

# Lady Jay tennis had great season

By Dick Boyd

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Coach Jim Green's Norton Community High School girls tennis team had a terrific 2012 season during which they won three tournament championships, placed runner-up in four tournaments, third in one and fourth in the Class 3A Regional Tournament.

In addition, senior Tawni Griffey placed runner-up in singles in the Class 3A State Tournament for the second year in a row. She was state champion her sophomore season, her first year in Norton.

The Lady Jays will lose just seniors Griffey and Sierra Black, also an outstanding player with many season wins, so prospects for another great season in 2013 are excellent.

"I can not be more proud of our girls' efforts and the way we conducted ourselves during the season," said coach Green.

"As the season went along, our players gained experience and showed great improvement. I was extremely pleased with the effort our girls put forth and their improvement."

Assistant coach for the Lady Jays was Crystal Montgomery.

## Season round-up

The season opener set for the Trego Round Robin in WaKeeney was postponed due to rain so the Lady Jays opened in the Hays Invitational with a runner-up finish. Hays won with 37 points, followed by Norton, 27; Russell, 21; Colby, 13; Victoria, 2.

Senior Tawni Griffey was unscored upon in winning No.1 singles. Juniors Rickete Green and Ashley Hildebrand placed fourth in No.1 doubles. They played together last season in No.2 doubles. Senior Sierra Black finished runner-up in No.2 singles. Sophomore Molly Scott and junior Jessica White placed second in No.2 doubles. Scott and White were new to the varsity and played together for the first time.

Norton played in the Trego

Round Robin on Saturday, Sept. 1 in WaKeeney and the week's wait for what was originally scheduled for the season opener was well worth it as the Lady Jays earned the championship. Scores were Norton, 32; Phillipsburg, 25; Trego, 19; Osborne, 14; Colby, 6. All four Norton entries medaled.

Griffey continued unbeaten and unscored upon at No.1 singles. Green and Hildebrand placed third at No.1 doubles, Black was runner-up in No.2 singles and Scott and White won the No.2 doubles championship.

On Tuesday, Sept. 4, Norton placed runner-up in the Phillipsburg Quad. Team scores were: Phillipsburg, 25; Norton, 18; Trego, 13; Russell, 4. Griffey shutout all opponents once again to win No.1 singles. Green and Hildebrand were third at No.1 doubles, Black went unbeaten at No.2 singles to win the gold medal and Scott and White finished fourth in No.2 doubles.

The Norton junior varsity's biggest match of the season was their Norton JV Quad held Saturday, Sept. 8 at the swimming pool park courts and they earned the team championship. The young Lady Jays scored 18 points, followed by Phillipsburg, 16; Hays, 12; Colby, 12. Sophomore Brooke Sumner won the championship of No.1 singles. Freshmen Hailey Branek and Audrie Burge were fourth at No.1 doubles. Freshman Lizzie Smith placed fourth at No.2 singles and freshmen Rachel Jones and Morgan Griffey were champions of No.2 doubles. Sophomore Alex Araujo played No.2 singles for Hays and placed third.

On Tuesday, Sept. 11, Norton won their second team title of the young season when the Lady Jays outscored everyone in the Phillipsburg Quad. Team scores were: Norton, 22; Phillipsburg, 20; Concordia, 15; Scott City, 3. Griffey continued unscored upon to win No.1 singles. Green and Hildebrand placed fourth

at No.1 doubles. Black won the championship of the No.2 singles and Scott and White placed runner-up at No.2 doubles.

The Russell Invitational took place on Thursday, Sept. 20 and Norton made a serious challenge for the championship. Larned won with 12 points, followed by Norton, 11; Osborne, 9; Victoria, 7; Colby, 6; Hoisington, 4; Russell, 3; Phillipsburg, 3. Griffey continued her unbeaten string in No.1 singles but was scored on for the first time in the season. Sumner joined Hildebrand at No.1 doubles and they placed fourth in their first time playing together. Black was runner-up in No.2 singles and Scott and White were third in No.2 doubles.

