

Banquet honors Blue Jay wrestlers

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

Another excellent season was celebrated by head coach Bill Johnson and his Norton Community High School wrestling team during the Annual Banquet held Sunday, April 19 in the junior high gym in Norton.

With 11 returning lettermen out of 27 total wrestlers, the Blue Jays compiled another impressive record en route to a third place finish in the Class 3-2-1A state tournament in Hays.

The Blue Jay wrestlers were hampered most of the season by injuries but still fashioned an outstanding 13-2 dual record. Norton averaged 49.7 points per dual compared to an average of 18.7 points for opponents.

Norton's only two dual losses were to defending and eventual state champion Smith Center and a strong, talented Kearney, Neb. team.

In his 20th season at the helm of the Blue Jay wrestling program, coach Johnson had six returning state placers and three returning state qualifiers. Returning lettermen and last year's weight were: Zach Bainter, 135; Matt Stanley, 160; Jordan, Bebb, 171; Brock Lauer, 189, seniors; Kaenon Keiswetter, 125; Zane Perez, 130, juniors; Troy Bainter, 103, Billy Broeckelman, 112; Brett Terrell, Landon Keiswetter, 119, sophomores.

Assistant coaches this season were Doug Ray, Shane Miller and Tony Fiscus. Student manager was Gaia Cazzaniga.

Season review

In the season opener, every Norton wrestler placed in the Hoxie Invitational on Sat., December 6 as the Blue Jays won their sixth straight team championship, this time by 70.5 points.

Next, Norton placed second for the third year in a row in the annual Clay Center Invitational Round Robin on Sat., December 13.

Norton was scheduled to open the 2008-09 dual season on Fri., December 19 with matches versus Phillipsburg and Stockton in Norton but inclement weather caused a postponement until February 3.

The Blue Jays completed 2008 with an impressive championship victory in the tough Goodland Holiday Classic on Sat., December 20. Norton defeated Hoxie, Hugoton and Burlington, Colo. in pool action. In the semi-finals, they outscored Goodland 40-24, then came from behind to edge Garden City 33-31 to win the title.

Norton started the new year by hosting Mill Valley in a dual on Fri., January 9 the night before the annual J.R. Durham Invitational Tournament. It turned out to be a good warm up as the Blue Jays rolled over Mill Valley 47-18.

The next day, in the NCHS Stull Gymnasium, Norton turned in another outstanding performance by winning the championship of the Durham Invitational for the sixth straight year. To do so, they had to beat the likes of an outstanding Scott City team, which placed runner-up, as well as defending state champion Smith Center, who

was third, and an excellent Beloit squad. Jordan Bebb won the 215 pound championship with a 7-5 decision to guarantee a title for the Blue Jays!

On Thurs., January 15, Norton hosted Smith Center and Trego Community. The Blue Jays easily outscored Trego 63-18 and took an early lead over the Redmen before losing 43-25.

After the Smith Center/Trego duals, Norton left for Newton for the prestigious 46th annual Newton Tournament of Champions. The Blue Jay squad, decimated by injuries, had only eight wrestlers able to compete against the best wrestlers in all classes in the state of Kansas. The small Norton squad turned in an outstanding performance, finishing ninth as a team for the second year in a row.

Incidentally, Norton is the smallest school to ever win the Tournament of Champions championship. The Blue Jays did it in both 2005 and 2006.

Still hampered by injuries, Norton traveled to Kearney, Neb. on Tues., January 27 to wrestle Kearney High School, the No. 4 ranked team in the largest enrollment class in the state of Nebraska. The Blue Jays suffered their second dual loss of the season by a 36-11 score.

On Sat., January 31 in Osborne, Norton came within one point of extending their string of nine straight Mid-Continent League Tournament championships when they were edged for the title by Smith Center. The Blue Jays amassed 169 points but the Redmen totaled 169.5. Phillipsburg was third with 103 points, Plainville fourth with 89.5 and Osborne fifth with 86.

Two Norton wrestlers returned to the lineup for the league tournament and 11 of the 13 Blue Jay wrestlers placed.

