

Blue Jay boys take third in tournament

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkans.com
The No. 3 seed Norton Community High School boys basketball team erased the memory of an ugly loss to No. 2 Trego Community the day before with a quality 51-40 win over a talented No. 4 seed Hill City quintet to place third in the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament on Saturday in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

It was a close game for three quarters until Norton pulled away in the final stanza with the help of some timely three-point baskets and accurate free throw shooting.

The Blue Jays led by 9-7 after one quarter but Hill City scored the final 6 points of the second quarter to take a slim 19-17 lead. Norton outscored the Ringnecks 17-15 in the third quarter to cut the Hill City lead to 34-33 at the start of the final stanza.

Norton pulled away in the fourth period when sophomore guard J.D. Gall drained two three-point shots, one with 4:00 left and the other with 3:19, to put the Jays up 45-40. Hill City did not score again and senior forward Wes Georgeson hit two free throws, senior forward Preston Herman swished a basket and senior point guard Logan Kats hit nothing but net on two free throws to extend the final margin of victory to 11 points.

"It was a great win for us," said Norton head boys coach Doug Reusink.

"We executed better in the fourth quarter and really played with confidence. Hitting some big threes helped. They challenged us to do that and we did.

"Free throws had a lot to do with the game. They missed some and we hit 8 of 8."

After scoring just 4 points in the first half, Georgeson hit 14 in the second half to finish with 18 points for the game. He hit 6 of 9 from two-point range for 67 percent accuracy and was a perfect 6 of 6 from the charity stripe. He missed his only trey try.

Gall hit 2 of 3 shots from long range for 67 percent and added a two-point field goal for 8 points. Herman also tallied 8 points on 4 of 10 from two-point range and 40 percent shooting.

Logan Kats was Norton's third player scoring 8 points as he hit 2 of 5 from beyond the arc for 40 percent and was 2 of 2 from the charity stripe.

Jared Cox added 7 points on 1 of 1 from long range, 2 of 5 from two-point land for 40 percent and 3 of 6 overall for 50 percent shooting.

Leading scorers for Hill City were Chris Miller with 13 and David Gerstner with 11.

As a team, Norton swished 5 of 12 long range shots for 42 percent, 14 of 36 two-point tries for 39 percent and 19 of 48 overall for 40 percent.

Hill City connected on 1 of 5 from beyond the arc for 20 percent, 14 of 36 two-point shots for 39 percent and 15 of 41 overall for 37 percent.

Norton hit 8 of 8 free throws and Hill City swished only 9 of 17 for 53 percent.

The Blue Jays pulled down 11 offensive and 19 defensive rebounds for 30 total.

The Ringnecks grabbed 8 offensive and 12 defensive boards

for 20 total.

Leading rebounder for Norton was Herman with 8, followed by Georgeson, 7; Gall, 4; Kats, Cox, 3 each; Landon Hamel, Zac Dreher, 2 each; Zach Dole, 1.

Norton had 15 offensive assists compared to 13 for Hill City. Kats led in assists with 8, followed by Cox, 3; Dole, 2; Hamel, Gall, 1 each.

The Blue Jays had 8 steals and the Ringnecks stole the ball only 1 time. Thefts leaders for Norton were Cox and Georgeson with 2 each, followed by Kats, Hamel, Gall, Dreher, 1 each.

Herman blocked 2 shots.

Norton had 17 turnovers and Hill City had 13.

Smith Center won the championship with a 69-66 overtime victory over Trego in the battle of the unbeaten.

Fifth place went to Phillipsburg with a 60-53 win over Plainville. Stockton placed seventh with a 54-50 victory over Ellis.

Next action

Norton will travel to Goodland this evening for varsity, junior varsity and C-team games versus the Cowboys.

Games will begin at 4:45 p.m.

BOX SCORE

Norton boys 51

Logan Kats 0 2 2-28; Jared Cox 2 1 0-0 7; Wes Georgeson 6 0 6-6 18; J.D. Gall 1 2 0-0 8; Zac Dreher 1 0 0-0 2; Preston Herman 4 0 0-0 8; Total 14 5 8-8 51.

Hill City boys 40

Dylan Vap 2 0 2-4 6; Seth Thompson 2 0 0-4 4; Chris Miller 5 0 3-3 13; David Gerstner 3 1 2-2 11; Reggie Jordan 2 0 2-2 6; Ryan Pfeifer 0 0 0-2 0; Total 14 1 9-17 40.



