

Norton cross country teams wrap up season

By Dick Boyd

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Third year head coach George Rossi's Norton Community High School girls and boys cross country teams had another fantastic season in 2011 which ended with the Lady Jays placing runner-up to a state-record first place team and the boys placing a solid fourth in the Class 3A State Meet in Lawrence.

Along the way, the Norton girls runners earned five meet championships and three other runner-up finishes and the Blue Jay boys won four meet championships and placed runner-up in two meets.

The Norton girls were Mid-Continent League cross country champions for the fourth year in a row and the Blue Jay boys won the league crown for the eighth year in a row!

The Lady Jays were winners of the Norton Invitational for the sixth year in a row and the Norton boys were champions for the third straight year.

Coach Rossi had eight girls and 13 boys on this year's teams.

Returning letter winners for the girls were: Kamilla Jones, junior; Julia Kent, returning state placer, junior; Katelyn Engelbert, returning state placer, sophomore; Darcy Bainter, sophomore; Marisa Maddy, sophomore.

Other squad members were: Steph Hager, junior and Sierra Griffith and Jesika Smith, freshmen.

Returning boys lettermen were: Zach Hartwell, returning state placer, senior; Bryan Henry, returning state placer, senior; John Renner, junior; Marc Miller, sophomore; Alec Hager, sophomore.

Other squad members were: Eric Becker, senior; Ryan Bainter, junior; Garret Otter, Chris Chambers, Keith Sander, Andrew Smith, sophomores; Dalton Vanover, David Smith, freshmen.

Returning as his assistant coach was Nicole Satran. Student manager was freshman Andrew McMullen.

Norton Invitational

Norton opened the 2011 season by hosting the annual Norton Invitational Meet on Thursday, Sept. 1 and both girls and boys won the team championship for the third year in a row!

It was the sixth championship in a row for the Lady Jays.

Bainter finished fastest for the Norton girls, placing third in 18:16 over the 2.5 mile course. Engelbert was fifth in 18:43; Kent, tenth, 19:49; Maddy, 11th, 19:50; Jones, 12th, 20:13. Also running for Norton were: Griffith, 16th, 21:38; Smith, 27th, 24:09.

Hartwell hit the finish line first for the Norton boys, placing fifth in 19:06 for the 3.1 mile course. He was followed

by Miller, ninth, 20:08; Hager, tenth, 20:10; Henry, 15th, 20:45; Renner, 17th, 21:26. Other Norton runners were: Vanover, 20th, 22:16; Bainter, 27th, 23:46.

Wamego Invitational

On Saturday, Sept. 10, the Norton runners had another good day with the girls winning the championship and the boys placing runner-up in the annual Wamego Invitational. It was a repeat of last year's performance for both.

"Our girls ran with great intensity and desire in defending their title," said coach Rossi. The Norton girls won with a 61 score, followed by Overland Park Christ Prep, 64; Riley County, 77; Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays, 96.

Engelbert led the Norton girls with a sixth place finish in 16:59; followed by Bainter, ninth, 17:20; Kent, 13th, 17:44; Jones, 23rd, 18:19; Maddy, 27th, 18:31. Also running for Norton were: Smith, 54th, 20:04; Hager, 63rd, 21:16. Griffith placed runner-up in the junior varsity race with a clocking of 17:55.

Overland Park Christian Prep won the boys title with a 31, followed by Norton, 89; Pike Valley, 99. Hartwell was fastest for the Norton boys with an eighth place finish in 18:44, followed by Miller, 12th, 18:53; Hager, 14th, 18:59; Henry, 28th, 19:46; Renner, 39th, 20:20. Also running for Norton were: Vanover, 53rd, 20:56; Bainter, 62nd, personal best, 21:23.

Hays Invitational

Both Norton girls and boys continued to run very well in the Hays Invitational on Thursday, Sept. 15 when they both earned team championships.



Running downhill during the Oberlin Invitational cross country meet were, from left, Marisa Maddy, Katelyn Engelbert, Julia Kent and Darcy Bainter. The Lady Jays placed runner-up in the meet to an outstanding McCook squad.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Hill City Invitational

The Norton girls compiled a score of 36, followed by TMP, 46; Oakley, 64; Colby, 84. Engelbert was Norton's fastest again with a seventh place finish in a personal best time of 16:08. She was followed by Bainter, eighth, personal best, 16:18; Kent, tenth, personal best, 16:34; Maddy, 11th, personal best, 16:43; Jones, 13th, 17:15. Also running for Norton were Griffith, 14th, personal best, 17:21; Smith, 18th, personal best, 18:04.

