

Norton 8th grade girls finish season with 5 wins, 7 losses

By Cherri Brooks

The eighth grade Lady Jays had a very challenging schedule during the month of December. After winning five games in November, they were not able to win another game the rest of the season. However, they came across some very stiff competition.

On Nov. 29, they traveled to Hoxie to take on the undefeated Lady Indians. We unfortunately had to take on this challenge without one of our starters, Lexi Voss, due to illness. The Lady Indians put the pressure on from the very beginning and were able to put 12 points up on the board in the first quarter. Kylie Perez scored Norton's only basket in the first quarter for a total of two points.

However, Norton did start to take care of the basketball better and was able to score six points in the second quarter. The Lady Jays also played tougher defense and only allowed Hoxie to score six points as well, making the score at halftime 18-8.

After the half, Hoxie didn't look back and scored a whopping 24 points in the third and fourth quarters for a total of 41 points for the game. Norton only scored seven points for a total of 15 points. Hoxie is a very aggressive team. They like to press and then run the floor. Norton's leading scorers were our post players. Lauren Mordecai had five points and Casey Ambrosier had four points. Other scoring contributors for Norton were Kylie Perez with two points, Peyton Renner with two points, and another two points coming from Hanna Brooks.

Casey Ambrosier and Peyton Renner were our leading rebounders. Lauren Mordecai and Peyton Renner were our leading defensive stealers. The head coach's daughter, Terran Hoyt, was one of their leading scorers with 14 points. Kelsey Geerdes also had 14 points for Hoxie. Brynn Niblock scored seven points, Nicole Heim added four points, and one other Hoxie player hit two free throws for two more points.

On Dec. 1, the Lady Jays loaded the bus again to take on another undefeated team in the Hill City Ringnecks. Once again, the Lady Jays were short from its normal roster due to illness. Hill City only had six 8th grade girls suited up but as aggressive and hot handed as they were that's all it took.

Hill City came out on fire in the first quarter. They also created many turnovers for Norton and were ahead 23-6 at the end of the first quarter. The Lady Jays did begin to handle the pressure better and were able to score nine points in the second quarter bringing the halftime score to 15 points. The Lady Ringnecks contributed 14 points in the second quarter bringing the halftime score to 37.

The Lady Jays stepped up their defense in the second half and only allowed Hill City to score 10 points in the third quarter and two points in the fourth quarter. The Lady Jays added four points in the third quarter and two points in the fourth quarter for a total of 21 points.

Kirstin Georgeson hit some big outside shots for a total of six points and Lauren Mordecai was able to connect down low on the blocks for six points as well. Molly Maddy added four points, Hanna Brooks scored three points off a field goal and one free throw, and Peyton Renner connected on a field goal for two points.

Lauren Mordecai had a strong game. She was not only one of our leading scorers but was also our leading rebounder and defensive steals leader. Hill City is a tough team. They can shoot from the outside, penetrate to the hole, knock down high percentage shots inside the lane, and apply defensive pressure that creates turnovers.

Nickelson was Hill City's leading scorer with 21 points, Conway added 14 points, McDowell hit for eight points, Simon scored four points, and Bell tallied in two points. Five of their six players scored, which is pretty impressive for any ball club.

After a week of practice, the girls loaded the bus again. On Dec. 8, Norton took on the Ellis Roadroaders. Ellis was also having a very successful season and had not lost yet. This time the Lady Jays had all its varsity line up suited up though.

In the first quarter, Lexi Voss hit one field goal for the Lady Bluejays and the Roadroaders successfully knocked down three field goals and two free throws for a total of eight points.

In the second quarter, Lexi Voss sank a three point basket and Lauren Mordecai connected on a bank shot for a total of five points, making Norton's score at halftime seven. Ellis had a strong, athletic post player that drove to the hole for six points and two other players hit field goals, making Ellis's score at halftime 19 points.

Norton did come out in the third quarter and put up eight points on the board with a field goal from Molly Maddy, Peyton Renner, and Kirstin Georgeson; and two free throws from Casey Ambrosier. However, Ellis was able to connect on seven of its 10 attempted free throws and a field goal for a total of nine points in the third quarter.

After three quarters, the score was 28-15. In the fourth quarter the Lady Roadroaders scored 12 points and kept Norton scoreless. Ellis defeated Norton 40-15. Casey Ambrosier and Lauren Mordecai were the leading rebounders and the Lady Jays had several others getting in position to pull down some missed shots including Lexi Voss, Kylie Perez, Hanna Brooks, Molly Maddy, Kirstin

Georgeson and Peyton Renner. Molly Maddy had an impressive six steals for the night as well.

The Lady Jays didn't have much time to regroup for its fourth straight road trip. This time on Saturday, Dec. 10, they headed to Smith Center for a tournament. In their first game they took on another tough team from Beloit, who led the whole game.

