Norton ladies cap season with state trip

By DICK BOYD nortontelegram@nwkansas.com Coach Kevin Jilka had five returning starters on this season's Norton Community High School girls basketball team and that nucleus proved to be a formula for success as the Lady Jays ended the season with a trip to the state tour-

nament and 16-8 final record. Returning starters were Laura Lee Baird, 5-feet-8-inch junior guard; KaraJo Jones, 5'9" junior post; Hayli Bozarth, 5'10" junior post; Taylor Rossi, 5'3" junior point guard and Megan Kats, 5'4" senior guard.

There were only three seniors on the team. In addition to Kats, Courtney Cox, 5'6" guard and Chantille Campbell, 5'7" post, were returning senior letter win-

Assistant coaches again this season were George Rossi and Joan Bolt. Student manager was Bloss Jacobus.

In addition to winning the Class 3A substate tournament and advancing to the state tournament in Hutchinson, Norton placed second in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland, third in the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament and tied for fourth with Ellis in the league race.

The Lady Jays opened the 2007-008 season with an impressive 62-36 win over Goodland on Thurs., December 6 in the Topside Tip-Off Tournament. Baird led the team in scoring with 28 points.

In the semi-finals, Norton outscored Sharon Springs 52-40 and Bozarth was top scorer with 19

In the tournament finals, the Lady Jays played No.2 state ranked and defending Class 4A state champion Colby. Norton trailed by just one point early in the fourth quarter but the Lady Eagles hit their free throws down the stretch to win 56-49. Baird scored 13 points for Norton.

On Fri., December 14, Norton

Jays rallied from a 9 point deficit in the fourth quarter but lost 54-53 on a last second Phillipsburg shot. Bozarth led the Lady Jay offensive attack with 20 points.

After a game with Stockton was postponed due to inclement weather, the Lady Jays hosted Osborne on Fri., January 4. The Lady Bulldogs placed third in the Class 2A state tournament a year ago and had another outstanding team. The Lady Jays played them down to the wire before losing 54-48. Baird led the way in scoring with 17 and Bozarth added 15.

The next day, Norton hosted Stockton in the makeup contest. It was played in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym and Wilmeth would have been proud as the Lady Jays rolled over the Lady Tigers 53-27 and Bozarth tallied 17.

The Lady Jays played their third game in four days when they traveled to Oberlin on Mon., January 7. Bozarth did not miss a shot from the field as she scored 26 points en route to a 69-46 victory.

On Fri., January 11, Norton hosted Trego Community in the NCHS Stull Gymnasium and the Lady Jays extended their season record to 5-3 with a 64-41 victory. Baird hit 20 points, Bozarth added 18 and Jones 10.

The annual Mid-Continent League Tournament began with first round games on Mon., January 14. The No.5 seeded Lady Jays traveled to Smith Center to play the No.4 seeded Smith Center Lady Red. It was a low scoring game with free throws in the fourth quarter making the difference for Norton as the Lady Jays prevailed for a 41-31 upset. Baird hit 15 points and Campbell added 10.

The tournament moved to Hays for the semi-finals and finals. Norton met No.1 seeded Osborne on Fri., January 18. The Lady Jays

play at Phillipsburg. The Lady half to take the Lady Bulldogs down to the wire in a 34-30 loss. Baird led scoring with 13.

On Sat., January 19, Norton defeated No.6 seed Ellis 65-30 to win third place. The Lady Jays had both the inside and outside game going as Bozarth threw in 24 points and Baird hit 21.

On Tues., January 22, the Lady Jays traveled to Goodland to play the Lady Cowboys for the second time in the season. They were successful again as they outscored Goodland 45-30. Baird hit 64 percent from the floor and ended with 17 points.

Smith Center came to town on Tues., January 29 with hopes of avenging their earlier loss to Norton on their own court. It was a close game with Norton leading until the end when a last second Lady Red basket tied the score at 40-all and sent the game into overtime. Norton was outscored in the extra period and lost 51-46. Baird led the Lady Jays in scoring with 33 points as she hit 8 shots from beyond the arc.