The Norton boys had a team score of 35, followed by Colby, 74; Ness City, 80. Hartwell was fastest Norton boys runner again with a third place in a personal best time of 17:04, followed by Henry, fifth, 17:40; Miller, sixth, personal best, 17:46; Hager, eighth, personal best, 18:00; Renner, 13th, 18:59. Also running for Norton were Vanover, 19th, 19:20 and Bainter, 27th, 20:19.

Since the varsity runners were competing in Lawrence on Saturday, Norton's only runners in the Hill City Invitational on Thursday, Sept. 22 were from the junior varsity. Competing in the varsity race, Smith placed 40th in 21:57 and Becker was 47th in 22:22.

Rim Rock Classic

On Saturday, Sept. 24, the Norton runners had the chance to compete in the Rim Rock Classic north of Lawrence, where the Class 3A State Cross Country Meet would be held at the end of the season. The Norton girls team placed sixth out of 26 teams and 200 runners competing and the Blue Jay boys team finished 14th out of 32 teams and 232 runners.

In the girls division, Engelbert finished first for Norton with a 28th place in 16:50, followed by Bainter, 44th, 17:13; Maddy, 57th, 17:33; Kent, 69th, 17:49;

Jones, 110th, 18:26. Also running for Norton were Griffith, 123rd, 18:57; Smith, 141st, 19:20.

Hartwell finished highest for Norton's boys with a 14th place and time of 17:17, followed by Henry, 51st, 18:09; Hager, 98th, 18:43; Miller, 108th, 18:55; Renner, 162nd, 19:50. Also running for the Norton boys were Vanover, 169th, 20:00 and Bainter, 219th, 22:13.

"It was our toughest meet to date," said coach Rossi.

Oberlin Invitational

The Norton girls finished runner-up and the Norton boys won the championship of the Oberlin Invitational held on Tuesday, Sept. 27. McCook just edged the Lady Jays for the title with 52 points compared to 59 for Norton. Oakley was third with 84. The Norton boys won the meet for the seventh year in a row with 30 points. McCook was runner-up with 51, Oberlin was third with 63 and Colby fourth with 82.

Engelbert led the Norton girls again, this time finishing fourth in 15:50. She was followed by Bainter, ninth, 16:43; Maddy, 12th, 16:59; Kent, 17th, 17:12; Smith, 23rd, 18:00. Also running for the Lady Jays were Jones, 24th, 18:11; Griffith, 41st, 20:43. Hager won the junior varsity race in 19:32.

Hartwell led the Norton boys to the finish line once again with a runner-up place in 16:39, followed by Henry, fifth, 17:41; Hager, seventh, 17:56; Miller, 11th, 18:18; Renner, 21st, 19:06. Also running for Norton were Vanover, 26th, 19:32; Bainter, 29th, 20:27.

Mid-Continent League Meet

The Mid-Continent League Meet was held on Thursday, Oct. 6 in Phillipsburg and the Norton girls and boys were equal to the occasion. The Lady Jays won the title for the fourth year in a row and the Blue Jay boys were team champions for the eighth year in a row!

Bainter was fastest for the girls with a third place finish in 17:36, followed by Engelbert, fifth, 17:40; Maddy, seventh, 18:14; Kent, tenth, 18:26; Griffith, 14th, 19:30. Also running for the Norton girls were Jones, 15th, 19:34 and Smith, 23rd, 20:42. Hager won the junior

varsity race in 21:42.

Hartwell was fastest for the Norton boys again with a fourth place finish in 18:17, followed by Henry, sixth, 19:01; Hager, seventh, 19:22; Miller, ninth, 19:44; Renner, 14th, 20:06. Also running for the Norton boys were Vanover, 19th, 20:27 and Bainter, 28th, 21:58.

Lakeside Invitational

The Lakeside Invitational on Thursday, Oct. 13 was another large, tough meet. The Norton girls placed runner-up and the boys placed fourth. Sacred Heart of Salina just edged the Lady Jays 59-60. Engelbert was fastest again for the Norton girls with a fifth place finish in 16:39, followed by Griffith, tenth, personal best, 17:02; Bainter, 11th, 17:03; Maddy, 17th, 17:38; Kent, 24th, 18:08. Also running for the Norton girls were Jones, 32nd, 18:45; Smith, 38th, 19:16.

Hartwell led the Norton boys to the finish line once again, this time with a seventh place in 17:52, followed by Miller, eighth, 18:29; Hager, 17th, 18:57; Renner, 42nd, 20:03; Vanover, 43rd, 20:04. Also running for Norton was Bainter, who placed 72nd in 21:27.

Class 3A Regional Meet

It was time to qualify for the upcoming state meet and the Norton girls and boys runners came through with flying colors at the Class 3A Regional Meet in Cimarron on Saturday, Oct. 22. For the third year in a row, both teams qualified for state competition. For the second straight year, the Norton girls won the Regional championship and the Blue Jays boys were the runner-up team.

