

Blue Jays take fifth at Topside Tip-Off

By DICK BOYD

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After being outshot by McCook in the opener on Thursday, the Norton Community High School boys basketball team played two steady games for victories over Wray, Colo. on Friday and Burlington, Colo. on Saturday to place fifth in the 25th annual Topside Tip-Off Basketball Tournament in Goodland.

Sharon Springs defeated McCook in the semi-finals and edged Oakley 62-59 for the championship. McCook took third with a 55-33 win over Goodland.

McCook

In the 56-29 loss to McCook, Norton scored just 4 points in the first quarter and 4 in the second and trailed 33-8 at halftime. An 8 point third period set the Blue Jays even farther behind as McCook tallied 12 to lead 45-16. Norton outscored McCook 13-11 in the final stanza.

Leading scorer for Norton was senior Marc Miller with 7 points on 1 two-point and 1 three-point basket on 67 percent shooting and 2 of 2 free throws. Junior Conor Cox added 6 points on 3 of 6 from the field for 50 percent.

As a team, Norton scored on 2 of 10 three-point attempts for 20 percent, 9 of 24 two-point tries for 38 percent and 11 of 34 overall for 32 percent. McCook hit 5 of 17 triple tries for 29 percent, 16 of 27 two-point attempts for 59 percent and 21 of 44 overall for 48 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton swished 5 of 9 for 56 percent and McCook tallied on 9 of 11 for 82 percent.

Norton grabbed 3 offensive and 15 defensive rebounds for 18 total and McCook pulled down 3 offensive and 18 caroms for 21 total. Cox was leading rebounder for Norton with 7, followed by Miller, 3; senior Drew Schrum, senior Tanner Furbush, senior Trever Lewis, 2 each; freshman Tyus Henson, junior Kobie Unterseher, 1 each.

The Blue Jays had 5 assists. Henson led with 2, followed by sophomore Quinton Porter, Schrum, Furbush, 1 each.

Norton had 6 steals. Miller and Furbush each had 2 thefts while junior Breven Sondergaard and Henson each had 1.

The Blue Jays had 21 turnovers compared to 12 for McCook.

"We obviously did not play well early and, when things got tough, our boys panicked and it just got progressively worse," said Norton head



Norton senior guard Marc Miller outhustles the Burlington players to pull down a rebound during the Blue Jays' victory on Saturday in the Topside Tip-Off Basketball Tournament in Goodland. At right for Norton is junior post Conor Cox.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

coach Doug Reusink.

"The only bright spot is that we did have some boys come off the bench and give us some good minutes. We need to put this one behind us, find some mental toughness and get a win in this tournament."

Norton boys

Breven Sondergaard 2 0 0-0 4; Tyus Henson 0 1 0-0 3; Marc Miller 1 1 2-2 7; Kobie Unterseher 0 0 2-2 2; Conor Cox 3 0 0-0 6; Tanner Furbush 2 0 0-0 4; Trever Lewis 1 0 0-0 2; Jordan Karnopp 0 0 1-4 1; Totals 9 2 5-8 29.

Wray

After holding Wray to 4 points in each of the first two quarters and taking a 15-8 lead at halftime, Nor-

ton tallied 23 points in the third quarter to win going away.

"It was great to get a win," said coach Reusink. "Our defense kept us in the game in the first half and we got things going offensively to get a good lead. It wasn't always pretty down the stretch but we did enough things right to finish with the win. We are on the right track but need to keep getting better to continue to win games."

Furbush had a career scoring night as he threw in 19 points on 8 of 15 two-point shots for 53 percent and 3 of 5 free throws for 60 percent.

As a team, Norton hit 2 of 8 three-point attempts for 25 percent, 17 of 41 two-point tries for 41 percent

and 19 of 49 overall for 39 percent. Wray missed all three triple tries and hit 8 of 37 two-point attempts for 22 percent.

Norton pulled down 13 offensive and 19 defensive rebounds for 32 total compared to 8 offensive and 13 defensive caroms for 21 total for Wray.