Norton got back on the winning track on Fri., February 1 at Hill City. The Lady Jays dominated the Lady Ringnecks in winning 59-34. Bozarth hit 25 points and Baird 17.

After an Oberlin game was postponed due to inclement weather, Norton traveled to Atwood on Fri., February 8 and beat a good Lady Buffalo team 55-47. Baird led the way with 23 points and Bozarth scored 14.

The Lady Jays played a second straight Northwest Kansas League foe when they hosted Hoxie on Tues., February 12. It was a hotly contested game in which both teams hit the same number of shots from the field but Norton hit one more free throw than Hoxie to win 55-54!

The third game in a row with a Northwest Kansas League oppofor the makeup contest. The Lady Jays had no trouble defeating the Lady Red Devils 63-42 as Baird and Bozarth each contributed 20 points to the win.

The next night, Norton traveled to Ellis to play a team they had beaten by 35 points to win third in the league tournament. The Lady Railroaders got revenge with a 49-31 win over a Norton quintet that had a rare bad game. The Lady Jays hit only 25 percent from the field compared to 43 percent for Ellis. The Lady Railroaders hit 11 free throws in the game.

Things went from bad to tremendous for Norton when the Lady Jays traveled to Plainville on Mon., February 18 for another league contest. The Lady Jays were as good as they were bad in the previous game as they rolled up a season-high 80 points and allowed the Lady Cardinals just 49. Bozarth led the way with 29 points on 71 percent shooting and grabbed 12 rebounds!

On Tues., February 19, the Lady Jays got a second chance against a Colby team with a perfect 19-0 record. It was Senior Night in Norton but the Lady Jays had another bad shooting night and Colby extended their win streak with a 52-29 victory. Baird led Norton in scoring with 12 points.

Tournament action

The regular season was over and it was time for post-season tournament play. Norton hosted the Class 3A Substate Tournament and the Lady Jays were seeded No.3. In their opening game, they hosted No.6 Belleville and extended their season record to 14-7 with an easy 63-35 win. Bozarth threw in 25 points and Baird 16.

In the substate semi-finals, on Fri., February 29, Norton played No.2 seed Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays. Once again, the Lady Jays played very well and played their worst half of the sean ent was played on Thurs., Februended TMP's season with a 61-47 chances and competed very well.

started Mid-Continent League son before rallying in the second ary 14 when Oberlin came to town win. Bozarth led the way with 22 points and Baird hit 17.

That set the stage for the championship finals versus No.1 seed Sacred Heart of Salina who had won their last four substate tournaments and had a 13 consecutive substate game winning streak. Defense was the name of the game as Norton defeated Sacred Heart 40-35 to win the championship! Baird led the way with 20 points and Bozarth added 16.

The Norton girls were seeded No.6 in the state tournament and played No.3 seed Wichita Collegiate on opening day, Thurs., March 6 in the Sports Arena in Hutchinson. Norton played on even terms with the higher seeded Collegiate quintet and matched them basket for basket; however, six of Collegiate's baskets were from beyond the arc and the Lady Jays failed to score from that area of the court.

Both teams hit 15 field goals and 9 free throws but the longer baskets gave Collegiate a 45-39 win and ended Norton's season at 16-8. Bozarth led the Norton offense with 29 points.

It was the Norton girls first state tournament appearance since 2001 when they placed fourth with an 18-7 record.

"We couldn't get baskets when we needed them," said coach Jilka. "Free throws hurt, too. Normally throw line but we hit just 45 percent in this game.

"I'm proud of our girls. We were behind by 11 and came back at the

Collegiate placed third in the state tournament.

"Our substate games were the best three games we played all season," coach Jilka told the Blue Jay Booster Club. "We took our game to the next level. We played great defense in the substate.

"We didn't play as well in the state tournament but we had our

"It was an awesome experience for our girls. We discovered that we could compete against the top teams elsewhere in the state. If we work hard, we could do well again

"Hayli and Laura Lee were both chosen first team all-league and that was good to see.

"Many thanks to everyone in the community for their tremendous support."