Getting ready to rebound after a Hill City shot during Norton's third-place 51-40 win Saturday in the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Hays were, from left, seniors Jared Cox, Preston Herman and Wes Georgeson. Norton outrebounded Hill City 30-20 and these three were among the Blue Jays' leading rebounders for the game.

-Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Lady Jays settle for third

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkans.com
Coach Kevin Jilka's No. 5 seed Norton Community High School girls varsity basketball team followed a disappointing loss to No. 1 seed Osborne in Friday's semi-finals with a stellar performance to defeat No. 6 Ellis 65-30 and win the consolation championship of the Mid-Continent League Tournament played in Hays.

Unlike Friday versus Osborne, the Lady Jays took a commanding 19-6 first quarter lead over the Lady Railroaders and extended it to 30-14 by half-time. As it turned out, the Norton girls were just getting warmed up as they poured in 24 points in the third quarter while holding Ellis to 6 and expanded their advantage to 54-20.

An 11-10 fourth quarter in Norton's favor with lots of Lady Jays seeing action produced a final victory margin of 35 points.

Junior post Hayli Bozarth with 24 points and junior guard Laura Lee Baird with 21 led the Norton offensive attack.

Bozarth hit 6 baskets and 4 of 4 from the free throw line in the first quarter and scored 10 more points in the third stanza on 4 baskets and 2 of 2 from the charity stripe. For the game, she hit 9 of 14 shots from the field for 64 percent accuracy and was a perfect 6 of 6 from the line.

Baird was uncanny from beyond the arc, swishing 5 of 7 trey tries for a net-smoking 71 percent. She hit 1 of 4 two-point tries to end with 6 of 11 from the field for 55 percent. She was also a perfect 4 of 4 from the free throw line.

Danielle Pfeifer hit over half of Ellis's points as she put in 16.

"Shooting the ball well got us off to a good start and that makes all the difference in the world," said coach Jilka.

"They couldn't handle us inside and we shot well from the perimeter as well.

"We also played really good defense tonight.

"We rebounded back from yesterday's loss and played the way we are capable of playing. We hope to continue this kind of play the rest of the year.

"We were able to play a lot of girls and that was also a good thing."

As a team, Norton hit 8 of 13 shots from beyond the arc for 61 percent, 13 of 32 two-point attempts for 41 percent and 21 of 45 overall for 47 percent.

The Lady Railroaders missed all 5 shots from beyond the arc, hit 13 of 36 two point shots for 36 percent and 13 of 41 overall for 32 percent accuracy.

From the charity stripe, Norton was 15 of 18 for an excellent 83 percent accuracy. Ellis hit 4 of 6 free shots for 67 percent.

The Lady Jays outrebounded the Lady Railroaders 24-15. Norton pulled down 8 offensive and 15 defensive caroms compared to 6 offensive and 9 defensive boards for Ellis.

Jones was leading rebounder for Norton with 6, followed by Chantille Campbell, Bozarth, 4 each; Baird, Courtney Cox, 3 each; Ashlie Stewart, 2; Katharine Roy, Amanda Ray, 1 each.

The Lady Jays displayed ex-

cellent offensive teamwork by recording 21 assists compared to just 4 for the Lady Railroaders.

Nine different Norton girls recorded at least 1 assist. Roy was the leader with 5, followed by Kats, 4; Rossi, Baird, 3 each; Jones, 2; Stewart, Cox, Campbell, Bozarth, 1 each.

The Lady Jays stole the ball 11 times while losing it 8 times. Baird was the thefts leader with 5, followed by Shelby Jones, 2; Roy, Cox, Kats, Bozarth, 1 each.

Norton had 9 turnovers while the aggressive Lady Jay defense caused Ellis to turn the ball over 15 times.

In other tournament games Saturday, Osborne defeated No. 2 seed Phillipsburg 45-35 for the championship, No. 4 seed Smith Center defeated No. 3 Hill City 51-30 for fifth place and No. 8 Trego outscored No. 7 Plainville 55-41 for seventh place.

Norton will travel to Goodland this evening for varsity, junior varsity and C-team games versus the Lady Cowboys.

Games will begin at 4:45 p.m.

BOX SCORE

Norton girls 65

Taylor Rossi 0 2 2-2 8; Laura Lee Baird 1 5 4-4 21; Shelby Jones 0 0 2-2 2; KaraJo Jones 1 1 0-0 5; Chantille Campbell 0 0 1-4 1; Hayli Bozarth 9 0 6-6 24; Amanda Ray 2 0 0-0 4; Total 13 8 15-18 65.

