

BB Gun Team headed for state competition

By Dick Boyd

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The Norton County Rotary BB Gun Team will compete in the Kansas State BB Gun Championships on Saturday in Alma.

The Norton BB Gun teams have won 38 of 46 state championships during the program's existence, including March 13, 2010 in Alma. They did not compete in the state shoot in 1982 because there was no Jaycees chapter that year to sponsor them.

The Norton Jaycees were the original sponsors but the Rotary Club is in the eighth year of sponsorship since the Jaycees chapter in Norton disbanded.

BB gun teams consist of young girls and boys from 8 to 14 years of age.

The top three teams in each state shoot qualify to compete in the Daisy National BB Gun Championships, formerly the Daisy/Jaycees International BB Gun Championships.

Norton has competed in 42 of the 46 international shoots and has also won eight international championships, more than any other team in the world!

The Norton County team was in the hunt again last year in placing ninth in the national shoot, which is the largest junior marksmanship competition in the world!

Two Norton teams will enter the state championships in Alma on Saturday and a top three finish would again guarantee Norton a spot in the national championships, which will be held again in Rogers, Ark, the home of Daisy.

This year's schedule for the national shoot is a little different; it will not be held on Fourth of July weekend. Opening ceremonies will be Sunday, July 1 with two days of shooting on Monday and Tuesday, July 2 and 3 and closing ceremonies on Tuesday evening.

Team members

Members of this year's Norton team, in order of age, are:

Erin Archer, 15; James Berry, 13; Evan Chambers, 13; Miles Harrington, 11; Stacie Elliott, 10; Dylan Goss, 10; Colton Mulder, 10; Riley Goss, 9; Greyson Tanner, 9; Nick Davis, 10; Ryan Lively, 10; Alexandar Olliff, 9 and Tia Paxton, 8.

Members of the two teams that will compete Saturday will be chosen this week.

Cameron Archer returns as the head coach and is in his seventh year as head coach.

On Saturday, Jeff Elliott will assist Cameron in coaching the Yellow team and Marty Harrington and Chris Mulder will be coaches of the Blue Team.

Chandra McKenna, former expert marksman for the Norton BB Gun Team, returns as the classroom instructor.

Lots of BB Gun history in Norton

Norton is associated with the beginning of the national gun safety program. It is based on a format proposed by the late Norton Jaycees member Duane Winder. His suggestions were adopted nationwide when Daisy and the U.S. Jaycees began the program.

The purpose is to introduce young shooters to the basics of safe gun handling and marksmanship.

About 250,000 young people take part in the program each year.

"The community of Norton has supported this program because they know it passes on to the children and parents the proper safety knowledge of hunting," said coach Archer. "These youngsters have stepped it up in both the classroom and shooting through the years to become well known on the international and national level."

The winning performances of the Norton shooters at the state and national (formerly international) level have earned them an admirable reputation in marksmanship circles.

State shoot schedule

The State Shoot will be hosted by the Kansas State Rifle Association and will be held in the Wabaunsee High School Gym on Saturday in Alma.



Some members of the Norton County Rotary BB Gun Team fired from the sitting position on Monday evening during their last practice before the State Championships in Alma this Saturday. Pictured with coaches are, from left, front row: James Berry, Evan Chambers, Stacie Elliott, Colton Mulder, Dylan Goss; back row: head coach Cameron Archer, assistant coaches Marty Harrington, Jeff Elliott, Cris Mulder and Stephen Davis.

Opening ceremonies will be at 9 a.m.

Competition will begin with the written test from 9:15 to 10 a.m. A coaches meeting will also be held during this time.

Shooting from the prone position will be held from 10:15 to 11:45 a.m. Competition from the sitting position will be from 11:50 a.m. until 1:20 p.m. Kneeling position firing will be from 1:25 to 2:55 p.m. Shooting while standing will be from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Presentation of team and individual awards will be around 5 p.m.. There is no admission charge for the shoot.