Season statistics

As a team, Norton outscored opponents an average of 52.2 points per game to 42.5. The Lady Jays hit 36.6 percent of their field goal attempts compared to 37 percent by opponents. From the free throw line, Norton swished 64.2 percent and opponents averaged 60.2 percent.

The Lady Jays had 255 steals on defense for an average of 10.6 thefts per contest. Norton's aggressive defense caused 439 turnovers by the opposition for an average of 18.3 per contest.

On offense, Norton had 299 assists, or 12.5 per game. The Lady Jays had 555 total rebounds for an average of 23 per game.

Laura Lee Baird was leading scorer with 16.3 points per contest. She hit 74.8 percent of her free throws to lead the Lady Jays in that category. Baird was steals leader with a total of 73, second in aswe hit 65 percent from the free sists with 60 and third in rebounds with 78.

Hayli Bozarth was right behind Baird in scoring with a 16 points per game average and was the Lady Jays' leading rebounder with 143. Bozarth was also the most accurate field goal shooter among the starters with a 56.9 percent average and second high in free throw accuracy with a 69.9 percent average.

KaraJo Jones was second high rebounder with 107 and third high in steals with 36.

Taylor Rossi was assists leader with 82 and was second in steals

*Blue Jay boys roll to a 15-victory season

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com Head coach Doug Reusink's men and they put together another 18 points. very successful season.

the Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland to begin the season, third in the Mid-Continent League Tournament and third in the league race with a 6-2 record.

Norton reached the semi-finals of the substate tournament, where they lost a 56-53 game to a strong Sacred Heart of Salina quintet to finish their season with a 15-7 record.

Returning starters were Logan Kats, 5-feet-8-inch senior point guard and Wes Georgeson, 6'3" senior forward. Other returning lettermen were Preston Herman, 6'3" senior forward; Jared Cox, 6' senior guard; Zach Dole, 5'10" senior guard and Zac Dreher, 6'2" junior post.

Assistant coaches again this season were David Stover and

Todd Fulton. Student managers were Ashley Maybon, Hannah Fulton and Kyra Fulton.

Norton opened the 2007-008 season with an impressive 69-52 win over Skyline of Longmont, Colo. in the Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland on Thurs., December 6. Kats hit 17 of 19 free throws to finish with 19 points. Georgeson also swished 19 and was accurate on 9 of 12 field goals for 75 percent shooting.

In the second round, Norton played Ottawa, ranked No.6 in the state in Class 4A and lost 61-49. Georgeson led Norton in scoring with 18 points.

The Blue Jays won third place in the tournament on Saturday by defeating Goodland 35-29. Ottawa won the championship.

Norton opened Mid-Continent League play on Fri., December 14 at Phillipsburg and outshot and outrebounded the Panthers to win 49-31. Georgeson scored 20 points; Herman added 14.

After the Stockton game was postponed due to inclement weather, the Blue Jays started the

in the second half to win 62-44. returning starters among six letter- Georgeson threw in 21 and Kats

The Blue Jays placed third in Stockton in the makeup game. The contest was played in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym. The Tigers played the Blue Jays close and hit a three point basket at the buzzer to put the game into overtime with a 40-all score. The Blue Jays prevailed in the extra period to win 45-43. Georgeson scored 18 points and Herman 12.

> Norton played their third game in four days when they traveled to Oberlin on Mon., January 7 to play the Red Devils of the Northwest Kansas League. With three players in double scoring figures, Norton had little trouble in winning 74-41. Georgeson scored 23, Herman 16

> and Kats 13 points. On Fri., January 11, Norton hosted unbeaten Trego Community in a key Mid-Continent League contest. The Blue Jays played well enough to upset the Golden Eagles and led 42-36 after three quarters but fell short at the free throw line and lost 52-49. Kats led Norton in scoring with 16 points, followed by Georgeson with 13. The loss dropped Norton's record to 6-2.

> The Mid-Continent League Tournament began for the boys on Tues., January 15 and No.3 seed Norton hosted No.6 seed Ellis. The Blue Jays cruised to a 62-36 win as Georgeson scored 21 points.

