

Northern Valley football team in Hall of Fame exhibit

By DICK BOYD

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In many Kansas communities in devoted to high school football.

It is as much a part of the community as the local bank or church and it represents small-town pride at its best.

The Kansas Sports Hall of Fame is honoring this great Kansas tradition with an original exhibit highlighting the history of Eight-Man Football in Kansas at the Kansas Sports Museum in Newton.

The exhibit, which opened November 10 and will be on display through December 31, highlights the great football dynasties of schools such as Northern Valley.

The Huskies, under the tutelage of head coach Chuck Fessenden, have played in seven state championship games and won state championships in 1986, 1987 and 1990.

They were state runners-up in 1982, 1983, 1988, and 1989.

Their playoff scores in their 1986 state championship run were: 32-12 over Wilson, 58-12 over Leroy and 12-10 over Greensburg.

In 1987, they defeated Morland 45-0, Tipton 45-0, Rolla 46-20 and Attica 20-6 to win the state championship.

Their 1990 state championship team defeated Wilson 56-14, Jetmore 34-26, Greensburg 40-24 and Centre 50-32 in playoff games.

Northern Valley won 41 straight games from the sixth game of 1985 to the state championship game of 1988.

Coach Fessenden is a 1976 graduate of Kansas State University. He was hired as football coach at Northern Valley in the fall of 1976 and has coached the Huskies for 35 years. His overall record is 247 wins and 113 losses. At the start of the 2010 football season, he was the state of Kansas all-time winningest Eight-Man football coach!

The Northern Valley display in the Museum has the following information in a frame: "Led by head coach Chuck Fessenden, the Huskies of Northern Valley High School were one of the top high school programs in Kansas during nine seasons from 1982 to 1990.

"Northern Valley, located in the communities of Almena and Long Island, won three state championships and finished second four more times in the 1980s.

"In addition to the state titles in 1986, 1987 and 1990, the Huskies also produced a 41-game winning streak, which, at the time, tied for the second longest in the history of Kansas Eight-Man football.

"Fessenden, who is currently in his 35th year at Northern Valley, was the state's all-time winningest Eight-Man coach with 245 victories heading into the 2010 season."

Also included in the Museum displays are the championship histories of Midway-Denton,

Hanston, Alton, Dwight, Claflin, Hanover, Coldwater, Scandia and Sylvan Grove, among others.

A total of 34 state championship trophies - including eight from Midway-Denton, six from Hanston, three from Northern Valley and the first Eight-Man state championship won by Nashville Zenda in 1969 - are on display.

Many of the all-time leading rushers, passers and receivers in the eight-man game are also featured, as well as programs from the annual Kansas Eight-Man Football Coaches Association All-Star Game.

Results of every state championship game are displayed along with the coaches' names. Much of the small town traditions and passion for high school Eight-Man teams are captured in the memorabilia loaned for the exhibition.

The Kansas Sports Museum is located in the Chisholm Trail Center at Exit 28, I-135 Highway in Newton. It is open Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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Northern Valley head football coach Chuck Fessenden, the winningest Eight-Man football coach in the state of Kansas, is shown near the Husky display in the Kansas Sports Museum in Newton. Memorabilia from Northern Valley, including their three state championship

trophies, is on display along with championship histories of other Kansas high schools in an original exhibit highlighting the history of Eight-Man Football in Kansas. The exhibit runs through December 31.

Norton Blue Jays tennis team completes successful season

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School tennis team, under the guidance of veteran head coach Jim Green, has completed the best tennis season ever in Norton with two tournament championships, four tournament runners-up and an individual state champion.

Leading the way for the Lady Jays in the 2010 season was sophomore Tawni Griffey, who finished the season with a 31-0 unbeaten record and state Class 3A singles championship!

With six returning letterwinners, all seniors, the Norton tennis team got the season started in mid-season form and never let up.

Coach Green guided Norton's tennis team for 25 years and returned last year after a two-year absence. His assistant coach was Crystal Montgomery, former outstanding tennis player for Colby High School and Bethany College.

The Norton tennis team got an early morale boost with the completion of a whole new surface on the tennis courts in the swimming pool park.

An impressive start

The Lady Jays opened the season August 28 with an impressive runner-up finish in a traditionally tough Trego Varsity Round Robin in WaKeeney. Not only was Norton runner-up, the Lady Jays came within one point of tying Tribune for the championship.

Sophomore Tawni Griffey made her debut at No.1 singles in outstanding fashion, going undefeated. Senior letterwinner Morgan Baumann was runner-up at No.2 singles. Senior letterwinners Rachel Shepard and Meaghan Peterson played together for the first time ever and placed fourth at No.1 doubles with a 2-2 record.

Senior letterwinners Kyra Fulton and Nikki McVey also played together for the first time and placed third in No.2 doubles with a 3-1 record.

"I was extremely pleased with how our girls played," said coach Green. "We were seventh last year in this tournament and the other teams had most of their varsity players returning."

On Thursday, Sept. 2, Norton competed in the Hays Invitational and won the championship!