On Tues., February 3, there was evidence that the Norton wrestlers were starting to heal. It was "Senior Night" in Wilmett Kirk Memorial Gym for the Stockton/Phillipsburg duals which had been postponed from December 19. The Blue Jays took care of business by smothering Stockton 66-3 and dominating Phillipsburg 67-6.

Norton put two more duals in the win column on Fri., February 6 when they outscored Plainville 51-15 and Ellis 61-14 during wrestling in Plainville.

These duals served as a warm-up for the annual Panther Classic on Saturday in Phillipsburg. The Blue Jays had to battle hard to hold off a determined Abilene to win their sixth Panther Classic championship in a row. Norton scored 147.5 points and Abilene ended with 135.5. Beloit was third with 102.

On Thurs., February 12, Norton completed the dual season with Mid-Continent League wins over Osborne by 51-15 and over Hill City by 67-0 in action in Hill City.

Regional wrestling was held Fri. and Sat., February 20-21 in Ellis and Norton went in ranked No. 1 in the state with seven state-

ranked wrestlers. The Blue Jays came through again by winning their fifth straight regional title. Thirteen Norton wrestlers competed and 11 qualified for the state tournament.

The Blue Jays scored an impressive 204.5 points compared to second place Goodland's 148.

Regional champions for Norton were sophomore Troy Bainter, 112; junior Kaenon Keiswetter, 135 and senior Zach Bainter, 140. Coach Johnson was named "Regional Coach of the Year" by vote of the team coaches.

The Class 3-2-1A State Tournament was held Fri., and Sat., February 27-28 in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. As always, the competition was tough and, as always, the Blue Jays were in the hunt for a state championship but two other teams wrestled enough better to finish ahead of them. Smith Center successfully defended their state title by scoring 134.5 points. Beloit was second with 109 and Norton third with 103. The order was the same after Friday's wrestling and did not change on Saturday.

Goodland finished right behind Norton in fourth with 102 points. Five of the top 10 teams were from the Mid-Continent League as Plainville placed fifth; Osborne placed sixth and Phillipsburg finished tenth.

The Bainter brothers both won championships, followed by Zane Perez, fourth, 152; sophomore Kaid McKenna, fifth, 145; senior Matt Stanley, sixth, 160. Also wrestling for Norton were sophomore Billy Broeckelman, 119; sophomore Brett Terrell, 125; sophomore Landon Keiswetter, 130; junior Kaenon Keiswetter, 135; senior Brock Lauer, 171 and senior Jordan Bebb, 215.

An estimated 800 wrestlers, coaches, family members, school administrators and fans attended the banquet.

Individual awards

Following a potluck meal, coach Johnson and his assistant coaches spoke to the large crowd and presented awards.

The "Most Outstanding Wrestler" award, the most prestigious of all, was awarded for the second year in a row to state champion Zach Bainter.

Zach had the highest winning percentage of any Norton wrestler this season. He compiled an excellent 21-1 record which is 95 percent wins.