The semi-finals and finals of the tournament moved to Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays on Friday and Saturday. In the semifinals, Norton played Trego but was unable to stay with the Golden Eagles after throwing a scare into them a week earlier. Kats scored 12 and Georgeson 10 points as the Blue Jays suffered a 63-38 loss.

In the consolation championship on Saturday, Norton placed third with a 51-40 win over No.4 seed Hill City. Georgeson led scoring with 18 points.

On Tues., January 22, Norton traveled to Goodland to play the Cowboys whom they defeated

Kats led the Blue Jays in scoring with 12 points.

A week later, Norton hosted On Saturday, Norton hosted No.2 state ranked Smith Center. The Blue Jays played well and held a 40-37 lead with 5:35 left in the game but their upset bid failed as the Redmen prevailed 59-50. Kats led Norton in scoring with 16 points.

On Fri., February 1, Norton traveled to Hill City and rallied in the second half to win 70-58. Georgeson was scoring leader with 23; Kats hit 18.

Norton was scheduled to play Oberlin on Tues., February 5 but the game was postponed due to inclement weather.

The Blue Jays traveled to Atwood on Fri., February 8 and fought off a fourth quarter Buffalo rally to win 67-62. Kats hit 22 points and Georgeson 19.

Norton hosted Hoxie on Tues., February 12. In a low scoring contest, the Blue Jays controlled the backboards and took more shots to win 42-32. Kats led scoring with 15 points.

On Thurs., February 14, Norton hosted Oberlin in the makeup game and won 55-39. Georgeson led the way with 17 points.

Norton traveled to Ellis on Fri., February 15. A three point basket by Ellis threw the game into overtime with a 48-all score but the Blue Jays outscored the Railroaders 8-2 in the extra period to win 56-50. Georgeson had an outstanding offensive game, hitting 67 percent from the floor and tallying 30 points!

The Blue Jays won their sixth straight contest with a 51-44 Mid-Continent League victory over Plainville on the Cardinals home court on Mon., February 18. The Blue Jays trailed in the game until tying the score at 35-all by the end of the third quarter and outscoring the Cardinals in the final stanza. Kats led Norton in scoring with 18.

On Tues., February 19, Norton hosted an outstanding Colby quintet on Senior Night. Norton trailed 23-18 at half-time but had cut the

new year by defeating a visiting earlier in the Topside Tip-Off Eagle lead to 32-30 by the end of Reusink. "We made our run and for 15.4 per game. The Blue Jays Osborne quintet on Fri., January 4. Tournament. This time, the Cow- the third quarter. The Blue Jays our crowd got into it. We played had 312 offensive assists which is Norton trailed 27-25 at half-time boys were ready for them as Norled 45-44 at one time in the final our hearts out. I couldn't have 14 per game. Norton Community High School but outscored the Bulldogs 37-17 ton got a slow start and lost 50-47. period but lost 50-47. Georgeson asked any more of our boys. I'm Norton outrebounded oppoled Norton in scoring with 15 really proud of them. points and Kats added 13.

Tournament play

Norton hosted the Class 3A Substate Tournament. The Blue Jays were seeded No.3 and hosted No.6 seed Phillipsburg on Mon., February 25. The Blue Jays had beaten the Panthers by 18 points earlier in the season but Phillipsburg made Norton earn a 57-52 victory. Georgeson scored 18 points and Kats added 16 as the Blue Jays extended their record

to 15-6. On Feb. 28, Norton played No. 2 seed Sacred Heart of Salina in the tournament semi-finals. The Blue Jays produced a tremendous second half rally to force overtime at 50-all but lost 56-53 to end their season. Georgeson led the way in scoring in his final game in a Blue Jay uniform with 22 points and Kats hit 11 for his finale.

"We battled back and had the opportunities but just couldn't finish enough plays to beat a good Sacred Heart team," said coach

"Logan and Wes received second team all-league recognition and that was great to see. Logan also played in the Colby all-star game.

"We had a good season. Our seniors held us together all year long. Thanks to everyone for the tremendous support this season."

