

# Lady Jays make history

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School girls cross country team turned in an outstanding performance to place third in the Class 3A Cross Country State Championships on Saturday on the Country Club Golf Course in Wamego.

The Lady Jay runners competed as a team in the state meet for the first time in school history in 2007 and placed sixth. Last year, they qualified their team for the second time and finished in fifth place.

The Norton boys cross country team also qualified and competed in the state meet on Saturday and placed eleventh.

It's been a great season for first year head coach George Rossi's girls and boys cross country teams. Both squads were champions of the Norton Invitational and were champions of the Mid-Continent League meet.

In the Class 3A Regional Cross Country meet, the top three teams qualified for the state meet. The Norton boys were the runner-up and the Norton girls were third in the regional.

Girls team scores on Saturday in the state meet were Riley County, 82; Belle Plaine, 89; Norton, 127; Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays, 127; Minneapolis, 147; Allen-Northern Heights, 147; Prairie Village-KCC, 152; Ellinwood, 159; Horton, 164; Southeast of Saline, 175; Burlington, 291; Eureka, 293.

The Norton girls placed third over TMP based on the time of the sixth place girl.

Boys team scores on Saturday in the state meet were Holcomb, 77; Minneapolis, 88; Wichita - The Independent, 111; Lyons, 120; Beloit, 134; Riley County, 156; Jefferson County, 182; Sterling, 185; Prairie Village - KCC, 190; Burlington, 195; Norton, 198; Wellsville, 233.

The Norton girls and boys also competed in the Wamego Invitational in their second meet of the season. The girls placed second and the boys were third in that meet.

All the Norton runners' times on the same course were faster this time around, some by one or two minutes!

## Girls

Freshman Regan Simpson led the Norton girls to the finish line in the 2.5 mile race. Regan placed 14th with a time of 16:57 and earned an individual medal since the top 20 placers medaled.

Placing 26th was sophomore Abby Bainter with a 17:21 clocking. She was followed by freshman Julia Kent, 40th, 17:52; freshman Kamilla Jones, 44th, 17:57 and junior Dustyna Sprigg, 63rd, 18:41. Junior Kaylen Rossi was the sixth place finisher for Norton and her time of 19:35 placed her in 80th but, most important, was faster than TMP's sixth place finisher to break the tie for third as a team.

"We had a team meeting Friday night and we told our girls that a top five or six finish would be great," said coach Rossi. "Coach Bailey and I then told them that what people predict on paper is just that, a prediction, and that is why you run the race."

"This team never ceases to amaze us. To finish third in the state meet is simply amazing!"

"This was an absolute team effort. The average time for our team was one minute and ten seconds faster than at the Wamego Invitational in September."

"Regan beat the TMP number two runner for the first time this year. Abby ran two seconds off her season best on the toughest course of the year."

"Julia runs like a little deer and is so calm when everyone is so nervous. Kamilla broke the 18 minute barrier. Dustyna ran her fastest time for this course. Kaylen proved to be the tiebreaker against TMP and secured the trophy for the Lady Blue Jays, the first state trophy in cross country for our girls in school history!"

"If any one of these girls would have done anything less by a second or two, we would have been fourth."

"In this race, our Lady Jays defeated every team that beat us during the year in 3A except for the state champion team of Riley County, who also beat us at the Wamego Invitational."

"What a way to end a great season. I am so proud and humbled to have been able to coach this group. Amanda Ray, who ran for three years and was an outstanding student assistant this year, will be missed by her coaches and teammates next year. Amanda was a great help and her humor did a great job of helping the girls stay relaxed and focused all year."

"Cross country is a unique sport in which you can practice in many different locations and have very different workouts during the year and these girls made the season most enjoyable."

The top 20 individual girls finishers were: Jenna Snell, EL-

linwood freshman, 15:38; Heather Ruder, TMP freshman, 15:46; Morgan Tribble, Remington junior, 16:04; Sarah Wright, Douglas freshman, 16:04; Kimberly Smith, Allen-Northern Heights sophomore, 16:13; Paige White, Baxter Springs freshman, 16:21; Megan Doyle, Belle Plaine freshman, 16:22; Leah Murata, Horton freshman, 16:36; Anna Trahan, Minneapolis freshman, 16:37; Ivy Wellman, Belle Plaine senior, 16:38; Megan Duggins, Wichita Collegiate junior, 16:54; Whitney Steinike, Ellsworth senior, 16:56; Becky Jensen, Rossville junior, 16:56; Regan Simpson, Norton freshman, 16:57; Allison Pfeifer, TMP freshman, 16:58; Courtney Sager, Southeast of Saline junior, 16:59; Karly Ruggle, Riley County sophomore, 17:00; Haley Wellman, Horton senior, 17:01; Danny Reyes, Fredonia freshman, 17:05; Julia Rosales, Lakin senior, 17:08.

## Boys

Sophomore Zach Hartwell led the way for the Norton boys team in the 3.1 mile race, placing 25th with a time of 18:24. Second best for the Blue Jays was sophomore Bryan Henry, 45th in 18:57.

They were followed by junior Troy Bainter, 57th, 19:11; freshman John Renner, 81st, 19:52; junior Kegan Vanover, 82nd, 19:53.