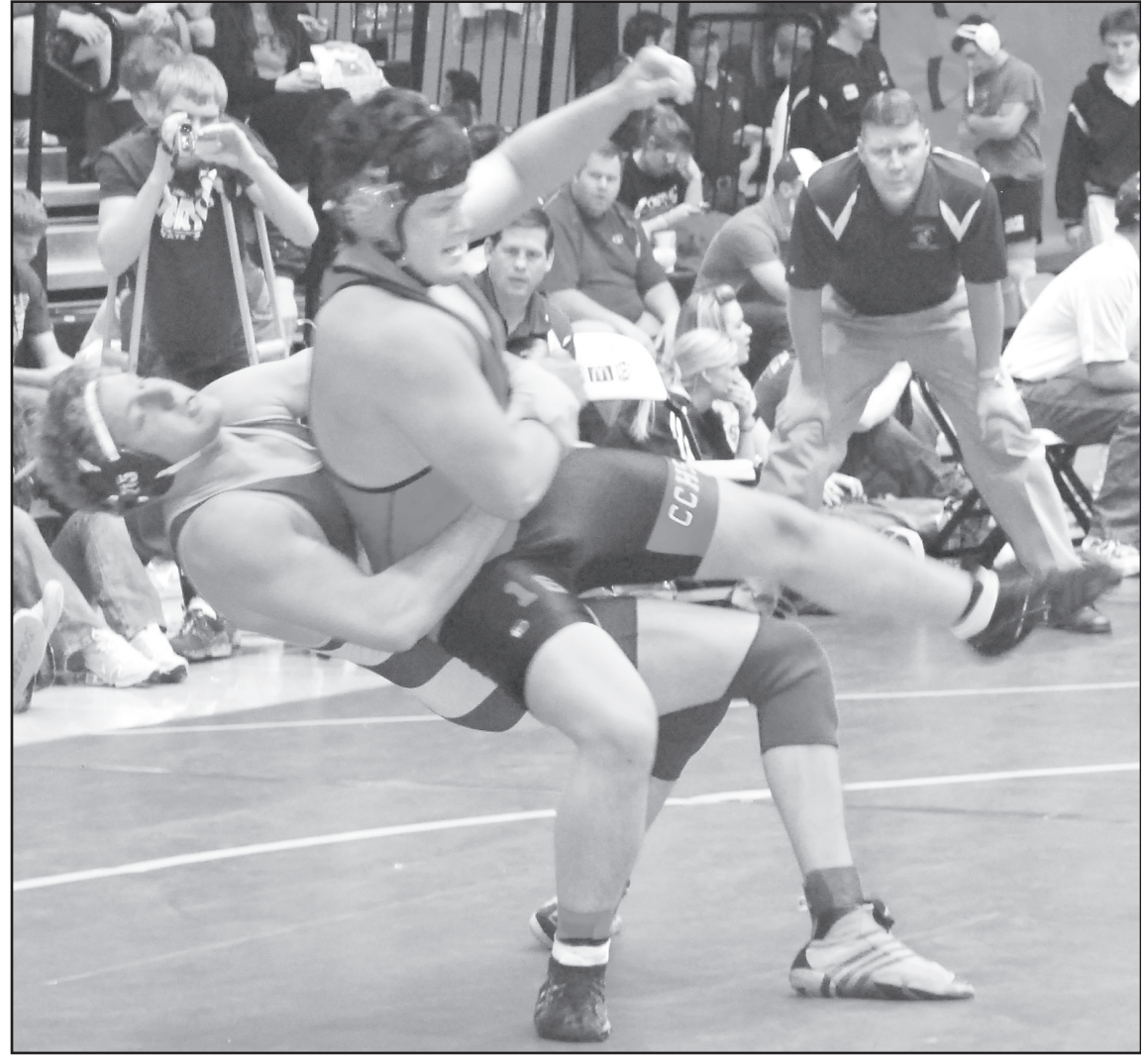
This percentage ties him for 19th in Norton history since records have been kept.

Zach's career record at Norton is an impressive 108-19. His 108 wins ranks him 11th overall among Blue Jays wrestlers.

Receiving the "Coach Durham" award was senior Logan Kelly. The award is based on hard work, sportsmanship, academics and good citizenship.

Named the "Most Improved Wrestler" of the season was sophomore Kaid McKenna. Kaid led the team this year in technical falls with four, reversals with 28 and near falls, 3 points, with 27.

Troy Bainter received the "Outstanding Sophomore Wrestler"



Norton senior Jordan Bebb manhandled his 215 pound opponent Trenton Harshman, Chase County, in their consolation match in the Class 3-2-1A State Wrestling Tournament in the Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. Bebb is shown here taking Harshman down to the mat and he pinned Harshman later in the match. In the background photographing the action was Bebb's injured teammate Spencer Shirk. Norton head coach Bill Johnson and assistant coach Doug Ray can also be seen as they focused on the match.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

award and the "Most Promising Freshman" award went to R.J. Ellis.

"The Most Improved Junior Varsity Wrestler" award went to sophomore Taylor Gordon.

