

Blue Jay wrestling team celebrates season

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkansan.com

Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team celebrated a tremendous Class 3-2-1A state championship 2009-10 season during the Annual Banquet held Tuesday, March 30 in the junior high gym in Norton.

Returning eight wrestlers with state experience and six who had won state medals, the Blue Jays went to work with a blue collar attitude and became an unbeatable team en route to the state championship in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

Norton compiled an 11-3 varsity dual record and earned the J.R. Durham Tournament championship, the Mid-Continent League Tournament and Duals championships and the Class 3-2-1A Regional Tournament championship prior to dominating the Class 3-2-1A State Tournament in Hays.

The Blue Jays averaged 51.3 points per dual this season while limiting opponents to an average of only 18.5 points per dual.

In his 19th season at the helm of the Blue Jay wrestling program, coach Johnson welcomed back for the season: junior Troy Bainter, 125, returning state champion who was third in the state as a freshman; senior Zane Perez, 171, fourth in the state last year, state qualifier as a sophomore and sixth in the state his freshman season; senior Kaenon Keiswetter, 145, a state qualifier in 2009 and 2007 and third in the state his sophomore season; junior Kaid McKenna, 189, fifth in the state tournament last season; junior Billy Broeckelman, 130, a state qualifier last year and second in the state as a freshman; junior Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, 152, a state qualifier last year and fifth in the state in 2008; junior Brett Terrell, 135, state qualifier last season; senior Connor Pfannenstiel, 140, state qualifier in 2007.

Other returning lettermen were senior Casey Robison, 215; junior Spencer Shirk, 160 and sophomore R.J. Ellis, 112.

Assistant coaches again this season were Doug Ray, Shane Miller and Tony Fiscus.

Season review

Norton had only five practices prior to the season opener tournaments because the Blue Jay football team went deep into the playoffs.

On Saturday, Dec. 5, Norton split teams between the Hoxie Invitational and St. Francis Invitational. Norton had won the Hoxie championship the past six years but coach Johnson felt the Blue Jays would get more exposure by sending some wrestlers to St. Francis.

Ten wrestlers competed at Hoxie, eight medaled and the Blue Jays brought home the second place trophy. At St. Francis, seven of eight Norton wrestlers competing medaled and Norton placed third.

On Friday, Dec. 11, Norton sent another mixed team to the Southern Valley Invitational in Oxford, Neb. since most would compete the next day in Clay Center. Norton compiled 341 points to win the championship. Perez and Trey Millan, 145, both won gold medals.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, Norton competed in the Clay Center Invitational Round Robin and placed third, just six and one-half points out of first place. Andale edged Clay Center for the championship. Troy Bainter, 125; Kaenon Keiswetter, 145; Landon Keiswetter, 152 and Spencer Shirk, 160, won individual championships. Norton had an outstanding 29-8 won-loss record. Landon Keiswetter was voted "Outstanding Wrestler" of the tournament by the team coaches.

The duals season opened for Norton on Friday, Dec. 18 in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym in Norton and the Blue Jays were ready. They defeated Stockton 71-6 and Phillipsburg 32-28.

The very next day, on Saturday, Dec. 19, Norton competed in the tough Holiday Classic dual tournament in Goodland. It was a real fight for the championship. Garden City won with 30 points, Scott City was second with 29 and Norton finished third with 28. Unbeaten were Bainter, 125;



Norton senior Kaenon Keiswetter is shown controlling Osborne senior Trevor Oliver during Kaenon's 10-3 decision to win the 145 pound state championship. Kaenon compiled a 36-6 season record and was 115-26 overall for four years, which ranks ninth among wins in the coach Bill Johnson era. Kaenon was named Norton's "Most Outstanding Wrestler" and "Most Courageous Wrestler of the Year". Oliver's only two losses this season were to Kaenon.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Shirk, 160; Perez, 171 and McKenna, 189.

"Many of our wrestlers, especially our young boys, learned that we are going to have to work much harder in practice and get tougher," said coach Johnson following the tournament.

