

Football team honored during annual banquet

By DICK BOYD

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The 2009 Norton Community High School football team was honored by parents and fans for their stellar season during the annual banquet sponsored by the Blue Jay Booster Club in the high school cafeteria on Sunday, Dec. 20.

Under the guidance of fourth year head coach Lucas Melvin, the Blue Jays put together a 9-4 season and went to the final four in Class 3A before losing to eventual state champion Wichita Collegiate.

Norton reached the Sub-State championship game for the first time since 1989. En route to that contest, they were Bi-District champions, Regional champions and Sectional champions.

After opening the season with a hard-fought 21-14 win over long-time rival Phillipsburg, Norton shutout Oberlin 33-0 in a rain-shortened game.

The third week of the season, the Blue Jays traveled to Smith Center to take on the five-time Class 2A state champion Redmen before a standing room only crowd. In one of the hardest hitting games most fans had seen in years, the Redmen prevailed 20-14.

Smith Center led 14-7 at halftime and Norton tied the score at 14-all on the Blue Jays' first possession of the second half. The Redmen responded on the ensuing kickoff with the go-ahead touchdown and neither team crossed the goal line after that.

After a 39-14 Homecoming victory over a spirited Osborne eleven, Norton traveled to St. Francis and returned with an impressive 36-0 shutout of an outstanding Indian team that mir-

rors the Smith Center wishbone offense.

Norton's sixth game was at Travis Field versus the Ellis Railroaders. The score was tied 14-all late in the fourth quarter and it appeared the contest would go into overtime until Ellis completed a go-ahead touchdown pass with 12 seconds left to earn the 22-14 win.

Norton opened District play with a 48-0 shutout of Ness City-Dighton, then traveled to Scott City for another tough contest. It was a defensive battle with Scott City holding on for a 14-6 win.

The Blue Jays returned to Travis Field for a Thursday "Senior Night" game and did not disappoint the hometown fans with a 42-9 win over Goodland to place runner-up in the district and move on.

Norton had to travel again for the Bi-District contest and the Blue Jays went all the way to Lakin. The trip was worth it as Norton led 62-0 at halftime, played the junior varsity the entire second half and left with a 62-22 Bi-District victory.

Norton hosted its Regional contest versus another strong Beloit eleven. The Blue Jays never trailed in the game as they won 42-20 to avenge the 2008 season ending loss to the Trojans and earn the Regional championship.

Next, Norton hosted unbeaten Hutchinson Trinity and ended the Celtics' season at 11-1 with a solid 17-7 win for the Sectional championship.

That win set up a Sub-State game with unbeaten Wichita Collegiate in Norton.

Despite scoring the second highest number of points scored against Collegiate all season,

their talent prevailed in the end and the visitors won 56-21. Coming into the game, Collegiate had allowed an average of just 10.3 points per game and Norton had allowed an average of just 11.7 points per contest.

Collegiate moved on the next Saturday to defeat Marysville for the state championship.

Coach's comments

"The Phillipsburg game was a battle as usual," said coach Melvin in reviewing the season following the carry-in meal. "We overcame a lot of adversity in turnovers, cramping and injuries and were able to come back and win.

"Smith Center is a game we feel we should have won. Again, we played very hard and had our chance to beat a very good team. We really started to come together in the St. Francis game and that was solidified more after the Ellis game when we learned you have to finish every play.

"We really started to play with a sense of urgency against Goodland and Lakin and that carried on through the playoffs. The Lakin game was almost surreal. I don't know that we could play that well on some days.

"Beloit was a special win. We finally got past the Trojans. Half of us wanted to sleep at the field that night!

"Defeating Hutch Trinity was a special game and day. So many guys stepped up. It was a great win!

"Wichita Collegiate was a great team and our guys fought hard against them."

The junior varsity players were not forgotten. Coach Melvin said they improved greatly during their 3-3 season and became more physical and more competitive at

practice. He said they have a lot of potential.

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: Ashton Draper, wide receiver, defensive back; Connor Pfannenstiel, quarterback, defensive back; Zane Perez, fullback, defensive back; Landon Hamel, wide receiver, defensive back; J.D. Gall, tight end, linebacker; Tyler Cook, offensive lineman, defensive end; Marcus Herman, offensive lineman, defensive lineman and Jake Romey, offensive lineman, defensive lineman.

