

Norton Cross Country teams have successful season

By DICK BOYD

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Second year head coach George Rossi and his girls and boys Norton Community High School cross country teams had a tremendous 2010 season which ended with the Lady Jays winning their first ever state championship and the boys placing a solid fifth.

Along the way, the Norton girls won six other meet championships and were the runner-up team twice out of nine total meets. The Blue Jay boys captured four meet championships and were runner-up in four meets.

Also this season, the Norton girls and boys were Mid-Continent League champions for the third year in a row and they were both winners of the Norton Invitational for the second year in a row!

Norton had five returning letter winners this season: Dustyna Sprigg, Kaylen Rossi, seniors; Abby Bainter, junior; Julia Kent, Kamilla Jones, sophomores. Other girls squad members were Astrid Moen, junior exchange student from Norway and Darcy Bainter, Katelyn Engelbert, Marisa Maddy, freshmen.

Returning boys letter winners were Troy Bainter, Kegan Vanover, Cole Archer, seniors; Zach Hartwell, Bryan Henry, juniors; John Renner, Ryan Bainter, sophomores.

The five freshmen boys on the team were Alec Hager, Marc Miller, Keith Sander, Garret Otter and Chris Chambers.

Coach Rossi's assistant coach this year was Nicole Satran.

Norton Invitational

Norton opened the 2010 season in the annual Norton Invitational Meet on Thursday, September 2 and both girls and boys won the championship for the second year in a row and it was the fifth title in a row for the Lady Jays!

Astrid Moen won the gold medal for the girls in the 2.5 mile race in 17:11. She was followed by Darcy Bainter, third, Katelyn Engelbert, fifth; Kamilla Jones, sixth; Julia Kent, seventh. Also running for Norton were Abby Bainter, ninth and Dustyna Sprigg, tenth. Marisa Maddy won the junior varsity race.

Troy Bainter was fastest for the Norton boys in the 3.1 mile race with a fifth place finish in 18:45. Zach Hartwell was next in sixth, followed by Marc Miller, 13th; John Renner, 15th; Alec Hager, 16th. Also running for the Blue Jays were Kegan Vanover, 20th; Cole Archer, 32nd. Bryan Henry was recovering from an injury but won the junior varsity race.

Wamego Invitational

On Saturday, Sept. 11, the Blue Jays traveled to Wamego for a very tough meet where they competed against all classes. The girls came through with the championship and in so doing defeated defending meet champion and defending Class 3A state champion Riley County. When the smoke cleared, the Lady Jays

had 79 points and Riley County scored 88 for runner-up.

Moen ran well again, placing third individually in 17:05 and was followed by Darcy Bainter, 13th; Engelbert, 23rd; Jones, 26th; Kent, 33rd. Also running for the Lady Jays were Abby Bainter, 34th and Sprigg, 47th.

"This was a fantastic day for our girls," said coach Rossi.

The Blue Jay boys also ran well at Wamego and finished as the runner-up to Overland Park Christian Prep. Hartwell was third individually with an 18:02, followed by Troy Bainter, 19th; Miller, 23rd; Hager, 27th; Henry, 37th. Also running for Norton were Renner, 38th and Vanover, 52nd.

"Our boys also ran a fantastic race," said coach Rossi.

Hays Invitational

The Norton girls won their third team championship in a row at the Hays Invitational on Thursday, Sept. 16. Norton edged Class 4A Colby 38-41 for the title. Moen placed sixth in a personal record time of 16:10, followed by Darcy Bainter, 25th; Engelbert, 13th; Kent, 14th; Jones, 15th. Also running for the Lady Jays were Sprigg, 17th; Abby Bainter, 25th.

The Blue Jay boys placed runner-up to an outstanding Ness City team. Hartwell was fifth in 17:52, followed by Troy Bainter, seventh; Henry, tenth; Miller, 13th; Hager, 14th. Also running for Norton were Renner, 16th; Vanover, 25th.

Hill City Invitational

On Thursday, Sept. 23, the Norton girls' unbeaten season ended with a one point loss to Class 4A Colby in the Hill City meet. The Lady Jays had 41 points and Colby scored 40. Moen placed fourth in 17:04, followed by Darcy Bainter, ninth; Engelbert, 14th; Jones, 16th; Kent, 17th. Also running for Norton were Sprigg, 23rd; Abby Bainter, 26th. Maddy won the junior varsity race.

The Norton boys placed runner-up to Ness City for the second straight meet. Hartwell finished seventh in 18:51, followed by Miller, 18th; Henry, 20th; Renner, 22nd; Troy Bainter, 23rd. Also running for Norton were Hager, 29th; Vanover, 31st.