Norton opened the new year on Saturday, Jan. 9 by winning the annual J.R. Durham Invitational Tournament in the NCHS Stull Gymnasium in Norton. The Blue Jays won 12 of their first 14 matches for a big early lead. Norton scored 246.5 team points. Scott City was runner-up with 61 fewer points. Norton medaled 13 of 14 wrestlers and compiled a 36-14 won-loss record.

Returning to dual action on Thursday, Jan. 14, the Blue Jays traveled to WaKeeney for league wrestling. They scored a 55-15 win over Smith Center and shut-out Trego Community 66-0.

Norton left WaKeeney immediately after the two duals and traveled to Newton for the prestigious 47th annual Tournament of Champions. Despite three open weights, the Blue Jays placed fifth out of 25 teams, just eight points out of third, in the toughest high school tournament in the state of Kansas. Norton was the smallest school competing and is also the smallest school to ever win the tournament.

On Friday, Jan. 15, the Norton junior varsity wrestlers won the championship of the Elm Creek, Neb. Invitational. All eight Blue Jay wrestlers placed.

The Norton wrestlers hosted an excellent Kearney, Neb. High School wrestling team, ranked No. 2 in the state in the largest enrollment classification, in Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym on Tuesday, Jan. 26. The Blue Jays fought hard before losing the dual 43-21. It was "Senior Night" and Connor Pfannenstiel, Kaenon Keiswetter, Zane Perez, Casey Robison and Tyler Cook and their parents were honored.

On Saturday, Jan. 30, another mixed team was sent to the Arapahoe, Neb. Warrior Invitational and Norton placed sixth.

On the same day, most of the Norton wrestlers competed in the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Phillipsburg. The Blue Jays ran away with the team title, scoring 229.5 points. Runner-up Phillipsburg compiled just 175 points. All 14 Norton wrestlers placed. Champions were Rise-wick, 103; Broeckelman, 130; Kaenon Keiswetter, 145; Shirk, 160; Robison, 215.

League duals with Plainville and Ellis were held at Ellis on Friday, Feb. 5. In nearly identical scores, Norton defeated Ellis 55-13 and outscored Plainville 55-15.

The next day, on Saturday, Feb. 6, the Panther Classic was held in Phillipsburg. The Blue Jays were given a run for their money by Abilene and Hoxie but fought them off to win their seventh

straight Panther Classic championship. Nine of the 11 Norton wrestlers medaled.

On Thursday, Feb. 11, the Blue Jays completed another undefeated Mid-Continent League dual season with a 63-15 win over Osborne and 82-0 shutout of Hill City in Osborne. Kaenon Keiswetter suffered a knee injury in his match with state-ranked Trevor Oliver of Osborne.

Norton's junior varsity wrestlers competed in the Colby JV Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 13. No team scores were kept but all eight Norton wrestlers medaled; six of them won gold medals.

The Class 3-2-1A Regional Tournament was held in Norton on Friday, Saturday, Feb. 19-20 and featured seven of the top ten ranked teams in the state and over 50 percent of the state-ranked wrestlers in the state. The No. 1 state ranked Norton squad dominated the tournament, winning their sixth regional championship in a row!

Norton compiled 218 points, Phillipsburg was runner-up with 132 and Hoxie was third with 111. Norton had a 40-13 won-loss record and 18-3 pin ratio. Ten of the Blue Jays' 13 wrestlers qualified for the state tournament. Norton regional champions were John Risewick, 103; Troy Bainter, 125; Landon Keiswetter, 152; Spencer Shirk, 160 and Kaid McKenna, 189.

Norton took dominance at the toughest regional tournament in the state one step further in the Class 3-2-1A State Tournament at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 26-27. Norton powered to a 79-point lead over second place Smith Center on opening day. When the dust cleared after Friday's competition, Norton had a 24-4 win-loss record and had pinned eight opponents. Norton went 8-0 in the championship quarterfinals en route to the state championship.

With a final team score of 174.5 points, Norton outscored runner-up Smith Center by 94 points! The Redmen had won the last three state titles. Oakley followed Smith Center's 80.5 points with 68 to place third. It was the second largest winning margin in the history of the state wrestling tournament.

