

Blue Jays win Championships again

By DICK BOYD

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Once again on Thursday, the Norton Community High School girls and boys cross country teams successfully defended their home course by repeating as champions of the Norton Invitational which was held on the Prairie Dog Recreation Association Golf Course south of Norton.

The Lady Jays fought off a strong challenge from Oberlin to win their eighth straight championship and the Norton boys finished nine points better than runner-up Phillipsburg to earn their fifth championship in a row.

"Another warm day set up for a well contested meet," said Norton head coach George Rossi.

"Our varsity girls came out and ran a very solid race for the first race of the year. Our varsity boys entered the race with two of our top four runners injured. Our boys really need to keep working to get better and both girls and boys need to get into better shape but this first meet was a great way to start."

The Norton girls won with a score of 42, followed by Oberlin, 43; Wheatland, 69; Plainville, 75.

The Norton boys won with a score of 35, followed by Phillipsburg, 44; Plainville, 62; Oberlin, 84; Trego Community, 112.

GIRLS

Junior Sierra Griffith picked up where she left off last season by crossing the finish line first for the Lady Jays with a time of

17:40 for the 2.5 mile course.

Sierra placed fourth individually.

Senior Darcy Bainter was next across the finish line for Norton, placing just behind Sierra in 17:43. Next, came senior Marisa Maddy in 11th individually in 18:41. Finishing just behind Marisa were senior Katelyn Engelbert, 12th in 18:42 and sophomore Molly Maddy, 13th in 19:09.

Top ten runners were: Winter Polivka, Oberlin, 16:04, first; Tustin Taylor, Grainfield-Wheatland, 17:12, second; Lacy Ostmeyer, Grainfield, 17:16, third; Sierra Griffith, Norton, 17:40, fourth; Darcy Bainter, Norton, 17:43, fifth; Leslie VanLoenen, Hill City, 17:44, sixth; Caitie Shields, Oberlin, 17:54, seventh; Cassidy Rathbun, Plainville, 18:00, eighth; Jakobi Blau, Oberlin, 18:21, ninth; Brooklyn Eilers, Plainville, 18:34, tenth.

Northern Valley's Brooke Baird placed 14th in the varsity race with a clocking of 19:19.

Five Norton girls competed in the junior varsity race and freshman Shania Burns won the gold medal with a time of 21:11. Other Norton runners and their finishes were: sophomore Kylie Perez, fourth in 22:48; freshman Macayla Kent, fifth in 23:05; freshman Starla Tischhauser, 17th in 31:14.

"Our season started in a great way with freshman Shania Burns winning the junior varsity race in her first race as a Blue Jay!" said coach Rossi.

"Our junior varsity girls ran a fantastic race, showing some



Norton's Marc Miller runs comfortably during the Norton Invitational Cross Country meet on Thursday. Miller led the Blue Jays to the finish line and freshman Nate Hartwell, who is shown behind Miller, was second fastest placer for Norton.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



From left, Katelyn Engelbert and Marisa Maddy complete the cross country course for the Lady Jays during Norton's championship performance in the Norton Invitational Cross Country meet on Thursday.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

real determination and heart in completing the race.

"It was nice to see our varsity girls win the championship for the eighth year in a row. Our 1-5 split was 1:17 seconds, which is just a bit off last year's split. All of our girls ran faster than they did on this same course last year.

"Oberlin gave us everything we wanted in a very competitive race. We learned a great deal about our strengths and weaknesses.

Our girls started the season in a great way. I loved the way our girls came out to compete!"

BOYS

Senior Marc Miller was fastest again for the Norton boys in the 3.1 mile course, placing second in 19:22.

He was followed by freshman Nate Hartwell, who placed third in 19:40 to begin his high school cross country career in a great way. Third across the finish line for the Blue Jay boys was junior Dalton Vanover, who finished just behind Hartwell in fourth place with clocking of 19:53.

Next finisher for Norton was sophomore Weston Erbert in 18th with a time of 22:05 and senior Keith Sander completed the five-man team for the Blue Jays with a 27th place in 23:08.

Also running for Norton was senior Garret Otter who placed 29th in 23:30.

The top ten finishers were Wyatt Ratzlaff, Phillipsburg, 18:05, first; Marc Miller, 19:22, second; Nate Hartwell, Norton, 19:40; Dalton Vanover, Norton, 19:53, fourth; Tanner Colburn, Hill City, 20:05, fifth; Reed Ste-

phens, Stockton, 20:14, sixth; Stephan Sage, Phillipsburg, 20:18, seventh; Nicholas Wentz, Grainfield, 20:29, eighth; Ganon Henningson, Oberlin, 20:51, ninth; Ethan Hamel, Stockton, 20:59, tenth.

