

Wrestling banquet celebrates another great year

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team celebrated a second consecutive Class 3-2-1A State Championship season during the Annual Banquet held Sunday, April 10 in the junior high gym in Norton.

Norton used a combination of a number of outstanding seniors as well as underclassmen to earn another state title.

The Blue Jays returned seven wrestlers with state experience and six who had won state medals. They were seniors Troy Bainter, 130; Brett Terrell, 135; Billy Broeckelman, 140; Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, 160 and Spencer Shirk, 171 and sophomore John Risewick. Senior Kaid McKenna was the seventh but a football injury kept him from wrestling this season.

This was coach Johnson's 22nd year at the helm of the Blue Jay wrestling program. "We are very excited about this season," he said prior to the start of the season. "We have a large and experienced senior class and a good group of young boys who will get some mat time throughout the year. This could be a great year for Norton wrestling but, as always in sports, last year does not count for this year. We will have to go out and earn everything that we get. We will have to work hard and be ready for the best efforts from all our competitors."

The Norton wrestlers listened well to their coach and came through with another tremendous state championship.

The Blue Jays opened the season with a championship at the Gabel/Jenkins Tournament in St. Francis, were runner-up in the tough Clay Center Round Robin Tournament, were champions of the Mid-Continent League Dual Tournament, won their eighth straight J.R. Durham Tournament title, placed fourth in the prestigious Newton Tournament of Champions, successfully defended last year's Mid-Continent League Tournament championship, won their eighth straight Panther Classic title in Phillipsburg and won their seventh straight Regional Wrestling championship in Goodland prior to once again winning it all at Gross Coliseum in Hays. Along the way, the Norton wrestlers lost just one dual, to an outstanding Kearney, Neb. team by a 39-30 score.

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

Student manager again this season was Juliana Miller.

Season review

Norton opened the 2010-11 wrestling season on Saturday, Dec. 4 with an impressive win at the Gabel/Jenkins Tournament in St. Francis. The Blue Jays scored 194.5 points for a 50.5 point advantage over runner-up Goodland, who tallied 144. Eleven of the 13 Norton wrestlers placed in the top three of their weight classes and four seniors won golds: Brett Terrell, 135; Billy Broeckelman, 140; Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, 160 and Spencer Shirk, 171. In addition, Norton had five runner-up finishers.

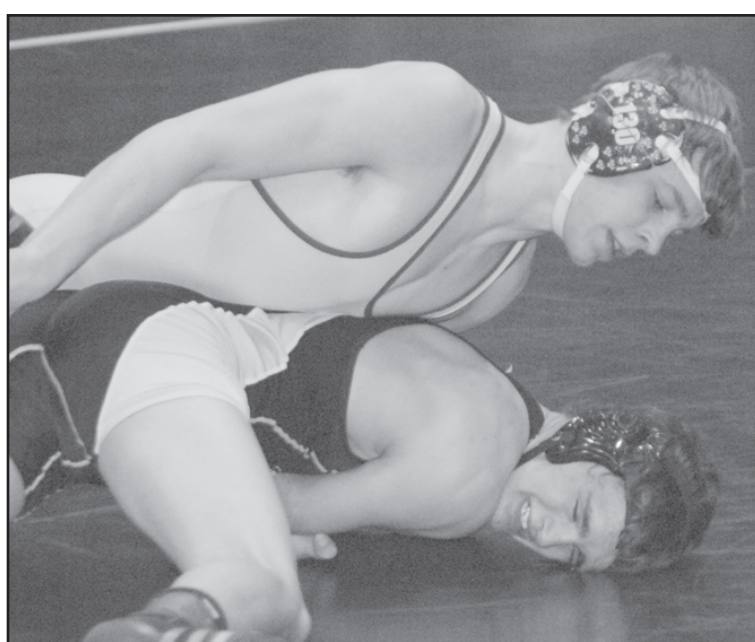
The Blue Jays had a 22-11 won-loss record and 16-4 pin ratio. "We had some disappointments as well as surprises but made a good statement with nine wrestlers in the finals," said coach Johnson.

Also on Saturday, Dec. 4, the Norton junior varsity wrestlers competed in the varsity Hoxie Invitational Tournament. Ten Norton wrestlers participated, three earned medals and Norton finished in eighth place.

On Friday, Dec. 10, the junior varsity wrestlers competed in the Southern Valley Varsity Tournament in Oxford, Neb. Seven of the Blue Jays finished in the top four of their weights and they placed fifth as a team.

