

# Blue Jays win wrestling state championship

By DICK BOYD

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After dominating their regional tournament the week before, head coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team took their dominance one step further last weekend to earn the Class 3-2-1A State Championship by a large margin in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

The Blue Jays, who had won the toughest regional tournament in the state in Norton with an 86-point spread over runner-up Phillipsburg, powered to a 79-point lead over second place Smith Center in the first day of state tournament competition on Friday.

Norton won 24 matches on Friday and lost just four while pinning eight opponents and being pinned just once. After the Blue Jays went 8-0 in the championship quarter-finals, barring any disaster, the championship was theirs!

Norton entered 10 qualifiers from the regional tournament and all but one placed. The Blue Jays had three champions, three runners-up, two fourth place finishers and one fifth place.

With six wrestlers qualifying on Friday for Saturday's championship finals, Norton did not wrestle as many matches on Saturday but still lengthened the final margin of victory.

When the dust settled Saturday evening, the Norton wrestlers had amassed an outstanding 174.50 points to outscore runner-up and three-in-a-row defending state champion Smith Center by 94 points!

The Redmen tallied 80.50 points and third place went to Oakley with 68. The Plainsmen were followed by Halstead in fourth with 60.50, Hoxie just one point back with 59.50 in fifth and Eureka with 58 points for sixth. Douglass had 56 points, Rossville 54, Wellsville, 53 and Caney Valley and Thomas More Prep-Hays tied for tenth with 52 each.

Phillipsburg finished 12th with 47.50 points, Osborne tied for 15th with 43, Atwood tied for 18th with 38, Plainville was 22nd with 33, Oberlin placed 26th with 27, Goodland was 34th with 19, Beloit had 17 for 35th, St. Francis scored 15 for 37th, Ellis scored 5 points to tie for 41st, Stockton had 1 point to tie for 57th.

Norton's three state champions were freshman John Risewick, 103; and brothers senior Kaenon Keiswetter, 145 and junior Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, 152.

Blue Jay state runners-up were junior Troy Bainter, 125; junior Spencer Shirk, 160 and senior Zane Perez, 171.

Winning fourth places for the Blue Jays were junior Billy Broeckelman, 130 and junior Kaid McKenna, 189.

Fifth place went to senior Con-

nor Pfannenstiel at 140 pounds.

Senior Tyler Cook, who had wrestled at 285 all season but dropped to 215 pounds in the regional, also wrestled well but just missed placing by two matches.

Demonstrating the toughness of the regional tournament in Norton the week before, 17 of the 28 wrestlers in the championship finals were from that regional and 10 won state championships.

A total of 224 wrestlers who qualified in the previous week's four regional tournaments competed and a total of 68 different schools were represented.

Norton compiled an impressive 32-11 won-loss record and had an equally impressive 9-3 pin ratio.

Prior to the championship finals on Saturday, two awards were presented.

The Kansas Wrestling Officials Association named Joe Dreher, head Oberlin wrestling coach, as their "Coach of the Year". The award was presented to him and is based on sportsmanship.

The Kansas State High School Activities Association presented to J.R. Dumler a certificate honoring him for 40 years of officiating wrestling. He is also a former wrestling coach.

Kaenon Keiswetter was a state qualifier in 2007 and 2009 and placed third in the state his sophomore year.

Landon Keiswetter was a state qualifier last year and placed fifth in the state in 2008.

Troy Bainter was the 112 pound state champion last year and placed third his freshman season.

Zane Perez placed fourth in the state last year, was a state qualifier as a sophomore and placed sixth in the state his freshman season.

Connor Pfannenstiel was a state qualifier in 2007.

Spencer Shirk was injured after Christmas last season so didn't complete the 2009 season.

Billy Broeckelman was a state qualifier last year and placed second in the state tournament his freshman year.

Kaid McKenna placed fifth in the state tournament last year.

### Coach's comments

"This is a dream come true," said coach Johnson. "I had a dream that we could do well but dreams don't always come true.

"Our young men wrestled tremendous.

