

# Exciting 3rd place finish

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Thunder 14 and under girls fast pitch softball team played five games on Saturday and Sunday in the Hill City Tournament and placed third with an exciting 16-15 victory over Colby on Sunday afternoon.

In their opener at noon on Saturday, Norton defeated Stockton 10-6 but lost their next game by a 12-5 score to Goodland on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday morning, Norton displayed some real batting power by outscoring Liberal 17-4. After a disappointing 24-0 loss to Russell later Sunday morning, the Lady Jays regrouped to win 16-15 over Colby on Sunday afternoon.

Members of the Norton Thunder team are Abby Bainter, Darcy Bainter, Sierra Black, Jade Cressler, Fayth Davenport, Kylee Ford, Brianna Karnopp, Samantha Keenan, Katie Koch, Shelbi McKenna, Teslee Nickell, Kayleigh Norwood and Erin Terrell.

Coaches are Denny Nickell and Patty Kleinschmidt.

In the Stockton game, the Lady Tigers scored four runs in the top of the first inning but Norton tallied three in the bottom of the inning.

Abby Bainter walked, Brianna Karnopp and Erin Terrell both got hits and Bainter, Karnopp and Terrell all scored.

Stockton added two more runs in the second inning to take a 6-3 advantage but Norton tacked on six more themselves in the bottom of the inning to take a 9-6 lead. Abby Bainter, Karnopp, Terrell, Fayth Davenport, Teslee Nickell, Shelbi McKenna and Kayleigh

Norwood all hit safely and all but Norwood scored.

Stockton did not score again and Norton added an insurance run in the bottom of the fourth when Terrell hit safely and scored.

Leading hitters for the Thunder were Terrell, 3 for 3 and Karnopp, 2 for 3.

Karnopp and Nickell pitched for Norton. They allowed just two hits, struck out eight batters and walked eight.

Norton had 11 hits, four walks and two strike outs.

In the Goodland game, the Thunder scored three runs in the top of the first. Karnopp walked, Terrell and Nickell both got hits and Kylee Ford and Darcy Bainter both walked and Karnopp, Terrell and Nickell all scored.

Goodland answered with four runs of their own in the bottom of the inning and another tally in the bottom of the second.

The Thunder scored once in the top of the third when Davenport and Ford got hits and Darcy Bainter and Jade Cressler walked.

Davenport scored to make it a 5-4 game. Goodland added another run in the bottom of the third to make it 6-4.

In the top of the fourth, Norton scored a run when Karnopp, Davenport and Ford all walked and Karnopp tallied. Goodland put the game out of reach, however, with six runs on seven hits in the bottom of the fourth to win 12-5.

Norton had just four hits in the game, nine batters walked and four struck out. Terrell, Davenport, Nickell and Ford each had one hit.

Losing pitcher was Abby Bainter. She allowed 15 hits, walked

two batters and struck out one.

The Norton Thunder had a big hitting game of their own and took advantage of bases on balls to defeat Liberal 17-4 in their next contest on Sunday morning.

Liberal picked up two runs in the top of the first but Norton answered with 10 runs in the bottom of the inning. Abby Bainter, Karnopp, Nickell, Terrell, Darcy Bainter, Cressler and Shelbi McKenna each got hits and Davenport hit safely twice. Scoring twice were Abby Bainter and Nickell. Scoring once were Karnopp, Terrell, Darcy Bainter, Norwood, Cressler and Davenport.

The Thunder ran seven more runs across the plate in the second inning. Cressler walked, McKenna and Davenport hit safely, Nickell walked, Terrell got on base with a hit, Darcy Bainter walked, Norwood got a hit and Cressler and McKenna both walked. Cressler, McKenna, Davenport, Nickell, Terrell, Darcy Bainter and Norwood all scored.

Liberal added two more runs in the top of the third to make the final 17-4 in favor of the Thunder.

Norton had 11 hits, ten walks and only one batter struck out.

Leading batters for the Thunder were Terrell, 2 for 2 and Davenport, 2 for 3.

Nickell was the winning pitcher. She gave up four hits, struck out four batters and walked five.