Sacred Heart beat No.1 seed Belleville 51-45 on Saturday to win the title and a berth in the Class 3A State Tournament in the Sports Arena in Hutchinson.

Season statistics

As a team, Norton averaged 53.5 points per game compared to 47.5 by opponents. The Blue Jays hit 42 percent of their field goal tries and opponents swished 38 percent.

Norton connected on 62 percent from the charity stripe compared to 61 percent by opponents.

The Blue Jays had 188 steals on defense for an average of 8.5 per contest. The Norton defense

nents an average of 28.0 to 23.8.

Wes Georgeson was leading scorer for Norton with 16.2 points per game, most accurate field goal shooter at 62 percent, second in rebounds with 6 per game, second in steals with 33 and second in blocked shots with 7.

Logan Kats was the overwhelming assists leader with a total of 136, steals leader with 53 thefts, second leading scorer with 12 points per game, leading free throw shooter with 79 percent accuracy, leading three-point shooter at 39 percent and third leading rebounder with 3.6 per contest.

Preston Herman was leading rebounder with 7.8 per game and led in blocked shots with 14. He was second in free throw accuracy at 63 percent, third high in steals with 27 and third high in points per

game with 8.1. Zac Dreher was second high in field goal accuracy, hitting 54 percent and tied with Kats for most caused 338 opponent turnovers charges taken with 13.

Norton qualifies 21 kids for state

By NANCY HAGER **Special Contributor**

The Norton Kids Wrestling

Team qualified 21 for the Kansas Kids State Wrestling Folkstyle Championship Tournament this weekend at the Expocentre in Topeka.

The Norton team has 64 active members, 11 coaches, and has taken part in the following tourneys: Hoxie, Norton, Atwood, Plainville, Ellis, Scott City, Oakley, Phillipsburg, and Salina.

On March 15, 34 wrestlers competed in the Sub-District in Goodland with the top four in each age and weight division advancing to the District in Hays on March 22. Twenty-seven Norton kids qualified for the district tournament.

tricts. Norton is in District 4 which reaches from Colorado to the Phillips/Smith County line and from Nebraska to Oklahoma. To qualify

the top four in their district. Norton advanced 21 to the state

tourney Saturday and Sunday at Topeka. They are: Tevin Petrie, Skylar Johnson, Riley Hager, Caysean Campbell, Jacob Green, Luke Keilig, Alec Hager, Jarod Tallent, Carson McKenna, Dalton Miller, Austin Hager, Eli Bozarth, Shirk, Kaid McKenna, Cayleb Campbell, Tyler Cook and Robert

The tourney begins with the Parade of Athletes at 8 a.m. with wrestling at 8:30 a.m on Saturday. Wrestling starts at 8 a.m. on Sunday with the championship round starting at approximately 3 p.m. Kansas is divided into four dis-

Norton team members who have competed throughout the season include the following: Cole Amlong, Seth Antrim, Rhett Blecha, Christian Boser, Trenton ont Shirk.

for state, wrestlers must place in Chisham, Jessie Courtain, Travis Cressler, Andrew Davis, Nicholas Davis, Trey Deal, Shayd Dicks, R J Ellis, Maverick Engel, Weston Erbert, Tucker Gosselin, Lane Gruwell, Miles Harrington, Ryan Johnson, Mike Kasson, Ray Kasson, Trey Kats, Jett Lill, Gavin Lively, Ryan Lively, Nicholas Mandl, Kade Melvin, Kendall Kolton Harting, Tye Nickell, Brett Miller, Layton Miller, Andy Nick-Terrell, Trey Millan, Spencer ell, Toby Nickell, Garrett Otter, Jacob Peterson, Nick Peterson, Justis Posson, Cole Renner, John Renner, John Risewick, Chandler Sumner, Jeremy Sproul, James Sturgill, Brandon Vacura, Dalton Vogelgesang and Trenton Wright. Coaches are head coach Kyle

Wright, Robert Campbell, Travis Chisham, Rick Green, Bill Johnson, Matt Kasson, James Kats, Brian McKenna, Shane Miller, Denny Nickell, and Lam-3/28/08 8:23:07 AM

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