Tawni Griffey went 3-0 which included an 8-0 shutout in the finals of defending Class 4A state champion Caitlyn Wark, Colby, to win the gold medal! Wark was 36-0 last season. No.2 singles player Morgan Baumann placed third with a 3-1 record. The No.1 doubles team of Rachel Shepard and Meaghan Peterson won gold with a 3-0 record. Kyra Fulton and

Nikki McVey placed third at No.2 doubles with a 2-1 mark.

Second team championship

Norton journeyed to Colby for a varsity tournament on Saturday, Sept. 4 and won another team championship!

Griffey went 3-0 again although she had to rally to beat Colby's Wark 7-6(7-1). Shepard and Peterson placed runner-up at No.1 doubles with a 2-1 record. Baumann at No.2 singles also won gold with a perfect 3-0 record. At No.2 doubles, Fulton and McVey also won the championship with a 3-0 mark.

Norton scored 28 team points and second place Colby had just 12.

On Tuesday, Sept. 7, the Lady Jays competed in the Phillipsburg Invitational and just missed a third straight team championship. The Lady Panthers survived the Norton challenge by scoring 25 points compared to the Lady Jays' 23 to edge them for the title.

Griffey went 3-0 again, this time with all shutouts.

At No.1 doubles, Shepard and Peterson were runner-up with a 2-1 record. Baumann won the No.2 singles championship with a 3-0 record and the No.2 doubles team of Fulton and McVey placed third with a 1-2 mark.

Norton returned to Phillipsburg on Tuesday, Sept. 14 for the Phillipsburg Quad. Although it was a varsity quadrangular, coach Green gave his junior varsity players a chance to compete and they did very well against varsity players, finishing fourth.

On Thursday, Sept. 23, Norton was to compete in the Russell Invitational but inclement weather kept that from happening.

Norton returned to WaKeeney on Saturday, Sept. 25 and turned in another excellent performance, placing runner-up to an outstanding Claflin squad. Griffey was a perfect 4-0 with three shutouts until meeting Allie Hip, Claflin, and winning 8-5. Hipp had defeated Nine Bwalya, Hoisington, last year's regional champion.

Baumann was sixth at No.2 singles with a 2-2 record. Shepard and Peterson placed seventh at No.1 doubles with a 2-2 mark and McVey and Fulton placed tenth at 2-2 in No.2 doubles.

On Tuesday, Sept. 28, Norton placed fourth, three points out of first, in the Colby Invitational Tournament. Tribune was the champion with 19 points, Phillipsburg and Trego tied with 18 points each and Norton scored 16 points. Griffey received a bye, then shutout two players, including a 6-0 win over Wark of Colby.

In No.2 singles, Baumann drew



Norton sophomore Tawni Griffey had a perfect 31-0 record en route to the Class 3A Regional and State singles tennis championships! She is shown at the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Phillipsburg where she won the singles gold medal.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

a bye, went 1-1 and was runner-up.

Shepard and Peterson were 0-3 and placed sixth in No.1 doubles. One of their losses went to a tie-breaker. In No.2 singles, Baumann placed runner-up with a bye and 1-1 record. Fulton and McVey were third in No.2 doubles with a 3-1 record.

Run for their money

On Saturday, Oct. 2, the Mid-Continent League Tournament was held in Phillipsburg. The Lady Jays gave the Lady Panthers a run for their money before placing runner-up. Phillipsburg ended with 47 points and Norton scored 42.

Griffey shutout four opponents 8-0 to win the individual No.1 singles crown. Baumann also went 4-0 to win the No.2 singles championship. Rachel Shepard played No.1 doubles for the first time with senior Ashley Millan and they placed fourth with a 1-3 record. In No.2 doubles, Fulton and McVey placed runner-up with a 3-1 record. Their only loss was 8-5 to a Phillipsburg team. "This was their best tournament of the year," coach Green said of Fulton and McVey.

The Class 3A Regional Tournament was held Friday and Satur-

day, Oct. 8-9 in WaKeeney.

It was a single elimination tournament. Griffey remained unbeaten and scored enough points for Norton to place fourth as a team, although other Lady Jay players did not survive the tough competition.

Griffey was 4-0 in the tournament and defeated Allie Hipp, Claflin, 6-2, 6-1 in the championship finals. Hipp was runner-up in last year's regional.

Baumann played well despite not placing and ended with a 1-1 record.

In doubles, Shepard and Millan lost in the first round. Fulton and McVey also lost in the first round.

State Tournament

Griffey advanced to the Class 3A State Tournament at Wichita Collegiate on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 15-16. She was seeded No.2 behind last year's state champion Caroline Lincoln, Wichita Independent. Tawni won

two matches both days to earn a gold medal and state championship and complete a perfect 31-0 season!

On Friday, she defeated a Wichita Collegiate and Hutch Trinity player. After winning over a Conway Springs player in the Saturday semi-finals, she faced defending state champion Lincoln and outscored her 6-1, 6-4 to win the championship. Claflin's Hipp finished in fourth place.

Tawni's 18 points placed Norton sixth in the state as a team.

"Tawni's championship was a tremendous accomplishment," said coach Green. "Tawni had a great season and great finish."

Norton will lose the six senior letterwinners from this very successful team. They are Morgan Baumann, Kyra Fulton, Nikki McVey, Meaghan Peterson, Katie Scott and Rachel Shepard. They will also lose seniors Kelsie Griffith, Ashley Millan and Kaitlyn Ross.

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