Also running for the Norton boys were senior Chris Maddy, 96th, 20:37 and freshman Ryan Bainter, 106th, 23:51.

"Even though the results were not what we had hoped, coach Bailey and I are very proud of our boys' effort," said coach Rossi. "These boys had an outstanding season. Sometimes teams have bad days and, unfortunately, this was one of those days. Each team member ran faster than they did at Wamego earlier in the season."

"Troy and Bryan improved by about 30 seconds and Kegan and John each by almost one minute. I told our runners after the race that they could do one of two things with this race. They could make excuses and feel sorry for themselves or they could hold their heads high and use it as motivation for next year because we have the entire team back with the exception of senior Chris Maddy. Chris had a tough year battling back from knee surgery but he never complained and I applaud his effort in every race. Chris will also be missed for his personality and his humor that kept the team loose all year. Matt Miller and Grant McClymont are



At one time during the Class 3A Cross Country State Championships in Wamego on Saturday, Norton's Zach Hartwell, left, and Bryan Henry were running side by side, which was very unusual in the crowded field of runners.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

the other two senior members of the team that will be missed by their coaches and teammates next year."

The top 20 individual boys finishers were: Collin Trickle, Minneapolis sophomore, 17:02; Austin Bogina, Arma-Northeast junior, 17:18; Jacob Spence, Baxter Springs junior, 17:30; Michael Wolf, Holcomb senior, 17:32; JaCee Jarnagin, Holcomb senior, 17:34; Enrique Sanchez, Kismet-Southwestern Heights junior, 17:35; Dillon Hackett, Minneapolis senior, 17:35; Josh Rankin, Ellsworth junior, 17:36; Jordan Hett, Marion freshman, 17:40; Jordan Speed, Wichita - The Independent junior, 17:40; Tyler Blass, Beloit senior, 17:41; Ethan

VanZant, Richmond-Central Heights senior, 17:41; Tyler Roberts, Sterling sophomore, 17:47; Garrett Daugherty, Minneapolis junior, 17:52; Adam Larson, Riley County junior, 17:55; Grady Goff, Riley County senior, 17:55; Kyle Stromgren, Osage City junior, 17:58; Ryan Jones, Marion senior, 18:02; Kayson Matthews, Lakin senior, 18:03; Aaron Catlin, Beloit senior, 18:03.

## Final coach's comments

"Many thanks to the staff and students of Norton Community High School and Norton Junior High School for the state meet sendoff on Friday," said coach Rossi.

"The team and coaches thank the parents and students for the

goodies. We made great use of them! Everyone who made the trip to Wamego thanks you."

"As you saw, state cross country is like no other event in high school. Five thousand screaming people running like wild people all over a golf course is a spectacle in itself."

"Thanks to Dick Boyd for his great coverage of our team this year. Norton is blessed to have someone who is so passionate about all of the sports in Norton. Also, thanks to Deena Wente and KQNK Radio for their support of our team during the season."

"I also thank assistant coach Lindsey Bailey for doing a great job with our team this year."

# Husky medals in Wamego

For the third year in a row, Northern Valley junior Kayla Lowry has medaled in the Class 1A Cross Country State Championships in Wamego.

The state meet was held Saturday and Kayla placed 13th with a time of 17:17.24.

As a freshman, Kayla placed 18th in 17:20.67 and last year she was also 13th with a clocking of 17:17.27.

"Kayla competed very well and ran a good race. She puts a lot of time and effort into her running," said Northern Valley cross country coach Marvin Gebhard. "It's good to see her receive some rewards."

"She is really dedicated. She runs all year long. That's what it takes to be good at this sport."

"Overall, our cross country season was successful. All our girls improved throughout the year and have something to work toward next season."

The top 20 placers medaled. They were: Rachel Renken, Lake-side senior, 15:55; Naomi Reeh, Cheylin senior, 15:57; Madison Moser, Tribune senior, 16:17; KimbraLee Adams, Thunder Ridge junior, 16:34; Audrey Schmitz, Axtell freshman, 16:36; Kendra Pfannenstiel, Ness City junior, 16:38; Kayla Thomas, Montezuma senior, 16:39; Kyle Drake, Dexter freshman, 16:50; Karly VanCampen, Clifton-Clyde junior, 16:53; Kerra Cissne, Lincoln senior, 17:02; Megan Hake, Tipton senior, 17:08; Kennedy Schneider, Tribune sophomore, 17:11; Kayla Lowry, Northern Valley junior, 17:17; Stephanie Busse, Cheylin freshman, 17:19;



Northern Valley's Kayla Lowry had another good day at the Cross Country State Championships in Wamego on Saturday. Here she leads another runner during her 13th place finish which allowed her to receive a state medal for the third year in a row!

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Chelsea Fullerton, Rosalia-Flinthills junior, 17:21; Maddie McCaffrey, Bishop Seabury freshman, 17:28; Meghan Navarro, Burrton senior, 17:29; Kailey

Gardner, Burrton junior, 17:30; Kenzie George, Clifton-Clyde senior, 17:34; Jenna Farris, Lincoln freshman, 17:37.

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