

Blue Jays dominate the Panther Classic

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School varsity wrestling team turned in a dominating performance to win their eighth straight championship of the Panther Classic Wrestling Tournament on Saturday in Phillipsburg.

The Blue Jays scored 198 points to easily outdistance runner-up Phillipsburg, who tallied 139. Abilene was right behind Phillipsburg in third place with 138 points.

Fourth place went to Hoxie with 121, followed by Beloit, 104; Hoisington, 84; St. Francis, 55; Ellis, 54.5; Lakin, 45.5; Ellsworth, 40.5; Oakley, 36; Stockton, 36; Minneapolis, 33.5; Lincoln, 29; Thomas More Prep of Hays, 24.5; Hill City, 14.

Norton had six wrestlers in the championship finals and all six won gold medals. They were: Branson Addington, 103; John Risewick, 112; Troy Bainter, 130; Billy Broeckelman, 140; Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, 160 and Spencer Shirk, 171.

Eli Bozarth, 145, placed third. Justin Waggoner, 125 and Josh Asbury, 285, both finished fourth in their weight classes.

Also wrestling for Norton were R.J. Ellis, 119; Brett Terrell, 135 and Jared Bohl, 152.

Norton was open at 189 and 215.

The Blue Jays had an outstanding 24-11 won-loss record and excellent 16-4 pin ratio.

Coach's comments

"The highlight of the tournament for us was having six wrestlers in the finals and all six winning," said coach Johnson.

"I don't remember another tournament of this caliber that we've had this happen!"

"To score 198 points in a tournament like this is amazing. This is a tough tournament with lots of ranked wrestlers. Abilene brings a lot of good wrestlers."

"There were five unbeaten wrestlers coming into the tournament and only two remained Saturday night."

"I'm happy with the way we finished the tournament, placing nine out of our 12 wrestlers."

"Our Brett Terrell at 135 pounds was one of those unbeaten wrestlers but, in his defense, he wrestled in the toughest weight class by far. Dalton Davis, Lakin,

came in 19-0 and seeded No.1 and Courtney Strauss, Abilene, was seeded No.2 at 29-0. Brett was seeded No.3 at 16-0.

"There were actually five very quality wrestlers in that division. Strauss won the championship by pinning Davis."

Strauss was named the "Chuck Lovenstein Outstanding Wrestler" for the tournament by vote of the team coaches.

"Our senior 160 pound wrestler "Tug" Keiswetter had a great tournament," said coach Johnson. "He was seeded No.2 behind Abilene's Collen Picking, who brought a 23-0 record into the tournament. Picking was a Class 4A state runner-up last year and decided Tug in overtime at 152 pounds in last year's Panther Classic. Tug dominated him this time and won the championship with a 5-2 decision!"

For his performance, the Norton coaches named Landon "Tug" Keiswetter as the Norton "Wrestler of the Week".

"I was also proud of our 103 pound freshman Brandon Addington winning his first tournament title," said coach Johnson. "His most important win came in the semi-finals where he pinned Lane Hoffman of St. Francis. That will be a big plus for regional seeding."

"As far as conditioning, I think we're getting there. We've left a little room to get in absolute top physical condition for the regional."

The Blue Jays will not wrestle again in competition until the Regional Tournament on Friday and Saturday, February 18-19 but coach Johnson says the practice schedule will be such that his Blue Jays will be working hard to get in that top physical condition.

Individual matches

103 - Branson Addington was seeded No.3. He drew a bye, then pinned No.2 seed Lane Hoffman, St. Francis, in 3:09. In the championship match, he won a 5-2 decision over No.4 seed Ty Nienke, Ellsworth.

Hoffman placed third by pinning No.1 seed Dakota Kohler, Phillipsburg, in the second period.

Addington is now 9-10 for the season. Nienke is 18-8, Hoffman is 25-5 and Kohler is 24-5.

112 - John Risewick was seeded No.1. He drew a bye, pinned No.4 seed Cory Howard, Oakley, in 1:00 and wrestled No.2

seed Ethan Wessling, Beloit, in the finals where he pinned him in 1:55.

No.3 seed Casey Keller, St. Francis, placed third with a 5-0 decision over Kyle Witmer, Phillipsburg.

Risewick is now 23-5 for the season and Wessling is 21-8.