Practicing since October

Norton's preparation for the State Shoot began in mid-October when the shooters entered the gun safety program, sponsored by Daisy and the National Rifle Association.

The first night was a tryout night for youngsters to explore their interest in shooting a BB gun in competition and a number of potential shooters were recruited that night.

The youngsters had four weeks of classroom instruction from the Daisy 10-Lesson Curriculum Book.

After passing the gun safety course, the young girls and boys began practicing marksmanship from each of the four positions (prone, sitting, kneeling, standing) and studying for the written test.

Practices are every Monday evening in the back of the Norton Rotary BB Gun Museum on East U.S. 36 Highway in Norton. Shooters are also encouraged to practice at home.

"Many thanks to the Norton Rotary Club for their unwavering support of our program and team," said coach Archer.

"The museum building is really nice for a practice area and there's enough room to keep our targets set up all the time and a separate room for a classroom."

Coach Archer was asked how practices have been going for his young marksmen in preparation for the State Shoot.

"We have been working hard and shooting pretty well," said coach Archer.

"Our first shooting competition this year was in the 4-H Regional in Oakley and we shot well and placed runner-up. Our shooters are improving at the right time. They are shooting a lot better than two weeks ago."

"When it's competition time, our youngsters step up. The regional shoot helped us get ready for the state shoot."

"The important thing is our young people are learning gun safety for a lifetime."

"We are proud of the sportsmanship shown by our shooters and the good behavior example that they set for other teams when they come to shoot."

The young marksmen's knowledge of gun safety is very important since the written test score is 20 percent of each shooter's final score.

"Under Chandra's guidance, our youngsters have been studying possible written test questions and seem to be doing pretty well," said coach Archer.

Second generation shooters
As in the past, Norton has

-Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

been involved in the BB Gun program long enough that several shooters are second-generation marksmen.

Former Norton shooter Kim Hull is Miles Harrington's mother, former Blue Jay shooter Jill Lively is Ryan Lively's mother and former Norton shooter and head coach Cameron Archer is Erin Archer's father.

BB Gun Museum

A plaque in honor of the international BB gun program originator Duane Winder is in the BB Gun Museum on East U.S. 36 Highway in Norton.

The museum contains trophies, medals, newspaper articles and other memorabilia of the Norton shooting education program.

Shotgun winner

The Norton BB Gun Team held a drawing for a Tristar Field Hunter over and under shotgun as a fund raiser and the winner was Dan Lauer, Norton, who just happens to be a former coach of the Norton marksmen.

The shotgun was donated by the Longspur Pheasants Forever chapter.

Three area teams are state basketball champions

By Dick Boyd

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Three area high school basketball teams, the Scott City boys in Class 3A, Sharon Springs girls in Class 1A-II and the Hoxie girls in Class 1A-I, won state basketball championships over the weekend.

The Scott City boys were representing the Class 3A Sub-State Tournament which was held in Scott City the week before. The Norton boys competed in that tournament and defeated Southwestern Heights before losing to Holcomb.

In their state tournament opener at the Sports Arena at Hutchinson, Scott City defeated Beloit 72-63 and in the semi-finals they outscored Rock Creek 64-49. In the championship finals, they defeated Nemaha Valley 61-47 to win their second straight state title.

The Sharon Springs girls competed in Class 1A-II at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. In their first state tournament game they defeated Norwich 53-45 and in the semi-finals they edged Wetmore 46-45 in overtime to advance to the finals. They survived another close contest on Saturday when they defeated Central Christian 48-46 to win the championship.

The Logan girls quintet advanced to the state tournament for the second straight year after win-

ning the Class 1A-II championship of the Norton Sub-State. They lost to Wetmore 41-29 in the opening round at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. The Lady Trojans stayed with Wetmore, who had just two losses, for most of the game until Wetmore pulled away by hitting free throws down the stretch.

The Victoria girls won the Hoisington Sub-State Tournament, also in Class 1A-II and also played in Hays. They lost 60-46 to eventual state runner-up Central Christian in the first round.

