

# Tennis girls ready for new season, new coach

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School girls tennis team will open the 2007 season at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday in the annual Trego Round Robin Tournament in WaKeeney.

This will be Lisa Henderson's first year of coaching the Norton girls tennis team. She has replaced Jim Green, who was with the Lady Jays tennis program for 24 of the 28 years he has been in the school system.

Coach Henderson was a member of the Norton girls tennis team all four years of her high school career. During her early years, she competed with a varsity doubles partner and then moved on to play No.1 varsity singles during her junior and senior years of high school.

Coach Henderson graduated with the Norton Community High School class of 2000 and received her degree in secondary English education from Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte, Neb. in 2002.

This is also assistant coach Nan Smith's first year of coaching girls tennis. Nan teaches third grade at Eisenhower Elementary School. She is in her 26th year as a teacher in the Norton School District and has been a teacher for 31 years. Mrs. Smith earned her bachelor's degree from Phillips University in Enid, Okla.

She and her husband, Dennis Maybon, have two children. Their daughter, Ashley, is a returning letter winner on the girls tennis team this year.

Coach Henderson has 16 players on this year's team and six of them are returning letter winners.

Returning letter winners are: Sara Campbell, Ashley Maybon, Tabitha Vincent and Valerie Wagoner, seniors; Hannah Fulton and Stephanie Shepard, juniors. Other team members are Kayla Scheetz, junior; Allie Corbin, Emily Juenemann and Kelsey Nuzum, sophomores; Kyra Fulton, Nicquel McVey, Ashley Millan, Meghan Peterson, Kaitlyn Ross and Katie Scott, freshmen.

"We began our varsity challenge matches on Monday," said coach Henderson. "Competing for the No.1 and No.2 singles positions are Ashley Maybon, Tabitha Vincent and Valerie Wagoner. All three of these players have shown much potential during earlier practices and have played each other during practice challenge matches last week.

"In doubles, we have three teams who have a chance to fill the varsity position. They are Sara Campbell and Emily Juenemann, Hannah Fulton and Stephanie Shepard and Allie Corbin and Kelsey Nuzum. Last year, there were seven graduating seniors on the team so Hannah and Sara will be playing their first challenge matches of the season with new doubles partners. Many of the players got a lot of varsity experience last year and switched around quite frequently between singles and doubles play. I'm really looking forward to the results of our challenge matches.

"Nan and I are both very excited



Tabitha Vincent is one of three seniors competing for the two varsity singles positions on this year's girls' team.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

to have so many new players on the team this year. Many of our freshman players have had little experience playing tennis but seem to be catching on quickly during



Lisa Henderson, a three-year letter winner for the Norton Community High School girls' tennis team when she played from 1997-2000, is the new head coach for the Lady Jays as they ready for their season's opener Saturday.

practice. We've had some difficulty with our serving so that has been our focus during practice this week. Junior Kayla Scheetz has joined our team this year and has given a lot of effort during practice to learn the fundamentals of the game.

"I'm proud of her for deciding to give tennis a try. Freshman Meghan Peterson shows much potential and has been progressing very quickly.

"During the next two weeks, we'll need to determine who will play singles and doubles for our junior varsity squad. Right now,

## Tennis schedule

### Varsity Tennis

Saturday, August 25 - Trego Varsity Round Robin (T) 8:30 a.m.  
 Saturday, September 1 - Colby Varsity Tournament (T) 9 a.m.  
 Tuesday, September 4 - Phillipsburg Round Robin (T) 1 p.m.  
 Tuesday, September 11 - Phillipsburg Quad (T) 3 p.m.  
 Tuesday, September 11 - Goodland Varsity Tennis (T) 3 p.m.  
 Saturday, September 22 - Trego Invitational Tourney (T) 9 a.m.  
 Tuesday, September 25 - Colby Varsity Tournament (T) 3 p.m.  
 Saturday, September 29 - MCL Tennis Tourney at WaKeeney 9 a.m.  
 Thursday, October 4 - Regional Tennis Tourney TBA  
 Saturday, October 6 - Sectional Tennis Tourney TBA  
 Friday, October 12 - State Tennis Tournament TBA  
 Saturday, October 13 - State Tennis Tournament TBA

