive and 17 defensive caroms for 27 total.

Bozarth led Norton in rebounds with 9, followed by Maggie Nielsen, 5; Laura Lee Baird, 3; Courtney Cox, 2; Taylor Rossi, Megan Kats, KaraJo Jones, 1 each.

The Lady Jays had 8 steals compared to 10 by Colby. Baird led with 3, followed by Kats, 2; Nielsen, Jones, Bozarth, 1 each. Norton had 13 assists and Colby had 20. Rossi led with 5, followed by Kats, 3; Bozarth, 2; Baird, Cox, Jones, 1 each.

The Lady Jays suffered 20 turnovers and the Lady Eagles gave up the ball just 10 times.

Junior varsity

The Norton junior varsity girls lost to Colby by a score of 44-40. The young Lady Jays took a 21-

0 lead after one quarter and led 27-21 at halftime. Norton was still on top 38-33 after three quarters but was outscored 11-2 in the fourth quarter.

Amanda Ray was leading scorer for Norton with 13 points, followed by Kaitlyn Wolf, 10; Lacy Keilig, 9; Ashlie Stewart, 6; Shelby Jones, 2.

"This was not the way we wanted to end the season," said Norton assistant coach George Rossi.

"These girls improved greatly over the year. They were a fun bunch to coach," he said.

The Norton junior varsity girls ended the season with a 9-4 record.

BOX SCORE

Norton Girls 41

Taylor Rossi 0 1 0-0 3; Laura Lee Baird 0 2 3-4 9; Maggie Nielsen 3 0 0-2 6; Megan Kats 2 0 0-0 4; KaraJo Jones, 1 0 0-0 2; Hayli Bozarth 6 0 2-2 14; Amanda Ray, 0 1 0-0 3; Total 12 4 5-8 41.

Colby Girls 68

Rishonna Martin 2 0 0-0 4; Lindsey Wilson 1 0 0-0 2; Tasha Wagoner 3 1 0-0 9; Aubrette Stephens 1 1 1-2 6; Paige Stephens 9 0 1-2 19; April Gee 2 0 0-0 4; Ashley Barnes 2 0 0-0 4; Lissa Mazanec 9 0 2-2 20; Total 29 2 4-6 68.