"This is the first class to go all four years in high school with me," said coach Melvin. "I taught them in seventh and eighth grade and moved with them into high school.

"They are very special in my heart as are all our players. I wish them the very best in their future endeavors."

For all their support during the season, coach Melvin thanked his wife and family; all the players; assistant coaches Todd Fulton, David Stover, Tony Fiscus and Wade Church; managers Shelby Schaefer, David Cressler and Dustan Daniels; filmers Kami Jones, Alec Melvin, Kolton Harting and Austin Hager; school faculty and administration; the groundskeepers and chain gang; Rick Green, statistics; Dorla Jones, coordinating; band; Blue Jay Booster Club; Lamont Shirk, Jerry Darling, Terry Laughlin, Dan Lauer, Brian McKenna, Shane Miller and others who painted the Blue Jay on the field; the mothers who served as "cheerleaders" and poster makers such as Jana Keiswetter and Patty Gall;

the Norton Telegram and KQNK Radio Station and the entire community for contributing to the successful season.

Raised the bar

"Our seniors continued a strong tradition of unselfishness and that is one thing a lot of our young players can learn from," said coach Melvin. "Several of our seniors did not play where they wanted or as much as they wanted but they went as hard as they could to make our team as good as possible. Many of these young men have matured very much over the last four years. I really appreciated the way they stepped up and were leaders for our team.

"The state of the football program in Norton is good but hungry. After reading our players' winter goals I had them fill out, I can see that the returning young men want more. It is going to take work, though; hard work, dedication, sacrifice and a selfless attitude. We have some very good football players and we have young men who have the potential to be great football players. All of them say they want that but now is the time to do it. We must work hard in the weightroom and in other sports now. There is no waiting; it is now. The weightroom is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 a.m. and we need to get in there. Right now, I have four to 10 guys coming in some of the time and they are working hard. This type of dedication is needed by all.

"Academics need to be more important to all our student athletes. Some are doing an excellent job with their classes but all of them are capable of being fine students. It is vital that these young men understand the im-

portance of an education and the blessing it is.

"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. We need to continue to hold each other accountable for the way we treat each other in and out of school."

Coach Melvin said new rules passed by the Kansas State High School Activities Association now allow coaches to have more practice time with all players in the summer and that he and his assistant coaches will work out the best time for the practices without taking too much time away from players' other summer activities.

"The state of our football program is good and now we want to continue to make it better," said coach Melvin. "Our ultimate team goal for next year, according to almost every player'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 for all your support.

"Have a great Christmas season and God bless!"

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

The seniors presented to coach Melvin a matted, autographed group of pictures, team and individual, of their class taken during each of their four years in high school.

The seniors also presented to the assistant coaches a smaller identical group of photos from all four years as well as a card containing all the coaches' pictures.

Junior high Jays defeated Annual tournament scheduled

By CHERI MILLER

Special to The Telegram

On Nov. 17, the eighth grade girls were defeated by Phillipsburg 22-16.

If we had played two consistent halves we would of had a lot different outcome. In the first half the girls turned over the ball too much, failed to block out and didn't have good enough intensity on defense.

However, in the second half we buckled down on defense and only allowed them four points. Katelyn Engelbert played great defense on their talented point guard, Dusin.

She did not have a single field

goal in the second half compared to her 11 point first half performance.

We still need to be more patient on our offensive execution and read the defense better. Getting some ball reversals, having guard penetration and getting the ball more to our posts will improve our game.

I would like to see the girls be more confident in themselves and go with their instincts more! I hope we get another opportunity to play them again in our league tourney in January.

Leading scorer for the Lady Bluejays was Katelyn Engelbert with ten points. Haley Wall-

ingford added four points and Johnnye Ruder chipped in two points. Katelyn Engelbert also led in rebounding with 14 boards. Wallingford and Ambrosier each pulled down ten boards. Katelyn was also able to steal the ball three times. Marisa Maddy, Haley Wallingford and Johnnye Ruder each stole the ball once.

The Junior varsity girls lost to Phillipsburg as well in a close battle 9-7.

Ashley Hildebrand led all scoring with four points, Hannah Goss added two points and Cristine Nelson added a free throw for one point.

