

13 Blue Jays named to All-League Team

By DICK BOYD

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Thirteen members of the 2008 Norton Community High School football team have been named to the Mid-Continent League All-League Football Team by vote of the league coaches.

Named to the first team offense were Terrell Lane, 5-foot-11-inch, 210 pound sophomore tailback; Ashton Draper, 6'1", 175 pound junior wide receiver and Brock Lauer, 6', 185 pound senior guard. Lane was also named to the first team as a punter, to the second team as a kick returner and received honorable mention as a linebacker. Lane was the leading rusher for Norton this season and recorded 2,125 all-purpose yards. He also received honorable mention last season as a running back. Lauer was also a second team offensive selection last season.

Lauer received a double honor by being named to the first team defense from his end position. He received honorable mention at that position last year.

Brad Nuzum, 5'9", 160 pound all-purpose senior, was chosen to the first team on defense from a defensive line position.

Zac Dreher, 6'2", 190 pound senior linebacker, was also named to the first team defense for the third straight year. Dreher was leading tackler for the Blue Jays for the third season in a row.

Dreher was also chosen to the second team as a tight end.

Draper was second leading pass receiver for Norton this year.

Matt Stanley, 5'8", 175 pound senior fullback, was named to the

second team offense.

Landon Hamel, 160 pound junior wide receiver, was also chosen to the second team offense. He was second for Norton in all-purpose yards with 931 total yards and was the leading pass receiver for the Blue Jays this season.

Nish Millan, 250 pound senior tackle, was named to the second team on offense.

Another second team selection from Norton was freshman kicker Caleb Laughlin.

Stanley was also named to the second team on defense as a line-backer. He was second high tackler for the Blue Jays this season.

Hamel also was named second team defense as a defensive back. He recorded the third highest number of tackles for the Blue Jays.

Zane Perez, 155 pound junior defensive back, joined Hamel on the second team defense.

Draper also received honorable mention as a defensive back. Draper led Norton's pass defense with three interceptions.

Also receiving honorable mention on defense was John Van Doren, 245 pound senior tackle for the Blue Jays.

Connor Pfannenstiel, 145 pound junior quarterback for the Jays, received honorable mention. He totaled 1,025 yards passing and rushing for the season.

Norton's Kaid McKenna, 160 pound sophomore center, also received honorable mention.

Other team choices

Named to the first team offense along with Lane, Draper and Lauer were: Chase King, senior quarterback, Ellis; Colt Rog-

ers, junior running back, Smith Center; Joe Osburn, senior running back, Smith Center; Jacob Kinderknecht, sophomore wide receiver, Ellis; Kris Lehmann, senior tight end, Smith Center; Logan Tuxhorn, senior center, Smith Center; Dillon Corbett, junior guard, Smith Center; Justin Nixon, senior tackle, Smith Center; Matt Erbert, senior tackle, Ellis; Zach Wood, senior kicker, Phillipsburg; Colt Rogers, junior kick returner, Smith Center.

On the first team defense along with Lauer, Nuzum and Dreher were: Corbett, junior defensive end, Smith Center; Erbert, senior defensive lineman, Ellis; Trevor Rempe, senior defensive lineman, Smith Center; Lehmann, senior linebacker, Smith Center; Matt Dietz, senior linebacker, Trego; Wood, senior linebacker, Phillipsburg; Rogers, junior defensive back, Smith Center; King, senior defensive back, Ellis; Spencer Hemmert, senior defensive back, Trego and Marshall McCall, senior defensive back, Smith Center.

Second team offensive choices along with Stanley, Hamel, Dreher, Millan, Laughlin and Lane were: Hemmert, quarterback, Trego; Dylan Pfeifer, running back, Ellis; Dylan Frantz, running back, Phillipsburg; Danny Pfannenstiel, running back, Osborne; Tanner Thompson, wide receiver, Phillipsburg; Casey Flax, center, Trego; Mark Harman, guard, Phillipsburg; Clay Barton, guard, Ellis; Eric Cunningham, tackle, Trego; John Krager, tackle, Osborne; Ben Suchsland, punter, Phillipsburg; Hemmert, kick



The Norton senior football players who received All-Mid-Continent League recognition at the end of the season are shown following the Regional game at Beloit with coach Lucas Melvin and the runner-up trophy. They are, from left: Nish Millan, Matt Stanley, coach Melvin, Brock Lauer, Zac Dreher, Brad Nuzum and John Van Doren.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

returner, Trego.