Later on Sunday morning, Norton played an outstanding Russell team and was shutout. Russell scored three runs in the top of the first, 12 in the second and nine runs in the top of the third to win 24-0.

Norton had just two hits, one



Every run was crucial for the Norton Thunder 14 and under fast pitch softball team in their 16-15 win over Colby to place third in the Hill City Tournament. The Thunder's Darcy Bainter is pictured here sliding into home plate to score one of those important runs!

— Courtesy photo

walk and three strike outs. Losing pitcher was Abby Bainter. Russell had 21 hits, four walks and no strike outs.

The Lady Blue Jays finished on a high point with their exciting win over Colby on Sunday afternoon to place third.

The Thunder took a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the first. Abby Bainter, Karnopp, Nickell, Davenport, Cressler and Norwood all walked and Bainter, Karnopp, Davenport and Cressler scored.

Colby took an 8-4 lead with eight runs in the second and Norton added three more in the bottom of the inning to make it 8-7. Darcy Bainter, Abby Bainter

and Karnopp all walked and all scored.

The Thunder tied the score at 8-all in the bottom of the third when Cressler walked and Norwood hit safely and Cressler scored.

Colby added three runs in the top of the fourth to take an 11-8 lead. In the bottom of the inning, Norton scored three more runs to tie the score at 11-all. Karnopp, Nickell and Terrell all hit safely and scored.

Colby tallied four more runs in the top of the fifth to retake the lead at 15-11 but the Thunder girls were equal to the occasion and scored five runs to win!

# Legion winless in Levi Hayden Tourney at Goodland

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton American Legion baseball team took a 2-2 record into the Levi Hayden Tournament in Goodland last weekend but was unable to win any games.

In the opener, the Blue Jays lost 8-0 to Scott City, then were outscored 8-4 by Goodland and lost their third game by a 14-3 score to Burlington, Colo.

"This was a good tournament and we came away with good game experience," said Norton head coach Joe Durham. "We were missing a couple of players due to a death in the family and work obligations but the players we took to the tournament played with a lot of heart and passion."

Missing from the team were Shane Stanley, Brandon Towery, Brett Pulec, Landon Hamel and Skylar Harris.

Norton opened with Scott City and got just two hits in the game. Blake Wolf and Todd Zink were both 1 for 2 at the plate.

Scott City scored five runs in the top of the first inning, two in the third and one in the fifth.

Winning pitcher was E. Gechter. He walked two batters and struck out seven. The losing hurler was Garrett Tacha. He gave up five hits, walked two batters and struck out one.

Next, Norton faced Goodland. The Cowboys scored one run in

the first inning and three in the third to take a 4-0 lead. Norton tallied one run in the top of the fourth when Tacha doubled and Logan Runion singled him home.

Three more runs by Goodland in the bottom of the fourth stanza made it 7-1 and the Cowboys lengthened the lead to 8-1 with another score in the bottom of the fifth.

Norton scored three runs in the top of the sixth to make the final 8-4. Tacha led off with a single, Matt Stanley singled, Runion singled, Brian Ulmer singled and Jacob Bracht walked. Tacha, Stanley and Runion all crossed home plate.

Norton scattered 11 hits in the game, one batter walked and four struck out. Leading hitters were Tacha, 3 for 3; Todd Zink, 2 for 4; Runion, 2 for 3 and Ulmer, 2 for 3. Winning pitcher was P. Dautel. Losing pitcher was Jordan Durham. He gave up 12 hits, struck out four batters and walked three.

In their final game of the tournament, Norton played an outstanding Burlington nine. Burlington took a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the first.

Norton tallied one run in the top of the second to make it 4-1. Bracht walked and got around the bases to score. Burlington added two more runs in the bottom of the inning and three more in the bottom of the third to extend their

lead to 9-1.

The Blue Jays scored two runs in the top of the fourth when Tacha walked, Runion got on base with a fielder's choice, Ulmer slammed a double and Bracht walked and Runion and Ulmer both scored.

Five more runs by Burlington in the bottom of the fourth made the final 14-3.

Norton had just two hits in the game. Tacha was 1 for 1 and Ulmer was 1 for 2. Winning pitcher was L. Hines. He walked three batters and struck out two. Losing pitcher was Zink. He allowed 13 hits, struck out 11 batters and walked six.