The "Most Exciting Match" award winner was Kaenon Keiswetter for the 14-13 decision loss to Beloit's Cas Spangler.

The winner of the "Key Match of the Year" award was Jordan Bebb for his 41 second pin of Chance Blalock, Garden City, to win the dual by one point and the Goodland Holiday Classic championship.

The "Underdog Match of the Year" award was won by sophomore Spencer Shirk for his 6-4 win over Kevin Wolters, Atwood.

The "Fan of the Year" award went to Norton's Jon Rowh by vote of those in attendance.

Classroom "Academic Award" winners and their grade point averages were: freshman R.J. Ellis, 3.43; sophomores Troy Bainter and Spencer Shirk, both 4.0; junior Zane Perez, 3.45; senior Logan Kelly, 3.898.

Winners of the varsity statistical awards for the season were: Billy Broeckelman, most points, 154; Billy Broeckelman, most take-downs, 63; Kaid McKenna, most reversals, 28; Billy Broeckelman, most near falls, 2 points, 27; Kaid McKenna, most near falls, 3 points, 27; Zane Perez, most decisions, 17 (ties school record second year in row); Landon Keiswetter, most major decisions, 6; Kaid McKenna, most technical falls, 4; Billy Broeckelman, most falls, 19; Billy Broeckelman, fastest fall, 11 seconds.

Receiving junior varsity statistical awards were: Casey Robison, most take-downs, 33; Casey Robison, most reversals, 17; Cayleb Campbell, most near falls, 2 points, 10; Casey Robison, most near falls, 3 points, 14; Casey Robison, most decisions, 7; Andy Nickell, most decisions, 3; Cayleb Campbell, most technical falls, 2; Cayleb Campbell, most falls, 9; Colby Poage, fastest fall, 15 seconds.

Coach Johnson called the seniors forward and presented awards to those who had wrestled all four years. Honored were: Zach Bainter, Logan Kelly, Brock Lauer and Jordan Bebb. Coach Johnson also presented a special award to Matt Stanley for three years of wrestling.

Gaia Cazzaniga, a foreign exchange student, also received an award for being a student manager.

Winners of the "Wrestler of the Week" awards were also honored.

Coach Johnson pointed out that Norton has had 86 state wrestling champions. He also said that Zach Bainter is only the ninth wrestler in Norton history to win four state tournament medals.

Coach Johnson also honored four senior wrestlers who have received Academic Awards from the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

To qualify they must have maintained at least a .500 record all four years of wrestling.

Logan Kelly was named to the academic first team for a grade point average of between 3.5 and 4.0.

Brock Lauer, Zach Bainter and Jordan Bebb received honorable mention for being between a 3.0 and 3.5 grade point average.

Coach Johnson talked about each individual senior wrestler and how they had contributed to the team's success.

He had a special award for each. He also presented lettermen's patches in recognition of the season's achievements.

Zach Bainter was the spokesman for the team in presenting framed pictures of the team to each of the coaches.

On behalf of the team, he thanked the coaches for all the time they worked with the wrestlers.

"Our wrestlers had a lot of injuries this season but just kept wrestling hard," said coach Johnson.

"They were always willing to fill in at other weights when needed to score points for the team."

Coach Johnson thanked his wife, his assistant coaches and their wives, school administration and staff, parents, the Norton Telegram, KQNK Radio and fans for their tremendous support of the wrestling program.

He especially thanked Vicki Bainter for all the photos she took of the team during the season.

Coach Johnson also handed out some "fun" awards.

Winners were: Kaenon Keiswetter, "Quiz the Coach" award; Brock Lauer, "Clockwatcher" award; Colby Poage, "Six Pound Orange" award; Billy Broeckelman, "Assistant Coach" award; Landon Keiswetter, "Porker of the Year" award; Jordan Bebb, "Leaner of the Year" award; Cayleb Campbell, "Mash" award.

Coach pleased with golfers

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

Norton junior varsity golfers competed in the Smith Center JV Invitational golf tournament on Tuesday and Blue Jay head coach David Stover was pleased with their performances.