Ellis 30

Haley Wolf 2 0 2-2 6; Whitney Taylor 2 0 0-4; Danielle Pfeifer 7 0 2-2 16; Bethany Polifka 0 0 0-2 0; Courtney Waldschmidt 2 0 0-0 4; Total 13 0 4-6 30.

BOX SCORE

Norton girls 30

Taylor Rossi 0 1 0-1 3; Ashlie Stewart 0 1 2-1; Laura Lee Baird 1 2 5-6 13; KaraJo Jones 1 1 0-1 5; Chantille Campbell 0 0 2-2 2; Hayli Bozarth 3 0 0-2 6; Total 5 4 8-15 30.

Osborne girls 34

Demi French 1 0 6-9 8; Tracey Mans 2 0 1-3 5; Jeni Wolters 1 0 0-0 2; Amberleigh Plowman 3 0 1-4 7; Tana Spears 2 0 0-1 4; Paige Noel 0 1 0-2 3; Emily Girard 0 0 1-2 1; Blake Nichols 2 0 0-0 4; Total 11 1 9-21 34.

Trego cruises over Jays

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkans.com
In the final game before the Mid-Continent League Tournament on Friday, Jan. 11 in Norton, the Norton Community High School boys basketball team gave unbeaten Trego Community a scare before losing 52-49, but the No. 2 seed Golden Eagles made sure from the start of the championship semi-final game a week later in Hays that they wouldn't be upset by the No. 3 Blue Jays as they cruised to a 63-38 victory.

Norton trailed by quarters 20-4, 33-11 and 46-20 and didn't really challenge Trego until the fourth quarter when they outscored the Golden Eagles 18-17 but it left Norton far short of making up for the previous three quarters.

"We didn't come to play. Things got tough and we became frustrated and got away from the things we normally do," said Norton head boys coach Doug Reusink.

"We tried to get into the game in the third quarter but they hit everything they shot and that continued to frustrate us."

Senior point guard Logan Kats led Norton in scoring with 12 points on 1 of 1 from beyond the arc, 2 of 6 two-point tries for 33 percent, 3 of 7 overall for 43 percent accuracy and 5 of 8 free throws for 63 percent.

Senior forward Wes Georgeson hit 10 points inside as he swished 5 of 9 shots for 56 percent but did not go to the charity stripe.

Senior Nolan Smith led Trego in scoring with 19 points, which included 4 baskets from long range. Junior Spencer Hemmert added 14 points, which included 5 two-point shots.

As a team, Norton connected on 1 of 7 from long range for 14 percent, 14 of 28 two point tries for 50 percent and 15 of 35 overall for 43 percent.

Trego hit the same field goal percentage as Norton but took 23 more shots and hit 6 more baskets from beyond the arc. They were 7 of 10 from three-point land for 70 percent accuracy, 18 of 48 from two-point range for 38 percent and 25 of 58 overall for 43 percent.

Norton hit 7 of 15 charities for 47 percent and Trego found the range on 6 of 7 for 86 percent.

Norton had 2 offensive and 19 defensive rebounds for 21 total and Trego grabbed 10 offensive and 15 defensive caroms for 25 total.

Preston Herman, Zac Dreher and Georgeson each had 5 rebounds for Norton, followed by Landon Hamel, 2; Kats, Zach Dole, Jared Cox, J.D. Gall, 1 each.

Kats had 2 of Norton's 4 steals. Georgeson and Gall got 1 theft

apiece. Trego had 10 steals.

The Blue Jays had 13 assists and the Golden Eagles recorded 21. Assists leader for Norton was Hamel with 5, followed by Herman, Gall, Dole, 2 each; Kats, Cox, 1 each.

Norton did have a season high number of blocks of Trego shots. Herman rejected 3, Georgeson and Kats, 1 each.

The Blue Jays had a season high 20 turnovers compared to 10 for the Golden Eagles.

In the other championship semi-final game on Friday, No. 1 Smith Center defeated No. 4 Hill City 55-41 to advance to Saturday's championship finals versus Trego.

Norton dropped into Saturday's third place game against Hill City.

BOX SCORE

Norton boys 38

Logan Kats 2 1 5-8 12; Luke Ninemire 1 0 0-2; Landon Hamel 1 0 1-2 3; Jared Cox 1 0 0-2 2; Wes Georgeson 5 0 0-0 10; Zac Dreher 1 0 1-2 3; Preston Herman 3 0 0-1 6; Total 14 1 7-15 38.

