

Lady Storm regroups, takes 3rd in tourney

By DICK BOYD

With injuries cutting down their roster and hobbling some of those remaining, the Norton Lady Storm fast pitch softball team picked up enough additional players last weekend to compete in the Russell Tournament, where they compiled a 3-2 record and finished in third place in some tough competition.

Norton opened the tournament Saturday morning with a 6-2 win over Larned, followed by a 7-4 loss to Pratt and 8-7 win over Medicine Lodge in the afternoon to complete pool play. Beginning Sunday at noon, they shutout a Salina team 7-0 before losing their final game 3-1 to Great Bend.

Filling in for the weekend were pitchers Kendra Roles and Maddy Holub, both of Hays, and Teslee Nickell, Norton. Sara Favinger, Hill City, has joined the team as a full time player.

Slowed with injuries are Kelsey Normandin, pitcher from Plainville, and Kayla Foley and Chantille Campbell, both from Norton. Brittney Anderson, Hill City, who is the regular catcher, took a throw from centerfielder Campbell in the final game on Sunday and tagged the Great Bend runner out at home plate. Unfortunately, she suffered a broken hand and will be out for four to six weeks. Elleigh Walker, Oberlin, received a torn ligament in an ankle while sliding into second in the Hill City tourney and is out indefinitely. Amelia Nickelson, Penokee, starting third baseman, received a torn ligament in one knee several weeks ago and has been lost for the season.

"Many thanks to the girls who filled in as well as to the girls we have left for their good play last weekend," said team manager Darin Campbell. "Overall, we were very happy with their play. Many were playing in positions they weren't used to.

"It was a real treat watching Holub and Roles pitch. They put the ball exactly where the catcher wanted it.

"We are still looking for more players and hoping to get more



The Lady Storm's Kelsey Normandin lays down a sacrifice bunt during the Lady Jays' 6-2 win over Larned in the Russell tourney last Saturday. Normandin was also the winning pitcher, giving up just six hits, striking out seven and walking none.

practices. With jobs, vacations and other commitments for the girls, it's been hard to get together for practices. We especially need to work on our defense."

Coaches of the team are Kirk Foley, Erin Hill and Maggie Foley.

LARNED

Norton was designated the visitor and batted in the top of the innings. In the top of the first, the Lady Storm ran across two runs as Courtney Balthazor got on base and Brittney Anderson blasted a home run.

Larned scored their only two runs of the game in the bottom of the inning.

The Lady Storm tallied four more runs in the top of the second. Kylie Cooper singled, Kendra Roles and Ashley Martinez both walked, Balthazor singled and Normandin was hit by a pitch. Cooper, Roles, Martinez and Balthazor all scored to make the final 6-2.

Leading hitters for Norton were Balthazor, who went 2 for 4, and

Cooper, who was 2 for 3. Norton had six hits, four Norton batters walked and four struck out.

Normandin was the winning pitcher, giving up six hits, striking out seven batters and walking none.

"Normandin pitched a great game," said Campbell. "We also played good defense."

PRATT

Norton was the visitor in the Pratt game. In the top of the first, the Lady Storm tallied one run when Lacey Roe singled and Maddy Holub singled her home.

Norton extended their lead to 3-0 in the top of the second when Roles doubled, Favinger singled and Balthazor drove both of them home.

Pratt scored a single run in the bottom of the second to make it 3-1.

In the top of the third, the Lady Storm tallied one final time when Holub doubled again, Anderson and Campbell both singled and Holub scored to make it 4-1.



Lacey Roe, Lady Storm third baseman, fires the ball to first base during Norton's 6-2 win over Larned in the opener of the Russell Tournament last Saturday.

Pratt was able to score six big runs in the bottom of the third to take a 7-4 lead.

Norton got to bat just one more time, in the top of the fourth, due to the 75 minute time limit on games. Favinger singled for Norton's only hit in the inning and the Lady Storm was unable to rally.

Norton had nine hits in the game, only two strike outs and no walks. Leading hitters were Holub and Favinger, both of whom went 2 for 2 at the plate.

Roe was the losing pitcher for Norton. She allowed just six hits, walked five and struck out three.

Winning pitcher was B. Blankenship.

"We struggled defensively and committed lots of errors," said Campbell.

MEDICINE LODGE

Norton completed Saturday pool play with an exciting 8-7 win over Medicine Lodge.

Medicine Lodge was the visitor and batted first, scoring three runs in the top of the first and one in the top of the second to take a 4-0 lead.

Lady Storm ran one run home in the bottom of the second when

Campbell tripled and Cooper doubled her home.

Medicine Lodge added two more runs in the top of the third to extend their lead to 6-1. Norton narrowed the Medicine Lodge lead to 6-4 in the bottom of the third. Normandin walked and Holub smashed a home run. Campbell and Cooper both singled and both scored.

Normandin pitched the first three innings but Holub relieved her in the top of the fourth. She retired the sides by striking out three straight batters.

In the bottom of the inning, Norton tied the score at 6-4. Favinger, Roe and Campbell all walked and Favinger and Roe scored.

With Holub on the mound for Norton, Medicine Lodge was three up, three down again in the top of the fifth. Norton also failed to tally in the bottom of the stanza and the international tiebreaker rule went into effect. Under that rule, the last player to make an out for each team in the previous inning goes to second and each team tries to score her.