Cox was Norton's rebounding leader with 10, followed by Furbush, 9; Miller, 4; Henson, 3; Schrum, 3; Porter, 2; Karnopp, 1.

Norton had 9 assists. Furbush led with 3, followed by Schrum, 2; Henson, Miller, Cox, Karnopp, 1 each.

The Blue Jays had 9 steals and Wray had 7. Schrum and Furbush each had 3 thefts, followed by junior Connor Griffey, Lewis, Karnopp, 1 each.

Norton had 18 turnovers while Wray lost the ball 26 times.

Norton boys

Breven Sondergaard 1 1 0-4 5; Marc Miller 1 0 0-0 2; Drew Schrum 4 0 0-0 8; Conor Cox 1 0 2-4 4; Tanner Furbush 8 0 3-5 19; Trever Lewis 1 1 0-0 5; Jordan Karnopp 1 0 0-0 2; Totals: 17 2 5-14 45.

Burlington

Neither team shot very well but the Blue Jays shot just enough better to defeat Burlington 32-27 on Saturday and earn the fifth place trophy.

Norton held a first quarter lead of 10-7 and the score was tied 12-12 at halftime. After an 11-6 third quarter, Norton was on top 23-18. Both teams scored 9 points in the fourth stanza.

Leading scorer for Norton for the second straight game was Furbush who hit 7 of 17 shots for 41 percent and was 2 of 4 from the charity stripe for 50 percent and 16 points.

As a team, Norton hit 4 of 13 from beyond the arc for 31 percent, 9 of 33 two-point tries for 27 percent and 13 of 46 overall for 28 percent.

From the free throw line, the Blue Jays swished 2 of 6 for 33 percent and the Cougars hit 4 of 13 for 31 percent.

Norton pulled down 13 offensive and 15 defensive rebounds for 28 total. Cox was the individual leader with 10 rebounds, followed by Furbush, 8; Lewis, 3; Schrum, 3; Sondergaard, 2; Miller, 2.

The Blue Jays had 6 assists. Lewis had 2 and Henson, Miller, Cox and Furbush each had 1.

Cox blocked 3 shots in the game.

Both teams had 17 turnovers.

Norton boys

Quinton Porter 0 1 0-0 3; Tyus Henson 0 0 0-1 0; Marc Miller 0 2 0-0 6; Drew Schrum 2 0 0-2 4; Tanner Furbush 7 0 2-4 16; Trever Lewis 0 1 0-1 3; Totals 9 4 2-8 32.

Lady Jays finish fifth in Topside Tip-Off tournament

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School girls basketball team lost their opening game, then continued on to win two contests and placed fifth in the 25th annual Topside Tip-Off Basketball Tournament in Goodland over the weekend.

Norton lost 59-47 to Sharon Springs on Thursday, defeated Burlington, Colo. 41-35 on Friday and outscored Wray, Colo. 56-53 in overtime on Saturday to earn a fifth place trophy.

Goodland won the championship on Saturday with a 39-26 victory over McCook and Sharon Springs placed third with a 48-34 win over Oakley.

Sharon Springs

Coach George Rossi's Lady Jays came close to winning their opener versus Sharon Springs on Thursday. They trailed 12-9 after one quarter and 26-22 at halftime but outscored Sharon Springs 16-5 in the third period to lead 38-31.

Norton hit only two field goals in the fourth quarter. Senior Johnnye Ruder had already hit three baskets from long range and hit a fourth. Norton's other final basket was a two-point shot by senior Bailey Ambrosier.

The Lady Jays were unable to stop Sharon Springs' junior Rachael Kuhlman, who hit six two-point and one three-point basket and two free throws in the final period for 17 of her game high 32 points.

"We made several moves in the right direction and one major move in the wrong direction," said coach Rossi. "We can't have as many turnovers as we had and win."

"On the positive side, we played better overall defense and shot the ball much better tonight."