The Norton varsity returned to action on Saturday, Dec. 11 in the always tough Clay Center Invitational Round Robin Tournament. Andale, ranked No. 2 in the state in Class 4A at the time, won with 143.5 points. Norton, who was ranked No. 1 in the Class 3-2-1A in the state, was runner-up just 3.5 points back with 140!

Norton had four champions at Clay Center: Risewick, 112; Bainter, 130; Terrell, 135; Shirk, 171. The Blue Jays had a 38-22



Blue Jay senior Troy Bainter is shown holding Seth Miller, Goodland, scoreless to win the championship in the Regional Wrestling Tournament in Goodland. Bainter was chosen by the Norton coaches as co-"Most Outstanding Wrestler of the Year".

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

won-loss record and 26-11 pin ratio.

Norton began the dual season on Friday, Dec. 17 with wins over Phillipsburg by 53-19 and over Smith Center by 56-18. The Blue Jays won 10 of 14 matches against each school.

On Saturday, Dec. 18, the Mid-Continent League Dual Wrestling Tournament was held in Ellis and the Blue Jays went undefeated for the day to win the team championship. In their duals, they outpointed Trego Community 78-6, Ellis 64-6, Plainville 56-24, Osborne 78-6 and Phillipsburg 45-34.

"Our technique needs to improve," said coach Johnson. "We'll spend a lot of time during Christmas break improving our technique."

Norton got the new year off to a great start on Saturday, Jan. 8 with the Blue Jays' eighth straight J.R. Durham Invitational Tournament championship in the NCHS Stull Gym in Norton.

Norton led all the way and finished with 165 points, followed by Hoxie, 154 and Mill Valley in third with 151. Norton had two repeat champions: Troy Bainter, 130 and Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, 160. There were nine Blue Jay wrestlers in the top six of their weight classes.

The Blue Jays traveled to Newton for the 48th annual Tournament of Champions on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 14-15. Norton was the smallest school to compete and is the smallest school to ever win the tournament. Norton demonstrated once again that they could wrestle against the larger schools in the toughest high school wrestling tournament in the state as they placed fourth out of 26 teams. Only seven Blue Jays wrestled and six of them placed. Bainter at 130 and Keiswetter at 160 were each a runner-up. Broeckelman, 140 and Shirk, 171, each placed third, Risewick, 112, was fourth and sophomore Eli Bozarth, 145, finished in seventh.

On Friday, Jan. 14, the Norton junior varsity wrestlers successfully defended their championship from the year before in the varsity Elm Creek Invitational. Norton scored 140 points to outdistance runner-up Arapahoe by 18 points. Alec Hager, 112 and Josh Asbury, 285, both won gold medals.

Norton's "Senior Night" was Thursday, Jan. 20 in the Wilmeth Kirk Memorial Gym and the seniors led the Blue Jays to an impressive 36-19 win over the visiting Colby Eagles.

On Tuesday, Jan. 25, Norton traveled to Kearney, Neb. for their toughest dual of the season and suffered their only dual loss of the season by a 39-30 score. Norton won more matches but Kearney had more wins by pins.

The Norton junior varsity got back into action on Saturday, Jan. 29 when they placed fifth in the varsity Arapahoe Invitational Tournament. Alec Hager won the 112 pound championship.

Also on Saturday, Jan. 29, the Norton varsity successfully defended last season's title by winning the championship of the Mid-Continent League Tournament held in Plainville. Norton scored 190.5 points. Phillipsburg tallied 162.5 and Smith Center had 143.5. All 11 Norton wrestlers placed and seven were champions. Winning championships were Risewick, 112; Bainter, 130; Terrell, 135; Broeckelman, 140; Bozarth, 145; Keiswetter, 160 and

Shirk, 171.

"We were really outstanding in this tournament," said coach Johnson.

On Friday, Feb. 4, the Blue Jays warmed up for Saturday's Panther Classic by defeating Smith Center 49-22 in a league dual.

The "warm up" worked to perfection as the Blue Jays dominated the opposition in the next day's Panther Classic in Phillipsburg. They won their eighth straight Panther Classic title with 198 points, easily outdistancing runner-up Phillipsburg who scored 139 points. Abilene was third with 138. Norton had six wrestlers in the finals and all six won! Champions were freshman Branson Addington, 103; Risewick, 112; Bainter, 130; Broeckelman, 140; Keiswetter, 160; Shirk, 171.

"The highlight was having six wrestlers in the finals and all six won," said coach Johnson.