By DICK BOYD

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The 45th annual J.R. Durham Invitational Wrestling Tournament will be held Saturday in the NCHS Stull Gymnasium in Norton.

Teams from Atwood, Beloit, Cozad, Hoxie, Leoti, McCook, Mill Valley, Oakley, Scott City,

Smith Center and the Norton varsity and junior varsity will compete.

The first session will begin at 9:30 a.m.

Honored will be Norton state medal winners from 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000.

A more complete story on the

Durham Invitational with the names of wrestlers to be honored, Norton's tentative wrestling lineup, etc. will be in Friday's Norton Telegram.

Dual on Friday

Norton will also wrestle Mill Valley in a dual in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym on Friday night, beginning at 6 p.m.

Junior high Jays lose to Plainville

By CHERI MILLER

Special to The Telegram

On Nov. 12 the seventh grade girls traveled to Plainville to take on the Cardinals. They lost 23-6.

The girls were able to knock down two field goals. Morgan Farber hit those two field goals for four points total and Erin Archer and Katie Bohl both added a free throw for one point each.

Then on Nov. 17 Phillipsburg ventured over to Norton and defeated the Lady Jays 29-4.

On this evening Erin Archer scored on one field goal and one free throw for three total points. Morgan Farber was also successful on a free throw for one point.

Later that week Osborne came to town and defeated the girls 13-6. Katie Bohl hit three of her six free throws for three points and Morgan Farber hit a field goal and one of two free throws for three total points as well.

On Nov. 23 Trego defeated the girls 31-10.

In this particular game Adrienne Hager, Erin Archer and Morgan Farber were all successful with one field goal and ended the game with two points each.

Katie Bohl was the leading scorer with four points off two field goals.

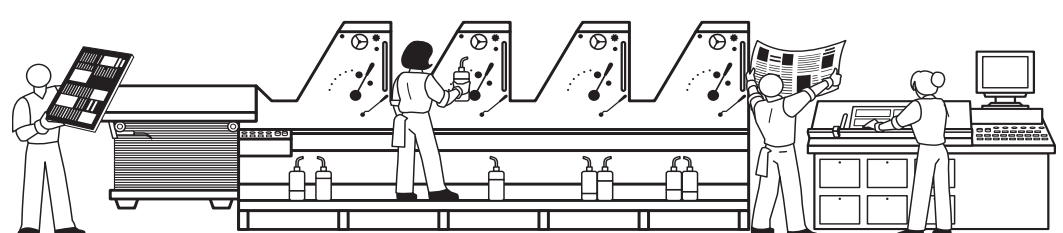
Finally, the girls luck turned around and they defeated Hill City on Dec. 3 21-13. Adrienne

Hager, Sierra Griffith and Erin Archer each hit one successful two point field goal. Adrienne and Katie ended the game with two total points, but Sierra hit a free throw for three total points. Katie Bohl hit three field goals for six points and Morgan Farber also added three field goals and two free throws for eight points.

The girls took care of the ball so much better in this particular game. They were patient on offense and took better shots.

Olivia Krehbiel is their coach. They had one more regular season game against Ellis on Dec. 10 and then they will participated in a tourney at Smith Center to wrap up their season Dec. 12.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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High School Sports This Week



Norton Blue Jays



Northern Valley Huskies



Logan Trojans

WRESTLING:
Norton vs. Mill Valley in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym in Norton..... 6 p.m. Friday
J.R. Durham Invitational Wrestling Tournament in Stull Gym..... 9:30 a.m. Saturday

BASKETBALL:
Norton Varsity, Junior Varsity vs. Osborne in Stull Gymnasium 4 p.m. Friday
Norton C-team Girls in Phillipsburg Tournament 9 a.m. Saturday
Northern Valley Girls and Boys vs. Stockton in Alma 4 p.m. Today
Northern Valley Girls and Boys vs. Lakeside in Alma..... 4 p.m. Friday
Northern Valley Girls and Boys in Cheyenne Conference Tourney in Palco..... January 12-16 TBA
Logan Girls and Boys vs. Natoma in Logan 4 p.m. Today
Logan Girls and Boys vs. Golden Plains in Logan 4 p.m. Friday
Logan Girls and Boys in Cheyenne Conference Tourney in Palco Jan. 12-16 TBA