

Blue Jays fall to Panthers in substate semis

By DICK BOYD

Coach Doug Reusink's Norton Community High School No. 2 seeded boys basketball team played their second close, hard-fought game of the season with rival Phillipsburg, the No. 3 seed, in the semi-finals of the Class 3A Substate Tournament on Friday night in Phillipsburg, but this time the Panthers came out on top 58-52 to end the Blue Jays' season.

In the Mid-Continent League opener on Friday, Dec. 15 in Norton, the Blue Jays won a very closely contested game 40-31 by hitting free throws at the end.

The Panthers, who are coached by Keith Sides, a former Northern Valley player who played for coach Reusink, are the ones who hit their free throws this time around to win the game. Phillipsburg hit 10 of 12 free throws in the fourth quarter and only two baskets.

The Blue Jays outscored the Panthers 18-14 in the final stanza but it wasn't enough to make up for a 44-34 deficit after three quarters. Norton hit 9 field goals and had no free throws in the fourth quarter.

Norton scored 34 points in the paint during the game, with most of them coming from senior forward Nic Lewis, who poured in 24, and the rest from junior forward Wes Georgeson, with 6, and senior post Blake Wolf and junior forward Preston Herman, with 2 each.

Senior guard Jared Engelbert ended with 11, junior point guard Logan Kats with 5 and senior guard Brian Juenemann with 2.

The Newlin Gym was filled to nearly capacity by fans and bands from both towns. Although Norton led 8-7 with 4:15 left in the first quarter, the Panthers grabbed a 13-10 lead by the end of the period and led the rest of the way. Norton trailed 35-24 at halftime.

The Blue Jays quickly made up some of their 10 point deficit entering the fourth quarter when Kats fired a long pass to Lewis and he scored, then Georgeson intercepted a Phillipsburg pass and scored to make it a six-point game at 44-38 with 6:44 remaining. The Panthers' Dylan Frantz, who hit 5 of 6 free throws in the fourth stanza, hit two charities with 6:30 left but Lewis scored for Norton to cut the margin back to six points.

Jarret Abell, who led Phillipsburg in scoring with 20 in the game, tallied but Georgeson matched it for Norton and it was a 48-42 game with 5:43 left.

Trent Weinman hit his only basket of the fourth period for Phillipsburg but Wolf got loose inside for Norton with 3:52 left and scored. Jerrad Jerby hit a free

throw for the Panthers at the 3:30 mark but Wolf threw a long pass down court to Lewis and he put the ball in the hoop to cut the Panther lead to five points at 51-46 with 2:05 showing. Abell hit two free throws five seconds later to extend the Panther lead to seven points.

Georgeson answered at the 1:50 mark with a Norton basket but two more Abell free throws with 1:06 left put Norton behind 55-48. Lewis got a rebound and put the ball back up and in to cut the margin back to five points at 55-50. A violation by Phillipsburg turned the ball over to the Blue Jays and Lewis scored again, this time with 41 seconds left, to make it a one-possession game at 55-52.

Both teams turned the ball over in the next 23 seconds and, with 18 seconds remaining, Frantz was fouled and hit both charities to make it a five-point game again. Norton turned the ball over and Frantz was fouled with 11 seconds remaining. He hit 1 of 2 tries to make the final 58-52 in favor of Phillipsburg.

Norton scored 10 points in the first quarter on three baskets by Lewis and one each by Engelbert and Kats.

Phillipsburg outscored Norton 22-14 in the second quarter to take a 35-24 advantage at intermission. The Blue Jays' points came on a basket from beyond the arc, a two-point basket and free throw from Engelbert, two more baskets from Lewis and a basket each from Juenemann and Herman.

Defense was the name of the game in the third period when Norton outscored Phillipsburg 10-9 to cut the Panther lead down to 44-34. Lewis hit two baskets, Kats hit a basket and 1 free throw and Engelbert connected on 3 free tosses.

The loss dropped Norton's final season record to 14-7 and Phillipsburg improved to 14-7.