State champions were John Risewick, 103; Kaenon Keiswetter, 145, brother Landon Keiswetter, 152. State runners-up for Norton were Troy Bainter, 125; Spencer Shirk, 160, Zane Perez, 171. Fourth place finishes were earned by Billy Broeckelman, 130; Kaid McKenna, 189. Connor Pfannenstiel placed fifth at 140. Tyler Cook, 215, missed placing by two matches.

Norton compiled a 32-11 won-loss record and 9-3 pin ratio.

"This is a dream come true," said Norton coach Johnson after the impressive performance by

his "Band of Brothers" who were followed all year by the faithful fans, "The Brotherhood". "I had a dream that we could do well but dreams don't always come true. Our young men wrestled tremendous."

The Norton coaches named the entire team the "Wrestlers of the Week" with emphasis on Kaenon Keiswetter who received the knee injury two weeks before and wrestled with a knee brace en route to winning the state championship.

The Norton varsity wrestling team had a total of 407 wins this season which is a new school record.

Individual awards

Following a potluck meal, coach Johnson and his assistant coaches spoke to the large crowd and presented awards.

"Our wrestlers really worked hard this season and accomplished something that many people never do," said coach Johnson. "We were very dominant this year."

"We overcame a lot of adversity and challenges and became stronger as the season progressed. Our 94-point team victory in the state tournament was the second highest margin of victory in the history of the state of Kansas."

The "Most Outstanding Wrestler" award, the most prestigious of all, was awarded to state champion Kaenon Keiswetter.

Kaenon compiled a 36-6 won-loss record this season and is 115-26 overall for all four years, which ranks ninth among wins in the coach Johnson era. He led the team in reversals this season with 30, tied for the most major decisions with seven, was second in technical falls with five, second in three point near falls with 24, tied for second in team points with 169, was third in takedowns with 53 and fourth in winning percentage at 85.7 percent.

Receiving the "Coach Durham" award was senior Zane Perez. The award is based on hard work, sportsmanship, academics and good citizenship. Zane won the team's senior academic award for his 3.45 grade point average. He had a 32-5 record this season and is 120-43 for four years, which ranks him fifth among Norton career win leaders. He is also tied for most decisions in a season with 17, ranks first in career decisions with 58 and is tied for fourth with the most two-point near falls for a season with 22 this year. Zane also had the second highest winning percentage on the team with 86.5 percent wins.

Named the "Most Improved Wrestlers" of the Year were senior Connor Pfannenstiel and junior Spencer Shirk.

Connor led the team this season in decisions with 16, tied for third in escapes with 24, tied for third in penalty points received with 7 and was fourth in takedowns with 51.

Spencer had the highest win-

ning percentage of anyone on the team, winning 91.7 percent of his matches. He also led the team in three point near falls with 28, tied for first in falls with 18, tied for second in team points with 169, was third high in reversals with 16, was fourth in technical falls with 3, fourth in two point near falls with 14, tied for fourth in major decisions with 5, and fifth in takedowns with 47.

The "Outstanding Sophomore Wrestler" award went to R.J. Ellis and winner of the "Most Promising Freshman" award was John Risewick.

"The Most Improved Junior Varsity Wrestler" award was won by Jared Bohl.

Winner of the "Outstanding Junior Varsity Wrestler" award was Eli Bozarth.

"The Most Exciting Match" award went to Billy Broeckelman for his close 8-7 loss to eventual four-time state champion Colt Rogers of Smith Center in the J.R. Durham tournament and to Kaid McKenna for his 9-7 overtime win over Preston Werth of Thomas More Prep in the regional tournament.

The winner of the "Key Match of the Year" award was Kaid McKenna for his 23-7 technical fall win over Zach Jacobs of Phillipsburg to seal the dual victory.

Connor Pfannenstiel won the "Underdog Match of the Year" award for his 8-3 decision over Dylan Nuzum, Beloit, in the state tournament.

The "Fan of the Year" award went to Norton's John Millan by vote of those in attendance.