Five Norton boys competed for the junior varsity. Sophomore James King placed seventh in 23:23; sophomore Skylar Johnson finished right behind King in eighth in 23:26; freshman Harrison Woodyard placed 14th in 29:05 and junior David Smith finished 15th in 29:24.

"Brendon Frack and Alec Hager were sidelined with injuries," said coach Rossi. "That did stop our boys from winning the race for the fifth year in a row. Marc Miller, freshman Nate Hartwell and Dalton Vanover ran great races with all three in the top four placers. Weston Erbert improved his time by about two minutes.

"It takes a lot of people to run a good meet."

Norton girls mistakenly omitted from the pre-season story were Shania Burns, Macayla Kent, Starla Tischhauser and Kylie Perez. Boys not listed but on the roster were Harrison Woodyard, Skylar Johnson, James King, David Smith, Garret Otter and Keith Sander.

Manager Jesika Smith was also left off the original list.

Next action

Norton will compete in the prestigious Wamego Invitational Cross Country Meet this Saturday on the Wamego Country Club course.

Norton tennis team takes third at Colby Invite

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School girls tennis team turned in another outstanding early season performance with a third place tie in the Colby Invitational Tennis Tournament on Saturday.

Phillipsburg won the championship with 18 points and Ulysses scored 14 for runner-up but Norton and Tribune were right behind them with 13 points each. Osborne placed fifth with 10 points, followed by Colby, 4; Scott City, 0.

Norton junior Brooke Sumner placed fifth at No.1 singles, the Lady Jays' No.1 doubles team of seniors Ashley Hildebrand and Jessica White placed runner-up and Norton's No.2 doubles team of senior Rickete Green and junior Molly Scott won the championship.

"It was another extremely hot day for tennis," said Norton head tennis coach Jim Green. "This was a seven team double elimination bracketed tournament.

At No.1 singles, Brooke was seeded fourth. In the first round, she played extremely well and won 6-0 over Arantxa Dillon, Ulysses. In her second match, she was up against No.1 seed Taylor Noel, Osborne. Taylor competed in the state tournament last year and is an extremely good player. Brooke lost to her 6-0. On the back side, Brooke met the No.3 seed Orianna Ratzlaff, Phillipsburg. Orianna had lost in a tiebreaker, which had sent her to the back side. Brooke gave a good effort but lost 6-1.

"At No.2 singles, sophomore Audrie Burge drew in against the No.4 seed, Madison Rogers,

Colby. Audrie was in the match and played well. In two games, she had the advantage but didn't win. Those two games might have made a difference in the match, which Rogers won 6-3. Next, Audrie played Erin Leivan, Osborne, a player that I thought Audrie matched up well with. As play went along, Erin won one game after another and the final score was 6-1.

"Coming off their first place finish at Hays, Ashley Hildebrand and Jessica White were seeded No.2 and received a first round bye. Their first match was against third seeded Sarah Lamm and Samantha Lindberg of Colby, whom they had beaten twice at Hays. Sometimes it is not good to have the bye and then play a team that has already played a match but our girls played well and won 6-2. In the second round, they played Ali-

son Davidson and Liz Balderama, Ulysses, who had beaten the fourth and one seeds. It was a very close match. Ulysses played a lot of lobs and hit the ball very softly. They were very consistent. It was a style of play that we had not played against before. It created a lot of problems for our girls and we played a number of very long games that went to deuce many times. We lost 6-4 and went to the back side to meet the No.1 seed from Phillipsburg, Britni Goothoff and Amy Stapel. It was another close match that went back and forth. Ashley and Jessica won 6-4 to put them in the finals for a rematch with Ulysses. Late in the hot afternoon with a 10 minute rest, Ashley and Jessica were back on the court with a chance to win the championship. Our girls fell behind 3-0 and battled back to 3-2. The score went on

to 5-4. Most of the play was like the first time they played Ulysses, long games going to deuce many times. Not enough of the games went their way. Our girls finished second with a 6-4 loss.

"At No.2 doubles, Rickete and Molly were seeded first and received a first round bye. In the second round, their opponents were No.5 seed Tresta Urban and Rachel Browne of Colby, who had defeated the fourth seeded Tribune team in a tiebreaker. Rickete and Molly made quick work of Colby with a 6-1 victory. Next, they played the No.2 seed Delaney Graber and Morgan Price of Ulysses who had a similar style of play as their No.1 doubles team and won 6-4. In the finals, No.3 seed Lindsey Solida and Karlye Stephen of Phillipsburg, who won the back side of the bracket, were Norton's opponent. Phil-

lipsburg is known for their good play in doubles. Rickete and Molly jumped out to a 3-0 lead, then lost the next two games 3-2. Even though the match became close, our girls played well and won 6-3 for first place. On the strength of our places in the doubles and singles, our team finished tied with Tribune for third place."

Next action

The Norton varsity will play in the Phillipsburg Quad today, beginning at 1 p.m.