In the other boys semi-final game in Phillipsburg on Friday evening, No. 1 seed Belleville edged No. 4 seed Salina/Sacred Heart 55-52.

On Saturday evening, the Belleville boys defeated Phillipsburg 80-41 and, in girls action, No. 4 seed Salina/Sacred Heart outscored No. 2 seed Belleville 55-48. The winners advance to Class 3A State Tournament play this week in Hutchinson.

"We played well; I'm happy with our effort," said coach Reusink. "We made their boys play hard to earn the victory."

"We were right there with a chance to win. We had opportunities and just didn't finish but I'm really proud of our players."

"We had great fan support tonight, as we have all season. Thanks to all our fans. It was a great atmosphere in which to play."

"I'm going to miss our seniors. They are a group of great young men and were a pleasure to coach."

The seniors on this year's Norton Blue Jay basketball team were Jared Engelbert, Brian Juenemann, Blake Wolf and Nic Lewis.

Assistant coaches were David Stover and Todd Fulton.

Lewis led Norton in scoring against Phillipsburg with 24 points on 12 of 17 baskets for a net-smoking 71 percent accuracy. He missed his only two free throws.

Engelbert was Norton's only other double figure scorer with 11 points. He hit 1 of 9 from beyond the arc for 11 percent, 2 of 2 two-point tries for 100 percent and 3 of 11 overall for 27 percent. He hit a perfect 4 of 4 free throws.

Leading scorer for Phillipsburg was Abell with 20; Frantz and Jerby each added 13.

While neither team shot very well from three-point land, both shot lights out from two-point range as well as from the free throw line.

Norton hit just 1 of 13 trey tries for 8 percent but cashed in 22 of 33 two-point attempts for 67 percent and was 23 of 46 overall for 50 percent.

Phillipsburg connected on just 3 of 11 from long range for 27 percent but 16 of 27 two-point tries for 59 percent and 19 of 38 overall for 50 percent.

From the free throw stripe, the Blue Jays hit 5 of 8 for 63 percent but the Panthers connected on 17 of 20 for an incredible 85 percent!

The two teams were pretty even in rebounding. Norton pulled down 8 offensive and 11 defensive caroms for 19 total. Phillipsburg grabbed 4 offensive and 14 defensive boards for 18 total.

Leading rebounder for Norton was Lewis with 6, followed by Engelbert, Wolf, Georgeson, 3 each; Kats, 2; Herman, Juenemann, 1 each.

Norton had just 5 steals in the game. Lewis led with 2, followed by Engelbert, Jared Cox, Georgeson, 1 each.

The Blue Jays were credited with 14 assists. Kats led with 7, followed by Engelbert, 4; Juenemann, Wolf, Lewis, 1 each. Kats, Wolf, Cox and Lewis each blocked a Panther shot.

Norton had 14 turnovers and Phillipsburg had 12.

Other scores of interest

Goodland 4A finals: Colby girls defeated Goodland 54-44; Thomas More Prep-Hays boys beat Goodland 63-49; Hill City 2A finals: Oakley girls over Ellis 66-63; Hoxie boys beat Hill City 48-42; Clyde 2A finals: Osborne girls defeated Frankfort 58-47; Colby 1A finals: Golden Plains girls defeated Atwood 45-31; Sharon Springs boys outscored Sylvan 63-60; Hays 1A finals: Quinter girls beat Brewster 43-40; Natoma boys handed Kensington their



Norton's junior point guard Logan Kats hurried down court looking for a teammate to pass to for a basket as Phillipsburg sophomore Dylan Frantz tried to keep up with him during the Blue Jays' 58-52 substate tournament loss to the Panthers in an exciting game on Friday night in Phillipsburg.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

only defeat of season by 54-49 score in overtime.

State tourney pairings

Class 4A in Salina: Wednesday — (2) TMP boys (21-1) vs. (7) Atchison (18-4), 3 p.m.; Thursday — (4) Colby girls (21-2) vs. (5) Columbus (21-2), 8:15 p.m.