### Junior Varsity Tennis

Thursday, September 6 - Trego Junior Varsity Round Robin (T) 1 p.m.  
 Saturday, September 8 - Norton Junior Varsity Tennis (H) 10 a.m.  
 Thursday, September 13 - Phillipsburg Junior Varsity Tennis (T) 3 p.m.  
 Tuesday, September 18 - Goodland Junior Varsity Tennis (T) 3 p.m.  
 Saturday, September 22 - Phillipsburg Junior Varsity Tennis (T) 9 a.m.  
 Saturday, September 29 - Colby Junior Varsity Tournament (T) 9 a.m.

everything is pretty much up in the air because our younger players are still learning the fundamentals of the game. I'm sure the decision will be made in the next week or so once the girls have full confidence in their play."

Coach Henderson is trying something new this year by selecting a team captain. "Many of the seniors have been helpful during practice and have served as role models to our younger girls," she said. "It will be difficult to make the final decision on who our team captain will be this year because so many of these senior players have

stepped up and shown true leadership ability. A decision will be made this week. Our team captain will be chosen and announced on Thursday."

Fans are invited to take team and individual photos Friday at the tennis courts in the Swimming Pool Park, beginning at 4 p.m. Following the picture session, some exhibition matches will be played.

Admission to the picture session and matches will be a canned good, non-perishable food item, laundry or dish soap or deodorant for God's Pantry in Norton.

# Food drive scrimmages this weekend usher in season

By DICK BOYD

The fall sports season at Norton Community High School will begin with food drive scrimmages on Friday and Saturday.

Admission to tennis, cross country, volleyball and football activities is a canned good, non-perishable food item, laundry or dish soap or deodorant for the non-profit God's Pantry in Norton.

"In recent years, we've added laundry soap, dish soap, deodorant and even diapers to the list of items we accept as donations because we thought these things are about as important to a family as food," said Elaine Mann, chairman of the food

pantry.

"Our stock is low enough that we spend money to purchase items so you can see that anything and everything that can be used by needy families is welcome.

"We even have a deep freeze if people want to give frozen items such as meat and fruit juice.

"It warms your heart to see everyone giving so generously. The God's Pantry is not some little group's project; it belongs to everyone. It is people taking care of people and Norton County people have really stepped up to meet the need of those less fortunate.

"We receive checks in the mail,

donations from churches or even anonymous bags of groceries left on our doorstep.

"The people who receive these necessities always express their gratitude to the community."

Connie Johnson, treasurer, and Michael Woodyard are also instrumental in the operation of God's Pantry.

Mrs. Mann stated that God's Pantry has already spent \$8,508 on needy people this year compared to \$3,178 last year. So far this year, 132 families have been serviced.

"Anyone is welcome to visit the God's Pantry at any time to see how it works," said Mrs. Mann.

"Connie or I can come anytime. We would also be happy to show groups the pantry in the evening. Or, we would also welcome clubs to consider the pantry as a program and they could tour the facility as part of the program."

Boxes for donated items will be placed at entrances for the scrimmages. "Many thanks to everyone for supporting our teams and also for your support of God's Pantry," said Norton Community High School Athletic Director Larry Mills.

### CROSS COUNTRY

Fans will get their first look at Norton's cross country team at

3:30 p.m. Friday at the Swimming Pool Park.

You are invited to meet the team members and take photos.

### TENNIS

Everyone is invited to meet the high school tennis team at 4 p.m. Friday at the tennis courts in the Swimming Pool Park. After fans have taken pictures, everyone is invited to stay for team matches.

### VOLLEYBALL

See and meet members of the volleyball team on Friday in the high school gym.

You may take pictures of your favorite players, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

The scrimmage will begin at 6 p.m.