"Early in the season we had five good wrestlers at 152 pounds and we had to figure who would wrestle what. Our boys sacrificed so we could fill all the weights because we needed all of them in the lineup to win.

"We had a lot of tough battles throughout the year and all have prepared us for the state tournament. We seek out the toughest competition and it shows. If we have to wrestle hard to win, we thrive on that. Some of our toughest matches are actually in the

practice room.

"Right before regionals we hit our stride and really bonded well. We yelled and came together and that made it fun.

"The last two weeks have really been phenomenal. Even though we were third in the state last year, we didn't do as well as we could have. I told our wrestlers that the past doesn't count. I told them it was up to them to make their own legacy as a team. After we had the team title wrapped up, I told them to go out and win for themselves. Our individual victories were icing on the cake.

"This is a very special championship because of our dominating performance. Placing nine out of ten wrestlers is just phenomenal! Every team title is important but our wrestlers will cherish this one the rest of their lives.

"This was a great way to end a great season!"

The theme for this year's team was "The Brotherhood". Coach Johnson thanked all the parents and other fans for their support throughout the season and for being part of the team theme.

Norton's assistant coaches again this season were Doug Ray, Shane Miller and Tony Fiscus.

Student managers were Juliana Miller, Alexis Lively, Vanessa Danesan and Cayleb Campbell.

The state championship trophy was officially presented to the Norton school and the wrestlers were honored during halftime of the Norton-Smith Center sub-state basketball game in the NCHS Stull Gymnasium on Monday.

### Wrestlers of the Week

The Norton coaches named the entire Norton wrestling team "Wrestlers of the Week" with emphasis on state champion Kaenon Keiswetter.

Kaenon received a knee injury two weeks ago and had to wrestle the rest of the season with a knee brace. He wrestled through a lot of adversity to reach his 145 pound gold medal.

### Individual matches

\*103 - Freshman John Risewick pinned Dakota Shay, Fredonia, in :42; won a 3-0 decision over Josh Goepfert, Marysville and decided Colt Skillman, Burlington, 5-4 to reach the championship finals. John didn't waste any time going out and pinning Trey Francka, Chase County, in 1:06 to win his first state championship!

Hunter Speer, Horton, won a 9-6 decision over Trevor Axelson, Plainville, for third and Skillman placed fifth with a 4-2 decision over Goepfert.

Risewick finished the season 30-10. Franka was 26-9, Speer 36-5, Axelson 21-10 and Skillman 34-7.

\*112 - Dylan Schumacher, Thomas More Prep-Hays, won the championship by pinning Calvin Ochs, Hoxie, in 2:53. Steven



State championship trophy in hand, Norton head wrestling coach Bill Johnson huddled for some final congratulatory words with his young men who had just dominated their way to the title in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. The final word in unison was "Brothers!"  
- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



The Norton fans, who enthusiastically supported "The Brotherhood" theme for this year's Norton Community High School wrestling team, were in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays in large numbers both Friday and Saturday. They cheered loudly for their dedicated and hard-working young men as they overpowered the opposition en route to the Class 3-2-1A State Championship!  
- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Howard, Eureka, placed third by default over Dustin Vap, Atwood. Skyler Goepfert, Marysville, placed fifth by pinning Braden Sahlfeld, Beloit, in 2:47.

Schumacher won the 112 pound state title last year with a perfect 29-0 record and finished this season 37-1, Ochs was 29-10 and Howard 24-7.

\*119 - Daylen Zaldivar, Douglass, won the championship with a 3-1 overtime decision over Cole Werner, Plainville. Jeremiah Breen, Wellsville, placed third with a 4-3 decision over Michael Vander Linden, Burlington. Fifth place went to Chris Ceman, Phillipsburg, with a 5-4 decision over Garth Griffith, Atwood.

Zaldivar finished the season 34-4, Werner was 27-7, Breen 29-6 and Griffith 33-8.

\*125 - Troy Bainter decided Brandon Ray, Eureka, 11-9, won a 10-5 decision over John Corman, Minneapolis, and shutout Riley Soward, Halstead, 8-0 to reach the championship match. He met Zach Hoehn, Wellsville, for the gold. It was a very even match. After a scoreless first period, Troy took a 1-0 lead in the second period but Hoehn was awarded two points in the third period to win 2-1.