On Saturday, Sept. 22, Norton finished third in the Trego Invitational in WaKeeney. Team scores were: Central Plains, 34; Tribune, 32; Norton, 27; Phillipsburg, 20; Hoisington, 14; Trego, 10; Victoria, 9; Osborne, 8. This was Norton's highest finish in this tough tournament in a number of years.

Griffey won another gold medal in No.1 singles. Sumner and Hildebrand played No.1 doubles, were not seeded and lost both of their matches. Black placed sixth in No.2 singles and Scott and White finished fifth in No.2 doubles.

Norton traveled to Colby for their Invitational on Tuesday, Sept. 25 and returned with the team championship. Team scores were: Norton, 22; Phillipsburg, 21; Tribune, 16; Russell, 13; Colby, 7; Trego, 5; Scott City, 4. Griffey shutout both of her opponents to earn another gold medal. Green rejoined Hildebrand in No.1 doubles and they placed third. Black won the championship of No.2 singles and Scott and White were third in No.2 doubles.

The Mid-Continent League Tournament was held on Saturday, Sept. 29 in Phillipsburg and the Lady Jays placed runner-up in the league competition. Phillipsburg was the winner with 41



Norton junior Ashley Hildebrand serves as junior Rickete Green awaits a possible return by a Scott City opponent during the Lady Jays' championship team performance in the Phillipsburg Quad on Tuesday, Sept. 11. - Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

points, followed by Norton, 24; Trego, 16; Osborne, 15. Griffey shutout all three of her opponents to win the gold. Green and White played together for the first time at No.1 doubles and finished third. Black placed third at No.2 singles and Hildebrand and freshman Audrie Burge played together for the first time at No.2 doubles and placed third.

The Class 3A Regional Tennis Tournament was held on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 5-6 in Russell. Griffey won all her matches to qualify for the State Tournament for the third year in a row! Black won one singles match, lost two and was eliminated. Doubles teams Green and White and Hildebrand and Scott lost one match and were eliminated.

Central Plains won the Re-

gional championship with 16 points, followed by Ellinwood, 11; Ellsworth, 10; Norton, 8; Hoisington, 4; Phillipsburg, 4; Osborne, 2; Russell, 2; Beloit, 1; Victoria, 0.

The Class 3A State Tennis Tournament was scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Oct. 12-13 at Hutchinson Trinity High School in Hutchinson but was delayed until Sunday and Monday due to rainy weather.

After both girls breezed through the early competition, Tawni played Sara Goodwin of Prairie Village-Kansas City Christian in the championship finals. It was the same girl she played in the finals a year ago.

"Like Tawni, Sara had no losses and had won all her preliminary matches 6-0, 6-0, winning without losing any games," said coach Green. "The finals

were exciting to watch with lots of hard hitting and angled shots. There were a number of volleys at the net, along with quick hitting exchanges between the two players up at the net. Both girls played very well.

"At the end of the match, Sara was the winner 6-1, 6-3. Tawni was the only player in the tournament to win any games against Sara and the only player to give Sara some tough competition.

"Tawni has had a great career playing tennis, three times finishing high in the state tournament. She will definitely be missed as a player but mostly as the wonderful person that she is."

Tawni Griffey finished her three-year high school tennis career at Norton with a tremendous 95-2 record, her only losses coming to Goodwin.

## Huskies remain undefeated after three

By Mike Stephens

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The Northern Valley Junior High School boys A-Team won an exciting game over Stockton, 44-41, on Nov. 13 in Almena.

The Huskies made seven 3-point shots in the game. Riley Sides led the Huskies with 17 points, Carson Wallace added 13 points, Caden Kinderknecht's six points came from two 3-pointers, Damian Wellman added six points of his own, Briely Yocum hit two

points.

"The Huskies did a good job of taking care of the ball late in the game to run out the clock," said head coach Jim Cole.

Five Huskies scored in the B-Team game as the Huskies won 27-13. Nick Stutsman led the B-Team with eight points, Caden Bach with seven points, Brady Rogers, with four points and Briely Yocum with two points.