On Saturday, Feb. 12, the Norton junior varsity wrestlers completed a successful season in the Bill Voss Novice Tournament in Colby. All 11 Norton wrestlers medaled and there were five Blue Jay champions: Alec Hager, 112; Cody Temmel, 125; Austin Hager, 135; Cole Renner, 160 and Dalton Miller, 171.

It was time for the toughest Regional Tournament of the four in the state of Kansas. It was held Friday and Saturday, Feb. 18-19 in Goodland. The Blue Jays held off a challenge from Hoxie to win their seventh straight Regional Tournament championship. Norton tallied 187 points and Hoxie was runner-up with 175.5. Five Blue Jays won championships: Bainter, 130; Terrell, 135; Broeckelman, 140; Keiswetter, 160; Shirk, 171. Risewick was runner-up at 112 and Addington placed fourth at 103. All seven qualified for the state tournament.

Norton finished the regional competition with a 34-13 won-loss record and 21-3 pin ratio.

The Class 3-2-1A State Wrestling Tournament was held the next weekend on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 25-26 at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays and the senior-dominated Blue Jays won their second consecutive state team championship!

Norton scored 131.5 points. Hoxie was a distant second with 97 points, followed by Rossville, 84 and Scott City, 81.5 in fourth.

Winning their second state championship were Bainter and Keiswetter. Shirk was also a champion at 171 and Risewick, 112 and Terrell, 135, were each a runner-up. Broeckelman placed sixth after being knocked unconscious in the 140 pound semifinals. Broeckelman had been named by team coaches as the "Regional Tournament Wrestler of the Year" the week before.

Broeckelman ended his high school career with a 112-33 record. His 112 career wins ranks him No. 14 among Norton wrestlers.

Addington won one of three matches in the state tournament. The Norton coaches named the entire Norton team as "Wrestlers of the Week".

"I'm really, really happy with the way we wrestled," said coach Johnson.

"To have the championship won after Friday was a pretty nice accomplishment. We had only four losses the entire tournament, not counting Billy's unfortunate



Norton senior Landon Tug Keiswetter is pictured en route to a technical fall over Hill City's Nathan Hanna in the finals of the Regional Wrestling Tournament in Goodland. Keiswetter was chosen by the Blue Jay coaches as co-"Most Outstanding Wrestler of the Year".

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

injury default.

"This group of seniors was very special. They just went out and won the title."

Norton had a very impressive 21-4 won-loss record in the state tournament and an equally impressive 7-0 pin ratio!

Individual awards

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

"This a special night for our seniors, who led us to the state championship," said coach Johnson.

"I'm very, very proud to be in this position at the completion of another state championship."

"You parents and fans were also part of this season."

The "Most Outstanding Wrestler" award, the most prestigious of all, was awarded to state champions Troy Bainter and Landon "Tug" Keiswetter.

These two outstanding wrestlers had very similar winning percentages this season. Keiswetter had a 36-2 record, which is 94.7 percent and Bainter compiled a 35-2 record, which is 94.6 percent winning.

For their four-year careers, Keiswetter was 123-38 and Bainter was 122-21.

Keiswetter ranks No. 5 and Bainter No. 6 among career wins by Norton wrestlers in the coach Johnson era.

This season, Keiswetter led his team in takedowns with 74, escapes with 19, technical falls with 5 and team points with 183. He was second in major decisions with 5, second in falls with 19, third in 3-point near falls with 17 and third in 2-point near falls with 20.

Bainter led the team in falls with 20, tied for first in decisions with 9, was second in team points with 179, third in takedowns with 49 and tied for fourth in escapes with 17.

Troy is one of only 10 four-time State Tournament placers in Norton wrestling history.

Receiving the "Coach Durham" award was Spencer Shirk. The award is based on hard work, sportsmanship, academics and good citizenship. Spencer won the team's senior academic award for his perfect 4.0 grade point average. He had a 33-3 record this season and was 102-14 for four years, which ranks him No. 17 among Norton career win leaders. This season, he led the team in 2-point near falls with 27, tied for first in decisions with 9, was second in reversals with 19, tied for second in technical falls with 2, tied for second in escapes with 18, placed third in winning percentage at 91.7 percent, was third in team points with 166, tied for third in falls with 17, placed fourth in 3-point near falls with 17 and was fourth in takedowns with 47.

Named the "Most Improved Wrestler of the Year" was Brett Terrell. "We had a lot of improvement by a lot of people but Brett was tops," said coach Johnson.

Brett was 24-3 this season and compiled a four-year record of 91-29. He is tied for No. 25 on the list of career win leaders. He tied for first in decisions this season with 9, tied for fourth in technical falls with 1 and placed fifth on the team in 3-point near falls with 14.