119 - R.J. Ellis lost a 4-1 decision to No.3 seed Diego Gallaway, Stockton, in the first round. In the consolation bracket, he won an 8-6 decision over Skylar Constable, Minneapolis. He just missed wrestling in the consolation championship when No.4 seed Braden Sahlfeld, Beloit, decided him 4-3.

Sahlfeld placed fourth when he was pinned by No.5 seed Caleb Studley, Phillipsburg, in the third period. No.1 seed Dylan Schumacher, TMP, won the championship with a 15-0 technical fall over Gallaway.

Ellis is now 10-9 for the season and Schumacher is now 28-2.

125 - Justin Waggoner was seeded No.4. He pinned Brandon Hall, Ellis, in 3:26 but was then pinned by No.1 seed Trevor Kennedy, Lakin, in 2:36. In the consolation bracket, he won a 12-2 major decision over Mason Bannister, Phillipsburg, to reach the consolation championship match. He lost a 7-6 decision to No.3 seed Bowe Behymer, Beloit, and placed fourth.

No.2 seed Calvin Ochs, Hoxie, won the championship with a 7-4 decision over Kennedy.

Waggoner is now 16-9 for the season; Ochs is 29-4 and Kennedy is 22-6.

130 - Troy Bainter was seeded No.1 and pinned his way to the championship. He pinned Logan Lampe, St. Francis, in 1:44; pinned No.5 seed Gage Younger, Ellis, in 3:15 and pinned Slade Sare, Abilene, in 2:59 to win the championship.

Younger placed third when he defeated No.4 seed Britton Sealock, Hoxie, with an 11-1 major decision.

Bainter is now 27-2 for the season, Sare is 30-8 and Younger is 14-5.

135 - Brett Terrell was seeded No.3 behind two other unbeaten wrestlers. He won a 9-5 decision over Jake Kubrick, Ellsworth, then wrestled unbeaten and No.2 seed Courtney Strauss, Abilene, in the semi-finals. He was pinned in 4:40 by Strauss and dropped into the consolation bracket. He

wrestled No.5 seed Austin Lopez, Ellis, and lost a 3-2 decision.

Lopez went on to place third by pinning No.4 seed Donovan Schamberger, Hoxie, in the third period. No.1 seed Dalton Davis, Lakin, also unbeaten, faced Strauss in the championship and was pinned in the second period.

Terrell is now 17-2 for the season. Strauss is 32-0, Davis is 21-1 and Lopez is 22-4.

140 - Billy Broeckelman was seeded No.1. He pinned Josh Street, Lakin, in :47, then pinned No.4 seed Chance Demel, Hoisington, in 1:23. In the championship finals, he won a 6-2 decision over No.3 seed Riley Hunsicker, Ellis.

No.2 seed Steven Yergey, Hoxie, placed third with an 11-7 decision over Demel.

Broeckelman is now 24-5 for the season. Hunsicker is 22-3 and Yergey is 19-2.

145 - Eli Bozarth was seeded No.4. He pinned No.5 seed Cole Meier, Beloit, in 1:53, then lost a 5-0 decision to No.1 seed Matt Schneider, Phillipsburg. In the consolation bracket, he pinned Coulter Boyd, Oakley, in 1:36, then decided No.3 seed Sean Ussrey, Lakin, 5-0 to place third.

Schneider continued on to win a 13-9 decision over No.2 seed Dalton Bell, Hoisington, to earn the gold medal.

Bozarth is now 21-12 for the season. Schneider is 22-6 and Bell is 29-5.

152 - Jared Bohl lost his first match by a 16-0 technical fall to John Kubick, Ellsworth. In the consolation bracket, he was



Norton senior 160 pound wrestler Landon "Tug" Keiswetter is shown controlling Abilene's Collen Picking in the championship finals of the Panther Classic Wrestling Tournament in Phillipsburg on Saturday evening. Keiswetter decided Picking 5-2 to avenge a loss to Picking in overtime a year ago in the same tournament. It was the first loss of the season for Picking, who is now 25-1. Keiswetter is 28-2. The Norton coaches named Keiswetter "Wrestler of the Week" for his performance in the tournament. - Courtesy photo from David Steinle

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pinned in the second period by Connor Hewitt, Beloit.

No.1 seed Kane Kelly, Abilene, won the championship with a 6-3 decision over No.2 seed Thomas Rachow, Phillipsburg. No.4 seed Dylan Bainter, Hoxie, placed third with a 3-1 decision over No.3 seed Eric Albers, Oakley.