After placing runner-up in the state tournament last season, the Hoxie girls won it all this time around. Playing in Class 1A-I at White Auditorium in Emporia, Hoxie defeated Centre 71-29 in the opener, beat Spearville 68-56 in the semi-finals and outscored St. John 55-45 to win the championship.

The Hoxie boys also earned a state tournament berth with a sub-state championship. They defeated South Gray 68-59 in their opener but lost 64-57 to Ashland in the semi-finals. They placed third by defeating Burton 55-49 on Saturday.

The Holcomb girls won the Class 3A Sub-State Tournament championship in Scott City and also advanced to the State Tournament in Hutchinson. They lost their opener 62-47 to Burlington, who continued on to place runner-up with a 51-47

overtime loss to Silver Lake.

The Oakley girls were sub-state winners but lost their opening game in Class 2A at Bramlage Coliseum in Manhattan when Central Plains beat them 46-35. The Belleville girls won their opener in the same state tournament by a 38-35 score over Lebo. In the semi-finals, they lost 61-43 to Jefferson County North. They edged Central Plains 48-47 to earn third place.

In Class 4A, the Ottawa boys who had dominated the season-opening Topside Tip-Off Tournament played in Goodland, placed runner-up to Basehor-Linwood with a 56-52 loss. The Ottawa girls, who also won the Topside Tip-Off, defeated

Bonner Springs 49-48 in overtime to place third.

The Ness City boys, who had edged Plainville 54-53 to win the Ellis Sub-State, lost their Class 2A State Tournament opener by a score of 47-43 to Madison. In the semi-finals, Madison lost to Meade 71-50 and lost to Berean Academy 50-38 to place fourth.

The Wheatland boys won the championship of the Class 1A-II Sub-State Tournament held in Norton. They lost their state tournament opener in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays to Hope by a 43-23 score. In the semi-finals, Hope lost to Otis-Bison 54-47 and lost to Fowler 46-41 to place fourth.

Tye Nickell signs with Highland Community College



Norton Community High School senior running back and defensive back Tye Nickell has signed a letter of intent to play football this fall for Highland Community College. He is pictured here with his father Denny and mother LariAnn and Norton head football coach Lucas Melvin.

-Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

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Blue Jay signs letter of intent

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Senior Tye Nickell, a multi-sport standout for Norton Community High School, has signed a letter of intent to play football at Highland Community College this fall.

Tye has had an outstanding high school grid career in addition to being a basketball and track letterman.

The 5'9", 150 pound Nickell was a running back and defensive back for the Blue Jays. Not only was he Norton's leading rusher this past season, he tied for runner-up in total tackles from his defensive position and led the team in pass interceptions with five.

Tye was also the leading punt returner and kickoff returner for the Blue Jay football team.

For his exploits on the grid-

iron, Tye was named to the Kansas High School Football Coaches Association Class 3A post-season All-State Team on defense. He was also named First Team All-Mid-Continent League on defense by the vote of the league coaches.

Tye also received honorable mention on defense from both the Wichita Eagle-Beacon and Topeka Capital-Journal newspapers. The Salina Journal no longer awards post-season honors.

"Tye is a great young man and a very hard worker," said Norton head football coach Lucas Melvin. "He is a selfless, team player and has good football knowledge."

"He was one of only two two-year starters for us on this year's team. He's a quality young man who is tough and will do well in

college. Highland has recruited him as a defensive back."

Judd Remmers, the defensive coordinator at Highland Community College, is responsible for recruiting the Norton area. "We are excited to get Tye in our program," said coach Remmers. "Coach Melvin does a great job at Norton Community High School so it is always a plus to be able to recruit players out of traditionally good high school programs."

"He will play in our second-year.

"Former Norton player Luke Ninemire is also on our squad and will be a sophomore this fall. He has been slowed by an injury but should be ready to go by the time spring football arrives."

Tye is the son of LariAnn and Denny Nickell.