

# Lady Blue Jays fall just one point short!

By DICK BOYD

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The No. 7 seeded Norton Community High School girls varsity basketball team had a chance to hand the No. 1 seeded Smith Center girls their second loss of the season in the fifth place game of the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament on Saturday in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays but their hard work fell one point short!

The Lady Red suffered their first loss of the season in the first round of the tournament, when Stockton defeated them 53-48. After that loss, they outscored Phillipsburg 54-44 in the consolation semi-finals to reach the contest with Norton, who lost to No. 2 seeded Osborne before beating Trego in the consolation semi-finals.

Saturday's game was very hard fought by both teams and the winning team wasn't decided until the end of regulation when Smith Center's Kelsey Merritt hit a free throw to give the Lady Red the 37-36 victory with no time left!

The Lady Jays got off to a slow start and trailed 8-2 after one quarter. Norton senior post Kaitlyn Wolf hit the first two points in the game but the Lady Jays did not score again in the quarter.

Norton played even with Smith Center in the second period, outscoring the Lady Red 9-8 to make the halftime score 16-11. Wolf hit two more baskets, senior post Amanda Ray hit her first basket of the game and junior guard Kaylen Rossi hit nothing but net from three-point land in the period.

Whatever Norton head coach Kevin Jilka said to his Lady Jays at halftime must have been the right words of wisdom because they came out of the locker-room and took charge in the third quarter, outscoring Smith Center 19-10 to take a 30-26 lead into the

fourth period.

Senior point guard Ashlie Stewart got scoring started for Norton after intermission when she got loose inside.

After Smith Center hit a free throw, Ray scored, was fouled in the act of shooting and her ensuing free throw made it a 17-16 game. Rossi then buried a three-pointer and the Lady Jays were on top 19-17 with 5:43 left in the third quarter.

After two more Lady Red charity tosses, Ray fed Wolf for two more Norton points. Smith Center got one of their two field goals in the period to tie the score at 21-all. Another Smith Center free toss gave them the lead but Stewart connected on a shot from beyond the arc to push Norton ahead 24-22. Stewart hit two free throws seconds later to make it 26-22 and Rossi hit a basket to extend the Norton lead to 28-22.

Smith Center maintained their composure. A Lady Red field goal and free throw made it 28-25.

Norton senior guard Hannah Waggoner calmly hit two free tosses with 1:28 left and another Lady Red charity made it 30-26 at the end of the third quarter.

Smith Center started the final stanza with a field goal and the Lady Jays' sophomore post Erin Terrell matched it with two free throws. Smith Center scored the next eight points on a free throw, two charities, a two-point field goal and a basket from beyond the arc to take a 36-32 lead with 2:45 left in the game.

Stewart's two free tosses with 2:03 remaining cut the Lady Red lead to 36-34. Norton senior guard Kendra Engelbert got loose under the basket for two points with 57 seconds left to tie the score at 36-34!

Smith Center took the ball down court and worked it around as the seconds ticked off. Just as

time was running out, Merritt took a shot at the buzzer, one of the officials called a foul on Norton and the rest is history.

"This was a typical Norton-Smith Center game," said coach Jilka. "We got down early and fought back, then got down again and fought back again and had the chance to win it."

"We played hard and played great defense. We had several chances to win but some turnovers hurt us at the last."

"We're still making some silly mistakes that we have to eliminate."

"We'll keep working hard and put this game behind us."

The loss evened Norton's current record at 6-6.

Seven different girls scored for Norton in the game. Leading the way was Stewart with 9 points on 1 of 3 from beyond the arc for 33 percent, 1 of 8 two-point tries for 13 percent and 2 of 11 overall for 18 percent. She was a perfect 4 of 4 from the charity stripe.

Wolf and Rossi each scored 8 points. Wolf hit 4 of 6 from the field for 67 percent and missed her only free toss. Rossi swished 2 of 4 from long range for 50 percent, 1 of 1 from two-point land for 100 percent and was 3 of 5 overall for 60 percent accuracy.

Taylor Arnold led Smith Center with 14 points.

As a team, Norton hit 3 of 9 from beyond the arc for 33 percent, 9 of 28 two-point shots for 32 percent and was 12 of 37 overall for 32 percent.

The Lady Red were 2 of 7 from long range for 29 percent, 10 of 25 two-point tries for 40 percent and 12 of 32 overall for 38 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton connected on 9 of 14 for 65 percent and Smith Center swished 11 of 22 for 50 percent.

Norton had 11 offensive and 9 defensive rebounds for 20 total



Lady Jay senior point guard Ashlie Stewart got a screen from senior teammate guard Kendra Engelbert as she drove toward the basket during Norton's battle with Smith Center in the Mid-Continent League Tournament on Saturday in Hays.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

and Smith Center pulled down 14 offensive and 8 defensive caroms for 22 total.

Stewart and Wolf led Norton in rebounding with 5 each, followed by Ray, 4; Engelbert, Terrell, 2 each; Waggoner, Rossi, 1 each.

The Lady Jays had 6 steals compared to only 3 for the Lady Red. Waggoner and Wolf each had 2 thefts and Stewart and Ray had 1 apiece.

Norton had 12 offensive assists and Smith Center had 13. Stewart was assists leader with 5, followed by Ray, 4; Engelbert, 2; Rossi, 1.