Class 3A in Hutchinson: Wednesday — (3) Southwestern Heights girls (20-2) vs. (6) Salina/Sacred Heart (16-7), 4:45 p.m.; Thursday — (3) Belleville boys (20-3) vs. (6) Kansas City Christian (18-6), 4:45 p.m.

Class 2A in Manhattan: Wednesday — (4) Hoxie boys (17-5) vs. (5) Pittsburg Colgan (16-5), 8:15 p.m.; Thursday — (2) Oakley girls (21-2) vs. (7) Lyndon (17-6), 3 p.m.; (3) Osborne girls (20-2) vs. (6) St. John (19-4), 4:45 p.m.

Class 1A in Hays: Wednesday — (2) South Haven girls (25-0) vs. (7) Quinter (18-6), 3 p.m.; (3) Golden Plains girls (23-1) vs. (6) Blue Valley Randolph (19-6), 4:45 p.m.; Thursday — (4) Sharon Springs boys (22-2) vs. (5) Goessel (22-3), 4:45 p.m.; (3) Centralia boys (23-1) vs. (6) Natoma (20-4), 8:15 p.m.

BOX SCORE
Norton Boys 52

Jared Engelbert 2 1 4 4 11; Logan Kats 2 0 1 2 5; Brian Juenemann 1 0 0 0 2; Blake Wolf 1 0 0 0 2; Wes Georgeson 3 0 0 0 6; Nic Lewis 12 0 0 2 24; Preston Herman 1 0 0 0 2; Total 22 1 5 8 52.

Phillipsburg Boys 58

Dylan Frantz 3 0 7 8 13; Jarret Abell 3 2 8 9 20; Jerrad Jerby 4 1 2 3 13; Garrett Wickham 3 0 0 0 6; Trent Weinman 3 0 0 0 6; Total 16 3 17 20 58.



Blue Jay junior guard Logan Kats, right, moved fast to cover a Phillipsburg player as junior forward Wes Georgeson looked for a Panther to cover if he tried to pass instead of shoot.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



Norton senior forward Nic Lewis (No. 34) outlasted Phillipsburg players as well as his teammates to pull down this rebound during the Jays' tough 58-52 substate tournament loss to the Panthers on Friday night in Phillipsburg. No. 5 for Norton was senior guard Jared Engelbert and No. 31 for Phillipsburg was senior Jonathan Feik. Partially hidden was Norton junior forward Preston Herman, No. 55

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Former Norton wrestler qualifies for nationals

By DICK BOYD

James Annon, 141 pound sophomore from Norton at Fort Hays State University, placed second in his weight class in the West Regional/Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference wrestling championship last Sunday in Golden, Colo., and qualified for the NCAA Division II national tournament in Kearney, Neb. March 9-10.

Annon was one of seven wrestlers from the No. 9 nationally ranked Tiger squad to qualify for the national tournament by placing in the top four in their weight classes.

Annon was the No. 5 seed at 141 pounds. He first defeated No. 4 seed Chris Freije, Western State, 8-5, then decisioned Cody Weitzel, Colorado Mines, 7-2, to reach the championship finals. He wrestled No. 2 seed Ross Montour, News Mexico Highlands, and lost a 16-8 decision to place second.

Andrew Ubben, a 285 pound senior from Phillipsburg, was the

only other Tiger to qualify for the championship finals but did not wrestle in the finals.

Third place finishers for Fort Hays were Danny Grater, 157 and Tyler Gonzales, 197. Finishing fourth were Derek Patterson, 133; Mikel Delk, 149 and Mike Howell, 184.

Nebraska-Kearney won the regional and RMAC Championship with 141.5 points and Fort Hays was second with 109.5. The Lopers are ranked No. 1 in the nation.

Annon is now 16-10 for the season. He wrestled earlier in the season at 133 pounds. He was a three-time state placer and two-time state champion for the Norton Blue Jays. His career record was 128-23.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Annon, Norton.

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