

Lady Jays conclude 2011-2012 basketball season

By Dick Boyd

nortontelegram@nwkanssas.com
Coach Kevin Jilka's Norton Community High School girls basketball team was very competitive in the recently concluded 2011-12 season and provided the Blue Jay fans with many exciting moments.

They played some of the best teams in the state and never backed down, playing their hardest all the time.

"We had a good year," said coach Jilka. "Obviously, there were some games we felt we could have won but that is the way it goes.

"There is a good nucleus coming back with three starters and nine letter winners so things look good for next year. Our girls must get better between now and next November by work in the weight room and playing games."

This year's team had four returning starters and five more letter winners. The starters from last year were Erin Terrell, 5'10" senior post; Caren Thomson, 5'7" senior post; Tawni Griffey, 5'5" junior point guard and Kamilla Jones, 5'8" junior guard.

Griffey and Terrell returned as the two highest scorers, Griffey averaging 12.6 points per game and Terrell with an 11.6 points per game average.

Assistant coaches again this season were George Rossi and Joan Bolt and Brian Henry returned as student manager.

Norton opened the season as the Lady Jays have in recent years by competing in the annual Topside Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland. In their opener, Norton played an excellent Sharon Springs quintet and was outscored 32-23 by the eventual Class 1A-II Kansas State champions. Griffey led Norton in scoring with 14 points.

A second quarter scoring drought hurt in a 52-42 loss to Wray, Colo., where Griffey scored 16 points. The Lady Jays were victorious in their third game of the tournament by a 56-42 score over host team Goodland to place seventh. Griffey scored 23 points which included hitting 4 of 5 shots from beyond the arc for 80 percent accuracy. Sophomore guard Katelyn Engelbert added 12 points.

"It was by far our best game of the tournament," said coach Jilka. "We got better each game."

Griffey was named to the All-Tournament Team.

Ottawa won the championship by a score of 48-37 over Burlington, Colo.

At the end of the season, Ottawa placed third in the state of Kansas in Class 4A.

Norton planned to host Stockton on Tuesday, Dec. 13 but the game was postponed until

Thursday, Jan. 26 due to inclement weather.

On Friday, Dec. 16, Norton got Mid-Continent League play underway at Phillipsburg versus a very good Lady Panther quintet and lost 46-19. Griffey scored 7 points and Teslee Nickell, junior guard, added 6 points. Norton would play Phillipsburg two more times in the season and gave them good, close games each time.

Norton traveled out of state to Cambridge, Neb. on Tuesday, Dec. 20 and the Lady Jays returned with a 39-29 victory. "We played hard and a lot more physical than we have been," said coach Jilka. "Offensively, we were more patient and took better shots and defensively it was our best effort as we blocked out on rebounds."

Thomson led the way with 11 points and 6 rebounds.

Norton opened the new year by hosting Osborne in Mid-Continent League action on Friday, Jan. 6. The Lady Jays fell behind in the first half but played the visitors even in the second half in a 52-41 loss. Griffey scored 15 points and Terrell returned after an earlier injury and threw in 11 points.

On Monday, Jan. 9, No.6 seeded Norton traveled to play No.3 seeded Phillipsburg in the Mid-Continent League Tournament first round. Norton played Phillipsburg on even terms until they pulled away at the end to win 45-37. Griffey scored 12 points and Terrell added 11.

Needless to say, it was a much closer game than the 27-point loss earlier in the season. "I was very proud of our girls' effort," said coach Jilka.

Norton hosted Ellis in Mid-Continent League Tournament consolation bracket play on Thursday, Jan. 12 in the NCHS Stull Gym. Ellis was the No.7 seed and had lost to Hill City in the first round.

The Lady Jays played a solid game on both offense and defense to defeat the Lady Railroaders 42-31. Eight different girls scored for Norton led by Terrell and Thomson, each with 8 points.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, Norton played their final game of the tournament in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. The Lady Jays avenged the earlier 52-41 loss to Osborne with a 45-43 win over the Lady Bulldogs to place fifth in the tournament.

The win over Osborne was not as close as the score might indicate. Norton led 45-36 with 1:31 remaining in the game but Osborne scored the final 7 points. Terrell was leading scorer for Norton with 12 points.

"It was a huge win for us," said coach Jilka. "We played awfully well all night."

On Tuesday, Jan. 17, the

Lady Jays traveled to Plainville for more Mid-Continent League play and returned with their third straight win! Norton overcame a second quarter cold shooting spell and left the nets smoking from three-point land with a 48-30 win. Norton hit 8 of 13 shots from beyond the arc for 62 percent accuracy. Griffey, who hit a perfect 4 of 4 treys, led the way with 17 points. Engelbert hit 13 points as she swished 3 of 5 shots from long range.

"We're 5 and 5 now and it's our third win in a row so our girls are gaining some confidence," said coach Jilka.