After the first quarter it was 6-0, Beloit. At half-time it was 8-1. Finally in the third quarter the Lady Jays outscored the Lady Trojans 5-2, making the score 10-6. Beloit outscored Norton again in the final stanza, 7-2, making the final score 17-8 with Beloit coming out on top.

Beloit didn't press the Lady Jays hard like Hoxie and Hill City did but instead they played a solid half court man defense. Norton had three players who each contributed one field goal and they were Molly Maddy, Kirstin Georgeson and Lauren Mordecai. Casey Ambrosier and Hanna Brooks each connected on one free throw for one point each.

Peyton Renner was our leading rebounder for the game. Hanna Brooks and Lauren Mordecai also went to the boards hard as well. Molly Maddy and Peyton Renner played tough defensively and led in the steals department.

After a short break, the Lady Jays took on Smith Center since they had lost to Republic County earlier in the day. The Lady Jays came out shooting better and led after the first quarter 8-6. During that quarter Lexi Voss sank a three point basket, Peyton Renner hit two field goals, and Molly Maddy connected on one free throw.

In the second quarter, Norton only put up three points on the board with a field goal from Molly Maddy and one free throw from Lauren Mordecai. Smith Center added four points in the second quarter off two field goals, making the halftime score 11-10 in favor of Norton.

Smith Center refused to give up and hit four field goals in the third quarter and Norton was only able to sink two jump shots from Casey Ambrosier for four points. After three quarters, the Lady Redmen were leading the Lady Bluejays 18-15.

The fourth quarter was another tough battle and Casey Ambrosier once again hit two jumpers for four points and Kylie Perez hit a field goal as well for a total of six points that quarter. Smith Center connected on four field goals for eight points, and the Redmen pulled out a close one 26 to 21 over the Norton Bluejays.

Casey Ambrosier was Norton's leading scorer with eight points, Peyton Renner chimed in with four points, Molly Maddy and Lexi Voss each contributed three points, Kylie Perez added two points, and Lauren Mordecai rounded out the scoring with one point. Smith Center was able to get six girls to contribute to their scoring. Habelman and Kuhn each scored six points; Strine, Palmer, and Nixon added four points a piece, and Weeks tallied in two points.

After practicing for almost one month, the Lady Bluejays once again loaded the bus and traveled to Plainville for the MCEL tourney. Norton went into the tournament seeded fourth and took on fifth seed Smith Center. This was a very hard fought game. The Lady Jays played some strong defense. Norton was able to get several turnovers but failed to convert on the layups. At the beginning of the season Norton had a tendency to not be very patient and rush its offense, however, on Saturday, Jan. 7, Norton became almost too patient and almost reluctant to shoot at times.

In the first period of play, Hanna Brooks connected on a bank shot and Lexi Voss hit two outside jumpers for a total of six points. Smith Center connected on four field goals and one free throw for a total of nine points. Norton trailed 9-6 after the first quarter.

In the second quarter, the Lady Jays added six more points from two successful post shots from Hanna Brooks and one more post shot from Casey Ambrosier. Norton was able to play some tough defense and kept the Redmen scoreless in the second quarter. The Lady Jays went into halftime leading 12-9.

In the second half of the ball game, Norton became tentative on offense and had some foul problems as well that dramatically impacted its success. Alexis Hartwell was the only Norton player able to knock down a field goal in the entire second half. Smith Center, however, was able to score on four field goals for eight points. The Redmen led at the buzzer, 17-14.

The Redmen would be up against the tough Hill City Ringnecks later on Saturday, Jan. 7, for the semi-finals of the MCEL tournament. Scoring for Norton was Hanna Brooks with six points, Lexi Voss with four points, Casey Ambrosier with two points, and Alexis Hartwell with two points.

Smith Center had Strine scoring six points, Kuhn scoring five points, Nixon adding four more points, and Habelmann also contributed two points. Peyton Renner played a great game defensively and led in the steals department.

The eighth grade girls finished their season with five wins and seven losses. Regardless of the record, the Norton girls improved throughout the season. They learned to play together as a team and handle the pressure better. This is a neat group of girls. They get along well and have a lot of depth. I hope they all continue to play basketball in high school.

A new year



To kick off another year in business, attendees of the United Northwest Federal Credit Union re-elected Don McClelland to serve as a board member for the business. Credit union loan officer Kendra Baker reported this week that 240 people registered to attend the annual meeting and 217 were in attendance on Monday. A business meeting was held at the event where McClelland was re-elected and board members, the supervisory committee and credit union employees were introduced. Pictured, Greg Engel addresses meeting attendees while Jim Green, Bette Townsend and Denise Bailey are seated at the head table.

-Photo courtesy of Kendra Baker

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