

Norton Thunder ends season in victory

By **DICK BOYD**

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The Norton Thunder 18 & Under girls softball team completed their 2013 season with a double header win on July 8 at Stockton.

Norton won by scores of 7-3 and 8-6.

Opener

Stockton held a 1-0 lead after one inning but Norton scored three runs in the top of the second to take a 3-1 advantage. Amanda Kessler hit safely, Tara Bracktenbach and Shelby Mulford both walked and Alison Helget singled. Kessler, Bracktenbach and Mulford all scored.

Stockton scored one run in the third inning but the Thunder added three more runs in the top of the fourth stanza to lead

6-2. Sabre Plante, Laurel Hageman and Helget all walked and scored.

Stockton cut into the Thunder lead with one run in the bottom of the fourth. Marisa Maddy and Shauna Gibson both walked in the top of the fifth inning and Maddy scored.

Stockton was three up, three down in the bottom of the fifth, leaving the score 7-3 in favor of the Thunder.

The Thunder had three hits, eight walks and eight strike outs. Skylar Davis, Amanda Kessler and Alison Helget each had one hit for Norton.

Winning pitcher for Norton was Laurel Hageman. She allowed just two hits, walked four and struck out four batters.

Nightcap

Stockton took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning in the second game.

The Thunder edged ahead 3-2 in the top of the second inning. Plante and Mulford both walked, Hageman singled, Helget walked and Maddy got on base on a fielder's choice. Plante, Mulford and Hageman all scored.

Stockton scored one run in the bottom of the second stanza to tie the score at 3-all.

Four Thunder runs in the top of the third inning, put them back on top 7-3. Davis and Kristen Dole both got on base on an error, Plante doubled and Bracktenbach and Mulford both singled. All except Mulford scored.

Stockton added two runs in

the bottom of the third to cut the Thunder lead to 7-5.

The Thunder added another run in the top of the fourth when Maddy singled, Gibson walked and Davis singled and Maddy scored.

Stockton scored another run in the bottom of the fourth inning but it was too little, too late as the Thunder prevailed 8-6.

Norton had seven hits, four walks and just one strike out. Skylar Davis was leading hitter for Norton, going 2 for 3 with the bat.

Alison Helget was winning pitcher for Norton. She gave up two hits, walked six and struck out three batters.

Coach's comments

"I was extremely proud of how our girls finished the season," said Norton Thunder head coach Brandon Gay. "It was a tough season in many ways.

"In a typical season, you deal with a few injuries but this season we were dealing with multiple injuries and illnesses at all times. Add to that girls who had to be out of town for extended periods of time and girls who had other commitments and what was a large team gets really thin really quick.

"The amazing thing to me is that as the team got smaller, it also got better. Even though we had trouble finding nine girls at the end and even had to find fill-ins a few times, we won our last five games and seven of our last eight.

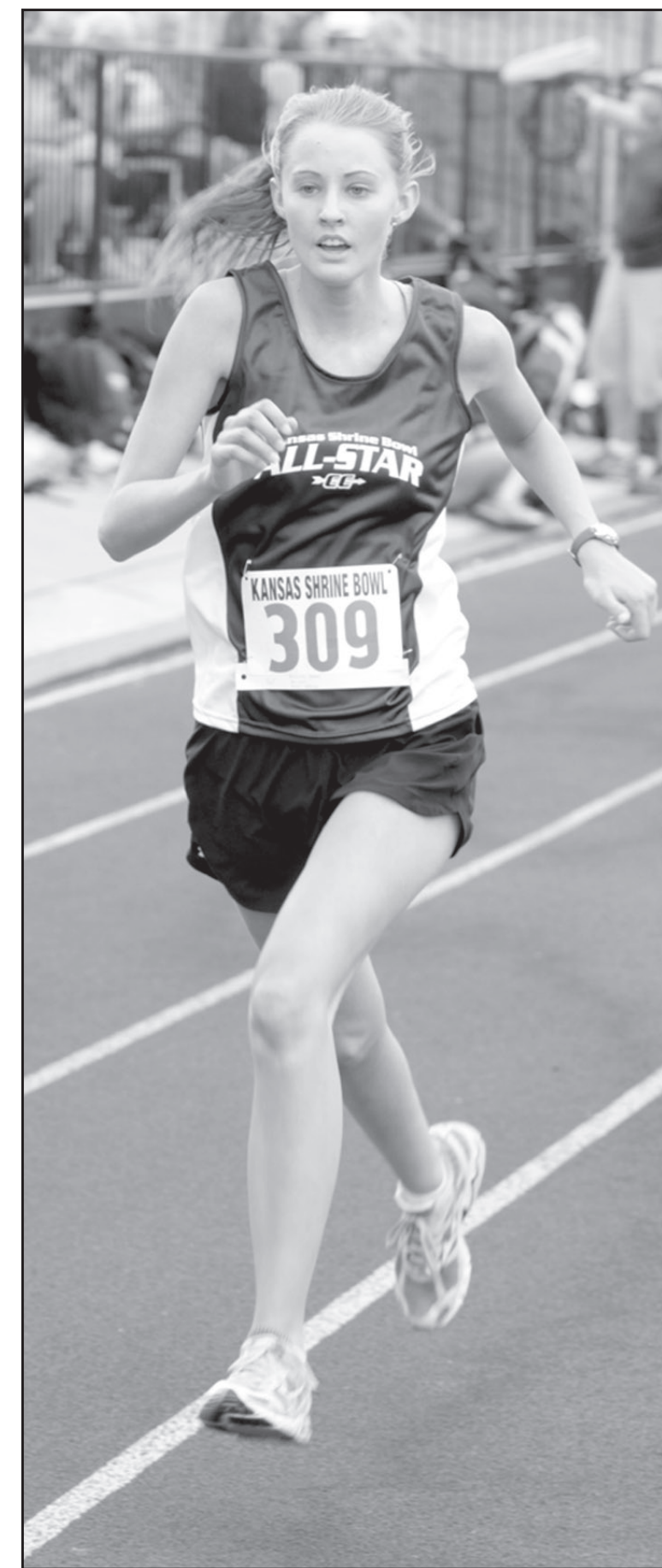
"Overall, we finished the season 14-7, which is a testament

to our girls who were with us all season and the girls who played with injuries or battled through injuries in order to get back on the field.

"As a coach, you are always proud when your team does well. But, when your team does well despite a lot of adversity, it's an entirely different level of pride. They were successful with hard work, character, and a love of the game and their teammates.

"I couldn't be more proud of all of them."

Assistant coach for the Norton Thunder this season was Tim Plante.



Norton Community High School 2013 graduate Kamilla Jones nears the finish line in the All-Star Cross Country Run which was held just prior to the 40th annual Kansas Shrine Bowl All-Star Football Game on Saturday in Washburn's Yager Stadium in Topeka. Kamilla was one of just 15 women from the West chosen to compete in the race, based on their record while running in high school

- Courtesy photo by David Steinle

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Community Calendar



Please submit your events for the Community Calendar which is printed in the Monday EXTRA. Events may be e-mailed to: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com or mailed to 215 South Kansas Avenue

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