Norton just missed a fourth win in a row when Trego Community came to town for more Mid-Continent League play. The Lady Jays trailed by just a few points most of the game, then saw a rally fall short in a disheartening 50-48 loss. Griffey scored 27 points in the game and Terrell added 11. "We played hard and did a lot of good things," said coach Jilka.

On Tuesday, Jan. 24, Norton played the Lady Cowgirls in Goodland and repeated the win in the Topside Tip-Off Tournament. The Lady Jays led the entire game to win 43-23. Terrell led the way in scoring with 16 points.

Norton hosted Stockton on Thursday, Jan. 26 in a Mid-Continent League game postponed from December due to inclement weather and won their fifth in the last six contests. In a game of contrasting halves, the Lady Jays won 48-37. The score was tied 13-all at halftime but Norton outscored the visitors 35-24 after intermission. Griffey scored 15 points and Terrell added 14.

On Tuesday, Jan. 31, Norton played host to the No.3 state ranked Smith Center quintet in Mid-Continent League action and the Lady Red dominated with a 64-14 win. Terrell hit 5 points for the Lady Jays.

Another league game was postponed due to inclement weather when the contest in Hill City contest was delayed until Thursday, Feb. 16.

The Lady Jays traveled to Oberlin on Tuesday, Feb. 7 and won their sixth game in the last eight by easily outscoring the Lady Red Devils 53-35. Norton jumped out to a big first half lead and maintained it in the second half. Griffey led Norton with 21 points. "We played hard and were much more aggressive on both offense and defense," said coach Jilka.

Norton returned home and hosted the next two games versus outstanding teams and was not able to produce victories. On Friday, Feb. 10, the Lady Jays hosted Atwood. A good first quarter was not enough as Norton lost 52-29. Griffey

scored 16 points.

On Tuesday, Feb. 14, Norton hosted No.2 state ranked Hoxie and lost 75-38. Griffey led Norton in scoring with 12 points and Thomson added 11. "You have to give them credit," said coach Jilka. "They are an excellent team and are well coached." Hoxie proved themselves by continuing on to win the Class 1A-I Kansas state championship.

The makeup game with Hill City was played on Thursday, Feb. 16 in Hill City and the Lady Jays got back on the winning side with an impressive 38-33 victory over the Lady Ringnecks on their home court. Griffey tallied 12 points and Engelbert hit 11 as Norton evened their record at 9 and 9.

"It was the hardest we've played all year," said coach Jilka. "We are very proud of the effort of our players."

The very next night, Norton traveled to Ellis for a regularly scheduled Mid-Continent League contest. This time, the Lady Railroaders got revenge for their loss to Norton in the MCL tournament by outscoring the Lady Jays 38-26. Norton hit only 23 percent on field goal attempts. Terrell hit 8 points and Engelbert added 7.

"I was disappointed in our play after we did a great job in all areas in beating Hill City," said coach Jilka.

On Tuesday, Feb. 21, Norton hosted Colby in non-league play in the NCHS Stull Gym and was no match for the Lady Eagles in all categories as the Class 4A visitors prevailed 58-26. Griffey led Norton in scoring with 8 points.

It was "Senior Night" for Norton. Seniors honored with their parents were players Erin Terrell and Caren Thomson, student manager Bryan Henry, cheerleader Rhees Carlson and dance team members Brae Bigge, Mariah Farber and Kylie Nuzum.

The Class 3A Sub-State Tournament was next and Norton was seeded No.6 which meant another game versus No.3 seeded Phillipsburg on the Lady Panthers' home court on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Norton had played much better in the second meeting of the two teams and played even better this time around. The fired up Lady Jays, knowing the end of the season was on the line, came out shooting and hitting and stormed to a 14-4 lead in the first quarter. After overcoming the initial shock, the Lady Panthers rallied to tie the score at 14-all by the end of the period.

Norton matched Phillipsburg almost basket for basket in the second quarter and trailed by just 27-25 at halftime. The sec-



Norton's junior point guard Tawni Griffey drives by an Oberlin defender during the Lady Jays' 53-35 victory over the Lady Red Devils on Tuesday, Feb. 7 in Oberlin. Griffey led Norton in scoring with 21 points.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

ond half was well played but Phillipsburg inched ahead and finally won 54-42. Griffey led Norton with 9 points and Engelbert added 7.

"I was proud of the way our girls played," said coach Jilka. "We played hard, shot well and hung in there on the boards but just gave up too many easy points."

Perhaps, that final game will be a springboard for next season and give them more confidence from day one.

Coach Jilka thanked his players, the Norton fans, his assistant coaches and student manager for all they did for the team this season.

Season statistics

As a team, Norton averaged 38 points per game compared to an average of 44 points for opponents.