Oberlin Invitational

The Lady Jays finished runner-up to an excellent McCook, Neb. team in the Oberlin Invitational on Tuesday, Sept. 28. Moen placed fifth in a personal record time of 15:50, followed by Engelbert, 11th; Darcy Bainter, 13th; Jones, 16th; Kent, 17th. Also running for Norton were Sprigg, 21st; Abby Bainter, 23rd.

The Blue Jay boys won the team championship and Hartwell successfully defended his gold medal performance from 2009. His winning time was a personal record 16:39. Henry placed eighth, followed by Renner, 14th; Miller, 16th; Hager, 21st. Also running for Norton was Vanover, who finished just behind Hager

in 22nd.

Mid-Continent League Meet

On Thursday, Oct. 7, on the golf course in Phillipsburg for the Mid-Continent League Meet, the third time was the charm for Norton as both girls and boys were league champions for the third year in a row!

It was also the seventh straight league championship for the Norton boys!

Moen won the gold medal with a time of 17:06. She was followed by Darcy Bainter, fifth; Engelbert, sixth; Kent, eighth; Jones, 11th. Also running for Norton were Abby Bainter, 13th; Sprigg, 14th. Maddy won the junior varsity race.

Leading the Norton boys to the league championship was Hartwell, who finished second in 17:46. He was followed by Miller, sixth; Troy Bainter, eighth; Hager, ninth; Henry, tenth. Also running for the Blue Jays were Renner, 13th; Vanover, 20th.

Lakeside Invitational

The Lakeside Invitational at Downs on Thursday, Oct. 14 produced another championship performance by both the Norton girls and boys!

Both divisions were loaded with state ranked teams and runners.

The Norton girls scored 81 points and were led by Moen with a fifth place finish in 16:32. She was followed by Engelbert, 10th; Darcy Bainter, 13th; Kent, 20th; Jones, 24th. Also running for Norton were Abby Bainter, 31st; Sprigg, 32nd. Maddy repeated as the junior varsity race winner.

The Norton boys were led again by Hartwell with a fifth place finish in 18:02, followed by Henry, 12th; Hager, 20th; Troy Bainter, 22nd; Miller, 23rd. Also running for Norton were Renner, 31st; Vanover, 50th.

"This was the most competitive race for us so far this year and we are very pleased with the results," said coach Rossi.

Regional at Fort Larned

The Class 3A Regional Cross Country Meet was held at the Fort Larned Historical Site west of Larned.

Both Norton girls and boys continued to run well and both qualified for the second year in a row to compete as teams in the state meet.

The Lady Jays won their sixth team championship of the season and the boys placed runner-up to a strong Sterling squad.

Moen was the runner-up for the Norton girls with a clocking of 15:57. She was followed by Engelbert, fourth; Kent, seventh; Darcy Bainter, tenth; Sprigg, 11th. Also running for Norton were Jones, 12th; Hager, 13th, in her first varsity race.

All Norton girls demonstrated that they were peaking for the state meet as all set personal records!

Hartwell was third individually for the Norton boys in 17:29, followed by Henry, fifth; Miller,



Astrid Moen, leading runner for Norton's Class 3A state champion girls cross country team, climbs a hill with runners from other schools strung out behind her during the state meet on the Wamego golf course. Astrid placed fifth individually for the state champion Lady Jays.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



Norton's Zach Hartwell moves up in the pack during the Class 3A State Cross Country Championships in Wamego. Zach led Norton runners in most races this season, including the state meet where he finished fifth individually for the Blue Jays' fifth place boys team.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

22nd; Hager, 23rd; Troy Bainter, 25th. Also running for Norton were Renner, 29th; Vanover, 42nd.

State Cross Country Meet

The big show that all runners had been working toward all

determined to do better this time around. And they did!

The Lady Jays employed tremendous teamwork to leave all other teams behind in winning their first ever state title! Norton scored 73 points, followed by runner-up Minneapolis, 106; third place Douglass, 126.

Moen placed fifth individually in 16:24, followed by Engelbert, 13th, 16:54; Kent, 14th, 16:56; Maddy, 29th, 17:30 and Sprigg, 30th, 17:34. Also running for the Lady Jays were Jones, 31st, 17:35 and Darcy Bainter, 34th, 17:37. Astrid, Katelyn and Julia were state medalists.

"Wow! Words cannot come close to describing the race our girls had today," said coach Rossi. "Winning the state championship by 33 points is a statement on how this team came together and worked with a single objective and would not let anything stand between them and a state championship.

"The week before the race, we told our girls that they would need to have the top five runners in the top 35 finishers. On Saturday, we had all seven in the top 35!

"Every race, these girls got a little better. The last three races, Lakeside, Regional and this State race, our girls just put the hammer down and dominated every other team.