Soward placed third with a 7-4 decision over Corman. Brent Juenemann, Oberlin, placed fifth with a 2-0 win over Hunter Stalford, Caney Valley.

Troy finished the season with a 35-6 record. Hoehn suffered only one loss during the season and finished 41-1. Soward completed a 35-4 season. Corman was 32-7 and Juenemann was 28-9.

\*130 - Billy Broeckelman pinned Mason Hurla, St. Mary's, in 1:38 and decided Ky Biddle,

Burden Central, 10-8, before losing a hard-fought 7-6 decision to Dalton Davis, Lakin. In the consolation bracket, he decided Alex Thibault, Halstead, 6-4 to reach the consolation championship match. He wrestled Biddle for the second time in the tournament, received a shoulder injury and was pinned in :50.

Colt Rogers, Smith Center, won a 10-2 major decision over Davis to win his fourth state championship and complete the season with a perfect 40-0 record.

Alex Thibault, Halstead, placed fifth with a default over Mark Smith, Rossville.

Broeckelman finished the season 23-8. Davis was 28-5, Biddle 34-3 and Thibault 39-6.

\*135 - Jace Campbell, Oakley, won the championship with a 7-2 decision over Kale Newell, Smith Center. Third place went to Kiefer Hurla, Rossville, with an 11-5 decision over Terrence Lamb, St. Francis. Case Mayfield, Eureka, placed fifth with a 5-4 decision over Chance Demel, Hoisington.

Campbell finished the season 23-1, Newell was 32-7, Hurla was 39-8 and Lamb was 31-9.

\*140 - Connor Pfannenstiel lost his first match when he was pinned in 1:36 by unbeaten Tyler McMichael, Burden Central. He then had to go through the back door to eventually place fifth. In the consolation bracket, Pfannenstiel decided Dalton Bell, Hoisington, 9-7, decided Dyllan Nuzum, Beloit, 8-3 and won a 16-2 major decision over Michael Forbes, Effingham. In the meantime, McMichael had lost 3-2 to defending state champion Danny Floyd of Osborne and had dropped into the consolation

bracket. Pfannenstiel and McMichael wrestled in the consolation semi-finals and, although Connor wrestled him better this time around, McMichael won a 10-1 major decision.

Pfannenstiel wrestled Bradon Melcher, Herington, for fifth. He held a 3-1 lead after one period, stretched it to 5-1 in the second period and won a 5-1 decision after a scoreless third period.

Floyd won the championship with a 5-4 decision over Levi Schneider, Ellsworth. McMichael placed third with a 7-3 decision over Cody Wildin, Marion.

Pfannenstiel finished the season 32-16. Floyd had a perfect season record of 36-0, Schneider ended 29-4, McMichael 34-1 and Wildin 32-5.

\*145 Kaenon Keiswetter pinned his way to the championship quarter-finals. He pinned Cody Schwant, Onaga, in 1:29 and Zane Sanders, Hoisington, in 1:23. Next, he won a 12-5 decision over Kevin Wolters, Atwood, to reach the championship finals versus a familiar rival, Trevor Oliver, Osborne. Kaenon led 2-0 after one period and by just 3-2 after two periods but finished strong to win a 10-3 decision and the championship.

Nick Hockett, Cherryvale, placed third with a fall in 2:33 over Dillon Wildin, Marion. Wolters finished in fifth with a 3-0 decision over Sheldon Graves, Rossville.

Kaenon finished the season with a 36-6 record. Oliver was 31-2 with his only two losses to Kaenon. Hockett finished 38-5, Wildin 40-03 and Wolters 36-6.

\*152 - Landon "Tug" Keiswetter (Wrestling - Continued on Page 10)



Norton's 103 pound freshman John Risewick jump started the championship finals for the Blue Jays in the State Wrestling Tournament on Saturday evening in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays when he took care of business in short order, pinning Trey Francka, Chase County, in 1:06 of the first period to win his first state tournament gold medal!  
- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd