

Very competitive Lady Jay team this year

By DICK BOYD

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Playing with just two seniors and three juniors, the 2013 Norton Community High School volleyball team under first year head coach Christine Thompson still put together a very competitive team which won a number of key matches as they gained experience throughout the campaign.

They finished with a 16-18 season record after falling to No.2 seeded Cimarron in the Class 3-A Sub-State Tournament in a match played on Cimarron's home court.

"Overall, we had a great season," said coach Thompson. "Every player on the varsity made great gains and grew mentally. I was very impressed with how our girls improved together as a team and played well most of the season."

"Our record does not reflect how much success we really had this season."

"Many thanks to our administration and the community for your fine support."

A 1983 graduate of Norton Community High School, coach Thompson has extensive volleyball experience, both playing and coaching.

An assistant coach again this season was Traci Uehlin and Peggy Cox was the other assistant coach.

The two seniors on this year's team were Johnnye Ruder, 5'7" and Bailey Ambrosier, 5'9". The three juniors were Adrienne Hager, 5'4"; Kaitlyn Bohl, 6' and Erin Archer, 5'4".

Other players who saw varsity action included Casey Ambrosier, 5'10"; Peyton Renner, 5'7", sophomores; Caitlyn Cox, 5'10" and Bailey Miller, 5'5", freshmen.

Student managers for the team were Morgan Farber, Trae Braun and Sabrina Gibson.

Season roundup

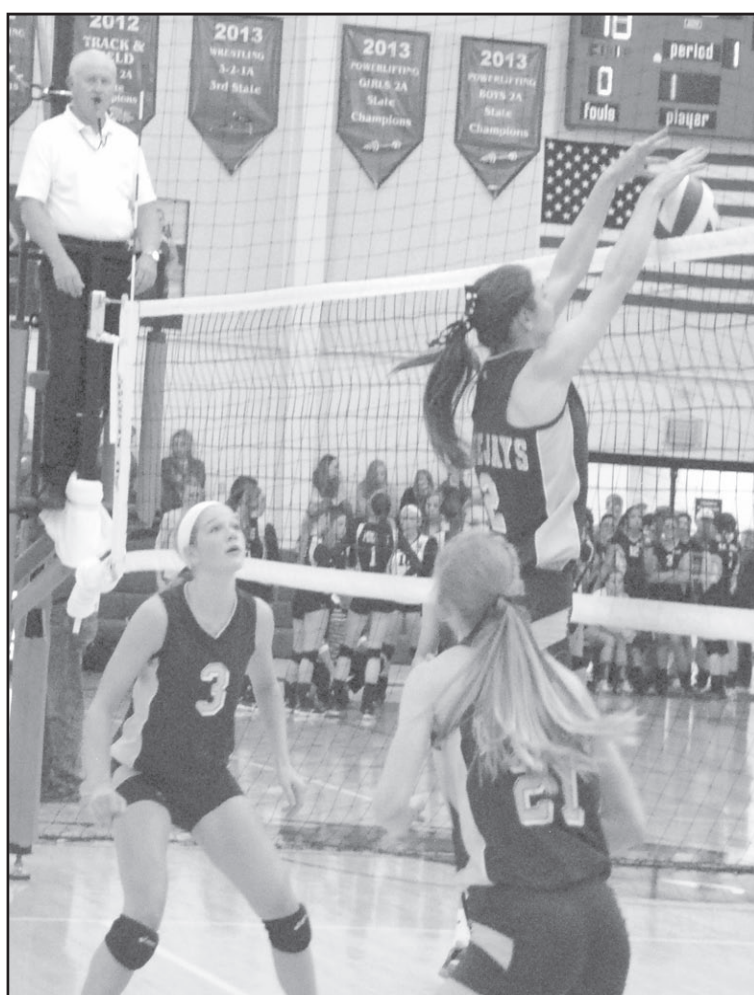
Norton opened the season with two close losses to Plainville and Northern Valley at Plainville on Friday, Aug. 30. The Lady Jays defeated the Lady Huskies 25-22 before losing 22-25, 18-25. They lost to Plainville 23-25, 17-25. "With only a few returning varsity players and a new coaching staff, our varsity team has done a wonderful job of preparing themselves for the season," said coach Thompson.

On Tuesday, Sept. 3, Norton hosted Colby, and Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays in the Stull Gym in Norton. The Lady Jays lost to TMP 23-25, 26-24, 23-25 and lost to Colby 11-25, 17-25. "We are playing right along with the tough teams," said coach Thompson. "We are still trying to find the right combination of girls and working hard on our skill level."

Norton played the best of the season in three matches in Stockton on Tuesday, Sept. 10. The Lady Jays defeated Stockton 25-14, 16-25, 25-22; defeated Osborne 25-22, 25-23 before losing to No.7 state ranked Phillipsburg 18-25, 13-25. "The Phillipsburg match was our best of the year even though scores don't reflect it," said coach Thompson.

On Thursday, Sept. 19, the Lady Jays showed steady improvement with wins over Goodland and Dundy County in the Stull Gym in Norton. They outscored Goodland 25-16, 25-20 and beat Dundy County 25-18, 25-12. "As our season progresses, our varsity is improving with each playing date," said coach Thompson.

Norton traveled to Hill City



Norton's Bailey Ambrosier goes high to hit the volleyball over the net during competition in the Mid-Continent League Tournament in Plainville. Also pictured for Norton are, from left, Caitlyn Cox, No.3 and Casey Ambrosier, No. 21.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

on Tuesday, Sept. 24 to play the Lady Ringnecks and No.2 state ranked Hoxie. Norton defeated Hill City 25-19, 27-25 but lost to Hoxie 15-25, 14-25.

On Tuesday, Oct. 1, the Lady Jays traveled to Goodland for a return match with the Lady Cowgirls plus matches with Wheatland and Wray, Colo. Norton's record evened at 7-7 with wins over Wray, 25-14, 25-18; over Wheatland 25-27, 25-14, 25-19

and a loss to Goodland 19-25, 21-25. "Our girls played very well together, being aggressive and communicating the entire night," said coach Thompson. "We had beaten Goodland earlier so I believe our girls were a little over confident in this second match."

Norton competed in some very challenging matches in Hays on Thursday, Oct. 3. They lost to Hays 21-25, 19-25; lost

to Abilene 22-25, 23-25 and lost to Salina South 16-25, 14-25.

On Saturday, Oct. 5, a bright spot in the season occurred when Norton went unbeaten to win the championship of the tough Oberlin Invitational! The Lady Jays defeated St. Francis 25-22, 25-22, outscored Oberlin 25-16, 25-19; beat Atwood 27-29, 25-20, 25-22 and defeated state-ranked Hoxie 25-22, 27-25. "I am very proud of our players and how they played as a team," said coach Thompson. "We played aggressive the entire day. The highlight was beating state-ranked Hoxie, who defeated us pretty easily earlier in the season. Our team is really coming together."

Norton traveled to WaKeeney on Tuesday, Oct. 8 to play Trego and Smith Center. The Lady Jays outscored Trego 25-12, 25-18 but lost to the Lady Red 10-25, 19-25.

On Thursday, Oct. 10, the Lady Jays hosted "Senior Night and Pink Out Night for Breast Cancer Awareness" in the Stull Gym. Honored with their parents were seniors Johnnye Ruder and Bailey Ambrosier; senior cheerleaders Brandy Davis, Riekele Green and yell-leader Jared Shelton. Norton defeated Ellis 25-22, 25-22 but lost to Goodland 25-22, 15-25, 26-28.

Team members and the crowd wore pink. "It was a very exciting and eventful night," said coach Thompson. "All three teams came ready to play. We just fell short of coming away with a victory against Goodland."

Norton competed in another tough tournament on Saturday, Oct. 12 when the Lady Jays traveled to Scott City. In another good performance, Norton placed third. The Lady Jays de-

feated Wheatland 15-25, 25-23, 25-23; beat Leoti 25-20, 25-14; lost to Holcomb 16-25, 24-26; lost to Dodge City 15-25, 13-25 and defeated Oakley 25-16, 28-26 to place third. "Overall, our team performed very well in the tournament," said coach Thompson. "It was a great day for the Lady Jays."

On Saturday, Oct. 19, Norton traveled to Plainville for the Mid-Continent League Tournament. They lost to Ellis 21-25, 25-15, 18-25; lost to Phillipsburg 23-25, 15-25 and lost to Stockton 22-25, 18-25. "Our first match of the day against Ellis was more than our girls anticipated," said coach Thompson. "We pretty easily beat them during the season. We didn't expect them to come at us the way they did. Due to us playing tentative against Phillipsburg and Stockton, another team we had beaten, we were not able to come away with a win for the day." Ellis defeated Plainville to place third.

The Class 3-A Sub-State Tournament was held in Cimarron on Saturday, Oct. 26. Norton was seeded No.7 with a 16-17 record and played No.2 seed Cimarron (28-7) on their home court. The Lady Jays lost 18-25, 19-25 to end their season.

"Saturday was very emotional and frustrating for us," said coach Thompson. "We came out playing hard and started by getting three or so points in a row. Then, momentum changed and we were not able to get it back. We attacked Cimarron aggressively but they were able to cover the floor well. Due to lack of experience, we were not able to compose ourselves and fight back like we had in past matches this season."

Quality performance for Husky runners

By Kirk Kasson

Northern Valley's Cross Country team concluded what was a productive year with a quality performance at the Wheatland Regional on Oct. 26. Junior Macy Kasson ran a great time of 19:35 to finish 19th and Camden Cox ran a personal record of 20:31 to place 29th. While neither runner placed high enough to qualify for state, both ran times which would have qualified in other years. Kasson's time would have been 8th fastest in 2012, and Cox's run would have been the last qualifying time in 2011. Earlier this month the team faced tough competition and windy weather at the Phillipsburg Invitational, Oct. 10.

Camden Cox placed 3rd in the junior varsity race with a time of 22:23. In the varsity girls race, Brooke Baird placed 17th at 19:26 and Allison Keith finished in 25:35 to place 41st. Macy Kasson struggled with stomach cramps to finish 27th in 20:54.

One week prior to the regional race the Huskies were

able to scout out the Wheatland course by running in the Thunderhawk Invitational. Allison Keith medaled with a 3rd place in the junior varsity race with a personal record time of 21:13. Camden Cox placed 4th in the boys junior varsity by running a personal record of 20:39, and Macy Kasson placed 18th in the varsity race with a personal record of 19:26.

Season highlights for the Northern Valley runners are as follows:

Macy Kasson: 4 varsity medals, improved personal record to 19:26, from 20:28.

Camden Cox, 3 junior varsity medals, 1 varsity medal, improved personal record to 20:31 from 22:40

Matt Florence personal record of 26:32.

John Towery personal record of 23:50.

Brooke Baird 4 varsity medals, season best time of 18:19.

Allison Keith 3 junior varsity medals, improved time to 21:13 from 21:41.



Sophomore Camden Cox earned three junior varsity medals, one varsity medal for the Huskies Cross Country team this season, and improved his personal record to 20:31 from 22:40

Junior Macy Kasson earned four varsity medals this season for the Huskies Cross Country team and improved his personal record to 19:26, from 20:28.

-Photo courtesy of Kirk Kasson

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