Named to the second team defense along with Stanley, Hamel and Perez were: Cunningham, defensive end, Trego; Clay Barton, defensive end, Ellis; Nixon, defensive lineman, Smith Center; Bobby Wilson, defensive lineman, Phillipsburg; J.J. Rice, defensive lineman, Phillipsburg; Gideon Fuchs, linebacker, Ellis; Flax, linebacker, Trego; Osburn, linebacker, Smith Center; Tuxhorn, linebacker, Smith Center; Tanner Thompson, defensive back, Phillipsburg; Aaron Geist, defensive back, Osborne.

Receiving honorable mention on offense in addition to Pfannenstiel, McKenna, Van Doren, Lane and Draper were: Travis Rempe, quarterback, Smith Center; Trevor Rempe, running back, Smith Center; Fuchs, running back, Ellis; Suchsland, running back, Phillipsburg; Kalen Mace, wide receiver, Smith Center; Kyle Hadley, tight end, Ellis; Trevor Oliver, center, Osborne; Scott Fuller, guard, Ellis; Taylor Badger, tackle, Phillipsburg; Cody Tucker, tackle, Smith Center; Colbin Patterson, tackle, Plainville; Jacob Begler, tackle, Ellis; Dietz, punter,

Trego; Osburn, punter, Smith Center; Casey, punter, Plainville; Tuxhorn, kicker, Smith Center; Manuel Rodriguez, kicker, Ellis; Osburn, kick returner, Smith Center.

Selected for honorable mention on defense along with Van Doren, Lane and Draper were: James Richmeier, defensive lineman, Trego; Derek Rowland, linebacker, Phillipsburg; Pfeifer, linebacker, Ellis; Josh Darnell, linebacker, Plainville; Osburn, defensive back, Smith Center; Jacob Kinderknecht, defensive back, Ellis.

Huskers' volleyball walk-on has local ties Finds herself in a starting role

By DICK BOYD

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Jordan Wilberger, a redshirt freshman walk-on middle blocker for the fourth-ranked nationally University of Nebraska women's volleyball team, has suddenly been thrust into a starting role for the Lady Huskers.

Wilberger received her opportunity when junior middle blocker Kori Cooper went down with a season-ending knee injury in a Nov. 19 match at Texas. She has been moved to a spot that was occupied by Amanda Gates, who is now playing in Cooper's former spot.

"It was really hard to see Cooper go down but I knew my team needed me to step in, so that's what I'm focusing on," Wilberger said. "It's very important to stay low-error and just do what I can do and really focus on fundamentals of blocking."

Wilberger appears to be adjusting well to her new role. She had two kills and a block in the third set against Texas after taking over for Cooper. She also had three block assists in her first start when the Lady Huskers swept Texas Tech on Saturday, Nov. 22.

Nebraska head coach John Cook said he doesn't expect Wilberger to do the things that Gates and Cooper were doing. On the other hand, he said Wilberger is more athletic than either of them.

"She's just an athlete," coach Cook said. "She plays higher than Cooper and Gates. She jumps higher. She just doesn't have that experience, but she can make athletic plays. She'll match up better against Texas-type hitters than Gates and Cooper. She just plays higher. She has to go out and play now."

Nebraska setter Sydney Anderson said she will keep encouraging Wilberger to just stay confident in her abilities.

Wilberger came to the Husker program as a graduate of Scottsbluff High School where she was a three-sport standout in volleyball, basketball and track.

"She was a great walk-on for us," said coach Cook. "We could see the potential there. I was saying early in the year that I thought she would be one of our most improved players."