It was Medicine Lodge's turn first. Their runner was able to score and give them a 7-6 advantage. Next, Norton's Roe went to second base. Holub singled her home to tie it at 7-7, then Norton won 8-7 when Anderson singled Holub home.

Norton had 10 hits in the game, nine walks and seven batters struck out.

Campbell went 2 for 2, Cooper 2 for 3 and Holub 2 for 4 with the wood for Norton.

Holub was the winning pitcher. She allowed no hits, walked none and struck out seven. Normandin gave up eight hits, walked three and struck out three batters.

SALINA

At noon on Sunday, Norton played Salina and put together a 7-0 shutout.

Norton was the visitor and batted first. Holub doubled and Anderson singled in the top of the first to drive Holub home.

In the top of the third, Favinger

and Balthazor singled, Holub doubled and all three tallied to make it 4-0.

Norton scored two more runs in the top of the fifth when Foley singled, Holub doubled, Anderson singled and Foley and Holub came home.

The Lady Storm's final run came in the top of the sixth when Cooper and Roles both singled and Cooper tallied to make the final 7-0.

Norton had 10 hits in the game, no walks and only four strike outs. Holub went 3 for 3 and Anderson 2 for 3 to lead Norton batters.

Meanwhile, Roles was on the mound for Norton and sitting Salina batters down with regularity. She pitched to 23 batters, struck out 15 of them, allowed two hits and walked three.

Crystal Gasper was the losing pitcher.

"In addition to Roles' great pitching, we had a good offensive game, too," said Campbell.

GREAT BEND

Great Bend was the visiting team and batted first. They tallied two runs in the top of the first inning.

Norton answered with a lone run in the bottom of the stanza when Holub walked and Anderson singled her home.

Great Bend scored one more run in the top of the second to take a 3-1 lead.

Neither team was able to score again. Norton had just three more hits.

Normandin started on the mound for Norton and gave up four hits, walked one and struck out two batters. Holub relieved her with one out in the top of the third. She struck out seven batters, allowed no hits and walked two batters. Normandin was the losing pitcher.

Norton had four hits, one walk and eight batters struck out. Leading batters for Norton, were Anderson, Cooper and Roe, all of whom went 1 for 2 with the stick. Balthazor got Norton's other hit. She was 1 for 3 at the plate.

The winning pitcher was Kuhn. "It was a real pitching duel," said Campbell. "We just didn't get enough hits and we had too many errors."

Next action

The Lady Storm will play Saturday in the round robin Colby Tournament. Teams competing, in addition to Norton and Colby, will be Oakley and Burlington and Wray, Colo.

Games will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Legion takes two on the road vs. Osborne

Locals ready for tourney at Holdrege

By DICK BOYD

The Norton American Legion baseball team traveled to Osborne Wednesday and returned with 6-3 and 3-2 victories.

"I credit three of our best pitching performances of the year for our two victories," said Norton coach Joe Durham.

"Logan Keiswetter pitched a complete five inning game for the first victory and Garrett Tacha made his first start of the year in the second game.

"Tacha pitched five strong innings before Chris Davis took over the final two innings to earn Davis the save.

"The difference in these games was our defense. Nate Morse playing centerfield caught everything hit his way and our team made only three errors.

"Our team is talented enough to play with anyone but our fielding and our discipline will be the deciding factor. Garrett pitching in this first start and holding Osborne to just two runs was more than I hoped for. Timely hitting and key

defensive plays is what won us these two games."

OPENER

Norton took a 3-0 lead in the top of the first. Aaron Daniels singled, Keiswetter walked, Blake Wolf singled and Tacha doubled. Daniels, Keiswetter and Wolf all scored.

Osborne scored once in the bottom of the inning to make it 3-1.

The Blue Jays extended their lead to 4-1 in the top of the third. Davis, Jordan Durham and Tacha each singled and Davis scored.

Osborne tightened the game with two runs in the bottom of the third to make the tally 4-3.

Norton's final two runs came in the top of the fifth. Wolf doubled, Durham singled and both came home to make the final 6-3.

Norton had nine hits, one walk and three Jay batters struck out.

Leading hitters for Norton were Wolf, Durham, Daniels and Tacha, all of whom went 2 for 3 at the plate.

Keiswetter was the winning pitcher. He allowed four hits, walked five and struck out five batters.

Losing pitcher for Osborne was Shamburg.

NIGHTCAP

Norton tallied once in the top of the second when Tacha walked and Jacob Bracht doubled him home.

They added another in the top of the third when Daniels walked, Davis doubled and Daniels scored to make it 2-0.

Osborne tallied once in the bottom of the fourth to narrow Norton's lead to 2-1. The Bulldogs tied the score at 2-2 with another run in the bottom of the fifth inning.

In the top of the sixth, Tacha got on base via an error, Nathan Morse and Bracht both singled and Tacha scored to edge the Jays back ahead 3-2, which turned out to be the final score.

Norton had 10 hits in the game, three batters walked and five struck out. Leading hitters for the Jays were Daniels, 3 for 4; Davis, 3 for 5 and Bracht, 2 for 2.

Tacha pitched the first five innings for Norton and Davis hurled the final two for the victory. Tacha allowed five hits, struck out one

and walked one. Davis gave up no hits, struck out three and walked one.

Losing pitcher for Osborne was Worley.

SMITH CENTER

Norton also traveled to Smith Center on Tuesday, June 12, intending to play a doubleheader.

Only one game was played due to rain and Norton lost 10-0.

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