### FOOTBALL

Fans may take pictures of the football team, beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday at Travis Field. The scrimmage will begin at 8:30 a.m.

Fans of the Norton Junior High football team will want to be present at 8 a.m. at Travis Field for a scrimmage while pictures are being taken of the high school players.

In addition to the seventh and eighth-grade scrimmage, an eighth and ninth-grade scrimmage is tentatively scheduled for later in the morning.

# Norton Legion baseball ends season with 21 victories

By DICK BOYD

The Norton American Legion baseball team had a successful 2007 season, showing great improvement from start to finish in compiling a winning 21-20 record and placing second in the season-ending Zone Tournament.

John Ryan Field, the Legion's home field, had a new feel for 2007 with a new scoreboard, new padding and carpet in the dugouts, roofs installed over the dugouts and a warm up area for the pitchers.

The Blue Jay nine set a new record for team batting average with a .376 and a new mark of 352 for stolen bases. They also broke last year's record of 86 errors by committing only 32 miscues.

"From day one to the final day of the zone tournament, we stressed making routine plays," said head coach Joe Durham, who was assisted by Steve Jeltz.

"Coach Jeltz and I preached to our players to play ball the Blue Jay way: fair and hard but clean.

"We started the season on a high note, playing and beating a Class 2A Minneapolis high school team, something no other Norton Legion team had ever done.

"After that game, our players felt invincible, something that was destroyed quickly by a good Cambridge team. Unable to play on our home field, we traveled to Cambridge and had a melt down. Losing the first game 12-8 and having dissension among our players, we also lost the second game 2-1. After that game, Steve and I had a meeting, invited all our players to a dinner and told them this was not acceptable and any further display of poor team spirit would result in the player being benched. Being

with the team for three years, I had grown lax in discipline, something that was corrected in our second game.

"Playing teams that the Blue Jays had never faced before helped our team progress from a mediocre team to a better team. Playing Alma, something a Norton team had not done in awhile, was good for both teams.

"In the first game, our players saw that we were serious as two starters were benched for their conduct at Cambridge. We probably had more shouting at coaches this year than in all three of my years combined as players learned the coaches were not backing down from making the players learn the correct way, not the way they thought it should be. Having coach Jeltz on this team, someone who has played in the major leagues and knows the correct way baseball is supposed to be played, made all of our players better. Our players learned never to take any team for granted as the next double-header after Alma, we split with a good Stockton team.

"The Goodland tournament was another chance for the Blue Jays to see that the coaches were serious about attitudes and sportsmanship. Norton played Colby in the first round, the first time we had played Colby in over three years, and we were demolished 14-1. Our players still thought they could do things how they wanted but were learning that things were different. Our players were learning not to let what was happening in the other dugout affect them.

"Losing the next game to Burlington 18-2 and the final game to Goodland 15-5, our players showed up to practice full of

fight. After having a team meeting, no coaches allowed, the players dedicated themselves to learning and playing better. Our Blue Jays still had a lot to learn, not only about playing ball, but about themselves, too. After losing to Smith Center in five innings, our team traveled to Holdrege to play in their tournament. Here, we faced three of the toughest teams in the state of Nebraska. We opened Friday without a complete team against Grand Island and were defeated 8-0. In the nightcap, we were at full strength and lost a good game to Kearney by an 8-7 score.

"Returning on Saturday, our team had another incident of not working together and was soundly beaten 12-4 by Hastings. After being told to go home and think about their attitude and the way they played, the team was hit with a major blow. Team member Blake Wolf was injured in a motorcycle accident that night and survived his injuries but was lost for the rest of the season. Suddenly, these young men saw that baseball was just a game but life is something precious. We returned to Holdrege on Sunday, to finish the tournament, and the crowd had a moment of silence for Blake before play was resumed.

"We played St. Paul, the team with the most pitchers, and lost 9-6 but played outstanding ball. The Achilles heel for this team all year was pitching as we didn't have enough pitchers and it came to haunt us in the zone tournament.