Wilberger made her second start for the Lady Huskers on Saturday, Nov. 29 when they clinched at least a tie for the Big 12 championship with a win over Baylor. The Lady Huskers were 27-2 overall and 18-2 in the Big 12 heading into first-round NCAA play Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5-6 in Lincoln.

On Friday, the Lady Huskers defeated Liberty University of Lynchburg, Virginia, 25-11, 21-25, 25-16, 25-19. Wilberger had 7 kills in 10 attempts versus the Lady Flames.

On Saturday, the Lady Huskers defeated the UAB from Birmingham, Alabama, 25-14, 25-15, 25-12. Jordan had 3 kills in 4 attempts in that win.

Nebraska has now advanced to NCAA Regional play in Seattle, Wash. They will play the University of Michigan at 8 p.m. this evening and Washington and Utah will play the other regional match today. Winners will play at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday for the regional championship and a trip to Omaha next weekend for the Final Four and possible national championship.

Jordan is the daughter of Renee and Rich Wilberger of Scottsbluff. Renee was a star athlete for Norton Community High School. Roxanne and Conrad Cox, Long Island, are Jordan's grandparents.

NOTE: Some information in this article was taken from a story by Bob Hamar, The Grand Island Independent. Permission to use the information was given.

Familiar name takes over TMP wrestling

By DICK BOYD

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Norton's Eric Johnson was one of several applicants to fill the vacant head wrestling coach position at Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays and was hired to the position in September, only a few months before the start of the season.

Johnson replaced eight-year coach Brandon Pfeifer, who resigned at the TMP-Marian winter banquet to spend more time with his family.

Johnson is a familiar name to many wrestling fans in western Kansas.

He was a four-time state finalist and two-time Class 3-2-1A state champion for Norton Community High School before wrestling collegiately at the University of Central Oklahoma and Fort Hays State University.

Eric, who is finishing classes at Fort Hays State University, is in his first head coaching position. His philosophy is a combination

from several coaches, including his father, Bill Johnson, the very successful head coach at Norton and former Tiger wrestling coach Cody Bickley.

"You kind of pick up stuff that you can like and you can use for yourself," Johnson said recently. "It is just kind of a conglomerate of stuff that I have learned over the years."

Although his team is starting the season with only 10 wrestlers in the lineup, coach Johnson does

not want his wrestlers to focus on winning team championships but on wrestling to the best of their abilities.

"If everyone goes out there and wrestles hard and gives it 110 percent, there is really nothing that you can be mad about," he said.

"We ask them to just go out there and leave it all on the mat."

Johnson has only one returning state tourney qualifier on his squad.

Football coach thanks many at banquet

By DICK BOYD

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The 2008 Norton Community High School football team was honored by parents and fans on Sunday, Nov. 30 during the annual banquet sponsored by the Blue Jay Booster Club in the high school cafeteria.

The Blue Jay gridders under third year head coach Lucas Melvin put together another very successful season. They compiled an impressive 8-3 season record, placed third in the tough Mid-Continent League, won the District championship, won the Bi-District championship and placed runner-up in the Regional game.

Norton's only losses were to five-time Class 2A state champion Smith Center, to Ellis, who went deep into the play-offs and to an excellent Beloit squad in the Regional game.

Following a carry-in meal, coach Melvin introduced the team and made comments to the crowd about each player as he called them forward.

Senior members of this year's team were: Zac Dreher, linebacker, tight end, offensive lineman; Donny Hildebrand, offensive and defensive lineman; Brock Lauer, offensive guard, defensive end; Nish Millan, offensive and defensive lineman; Kyle Mindrup, offensive and defensive lineman; Brad Nuzum, running back, linebacker, all purpose; Matt Stanley, fullback, linebacker and John Van Doren, offensive and defensive lineman.

"I have known most of these young men for the last six plus years," said coach Melvin. "Not only did I teach them in junior high, I also coached them in track and basketball. I knew they had a chance to do some special things. They are a very special group to me and I wish them the best in years to come."

"Congratulations on a wonderful season that I hope you all will cherish as much as we as coaches will."