Bohl is now 11-17 for the season. Kelly is 32-3 and Rachow is 30--2.

160 - Landon "Tug" Keiswetter was seeded No.2. He pinned Hagen Banzlick, Hoisington, in 1:40, then won a 9-2 decision over No.3 seed Braden Mayes, Beloit. In the championship finals, he dominated No.1 seed and previously unbeaten Colten Picking, Abilene, in winning a 5-2 decision to earn the gold medal.

Mayes placed third by pinning No.4 seed Nathan Hanna, Hill City, in the third period.

Keiswetter is now 28-2 for the season and Picking is 25-1. Mayes is 25-6 and Hanna is 20-6.

171 - Spencer Shirk was seeded No.1. He pinned David Baca, Lakin, in 1:55, then pinned No.4 seed Brandon Salmans, Hoxie, in 3:13. In the championship finals, he wrestled No.2 seed Jordan Ward, Abilene, and won a 10-5 decision to earn the championship.

Salmans placed third by pinning No.5 seed Sheldyne Brown, Phillipsburg, in the third period.

Shirk is now 24-3 for the season. Ward is 17-7 and Salmans is 28-7.

189 - Norton was open. No.1 seed Tate Omli, Minneapolis, won the championship by pin-

ning No.3 seed Connor Winters, Stockton, in the second period.

No.2 seed Cody Batt, Hoisington, placed third with a 3-2 decision over No.5 seed Mark Cordel, Beloit.

Omli is now 28-1 for the season. Winters is 11-5 and Batt is 27-4.

215 - Norton was open. Adam Guthmiller, St. Francis, won the championship with an 8-0 major decision over No.2 seed Jacob English, Beloit.

Third place went to No.3 seed Ethan Soeken, Hoisington, with a fall in the second period.

Guthmiller is now 29-2 for the season. English is 29-4 and Soeken is 27-7.

285 - Josh Asbury was seeded No.6. He pinned No.3 seed Brady Moore, Hoisington, in 3:05, then was pinned in :30 by No.2 seed Matt Holt, Abilene. In the consolation bracket, he pinned No.4 seed Connor Flegler, Minneapolis, in 2:04. In the consolation championship match, he lost a 1-0 decision to No.5 seed Chris Hoferica, Phillipsburg, and placed fourth.

No.1 seed Dillon Salmans, Hoxie, remained undefeated when he pinned Holt in the first period of their championship match. Salmans had edged Hoferica 3-2 in the semi-finals.

Asbury is now 13-13 for the season. Salmans extended his unbeaten record to 29-0. Holt is now 22-4 and Hoferica is 12-4.

Blue Jays are victorious over Smith Center Redmen

By DICK BOYD

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The three-point basket played a big factor in the Norton Community High School boys' weather-delayed 55-41 Mid-Continent League basketball victory at Smith Center on Thursday night.

Three Blue Jays hit shots from beyond the arc as Norton buried 10 of 20 for 50 percent accuracy!

In fact, the Blue Jays hit better from three-point land than two-point range where they were 11 of 30 tries for 37 percent.

It was an up and down game. Norton led by just 15-11 after one quarter but outscored the Redmen 11-4 in the second period to lead 26-15 at halftime.

Norton hit five three-pointers in the first half and Smith Center hit one. The Redmen started the second half by hitting three treys in the third quarter as they outscored the Blue Jays 16-10 for their best quarter of the game and cut the Norton lead to 36-31.

The Blue Jays saved the best for last and put 19 points on the scoreboard in the fourth quarter compared to 10 for the home-standing Redmen to extend the final margin of victory to 14 points.

"It was another game where we did not play as well as we are capable but it was a league win on the road."

"I felt that we were relying too much on the three-pointer of-

fensively but we were shooting it well.

"Defensively, we just did not play with any sense of urgency even when they made runs on us."

"We definitely need to play better in the future."

Norton's first quarter points came on a three-point and two-point basket by both senior guard Terrell Lane and sophomore guard Jacob Brooks and two baskets and a free throw by junior forward Jordan Wahlmeier.

The Blue Jays hit just four baskets in the second quarter but three of them were from beyond the arc. Lane buried two more treys, junior guard Tye Nickell hit from long range and Wahlmeier scored again.

Lane continued to add on points for the Blue Jays in the third period when he found the range on another trey and two-point basket. Nickell buried another trey and Brooks hit a two-pointer.