"We found our lead off hitter in Todd Zink," said coach Durham. "Todd's ability to lay down the bunt or smack the ball put a lot of pressure on their defense. Not only did he pitch but he played third, short and left field."

"Blake Wolf played first and batted second. He hit the ball really hard but it always seemed to be right at someone. He played the whole tournament with a bad knee and a bad hamstring and I couldn't have been prouder of him."

"Garrett Tacha has become our No. 3 hitter and No. 1 pitcher. He has become a dangerous hitter and is also able to take the mound and throw a good seven inning game."

"Jordan Durham bats fourth, pitches, plays third and catches. He made an outstanding catch on

a foul ball sliding and catching the ball before it got to the fence.

"Matt Stanley played short stop. He has one of those motors that never quits and hustled after every ball hit his way. Logan Runion made a couple of nice catches in center field. Brian Ulmer plays left field and hustled after every ball."

"Andrew Soderlund plays second and has really improved. He has more hits and more catches than he did all of last year. Aaron Pulec played right field and second base. He is hitting the ball hard and played a lot of ball for us in the tournament."

"Jacob Bracht also played a lot for us and played well. We played Jacob at third, short, second, right field and catcher."

"Cody Callaway from Almena played right and left field. He has a lot of speed and we are going to try to make him into a pitcher."

"We started off slow last year so I am not worried. Having one of the best coaches you could ask for in Steve Jeltz, who is stern but fair, our players know what to expect. You can see our hitting getting better each game and that is due to Aaron Daniels working with our hitters."

"One of our strengths is our pitching coach Chris Davis, who played short and pitched for us. He is bringing along some of our younger players and I expect to see great improvement over the

course of the year."

**Defeated Osborne**

The Norton Legion nine traveled to Osborne on Tuesday and earned an exciting 11-10 victory!

The Blue Jays took a 1-0 lead in the top of the first when Todd Zink singled, Tacha walked, Durham singled, Brian Spooner was hit by a pitch and walked and Zink scored.

Osborne tallied five runs in the bottom of the first to take a 5-1 lead. Norton narrowed the Bulldog advantage to 5-4 with three runs in the top of the second. Andrew Soderlund walked, Callaway got on via an error, Todd Zink walked, Runion got on base on an error and Soderlund, Callaway and Zink all scored. Osborne added one run in the bottom of the second and two more in the bottom of the third to make it 8-4.

The Blue Jays kept it close by scoring four big runs in the top of the fourth to tie the score at 8-all.

The top of the order led off for Norton. Todd Zink singled, Tacha doubled, Durham doubled, Spooner doubled, Soderlund singled and Zink, Tacha, Durham and Spooner all scored.

Osborne edged ahead 9-8 with one run in the bottom of the fourth. Norton took the lead for good in the top of the fifth inning with three runs.

Brandon Towery walked, Todd Zink singled, Runion got on base

with a fielder's choice, Tacha got on via an error and Zink, Runion and Tacha all crossed home plate.

Osborne scored just one run in the bottom of the inning to make the final 11-10 in favor of Norton. The teams were not able to play the second game due to stormy weather.

Norton had eight hits. Leading hitters were Zink, 3 for 3 and Durham, 2 for 4.

Runion started on the mound for Norton but Tacha relieved him after one inning and was the winning pitcher. Osborne had 11 hits, six struck out and three walked.

S. Clark was the losing pitcher. He walked seven and struck out eight batters.

"I was very proud of our players as they played hard and didn't let the score affect their play," said coach Durham.

"Being down right from the start, Garrett pitched one of his better games to pick up the win."

**Next action**

The Norton Legion nine hosted Phillipsburg in a double header on Thursday evening but results were not available at press time.

The Legion's next action will be Sunday when they host Colby at John Ryan Field in games beginning at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

On Tuesday, June 17, Norton will travel to Stockton for games at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

# Lady Storm goes 3-1, takes second at Hill City

By DICK BOYD

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The Lady Storm fast pitch softball team began their 2008 season last weekend by going 3-1 and placing second in the Hill City Tournament.