Coach Melvin thanked his wife and family; all the players; assistant coaches Todd Fulton, David Stover and Tony Fiscus; managers Hannah Fulton, Shelby Schaefer, David Cressler and Anthony Wente; filmers Hannah Fulton, Jacob Brooks and Dalton Miller; school faculty and administration; Ray Hildebrand and the groundskeepers; Charlotte and Bob Stephenson, statistics; cheerleaders; band; Blue Jay Booster Club; Lamont Shirk, Terry Laughlin and others who painted the Blue Jay on the football field; news media and the entire community for contributing to the successful season.

"Our Phillipsburg game at the beginning of the season really defined us as a team that won't quit and will play hard and that is a big compliment to these young men," coach Melvin told the crowd.

"Another part of our season that I think was a huge victory was the day after the win over Phillipsburg in double overtime when most of our players and all of the coaches helped paint a home for a lady who

could not. What a special thing for these young men to come together and do. I know they felt it was more rewarding to give than to receive that day.

"The Smith Center game is one we feel we should have won. We played very hard and had our chance to beat a very good team."

"The St. Francis game was very special and helped us realize we can not only come close to beating great teams but can beat them."

"The Scott City game was a great win against a fantastic team."

"The Beloit game was a tough game. We know we could have won but we just didn't put a full game together and made some errors they were able to capitalize on."

"Our seniors continued a strong winning tradition at Norton. One thing I think a lot of our young players can learn from is their unselfishness. Several of our seniors maybe did not play where they wanted or as much as they wanted all the time but they went as hard as they could to make our team as good as possible."

"Many of our seniors have matured very much over the past four years. I really appreciated the way they stepped up and were team leaders."

"The state of the football program at Norton is good but hungry. After reading their winter goals I had them fill out, I can see the young men returning want more. It is going to take work, though. Hard work, dedication, sacrifice and a selfless attitude are essential. We have some very good football

players and we have young men who have the potential to be great football players. And, all of them say they are willing, so now it is time to do it. We must work hard in the weightroom and in other sports now. There is no waiting; it is now."

"Academics for our student athletes need to be more important to them all. We have some who are doing excellent with their classes but all of them are capable of being fine students. It is vital that they understand the importance of an education and its blessing. Also, these young men need to be leaders in the classroom and school. It is our goal for them to be the type of young men that their peers look up to in the classroom and community."

"The state of the program is good and now we want to continue to make it better. Our ultimate team goal for next year, according to almost everyone's survey, is for a state championship. For those 'graduating parents', you are still part of this family and always will be. Working with all of your sons this season was such a blessing. Thanks so much for all your support."

Coach Melvin presented a miniature Norton football helmet to each of the senior players.

The seniors presented to coach Melvin a handsome clock which had pictures of all the coaches and action pictures of the seniors around the face of it

The seniors also presented shirts with their pictures on them to all the coaches.

Junior high Husky girls win, lose

The Northern Valley junior high girls played Logan and both the A- and B-teams tasted defeat.

In A-team action, Logan won 10-8 and in B-team play it was 20-10, Logan.

A-team scorers were:
Haley Graham - 3
Erika Chandler - 2

McKinsey Evans - 2
Regan Simpson - 2
Patience Coffman - 1
B-team scorers were:
DaKota Hilburn - 4
Harley Rupp - 2
Khrissanna VanPatten - 2
Kortney Cunningham - 2
Comments from coach Amy

McKinney: "Improvement was the word for the evening. The B-team girls are starting to look comfortable on the court and play together as a team."

It has been fun to see the changes in the B-team since we started in October. The A-team girls were able to get the shots up but were

unable to make them fall. "We were proud that they played to the final buzzer and showed improvement in their on the court thinking."

The girls took part in the Healy Tournament on Dec. 6.

The A-team girls beat Healy 20-9.

Scoring were:
Erika Chandler - 9, Sheila Stillion - 7, McKinsey Evans - 2, Haley Graham - 2.

Northern Valley lost to Quinter 20-10. Scoring were: Erika Chandler - 4; McKinsey Evans - 2; Regan Simpson - 2; Sheila Stillion - 2.