The Norton girls scored 43 points, followed by TMP, 55; Lakin, 100. Holcomb won the boys title with 59, followed by Norton, 83; Scott City, 91.

Engelbert was home first again for the Norton girls, placing third in 16:29, followed by Kent, eighth, 17:07; Bainter, ninth, 17:15; Maddy, 12th, 17:45; Griffith, 13th, 17:49. Engelbert, Kent and Bainter were medalists. Also running for the Norton girls were Jones, 24th, 18:53 and Smith, 27th, 19:17.

Hartwell continued to lead the Norton boys as he medaled with a fourth place in 18:07, followed by Miller, 11th, 18:42; Henry, 15th, 18:54; Hager, 24th, 19:23; Renner, 29th, 19:39. Also running for Norton were Vanover, 42nd, 20:17 and Bainter, 63rd, 21:26.



Members of the Norton boys cross country team lean forward as they get a good start in the Mid-Continent League meet in Phillipsburg. Pictured are, from left, Zach Hartwell, Alec Hager, Bryan Henry, John Renner, Marc Miller and Ryan Bainter. The Norton boys were the league champions for the eighth year in a row.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Norton teams fare well at state meet

By Dick Boyd

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Coach Rossi's girls and boys runners turned in another tremendous performance in the Class 3A State Cross Country Meet on Saturday, Oct. 29 at Rim Rock Farm, north of Lawrence with the girls placing runner-up and the boys fourth.

It was the third straight year that both the Norton girls and boys had qualified as teams for the state meet. The Lady Jays won the state championship last season for the first time ever and the Norton boys were fifth at state. Two years ago, the girls were third and the boys placed 11th at state.

The Norton girls scored better this year than last when they were the champions. They were defeated this year by a super Douglass team which set a state record with a 21 score. Norton won last year with 73 points. The Lady Jays were runner-up this year with 63, followed by Riley County, 82; Salina Sacred Heart, 133; Southeast of Saline, 144; Sabetha, 165; Pleasant Ridge, 174; Osage City, 183; Lakin, 217; West Franklin, 223; Frontenac, 232.

Wichita Independent was the boys state champion with a score of 45, followed by Holcomb, 100; Wellsville, 136; Norton, 155; Burlington, 158; Scott City, 160; Nemaha Valley, 169; Southeast of Saline, 171; Belle Plaine, 174; Sabetha, 215; Silver Lake, 239; Osage City, 254.

Engelbert was fastest Norton girl again,

this time with a ninth place in 16:37, followed by Griffith, 15th, personal record 16:57; Kent, 19th, 17:10; Bainter, 28th, 17:29; Maddy, 34th, 17:38. Also running for the Norton girls were Jones, 61st, 18:34 and Smith, 65th, 18:41.

"Our girls ran a fantastic race!" said coach Rossi. "We knew coming in that Douglass was a very good team and they proved it. Katelyn and Julia became two time All-State runners. Both girls ran about 30 second faster than they did at the Rim Rock Invitational."

"Sierra ran the race of her life and medaled, setting a personal record. Her time was two minutes faster than earlier at Rim Rock. Darcy and Marisa both ran great races."

"Our 1-5 split was right at one minute, which was the best split of the year. This team just goes out and competes with so much heart. More importantly, they are great young ladies."

Hager was fastest boy runner for Norton, placing 27th in 18:26 and followed by Miller, 34th, 18:38; Henry, 37th, 18:42; Renner, 62nd, 19:26 and Vanover, 68th, 19:37. Hartwell, who finished fastest for Norton all year received a cramp that slowed him considerably. He placed 77th in 19:57. Bainter also ran for the Blue Jays and placed 95th in 21:05.

"Our boys gave a good effort," said coach Rossi. "Fourth place at the state meet is very good. Alec paced the team with a great

effort and top 30 finish, followed closely by Marc and Bryan. Dalton, John and Ryan also ran much better times than at Rim rock earlier. Our 1-5 split was right at one minute, which is very good.

"Senior Zach developed a severe cramp about a mile into the race and showed a lot of guts finishing the race. He has had a great career, being our number one runner for three years and to have this happen in his last race is just a terrible thing."

"Along with Zach, our team loses another top runner, Bryan. Both Zach and Bryan were All-State runners last year and have been consistently our number one and two runners the last three years. They will be greatly missed next year."

"If the remaining young men work hard, we can be contenders again next year."

"I am very proud to have coached these girls and boys this year. They were a great group to work with."

"Thank you to everyone in the community for your support of the cross country program from the administration on down. Thanks, too, to the parents, students, fans and alumni who attended the state race. You were the best, loudest and most active fans on the course. Your support means everything to our team."

"Thanks to our assistant coach Nicole and, above all, to the team for making this another outstanding year for Blue Jay Cross Country!"

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