The Lady Jays hit 32 percent of their field goal attempts while opponents averaged 39 percent. From the free throw line, Norton hit 55 percent compared to 54 percent by opponents.

Norton had 179 steals on defense for an average of 8.5 thefts per contest. The Lady Jays' aggressive defense caused 346 turnovers by the opposition for an average of 16.5 per game.

On offense, Norton had 185 assists for an 8.8 average per

game. The Lady Jays had 433 rebounds for an average of 20.6 per contest.

Tawni Griffey was leading scorer for the second year in a row with an average of 12.3 points per game. She led in three-point shooting with 36 percent accuracy and in free throws at 76 percent.

Erin Terrell was second high scorer with 8.9 points per game and was second leading in field goal percentage at 40 percent.

Third leading scorer was Katelyn Engelbert with 6.5 points per contest. She was also second in free throw accuracy at 65 percent.

Caren Thomson was third in field goal accuracy at 37 percent.

Terrell was leading rebounder with 98 for an average of 6 per contest in which she played. Engelbert was second high rebounder with 82 caroms or 3.9 per game played.

Griffey led in steals with 51, followed by Engelbert, 35; Jones, 25; Terrell, 24; Thomson, 18.

Assists leader was Griffey with 57, followed by Jones, 44; Engelbert, 39.

Leading in field goal percentage was Bailey Ambrosier at 43 percent.

Jays earn post-season honors

By Dick Boyd

nortontelegram@nwkanssas.com

Two boys and one girl basketball players for Norton Community High School this season have received All-Mid-Continent League post-season honors by vote of the league coaches.

BOYS

Jordan Wahlmeier, Norton's 6'3" senior power forward, was chosen to the first team and Jacob Brooks, the Blue Jays' 6'2" junior guard, was selected to the second team.

Wahlmeier was the leading scorer and leading rebounder for Norton, averaging 14.7 points per game and grabbing 8.1 rebounds per contest. He also led the team in field goal percentage, hitting 129 of 280 tries for 46 percent.

He also led the Blue Jays in charges taken with 15 and blocked shots with 53 rejections!

Wahlmeier was chosen to the second team as a junior and was named honorable mention as a sophomore.

Brooks was second leading scorer with an average of 13.4 points per game and second leading rebounder with 5.8 caroms per contest. He was also tied for steals leader with 30 and was second high in offensive assists with 40.

OTHERS HONORED

In addition to Wahlmeier, others honored on the first team were: Andrew Casey, 6'1" senior, Plainville; Adam Pfeifer, 5'11", senior, Hill City; Alex Hobelmann, 6' Smith Center senior and Sean Newlan, 6'2" Phillipsburg junior.

On the second team with Brooks are: Kyle Becker, 6'1" Plainville senior; Kale Terrill, 6'1" Smith Center senior; Matt Craig, 5'10" Hill City senior and Clayton Riedel, 6'3" Trego Commu-

nity sophomore.

Receiving honorable mention were: Jameson Klein, 6'2" Plainville senior; John Griffith, 5'11" Trego junior; Luke Lohmeyer, 6'4" Ellis junior; Thatcher Brown, 6'5" Ellis junior and Tyler Walters, 6' Ellis junior.

GIRLS

Norton junior point guard Tawni Griffey received honorable mention after a second team selection last year.

Griffey was leading scorer for Norton for the second year in a row with 12.3 points per game. She led the Lady Jays in baskets from beyond the arc, hitting 49 of 135 tries for 36 percent and was leading free throw shooter with 76 percent accuracy.

Griffey also led the squad in offensive assists with 57 and in steals with 51.

OTHERS HONORED

Honored on the girls first team were: Tangie Hileman, 5'8" Smith Center senior; Sydney Benoit, 5'9" Smith Center junior; Kelsey Keith, 5'3" Hill City senior; Raegan Vanderplas, 5'7" Phillipsburg senior and Hannah Dietz, 5'5" Trego senior.

Named to the girls second team were: McKenzie Benoit, 5'8" Smith Center senior; Lexi Riedel, 5'7" Trego senior; Bailey Hensley, 5'4" Ellis junior; Trenna Cox, 5'6" Smith Center junior and Mattison Dusin, 5'10" Phillipsburg sophomore.

Receiving honorable mention along with Griffey were: Haley Dinkel, 5'10" Hill City senior; Mikayla Gottschalk, 5'10" Ellis senior; Regan Bartels, 5'11" Phillipsburg junior and Caitlyn Miller, 5'8" Osborne sophomore.

Community Calendar



Please submit your events for the
Community Calendar

which is printed in the Monday EXTRA.

Events may be e-mailed to:

nortontelegram@nwkanssas.com
or mailed to 215 South Kansas Avenue

THE NORTON
TELEGRAM

785-877-3361

215 S. Kansas Ave.
Norton, Kan.
67654