



Legion competitive despite two setbacks

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton American Legion baseball team hosted an outstanding Russell nine on Wednesday evening and was competitive, despite losing 14-4 and 17-12.

"Our players play with a lot of heart and continue to battle no matter whether we win or lose," said Norton head coach Steve Jeltz.

"All you can ever ask out of a young man is to do the best he can and our players try as hard as they can."

Norton was playing short handed due to harvest and a recent auto accident which kept Damien Davis out of the lineup.

In the opener, Russell took a 3-0 lead in the top of the first inning. Norton scored once in the bottom of the inning when Logan Runnion singled and Landon Hamel sacrificed him home.

Russell added one more run in the top of the second and ran across six more in the top of the third. Four more runs in the top of the fourth for Russell extended their lead to 14-1.

In the bottom of the fourth, the Blue Jays tallied three runs but still trailed by 10 runs after four innings so rules state that the game was over. Runnion led off the bottom of the fourth with a double, Hamel singled, Brian Spooner walked, Kaenon Keiswetter walked, Jake Riedel doubled and Hamel, Spooner and Keiswetter all scored in the inning.

Norton had four hits, three walks and five strike outs. Runnion was leading hitter for Norton with a single and double in two times at bat.

Hamel was the losing pitcher. He was relieved in the top of the fourth by Runnion.



Norton's Logan Runnion is shown her hitting a double in the bottom of the fourth inning in the Legion's first game of a double header here Wednesday night with Russell. Runnion was leading hitter for Norton in the game with a single and double in two official times at bat.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Russell had 10 hits, four walks and four strike outs. Winning pitcher was Craig Farmer.

Norton had a big bottom of the first inning in the nightcap as 14 Blue Jays batted and nine of them scored to take a 9-0 lead!

Tye Nickell walked, Logan Runnion got on base when he was hit by a pitch, Spooner singled, Colby Poage walked, Kaenon Keiswetter walked, Riedel walked when

hit by a pitch, Andrew Soderlund singled, Carlos Galloway walked, Nickell walked again, Runnion walked and Spooner walked. Nickell scored twice and Runnion, Spooner, Poage, Keiswetter, Riedel, Soderlund, Galloway all scored once.

Russell answered with eight runs in the top of the second to cut the Norton lead to 9-8.

Two runs by Russell in the top



The Norton Legion's Andrew Soderlund scored the hard way on Wednesday evening in the second game of a double header here with Russell when he slid head first into home plate during the Blue Jay's big nine run first inning.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

of the third gave them a 10-9 advantage.

Norton fought back and scored three runs in the bottom of the inning to take a 12-10 lead. Runnion, Hamel and Spooner all walked, Keiswetter singled and Riedel walked and Runnion, Hamel and Spooner all scored in the inning.

In the top of the fourth, Russell took the lead again with four more runs, which included a three-run home run by Nathan Wheelock.

With Russell on top 14-12, Norton was unable to respond with more runs and Russell added three more runs in the fifth to make the final 17-12 in the visitors' favor.

Norton had three hits, 11 walks and 10 strike outs. Hamel, Spooner and Keiswetter each had one hit for the Jays.

Keiswetter started on the mound for Norton and was relieved by

Hamel. Russell had 11 hits, 11 walks and 7 strike outs.

"I was very proud of all our players and coaches tonight for the way they kept battling against a very good Russell team," said Norton general manager Joe Durham. "Steve gets the most he can out of every player and makes the game fun no matter what the score is."

"One of our younger players,

Damien Davis, was not present due to a serious accident the night before but I am happy to know that all occupants in the vehicle will recover. All our players wish the Davis family a speedy recovery."

The Norton Legion team will host a double header with Phillipsburg at John Ryan Field this evening. The first game will begin at 6 p.m.

K-18 brings home tourney crown

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton K-18 baseball team journeyed to Elwood in the state of Nebraska the past week and returned with the Nebraska League Tournament championship!

The young Blue Jays were the No.6 seed in the tournament. They defeated No.11 seed Minden 4-1 in their tournament opener on Thursday, July 2.