Lane finished the contest with his fifth and sixth treys of the game in the fourth quarter. Brooks hit his second long range basket and a two-pointer, Nickell hit a free throw and Wahlmeier ended with three more baskets and one charity.

Lane scored 22 points in the game on 6 of 10 from beyond the arc for 60 percent, 2 of 5 two-point attempts for 40 percent and 8 of 15 overall for 54 percent. He did not shoot any free throws.

Wahlmeier added 14 points on 6 of 11 two-point shots for 55 percent and 2 of 5 from the charity stripe for 40 percent.

Norton's third double figure scorer was Brooks, who hit 2 of 4 from beyond the arc, 3 of 6 two-point tries and 5 of 10 for 50 percent overall and 12 points.

Leading scorer for Smith Center was Kody Molzahn with 10 points.

As a team, Norton hit 21 of 50 field goal attempts for 42 percent. Smith Center connected on 4 of 14 from beyond the arc for 29 percent, 11 of 31 two-point tries for 36 percent and 15 of 45 overall for 33 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton swished 3 of 8 for 38 percent and Smith Center hit 7 of 12 for 58 percent.

The Blue Jays outrebounded the Redmen 31-25. Norton pulled down 9 offensive and 22 defensive rebounds and Smith Center grabbed 9 offensive and 16 defensive caroms.

Junior guard Dillon McConney and Lane were leading rebounders with 8 each, followed by Brooks, 7; Wahlmeier, 5; Nickell, Luke Ninemire, Cole Archer, 1 each.

Norton had 9 steals and Smith Center had 4. Wahlmeier led with 4 thefts, followed by McConney, Nickell, 2 each; Lane, 1.

The Blue Jays had 15 offensive assists compared to just 4 for the Redmen. McConney led with 6, followed by Lane, 4; Nickell,

Jacobs, 2 each; Wahlmeier, 1. Norton had just 8 turnovers and Smith Center lost the ball 13 times.

Junior varsity

The Norton junior varsity was defeated 47-41.

The Redmen held quarter leads of 9-8 and 25-15 but Norton outscored Smith Center 14-4 in the third quarter to tie the score at 29-all. An 18-12 fourth quarter in the home team's favor left the Blue Jays six points short.

Leading scorer for Norton was Zach Hartwell with 12 points, followed by Andrew Ellis, 9; Lane Bigge, 8; Trey Millan, 5; John Renner, Taylor Meder, Carson McKenna, 2 each; Tanner Furbush, 1.

Kody Molzahn also led the Red-

man junior varsity in scoring with 17 points.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton Boys
Jordan Wahlmeier 6 0 2-5 14; Tye Nickell 0 2 1-3 7; Terrell Lane 2 6 0-0 22; Jacob Brooks 3 2 0-0 12; Game Totals 11 10 3-8 55.

Smith Center Boys

Alex Hobelmann 3 0 2-8; Zach Linn 0 1 0-1 3; Trevor Overmiller 1 0 0-0 2; Kale Terrill 2 0 3-7 7; Nathan Cox 1 0 0-0 2; Grady Brooks 2 0 0-0 4; Kody Molzahn 2 2 0-0 10; Payton Buckmaster 0 1 2-2 5; Game Totals



Please Join the **Buffalo Booster Club** for a Beef and Noodle Supper **Friday, February 11 - 5:00-7:00 p.m.** -RCHS Cafeteria

A \$5.00 meal includes: Beef and noodles over mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, bread and lazy peach pie — HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

High School Sports This Week



WRESTLING:		
Norton JV in Bill Voss Novice Tournament in Colby	.....	9 a.m. Saturday
BASKETBALL:		
Norton vs. Oberlin V, JV, Boys C in Oberlin	.....	.6 p.m. Today
Norton vs. Atwood V, JV in Atwood	.....	6:30 p.m. Friday
Norton vs. Hoxie V, JV in Hoxie	.....	6:30 p.m. Tuesday
Northern Valley vs. Franklin, Neb. in Franklin	.....	4 p.m. Today
Northern Valley vs. Hill City in Hill City	.....	4 p.m. Tuesday
Logan vs. Heartland Christian in Colby	.....	.5 p.m. Today
Logan vs. Western Plains in Ransom	.....	4 p.m. Friday
Logan vs. Oberlin in Logan	.....	4 p.m. Tuesday