Competing, in addition to Norton and Phillipsburg will be teams from Russell and Trego Community.

The Norton junior varsity will compete in the Trego JV Round Robin on Thursday, beginning at 1 p.m. and will host their own Norton JV Invitational this Saturday in the swimming pool park, beginning at 9 a.m.

Norton Blue Jays lose Mid-Continent league season opener

By DICK BOYD

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The very inexperienced Norton Community High School football team took on a senior-dominated Smith Center eleven in the 2013 season and Mid-Continent League opener on Friday night in Smith Center and grew up a lot in the second half in a 34-13 loss.

The Blue Jays trailed 22-0 at halftime but outscored the Redmen 13-12 in the second half, had double the rushing yardage of Smith Center and were the better second half team had they not suffered four costly fumbles after intermission.

Norton had only three returning starters from last year's 7-3 squad.

"We did not make any changes at halftime," said Norton head coach Lucas Melvin. "We just reminded our players to trust what we'd been telling them and to do it. Don't think individual but think team.

"In the second half, I was proud of the way we played. Our defense held them twice inside our 20-yard line and we moved the ball on offense. It was a tale of two halves. Turnovers really hurt us.

"In the first half, we didn't do our assignments on defense and we had a couple of offensive drives that stalled. In the second

half, we matured.

"We told our players to start the next game right away instead of waiting for the second half."

Although Smith Center rushed for more total yards, Norton had a better rushing average per play. The Redmen picked up 246 yards rushing and averaged 4.24 yards per carry but Norton averaged 4.45 yards per attempt in gaining 178 yards rushing. Neither team had many passing yards. Norton lost four total fumbles and Smith Center lost just one fumble.

Norton started the following players on offense: freshman Jacob Green, left tackle; junior Stewart Whitney, left guard; senior Cole Renner, center; senior Kolton Harting, right guard; junior Breven Sondergaard, right tackle; junior Conor Cox, tight end; senior Drew Schrum and junior Kobie Unterseher, wide receivers; sophomore Jordan Dole, quarterback; senior Toby Nickell and senior Austin Hager, running backs.

Starting on defense were: Dole, left end; Harting, Whitney, Sondergaard, interior linemen; Renner, right end; Nickell, junior Mickey Hahn, linebackers; Schrum, Hager, sophomore Gavin Lively, senior Tanner Furbush, defensive backs.

Individual statistics



Norton running back Austin Hager runs out of the grasp of a potential Smith Center tackler during the Mid-Continent League contest on Friday night.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Toby Nickell was leading rusher for Norton with 68 yards on 13 carries for a 5.3 yard av-

erage, followed by Kendall Miller, 6 carries, 40 yards, 6.8 yard average; Tanner Furbush, 3

carries, 33 yards, 11 yard average; Jared Tallent, 6 carries, 28 yards, 4.7 yard average.

Miller completed 3 of 7 passes for 28 yards and Jordan Dole completed 1 of 2 for 11 yards.

Leading receivers were Furbush, 2 catches, 21 yards; Kobie Unterseher, 1 for 11 yards; Nickell, 1 for 7 yards. Furbush had 4 kickoff returns for 68 yards and Unterseher had 1 for 12 yards.

Austin Hager had three kickoffs for a 42 yard average. Cameron Heikes had Norton's only fumble recovery.

Lambert was leading rusher for Smith Center with 154 yards on 24 carries for a 6.4 yard average.

Tackles

Jacob Green was leading tackler for Norton with 4 solos, 6 assists, 10 total; followed by Tanner Furbush, 5 solos, 4 assists, 9 total; Gavin Lively, 5 solos, 4 assists, 9 total; Jordan Dole, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Mickey Hahn, 2 solos, 3 assists, 5 total; Breven Sondergaard, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Austin Hager, 4 solos; Kolton Harting, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Toby Nickell, 4 solos; Kobie Unterseher, 4 solos; Stewart Whitney, 4 solos; Christian Boser, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Drew Schrum, 3 solos; Conor Cox, 2 assists; Cole Renner, 2 solos; Travis Cressler, 1 solo; Trevor Lewis, 1

solo; Ethan Ross, 1 solo; Cody Temmel, 1 solo.

Next action

Norton will host Goodland this Friday in a non-league game at Travis Field, beginning at 7 p.m.

The Cowboys defeated Hugoton in their season opener on Friday night.

"They have a lot of seniors and will be another experienced team," said coach Melvin.

"They also have many skilled players. They'll be another tough team for us."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Smith Center		
10	First Downs	15	
178	Yards Rushing	246	
39	Yards Passing	63	
217	Total Yards	309	
4-9-1	Passes Comp.	2-7-0	
4-4	Fumbles Lost	1-1	
2-18	Punts	2-27	
5-35	Penalties	5-40	

Go Big Blue!!!