No team scores were kept but Norton senior Ashley Colip was 11th medalist, just one stroke out of a tie for ninth. She shot a 52.

Other Norton players and their scores were: sophomore Shaylyn Boteler, 59; sophomore Tanner Morel, 62; sophomore Nikki McVey, 65; sophomore Ashley Millan, 68; sophomore Katie Gall, 68.

Medalists were: Travis Bird, Plainville, 46; Kalen Cromwell, Belleville, 49; Blake Pestinger, Beloit, 49; Kayley Johnson, Belleville, 49; Kyle Becker, Plainville, 50; Brady True, Beloit, 50; Cole Smith, Plainville, 50; Josh Tietjen, Belleville, 50; Eric Pahls, Beloit, 51; Dylan Woodward, Belleville, 51; Ashley Colip, 52;

Dillon Wilson, Plainville, 53; Zach Beims, Belleville, 54; Austin Barnes, Belleville, 55; Adam Waymaster, Concordia, 55.

"We saw improvements in these players today," said coach Stover.

"We had to fight through difficult weather conditions, including a rain delay and I think we handled it well.

"I was especially pleased with the play of Ashley Colip, earning individual honors with a solid round of golf.

"We will look to continue improvement during a very hectic stretch for our junior varsity golfers next week with tournaments in Norton and at Trego Community in the coming week."

Next action

The Norton junior varsity golfers will host the Norton JV Invitational on Tuesday with tee off set for 3 p.m.

The Trego JV Invitational will be held next Thursday in Wa-Keeney, beginning at 9 a.m.

Good words for jayvee tracksters

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

Norton junior varsity track and field athletes competed in the Freshmen/Sophomore Track Meet in Hill City on Monday and Blue Jay head coach Jason Jones was complimentary of their efforts.

No team scores were kept but coach Jones said the Norton girls and boys each set two new personal records and they brought home medals in five events.

"Once again, we are pleased with the efforts of those who competed," said coach Jones. "They have continued to work hard in practice and that hard work paid off.

"These athletes are getting better as the season progresses and we are continually proud of their efforts and performances."

GIRLS

Freshman Caren Thomson set a personal record in the long jump

with a leap of 13'5" and won the bronze medal with her performance. She also placed fifth in the 100 meter hurdles in 19.93, fifth in the 300 meter hurdles in 59.96 and ninth in the 100 meter dash in 15.33.

Other performances by Norton girls and results were: sophomore Morgan Baumann, 22'11", 15th; sophomore Katie Scott, 19'1.5", 16th; senior Emily Scott, 15'10.5", 17th, shot put; Morgan Baumann, personal record 64'8", 11th; Katie Scott, 44'6", 14th; Emily Scott, 38'9", 15th, discus; junior Kelsey Nuzum, 21.65, 7th, 100 meter hurdles; Kelsey Nuzum, 17.38, 12th, 100 meter dash.

BOYS

Freshman Joe LeClair earned two gold medals in the hurdles. He was timed in 17.62 in the 110 meter hurdles and in 45.52 in the 300 meter hurdles.

Sophomore Ryan Blecha earned the silver medal in the shot put

with a personal record heave of 41'6". He also finished fourth in the discus with a personal best throw of 107'7".

Freshman Kurt Douglas captured the bronze medal in the 3200 meter run with a clocking of 13:10.56. He also competed in the 800 meter run and was timed in 2:53.10.

The Norton 4 x 100 meter relay team of freshman Damien Davis, LeClair, freshman Justin Waggoner and Blecha placed fourth with a time of 51.54.

Other Norton boys performances and results were: Damien Davis, 29'5", 18th, shot put; Damien Davis, 58'6", 20th, discus; Ryan Blecha, 12.84, 9th; Justin Waggoner, 13.21, 12th; Damien Davis, 13.90, 13th, 100 meter dash; Justin Waggoner, 27.55, 13th, 200 meter dash.

Next action

The Hill City meet was the final one of the season for freshmen and

sophomores.

The Norton varsity is scheduled to compete today in the Goldsmith Relays in WaKeeney, beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Support
your
favorite
Spring
Sports
Team