They defeated Burlington, Colo. 7-0; outscored Akron, Colo. 5-2; beat Akron 9-2 in the semi-finals and lost 7-5 to Burlington in the championship game.

In the shutout of Burlington on Saturday afternoon, Norton scored two runs in the second inning. Brittany Anderson and Ashley Archer both singled and Samantha Raymer doubled and Anderson and Archer both crossed home plate.

The Lady Storm added three more runs in the third inning. Whitney Archer singled, Chantille Campbell doubled, Anderson singled, Ashley Archer doubled and Whitney Archer, Campbell and Anderson all scored.

The final two runs for the Lady

Storm were scored in the fourth inning. Whitney Archer and Campbell both doubled and both tallied.

Leading hitters for the Lady Storm were Ashley Archer, 3 for 3; Anderson and Raymer, both 2 for 2; Whitney Archer and Campbell, 2 for 3.

Norton had 12 hits, three walks and six strike outs.

Winning pitcher was Ashley Archer. She allowed just two hits, walked two batters and struck out one.

Later on Saturday, the Lady Storm defeated Akron. The Lady Storm got off to a good start by scoring three runs in the first inning compared to one for Akron. Whitney Archer singled, Erika Gonzales doubled, Campbell doubled, Anderson singled and Archer, Gonzales and Campbell all scored.

Akron narrowed the Lady Storm lead with one run in the third inning to make it 3-2. That was as

close as they got, however, as the Lady Storm ran across two more runs in the sixth inning when Ashley Archer doubled, Raymer bunted safely and Courtney Balthazar tripled. Archer and Raymer both scored.

Whitney Archer was leading hitter, going 2 for 3 at the plate.

Ashley Archer was the winning pitcher. She gave up just three hits, struck out nine batters and walked five.

The Lady Storm had eight hits, two walks and six strike outs.

In the semi-finals on Sunday afternoon, the Lady Storm met Akron for a second time and handled them even better than the first time after getting off to a slow start. After two innings, Akron led 2-1. The Lady Storm's first run came when Raymer and Kelsey Normandin both singled and Raymer scored in the second inning.

It was all Lady Storm after that. They ran across four runs

in the third inning Whitney Archer, Gonzales and Campbell all singled, Anderson doubled and Ashley Archer singled. Whitney Archer, Gonzales, Campbell and Anderson all scored.

The Lady Storm added two more runs in the fourth inning when Whitney Archer and Gonzales both doubled and Campbell singled and Archer and Gonzales both scored.

The Lady Storm wasn't finished scoring yet, however, as they added two more runs in the sixth inning when Whitney Archer and Campbell both singled and scored.

The Lady Storm had 14 hits in the game, one walk and seven strike outs. Leading hitters were Whitney Archer, Gonzales and Campbell who were all 3 for 4. Raymer was 2 for 3.

The winning pitcher was Normandin. She allowed just three hits, struck out six batters and walked three.

Having shutout Burlington in their first game, the Lady Storm might have been a little overconfident when they met the same team in the championship game later on Sunday afternoon.

Six errors and five hits produced seven runs for Burlington in the first inning! Although the Lady Storm shut them down after that, they could only score five runs themselves and suffered their only loss of the tournament.

The Lady Storm scored one run in the first inning when Whitney Archer walked and Campbell doubled her home. Two more runs came in for the Lady Storm in the third inning when Whitney Archer singled, Gonzales doubled, Campbell walked and Anderson singled and Archer and Gonzales scored.

The Lady Storm's final two scores came in the fourth inning when Raymer doubled, Normandin singled, Balthazar walked and Raymer and Normandin both

scored.

The Lady Storm had eight hits in the game, four walks and six strike outs. Anderson went 2 for 3 at the plate.

Losing pitcher was Ashley Archer. She allowed seven hits, struck out two batters and walked two.

"We played exceptionally well in the first three games of the tournament," said Lady Storm head coach Joe Anderson. "Our defense was outstanding but we played well in all phases of the game. Offensively, we put pressure on the other teams."

"We weren't focused in the first inning of the championship game. We played well after that error-filled first inning and might have been able to win but the 75 minute time rule stopped the game after five innings."

"I want to thank Jamie Alexander of Hill City for filling in and doing a good job of playing for us in the two Saturday games."