Classroom "Academic Award" winners and their grade point averages, in addition to senior Zane Perez, were: freshman Cody Ellis, 3.5; sophomore R.J. Ellis, 3.57 and junior Spencer Shirk, 4.0.

Winners of the varsity statistical awards for the season were: Landon Keiswetter, most points, 171; Landon Keiswetter, most

takedowns, 66; Kaenon Keiswetter, most reversals, 30; Zane Perez, most two point near falls, 22; Spencer Shirk, most three point near falls, 28; Connor Pfannenstiel, most decisions, 16; Troy Bainter, Kaenon Keiswetter, Zane Perez, most major decisions, 7; Landon Keiswetter, most technical falls, 6; Billy Broeckelman, Spencer Shirk, most falls, 18; Connor Pfannenstiel, fastest fall, 26 seconds.

Receiving junior varsity statistical awards were: Eli Bozarth, most takedowns, 32; Eli Bozarth, most reversals, 16; Taylor Gordon, Jared Bohl, Cody Ellis, Justin Waggoner, Eli Bozarth, most two point near falls, 12; Eli Bozarth, most three point near falls, 17; Eli Bozarth, most decisions, 7; Eli Bozarth, most major decisions, 3; Eli Bozarth, most technical falls, 2; Rylee Stanley, most falls, 13; Rylee Stanley, fastest fall, 18 seconds.

Coach Johnson had awards for the four senior wrestlers who completed four years for Norton. They were Connor Pfannenstiel, Kaenon Keiswetter, Zane Perez and Casey Robison.

Coaches' awards went to Tyler Cook for three years of wrestling and to Kaenon Keiswetter, the "Most Courageous Wrestler of the Year".

Assistant coach Shane Miller announced that coach Johnson had been named the Class 3-2-1A "Coach of the Year" by the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

"I'm only the conductor of a mighty train that keeps rolling," coach Johnson responded. "I appreciate being part of such a successful wrestling program. I'm so fortunate. Thanks for all the support by the coaches, parents and fans."

"I accept coach of the year on behalf of these great athletes. I knew what we could accomplish and we did."

The senior wrestlers presented framed team pictures to all the coaches.

When they arrive, coach Johnson will present a special state championship patch to every member of the team.

Coach Johnson thanked his wife, his assistant coaches and their wives, school administration and staff, parents, the Norton Telegram, KQNK Radio and fans for their tremendous support of the Norton wrestling program. He especially thanked Vicki Bainter for all the photos of the team she took during the season.

He also announced that Fig Millan of KQNK Radio had been honored as the broadcast "Media of the Year" award winner for 2010 by the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association. Also introduced were Greg Mann, Norton USD 211 superintendent, 2009 recipient of the "Administrator of the Year" award and Dick Boyd, Norton Telegram, 2009 recipient of the "Media of the Year" award.

Coach Johnson also handed out some "fun" awards. Winners were: Casey Robison, "Quiz the Coach" award; Kaid McKenna, "Clock-watcher" award; Justin Waggoner, "Six Pound Orange" award; Billy Broeckelman, "Assistant Coach" award; John Risewick, "Porker of the Year" award; Tyler Cook, "Leaner of the Year" award; Zane Perez, "Mash" award.

STOP LEG CRAMPS BEFORE THEY STOP YOU.

Calcet® is designed to help stop low calcium leg cramps. Just ask your pharmacist.



Helps fight leg cramps



For those with milk allergies



Fights osteoporosis




Petite Tablet
with **More Calcium & Vitamin D3**

Mission PHARMACAL
CIL 0202 Rev 0709 Copyright © 2009 Mission Pharmacal Company. All rights reserved.

*** SOFFIT * DOOR AND WINDOW REPLACEMENTS * NEW CONSTRUCTION**

REMODELS



NEW CONSTRUCTION

From concrete to roofing and everything in between.

Ron Lucke

CUSTOM BUILDING

Burlington, Co. (719) 346-8840
CELL PHONE (719) 349-8840

*** SIDING * SEAMLESS RAIN GUTTERS * FASCIA ***