"We lost our composure when Sharon Springs made a run at the start of the fourth quarter. The mistakes we made are all correctable and our girls understand what we want to do."

Ruder led scoring for Norton with 12 points which came on 4 of 12 three-point shots for 33 percent. Bailey Ambrosier added 10 on 3 of 6 two-point shots for 50 percent and a perfect 4 of 4 from the free throw line.

As a team, Norton hit 8 of 15 two-point tries for an excellent 53 percent, 8 of 21 from long range for 38 percent and 16 of 36 overall for 44 percent.

Sharon Springs hit 5 of 24 three point tries for 21 percent, 18 of 34 two-point attempts for 53 percent and 23 of 58 overall for 40 percent.

From the free throw line, Norton swished 7 of 13 for 54 percent and Sharon Springs hit 8 of 15 for 53 percent.

The Lady Jays had 3 offensive and 20 defensive rebounds for 23 total compared to 9 offensive and 17 defensive boards for Sharon Springs for 26 total.

Senior Katelyn Engelbert led Norton with 7 rebounds, followed by Bailey Ambrosier, Ruder and freshman Caitlyn Cox, 4 each; senior Darcy Bainter, 3; junior Katie Bohl, 1.

Norton had 8 offensive assists; Ruder led with 3, followed by Bailey Ambrosier, Engelbert, 2 each; Bainter, 1.

The Lady Jays had 10 steals and the Lady Wild-



Lady Jay senior guard Johnnye Ruder drives for the basket and is fouled by a Burlington player during Norton's win Friday in the Topside Tip-Off Basketball Tournament in Goodland. Senior guard Katelyn Engelbert is pictured in the background.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

cats had 17. Engelbert led in steals with 3, followed by Cox, Bailey Ambrosier, 2 each; Bainter, Bohl, Ruder, 1 each.

Norton had 39 turnovers and Sharon Springs lost the ball 25 times.

Norton girls

Caitlyn Cox 0 0 1-2 1; Katelyn Engelbert 2 1 0-0 7; Darcy Bainter 1 2 1-5 9; Katie Bohl 2 0 1-3 5; Bailey Ambrosier 3 0 4-4 10; Johnny Ruder 0 4 0-0 12; Miah Melvin 0 1 0-0 3; Totals 8 8 7-14 47.

Burlington

Norton received balanced scoring in their 41-35 win over Burlington on Friday.

Bohl led with 12 points, followed by Ruder, 9, and Bailey Ambrosier 8.

The Lady Jays trailed 12-10 after one quarter and the score was tied 18-18 at intermission. A three-point basket by Ruder at the buzzer gave Norton a 27-22 advantage after three periods. A 14-13 fourth quarter allowed the Lady Jays to earn their first win of the season.

"It was a great feeling to get that first win under our belts," said coach Rossi. "Our girls did a better job of maintaining composure during tight situations. Our balanced scoring is something that will be very important to us as the season progresses. Our girls are learning their roles and learning to play with each other."

Bohl was 6 of 9 from two-point range for 67 percent accuracy.

As a team, Norton hit just 2 of 16 from long range

for 13 percent, 13 of 36 from two-point land for 36 percent and 15 of 52 overall for 29 percent. Burlington missed all 11 three-point tries and hit 11 of 32 two-point tries for 34 percent.

From the free throw line, the Lady Jays tallied on 9 of 26 for 35 percent and the Lady Cougars hit 13 of 19 for 68 percent.

Norton pulled down 8 offensive and 19 defensive rebounds for 27 total. Burlington had 7 offensive and 25 defensive caroms for 32 total. Bohl led Norton with 10, followed by Cox, 5; Engelbert, 4; Bailey Ambrosier, 3; Bainter, 2; Ruder, 2; Casey Ambrosier, 1.

The Lady Jays had 10 assists. Bainter led with 3, followed by Engelbert, Ruder, 2 each; Bailey Ambrosier, Casey Ambrosier, Baylee Miller, 1 each.