The "Most Promising Freshman" award was won by Branson Addington and the "Outstanding

Sophomore" award went to John Risewick.

Alec Hager won the "Outstanding Junior Varsity Wrestler" award and Cody Ellis was the winner of the "Most Improved Junior Varsity Wrestler" award.

Troy Bainter won the "Underdog Match of the Year" award for his 3-2 win over No. 1 seed and previously unbeaten Daniel DeShazer, Wichita Heights, in the semi-finals of the Newton Tournament of Champions. DeShazer had pinned his first three opponents in the tournament.

The "Most Exciting Match" award went to Brett Terrell for his 9-6 win over Jayde Kolterman, Clay Center, in the Clay Center Invitational Round Robin Tournament. Terrell won the gold medal in the tournament.

The winner of the "Key Match of the Year" award was Billy Broeckelman for his 11-0 major decision over Steven Yergey, Hoxie, to win the gold medal in the Regional Tournament.

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

Classroom "Academic Award" winners and their grade point averages, in addition to senior Spencer Shirk, were: freshman Branson Addington, 3.45; sophomore Cody Ellis, 3.5; junior R.J. Ellis, 3.57.

Spencer Shirk, Troy Bainter and Billy Broeckelman have received Academic Awards from the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

The 12 wrestlers who won the Regional Tournament championship for Norton were named to the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association All-Academic State Championship Wrestling Team. The 12 wrestlers had an average 3.31 grade point average.

Winners of the varsity statistical awards for the season were: Landon Keiswetter, most takedowns, 74; Landon Keiswetter, most escapes, 19; Spencer Shirk, most 2-point near falls, 27; Brett Terrell, Troy Bainter, Spencer Shirk, most decisions, 9; Landon Keiswetter, most technical falls, 5; Billy Broeckelman, most reversals, 21; Landon Keiswetter, most penalty points from opponents, 7; Billy Broeckelman, John Risewick, most 3-point near falls, 18; Billy Broeckelman, most major

decisions, 7; Troy Bainter, most falls, 20; Billy Broeckelman, fastest fall, :08 and Landon Keiswetter, most team points, 183.

Receiving junior varsity statistical awards were: Alec Hager, most takedowns, 27; Cole Renner, most escapes, 35; Ethan Ross, most 2-point near falls, 15; Treven Rossi, most decisions, 8; Ethan Ross, most technical falls, 3; Alec Hager, best winning percentage, 81 percent; Cody Ellis, most reversals, 17; Treven Rossi, Cole Renner, most penalty points from opponents, 4; Ethan Ross, Alec Hager, Cole Renner, most 3-point near falls, 8; Ethan Ross, Garret Otter, Keith Sander, Cody Ellis, Treven Rossi, Cole Renner, most major decisions, 1; Alec Hager, most falls, 15; Ethan Ross, fastest fall, :21; Alec Hager, most team points, 99.

Coach Johnson had plaque awards for the six senior wrestlers who completed four years for Norton. They were Troy Bainter, Brett Terrell, Billy Broeckelman, Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, Spencer Shirk and Kaid McKenna.

Coaches awards went to seniors Josh Asbury and Kaid McKenna.

The senior wrestlers also presented gifts to their coaches and Jerry Darling for following them so faithfully all four years.

Coach Johnson announced that assistant coach Doug Ray had been named an Assistant Coach of the Year for Kansas by the National Wrestling Coaches Association.

Coach Johnson also announced that Norton Superintendent of Schools Greg Mann will be inducted into the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association Hall of Fame as a contributor.

Also announced by coach Johnson were his own awards to his three assistant coaches as "Assistant Coaches of the Year".

"I couldn't get along without these guys," said coach Johnson. "They make my job much easier."

Jim Broeckelman was called forward and he gave some awards to the "Liver Shack Quacks", volunteers who encourage the wrestlers to eat their liver before competition.

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 and Jana Keiswetter for supervising the poster making.

Coach Johnson also thanked coach Miller for creating the video which captured some of the highlights and moments from the past wrestling season as well as when the seniors were younger. The video was shown during the evening.

Coach Johnson also handed out some "fun" awards. Winners were: Lucas Engel, "Quiz the Coach" award; Juliana Miller, "Clockwatcher" award; R.J. Ellis, "Six Pound Orange" award; Billy Broeckelman, second year for "Assistant Coach" award; R.J. Ellis, "Porker of the Year" award; Garret Otter, "Leaner of the Year" award.

Great Job Blue Jays!

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