With the wins, both boys teams remain undefeated at 3-0.

## Northern Valley plays in pre-season tourney

By Mike Stephens

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The Lady Junior High School Huskies opened their season in the Brewster Pre-Season Tournament on Nov. 10 in Brewster. The A-Team went 1-1 in the tournament.

The Huskies first game was a 28-21 victory over Triplains-Brewster. The Lady Huskies scored 16 points in the fourth quarter for the seven point come from behind win.

The Lady Huskies were led in scoring

by Paige Baird with eight points, Brittany Wright with six points, Chaylee Lowry, HalLee Linner and Katie Johnson with four points each and Kylie Kinderknecht with two points.

The Huskies played hard in the next game but lost to a very talented Grinnell-Wheatland squad, 45-13.

The Lady Huskies leading scorers were Chaylee Lowry, six points, Katie Johnson, four points and HalLee Linner, three

points.

The Northern Valley Junior High girls B-Team went 0-2 in the tournament, but improved from the first game to the second.

"The girls have 17 players out for basketball this season with only two 8th graders. This season will be a learning experience. We are going to work hard on our fundamentals and try to improve with each game," said head coach Jim Cole.

## Basketball season opens for Lady Junior Huskies

By Mike Stephens

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The Northern Valley Junior High School Lady Huskies played their home-opener on Nov. 13 in Almena, losing to Stockton 53-17.

Four Lady Huskies scored baskets in the game. HalLee Linner led the Huskies with seven points, Chaylee Lowry and Kylie Kinderknecht had four points each and Paige Baird added two points.

"The Lady Junior Huskies played their first home game of the season against a terrific Stockton team. The A-Team girls improved during the game getting better at handling Stockton's pressure defense," said head coach Jim Cole.

The A-Team girls are now 1-2 on the season.

The B-Team girls played hard, but lost to Stockton, 49-6. Jaden Smith scored four points for the Huskies and Brianna Johns had two points.

The B-Team girls are now 0-3 on the season.

## Junior Jays off to a 3-0 start

By Mike Stephens

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The Norton Blue Jays Junior High varsity team won easily over the Plainville Cardinals, 41-25, in a key MCEL matchup on Nov. 8 in Stull Gymnasium.

The Norton A-team came out strong and jumped on the Cardinals early. The Blue Jays closed out the first quarter with a 12-3 lead. Jace Ruder led all scorers with 14 points, followed closely by Jacob Green with 10 points as the Blue Jays went on to win by 16 points over the Cardinals.

Norton shot 41 percent from the field compared to Plainville's 22 percent. The Blue Jays had 11 assists, led by Trenton Wright and Tyus Henson with four each.

The Blue Jays, however, committed a season high 19 turnovers mostly due to the Cardinals tough defense. The turnovers are a concern for Blue Jays head coach Joe Cox.

"We were fortunate to start the game shooting like we did. Our guys knew this was an important game and we came out hot and intense. If we are going to continue to win big games we have to lower our turnovers, we won't always shoot that well," Coach Cox said.

Defensively, the young Blue Jays turned in the performance of the season. Jace Ruder had a big night with six steals, seven defensive rebounds and two blocked shots. The Blue Jays forced 19 turnovers, 17 of those being steals. Henson had four steals and Green had three. The Blue Jays out rebounded the Cardinals 30 to 21, as well.

"The stats don't show effort level and intensity, but this was a great defensive night," said Coach Cox.

"Plainville is a very good team and we knew the game could be won with a great defensive effort," Coach Cox added.

"When parents and other fans are coming up to me, complimenting the team on their defensive performance, you can't help but be happy. Everyone played extremely hard and our players need to know how much the fans appreciate watching a game like that."

The B-Team game was won by Plainville, 30-22. Collyn Auker led all scorers with 12 points.

The C-Team game was also won by Plainville, 20-10. Layton Miller and Matt Vacara each had four points for the Blue Jays.

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