Norton had 13 steals and Burlington recorded 12. Ruder led Norton in thefts with 5, followed by Cox, Engelbert, Bohl, 2 each; Bainter, Miller, 1 each.

The Lady Jays had 24 turnovers compared to 31 for Burlington.

Norton girls

Caitlyn Cox 1 0 0-0 2; Katelyn Engelbert 3 0 0-2 6; Darcy Bainter 0 0 1-4 1; Katie Bohl 6 0 0-3 12; Bailey Ambrosier 2 0 4-6 8; Johnnye Ruder 0 2 3-8 9; Miah Melvin 1 0 1-2 3; Totals 13 2 9-25 41.

Wray

Norton had a very tight game on Saturday but survived overtime for the 56-53 victory and fifth place in the tournament.

Wray led 15-11 after one quarter. Norton also

scored 11 points in the second stanza but held Wray to 8 points to cut Wray's lead down to 23-22 at halftime. A 14-12 third quarter in favor of Norton put the Lady Jays ahead 36-35.

The two teams traded the lead in the fourth quarter until Bainter, with ice water in her veins, swished two free throws with 13 seconds left to tie the score at 49-49 and send the game into overtime!

Bainter also drained a three-point basket to start the extra period and Norton received a two-point basket from Bohl and free throw and a charity from Bailey Ambrosier for the three-point victory.

"This was a fantastic win!" said coach Rossi. "There were so many big moments. Darcy did a wonderful job of shooting and icing two huge free throws with 13 seconds left to push the game into overtime and Bailey Ambrosier took charge with just a couple of seconds remaining."

"Our bench players really played well and got us out of a rut in the second half. Our defense was very good at the end of the game."

"We are still having way too many silly, unforced turnovers. I think our conditioning was quite good because this is a long three days and we were not real tired."

"We need to continue to get to know each other on the floor and keep moving in the right direction."

Bainter concentrated on hitting baskets from beyond the arc and was very successful in doing so. She buried 5 of 8 from long range for 63 percent and hit 2 of 2 free throws for 17 points.

Bohl was great around the basket, hitting 7 of 8 two-point shots for a red hot 88 percent and 3 of 7 free throws for 43 percent and also 17 points.

As a team, Norton hit 7 of 28 three-point shots for 25 percent, 13 of 27 two-point tries for 48 percent and 20 of 55 overall for 36 percent.

Wray missed their only three-point try and hit 24 of 58 two-point attempts for 41 percent.

Norton had 10 offensive, 19 defensive and 29 total rebounds. Wray pulled down 12 offensive, 22 defensive caroms for 32 total. Bohl led Norton in rebounds with 7, followed by Engelbert, 6; Bailey Ambrosier, 4; Bainter, 4; Cox, 3; Miller, 2; Peyton Renner, Ruder, 1; Melvin, 1 each.

The Lady Jays had 14 assists. Ruder led with 7, followed by Engelbert, 4 and Cox, Bailey Ambrosier and Miller, 1 each.

Both teams had 14 steals. Engelbert led with 4, followed by Bailey Ambrosier, 3; Bainter, Miller, 2 each; Renner, Bohl, Ruder, 1 each.

Norton had 29 turnovers and Wray lost the ball 26 times.

Norton girls

Caitlyn Cox 1 0 1-2 3; Katelyn Engelbert 2 0 0-0 4; Darcy Bainter 0 5 2-2 17; Katie Bohl 7 0 3-7 17; Bailey Ambrosier 2 0 2-5 6; Baylee Miller 0 1 1-2 4; Miah Melvin 1 1 0-0 5; Totals 13 7 9-16 56.

Next action

The Norton girls and boys will host Stockton today in Mid-Continent League action.

Games will begin at 4 p.m. with the C-team boys at Wilmetth Kirk Memorial Gym, followed by junior varsity boys. Beginning at 4:45 p.m. in the Stull Gym will be the junior varsity girls, followed by varsity girls and varsity boys games.