"In the final game of the tournament, Norton lost to Holdrege 8-0. The loss of one of our key players suddenly had a profound effect on this team. Players were being

asked to play different positions than normal. We had two players from Hoxie, Garrett Tacha and Jacob Bracht. Our newcomers were Logan Tuxhorn, Matt Stanley, Logan Runnion, Aaron Pulec and our veterans were Jordan Durham, Chris Davis, Todd Zink, Logan Keiswetter, Nathan Morse, Aaron Daniels, Andrew Soderlund and Brian Ulmer. We got our act together and swept Osborne and Phillipsburg at home and away for the first time in a long time.

"Next, we swept Goodland at home and split with them at Goodland, the first time we had won on that field in over three years. We lost at Stockton on a disputed umpire's call, then ten-runners in the second game as we continued to get better.

"Losing two games at Scott City didn't affect our team at all. Suddenly, we were winning games we had lost in previous years. In the next two games, we split with Smith Center and Colby, something that was enormous to our Blue Jays because we had been ten-runners by both teams away from John Ryan Field.

"As we kept winning, fans started to follow us away as well as at home. Going into the zone tournament, we were seeded No.2 behind Colby. Being allowed only 12 innings in 72 hours, Logan Keiswetter took the mound for our first game against Scott City. Not having played a game for over a week, we were rusty and we showed it. Scott City jumped out ahead and never looked back in winning 6-3 and throwing our Blue Jays into the losers bracket.

"We had two ten game winners in Davis and Keiswetter but

needed another pitcher to step up and carry some of the load. Nathan Morse and Garrett Tacha answered the call and allowed Chris to play his position at shortstop and make some outstanding plays. We defeated Goodland 7-2. It was the first time our Blue Jays had won a tournament game in over three years. This set up a rematch with Scott City since they had lost to Colby. In the rematch, Chris allowed only one run in an 11-1 win over Scott City. This set up what everyone expected, No.1 versus No.2. Having only three innings left for Keiswetter to pitch, we started on the mound with Tacha but Colby jumped out ahead and forced Keiswetter to pitch in the first three innings, leaving only Davis as an experienced pitcher. Morse came in to pitch after Keiswetter but had no effect on a well hitting and disciplined Colby team, forcing Davis to finish the game. We fought hard but were defeated 14-9.

"They say there is no crying in baseball but, after the defeat by Colby, some players suddenly came to the realization that their playing days for the Norton American Legion were over. Playing the last Legion game of their career were Chris Davis, Aaron Daniels and Nathan Morse."

### Statistics

Logan Keiswetter led the team in hitting with a .505 average and Jordan Durham was right behind him with a .500. Chris Davis was next with a .482, followed by Aaron Daniels, .467; Logan Tuxhorn, .403; Todd Zink, .375; Jacob Bracht, .364; Blake Wolf, .348; Garrett Tacha, .329; Logan Runnion, .325; Matt Stanley, .308;

Nathan Morse, .295.

Davis led the team in home runs with three. Tuxhorn had one round tripper.

Durham led the Blue Jays in stolen bases with 80, followed by Davis, 61; Morse, 38; Zink and Daniels, 35 each; Keiswetter, 34; Stanley, 29; Tacha, 16.

Keiswetter and Davis tied in runs scored with 35, followed by Durham 34; Daniels, 29; Zink, 27; Morse, 24; Tacha, 19; Stanley, 14; Tuxhorn, 13.

Davis was the leading pitcher with a season record of 10-5. Keiswetter was 10-7 on the mound.

Durham, Tacha and Wolf had perfect fielding records. Davis had a .981 in fielding, followed by Morse, .964; Runnion, .944; Tuxhorn, .929; Zink, .857; Keiswetter, .783; Aaron Pulec, .750; Andrew Soderlund, .706; Bracht and Stanley, both .667.

### Final comments

The Norton American Legion baseball team played ten teams who play high school baseball and still had a winning record.

Chris Davis summed it up by saying, "Our team did something no other Norton Legion team had done in awhile and that was to go out as winners."

**Telegram SportsLine:**  
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