The Lady Jays had 14 turnovers but their aggressive defense

caused the Lady Red to give up the ball 20 times!

**Other tournament results**

Hill City defeated Ellis 51-45 for the girls championship. Osborne outscored Stockton 40-29 for third place and Trego beat Phillipsburg 54-44 for seventh.

**Next action**

Norton will travel to Goodland today for C-team boys, junior varsity and varsity girls and boys games, beginning at 4:45 p.m. with the C-team boys game, followed by the girls varsity and boys varsity games, all in Max Jones Fieldhouse. The boys junior varsity game will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the junior high gym, fol-

lowed by the girls junior varsity contest.

**BOX SCORE**

**Norton Girls 36**  
Kendra Engelbert 1 0 0-0 2; Hannah Waggoner 0 0 2-2 2; Kaylen Rossi 1 2 0-0 8; Ashlie Stewart 1 1 4-4 9; Erin Terrell 0 0 2-4 2; Kaitlyn Wolf 4 0 0-1 8; Amanda Ray 2 0 1-3 5; Game Totals 9 3 9-14 36

**Smith Center Girls 37**  
Whitney St. Clair 1 0 0-0 2; Baylee Ratliff 0 1 1-2 4; Taylor Arnold 4 1 3-4 14; Kelsey Merritt 2 0 5-8 9; McKenzie Benoit 3 0 2-8 8; Game Totals 10 2 11-22 37

# Ladies defeat Trego 47-34

By DICK BOYD

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The No. 7 seeded Norton Community High School girls varsity basketball team led from start to finish in defeating No. 6 seeded Trego Community 47-34 in the consolation semi-finals of the annual Mid-Continent League Tournament on Thursday in W-Keeney.

Norton held quarter leads of 10-5, 21-13 and 35-24.

In the first quarter, the Lady Jays received points from senior point guard Ashlie Stewart on a three-point and two-point basket, senior post Kaitlyn Wolf on a basket and free throw and senior post Amanda Ray on two charities.

Five Lady Jays scored in the 11-point second quarter. Senior guard Kendra Engelbert, sophomore post Erin Terrell and Wolf each hit a two-point basket, Ray hit a basket and two free throws and Stewart connected on a free throw.

Junior guard Kaylen Rossi ignited the Norton offense in the third quarter with two baskets from beyond the arc. Stewart and Ray each hit two baskets in the period.

Wolf and Ray each hit two baskets for Norton in the fourth quarter and Stewart was perfect on four free throws.

"We beat them easily the first time this season and I was afraid we might take Trego lightly but we treated it like another game," said Norton head girls basketball coach Kevin Jilka.

"We had a few mental lapses but made up for them with some big plays."

"We also had some additional people step up and score. That took the pressure off our normal scorers and that gave us better balance offensively."

Leading scorers for Norton with 14 points each were Ashlie Stewart and Amanda Ray.

Stewart hit 1 of 6 trey tries for 17 percent, 3 of 8 two-point attempts for 38 percent and 4 of 14

overall for 29 percent. She was 5 of 6 from the free throw line for 83 percent.

Ray was 5 of 6 from two-point land for a net smoking 83 percent, missed her only three-point try and was 5 of 7 overall for 71 percent. She was a perfect 4 of 4 from the charity stripe.

Kaitlyn Wolf took only 5 shots but hit 4 of them for 80 percent accuracy. She was 1 of 3 from the free throw line for 33 percent and ended with 9 points.

Catie Riedel was leading scorer for Trego with 13 points.

As a team, Norton hit 3 of 14 from beyond the arc for 21 percent, 14 of 31 from two-point land for 45 percent and 17 of 45 overall for 38 percent.

The Lady Golden Eagles connected on 16 of 46 two-point shots for 35 percent, missed all three trey tries and were 16 of 49 overall for 33 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton sank 10 of 13 for an outstanding 77 percent and Trego hit 2 of 4 for 50 percent.

Norton had 7 offensive and 15 defensive rebounds for 22 total.

Trego grabbed 12 offensive and 20 defensive caroms for 32 total.

Ray was leading rebounder for the Lady Jays with 7, followed by Dustyna Sprigg, 5; Terrell, 4; Stewart, 3; Engelbert, 2; Rossi, 1.

Norton had 4 steals and Trego had 6. Stewart led with 3 thefts and Engelbert had 1.

The Lady Jays had 13 offensive assists and the Lady Golden Eagles had none. Rossi, Wolf and Stewart each had 3 assists, followed by Ray, 2; Engelbert, Sprigg, 1 each.

Both teams had 10 turnovers.

**BOX SCORE**  
**Norton Girls 47**  
Kendra Engelbert 1 0 0-0 2; Kaylen Rossi 0 2 0-0 6; Ashlie Stewart 3 1 5-6 14; Erin Terrell 1 0 0-0 2; Kaitlyn Wolf 4 0 1-3 9; Amanda Ray 5 0 4-4 14; Game Totals 14 3 10-13 47

**Trego Girls 34**  
Lexi Riedel 2 0 0-0 4; Hannah Dietz 3 0 0-1 6; Kirsten Locke 2 0 1-2 5; Rachael Newcomer 1 0 0-0 2; Stephanie Griffith 2 0 0-0 4; Catie Riedel 6 0 1-1 13; Game Totals 16 0 2-4 34

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