"The main reason our girls team had such great success is that they run so well as a team. The time split today between all seven runners was one minute, three seconds. Running together like that has been their trademark all year.

"Coach Satran and I are so proud to have been part of this year and to see our girls achieve their goal is a feeling we will never forget."

Only 13 points separated the second and fifth place boys teams. Wichita Independent was the champion with 82 points, followed by Holcomb, 122; Sterling, 124; Kansas City Christian, 126; Norton, 135.

Hartwell was fastest for Norton again with a time of 17:20 and fifth place finish. He was followed by Henry, 19th, 18:04; Hager, 49th, 18:59; Miller, 55th, 19:08; Vanover, 61st, 19:15. Also running for the Blue Jay boys were Renner, 63rd, 19:17; Troy Bainter, 98th, 22:01.

"Our boys ran a very competitive race," said coach Rossi. "Zach and Bryan became first time state medalists and both ran awesome races. Alec, Marc, Kegan and John also ran their best times on this course.

Troy's body just gave out on him but he showed why he is a true champion and competitor and finished the race.

"Our Norton boys team worked so hard this year and to be in the top five of the state meet is a great feat. I know our boys will be very motivated for next year and, with hard work, should contend for a state championship next year."

Area football teams end season

By DICK BOYD

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Outstanding 2010 seasons by two area high school football teams, Hill City and Beloit, ended last weekend with losses in the state playoffs.

Hill City, in Eight-Man Division I, placed runner-up in the state with a 52-44 loss to unbeaten Madison in Newton on Saturday and Beloit lost 59-22 to undefeated Conway Springs in the Class 3A state semi-finals in Conway Springs on Friday.

In the other Class 3A semi-finals game, Silver Lake defeated Rossville 38-0.

The Class 3A state championship game between Conway Springs (13-0) and Silver Lake (12-1) will be played at 1 p.m. this Saturday at Gowans Stadium in Hutchinson.

Hill City

In the Eight-Man I state contest, Hill City fell behind by 26 points in the first half but put together a furious rally that came within 10 yards of tying the game and sending it into overtime.

The Ringnecks trailed by 32-6 with less than five minutes to play in the first half but senior quarter-

back Reggie Jordan scored from 43 yards out with 3:42 left, Madison added another touchdown with 2:29 showing and Jordan got into the end zone from 1 yard out with nine seconds left to make it 38-22 at intermission.

Jordan scored the only touchdown of the hard-fought third quarter on a 13 yard run, making the score 38-28 with one period remaining.

Madison scored on a pass play with 10:26 left in the game, but Jordan ran 17 yards for another tally with 7:56 on the scoreboard and ran for two extra points to make it 44-36.

Madison scored their final touchdown on a 70-yard pass and the extra points pass was good, extending the lead to 52-36 but the Ringnecks did not give up.

Hill City responded with another scoring drive.

This time, Jordan went into the end zone from one yard out with 4:50 left in the game. Jordan ran for two extra points, cutting the Madison margin to eight points again at 52-44.

The Ringnecks recovered an onside kickoff and had the ball with a chance to tie the score for

the first time since the opening quarter. They moved from their own 39-yard line to the Madison 10.

Hill City needed one yard for a first-and-goal on third down and did not make it and Madison also stopped them on fourth down.

Madison took over on downs with 42 seconds to play and Hill City out of timeouts and ran out the clock.

Jordan finished the game with 289 yards rushing and all six Ringneck touchdowns.

"We had our chance down the stretch," said Hill City head football coach Chris Shank.

"When you've got the ball with under a minute to play in the state championship game with a chance to take it to overtime, that's great.

"Our kids fought hard and we didn't have a single kid at any point that we worried about quitting.

"They all kept fighting and I'm proud of them. There's a difference between getting beat and losing, and our kids didn't get beat."

Hill City ended the season with an 11-2 record.

Beloit

On Friday night, Beloit ran into a crushing running attack from Conway Springs in their 59-22 loss in the Class 3A state semi-finals.

The Cardinals scored on each of their first nine possessions and put up 45 unanswered points during one stretch to overwhelm the Trojans.

A 52-yard touchdown run by Luke Shamburg and Lane Koster's 6-yard scoring carry enabled Beloit to tie the score at 14-all early in the second quarter.

The Cardinals took the lead for good with a touchdown to make it 20-14 and, when Beloit did not cover the ensuing kickoff, Conway took possession again.

They added two more touchdowns before halftime, the last with 29 seconds to play, to make it 33-14 at intermission.

Beloit rushed for 293 yards in the game but Conway Springs racked up 495 yards rushing.

Beloit ended the season 10-3. The Trojans handed Norton (9-1) their only loss of the season earlier in the playoffs by a score of 42-35.

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