Trego boys 63

Eric Cunningham 2 0 1-1 5; Nolan Smith 3 4 1-1 19; Dylan Sherfick 1 0 0-2; Spencer Hemmert 5 1 1-2 14; Ryan Pfannenstiel 1 1 0-0 5; Casey Flax 3 0 2-2 8; Cameron Locke 2 1 0-0 7; Brandon Eberle 1 0 1-1 3; Total 18 7 6-7 63.

Poor first quarter figures in Ladies' loss to Osborne

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkans.com
The No. 5 seed Norton Community High School girls varsity basketball team played their worst first half of the season before rallying in the second half to take No. 1 seed Osborne down to the wire in a 34-30 loss in the championship semi-finals of the Mid-Continent League Tournament Friday in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

The Lady Jays trailed 11-0 (yes, you read that right) after one quarter and were behind 19-6 at intermission.

Norton played like a different team in the second half and outscored the Lady Bulldogs 15-5 in the third quarter to trail by just 24-21 with one quarter remaining.

In the final stanza, neither team scored until 3:32 remained and KaraJo Jones buried a three-point basket to tie the score at 24-24.

Tracey Mans hit her only point of the second half from the free

throw line to put Osborne ahead by one point but Laura Lee Baird added a charity for Norton that made it 25-24.

A free throw by Demi French followed by a field goal by Amberleigh Plowman put the Lady Bulldogs ahead 28-25 with 2:15 remaining but Baird scored from beyond the arc at the 1:58 mark and it was tied at 28-28.

Norton was still unable to take the lead as French hit another free throw and Plowman hit her second basket of the quarter to put the Lady Bulldogs up by three points again. A free throw by Plowman with 28 seconds left stretched the Osborne lead to 32-28.

The Lady Jays had a number of shots in the final seconds but could not connect until Hayli Bozarth came through with a basket with 16.7 seconds remaining to cut the Osborne lead to 32-30. French hit two free throws for the Lady Bulldogs with 15 seconds remaining to make the final 34-30.

Baird hit a three-point shot in the second quarter for Norton's only basket of the first half, added 4 of 4 free throws and a two-point basket in the third quarter and buried another three-point shot and 1 of 2 free throws in the fourth quarter to end with 13 points in the game.

Leading scorer for Osborne was French with 8 while Plowman ended with 7.

"We didn't respond when things didn't go well early and dug ourselves a hole," said Norton head girls coach Kevin Jilka.

"We're not mentally tough enough yet but I give our girls a lot of credit for fighting back into the game. Unfortunately, we couldn't get a basket when we needed it in the fourth quarter.

"We need to find a way to play with confidence all four quarters. We played very tentative early but, in the second half, played more like we can. We had our chances to upset Osborne."

As a team, Norton hit 4 of 21 shots from long range for 19 percent, 5 of 28 two-point attempts for 17 percent and 9 of 49 overall for just 18 percent.

Meanwhile Osborne hit 1 of 5 trey tries for 20 percent, 11 of 30 two-point attempts for 37 percent and 12 of 35 overall for 34 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton was 8 of 16 for 50 percent and Osborne swished 9 of 19 for 47 percent.

Norton outrebounded Osborne 34-23. The Lady Jays pulled down 14 offensive and 20 defensive caroms and the Lady Bulldogs grabbed 6 offensive and 17 defensive boards.

Eight different Norton girls had at least one rebound. Jones was the leader with 10, followed by Bozarth, 8; Baird, 6; Courtney Cox, 4; Taylor Rossi, 3; Ashlie Stewart, Megan Kats, Chantille Campbell, 1 each.

Norton also had 10 steals com-

pared to just 4 for Osborne. Rossi and Baird each had 3 thefts while Kats, Jones, Campbell, Bozarth each had 1.

The Lady Jays had 4 assists while the Lady Bulldogs had 7. Katharine Roy, Rossi, Stewart and Kats each had 1 assist.

Norton had 12 turnovers and Osborne lost the ball 10 times.

In the other championship semi-final contest Friday, No. 2 Phillipsburg defeated No. 6 Ellis 56-45 to advance to Saturday's championship finals versus Osborne. Norton dropped into Saturday's third place game against Ellis.

Pack up the family and pack the gyms to cheer for your favorite team!