Norton edged No.3 seed Alma 3-2 on Monday to reach the semi-finals where they outscored No.2 seed Holdrege 8-6 on Tuesday.

In the championship finals on Wednesday night, Norton faced No.1 seed and unbeaten McCook and handed them their first loss of the season by a 4-2 score to win the championship!

Minden

Norton led all the way in the 4-1 victory over Minden. Norton was designated the home team.

In the bottom of the second inning, Trevor Lewis singled, Dalton Miller doubled, Ryan Bainter singled and Treven Rossi walked. Lewis and Miller both scored.

Norton's final two runs came in the bottom of the third when Austin Hager and Robert Blecha both walked and Lewis doubled them home to make it 4-0.

Minden got their only two hits of the game in the top of the fifth to score their only run.

Norton had four hits, three walks and nine strike outs in the game. Lewis was leading hitter for the Blue Jays, going 2 for 2 at the plate.

Austin Hager went all the way on the mound for Norton, allowing just two hits, walking three and striking out nine batters.

Alma

Norton was the home team again in the 3-2 win over Alma.

Again, Norton led all the way. The Blue Jays scored one run in the bottom of the second inning when Miller and Bainter both walked and Andrew Ellis singled Miller home.

Norton took a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the third. Hager walked, Lewis doubled, Bainter hit safely, and Ellis doubled. Hager and Lewis both scored.

In the top of the fourth, Alma scored two runs due to Norton errors to make the final 3-2.

Trey Millan pitched a no hitter and faced only 20 batters in the six

innings. He walked no batters and struck out 13.

Norton had five hits, five walks and three strike outs. Ellis was leading hitter for the Blue Jays, going 2 for 2 at the plate.

Holdrege

No.2 seeded Holdrege brought a 12-1 season record into the semi-finals game with Norton and Hager took the mound again for the Blue Jays.

Norton was once again designated the home team.

Two singles in the top of the first allowed Holdrege to take a 1-0 lead.

The Blue Jays answered with five runs in the bottom of the first. Hager and Millan both singled, Lewis doubled, Dalton Miller tripled and Ellis, Toby Nickell and John Risewick all singled. Hager, Millan, Lewis, Miller and Ellis all scored.

A home run over the fence by Dalton Miller in the bottom of the third extended the Blue Jay lead to 6-1! Bainter also singled in the inning but died on third.

Another Norton run in the bottom of the fourth made it 7-1. Hager and Miller both singled and

Hager tallied.

In the top of the fifth, Holdrege scored three runs to cut the Norton lead to 7-4. The Blue Jays scored one more run in the bottom of the fifth when Ellis singled and made it around the bases to home plate.

Two more runs by Holdrege in the top of the sixth were too little, too late and the Blue Jays were 8-6 winners.

The Norton bats were really connecting in the game as the Blue Jays came up with 13 hits! Dalton Miller was leading hitter, going 3 for 3 with a triple and home run. Recording two singles each were Hager, Millan and Ellis.

Norton had two walks and five strike outs.

Hager allowed nine hits, walked two and struck out five batters.

McCook

The win over Holdrege put the young Blue Jays in the finals on Wednesday versus the unbeaten McCook nine.

Trey Millan was on the mound again as the Norton pitcher and was once again equal to the occasion. He gave up just three hits, walked three and struck out 12

batters as the young Blue Jays won 4-2 to earn the tournament championship!

Norton was designated the visitor in this contest. The Blue Jays scored all four of their runs in the top of the fourth inning when they recorded six of their eight hits in the game. Millan led off with a single, Lewis doubled, Dalton Miller doubled, Bainter doubled, Ellis singled and Nickell singled and Millan, Lewis, Miller and Bainter all crossed home plate!

McCook scored just one run in the first inning and one in the third.

In addition to eight hits, Norton had one walk and no strike outs!

Leading hitters for the Blue Jays were Lewis and Nickell, each with two singles.

With the championship, Norton is now 8-2 in Nebraska League play this season.

Next action

The triumphant Norton K-18 nine will return to play in Kansas on Tuesday when they host the Hays Renegades in a double header at John Ryan Field, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

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