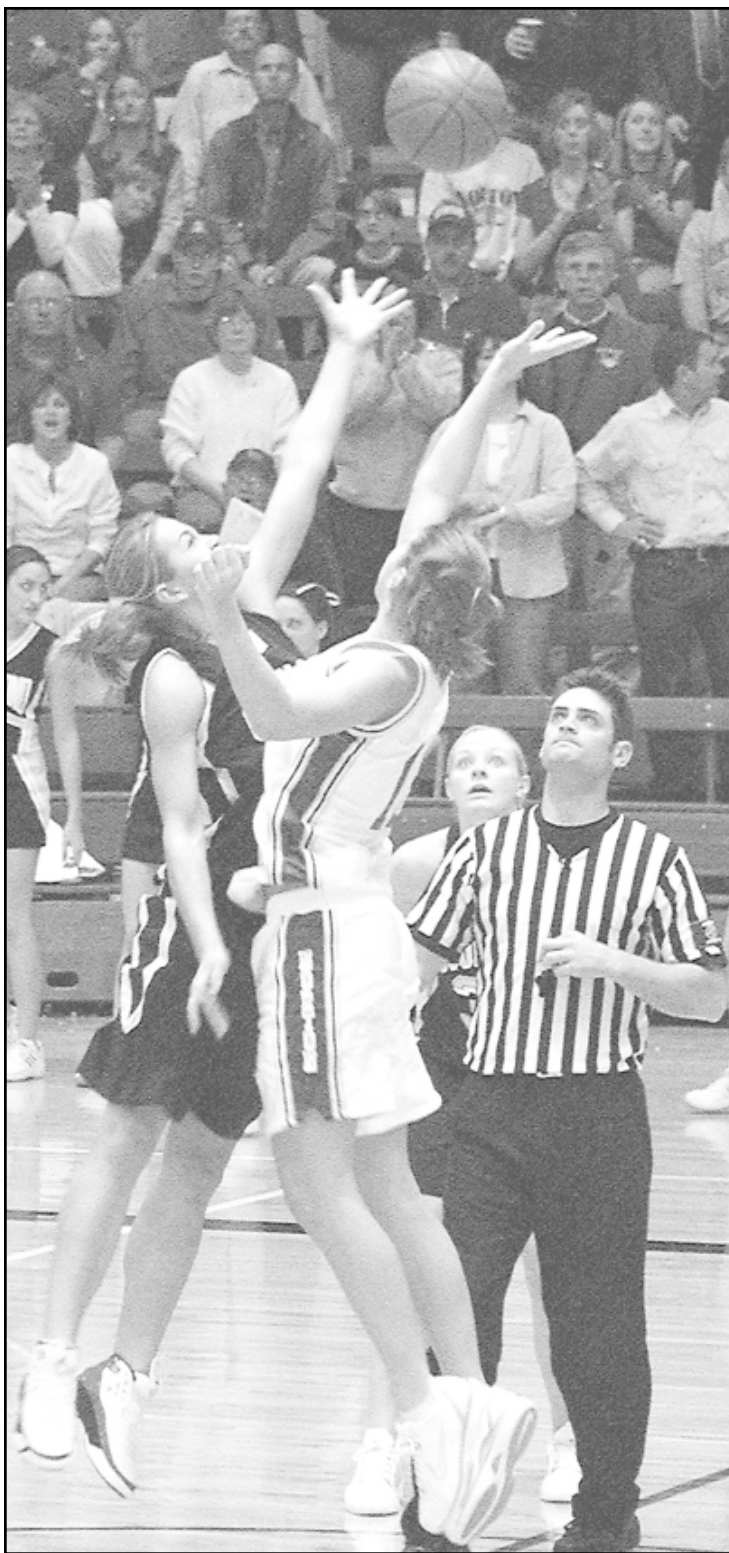




Junior Emily Murray (No. 31 in far right photo) scored two of her 10 points in the third period of the Cowgirls' 53-27 win over Wray High of Colorado Thursday in the first round of the Topside Tip-Off. Senior Justeen Koehler (left in right photo) went up for the game's opening tipoff against Norton's Chelsea Cox in the girls championship game Saturday. Junior Whitney Archer (right in above photo) scored six points against Norton, all in the fourth period, in Goodland's 47-33 loss to the Lady Jays in the finals.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News



# Cowgirls fall to Lady Blue Jays in final game

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

The Cowgirls basketball team ran into an inspired Norton team in the finals of the 17th annual Topside Tip-Off Saturday and fell to the Lady Jays 47-33.

Norton scored first, then the two teams exchanged baskets, with the game tied at 2, 4, 6 and 8. Then senior Justeen Koehler broke the tie with a turnaround jump shot off an inbound pass to give Goodland a 10-8 lead.

About 30 seconds later, Norton scored a three-point basket to make it 11-10 and the Lady Jays held on for a 13-12 lead at the end of the first period.

Norton held the lead for the first four minutes of the second quarter until junior Nicolette Clancy was found under the basket for a layup to cap a six-point Cowgirl run, giving Goodland a 21-20 lead. The

Jays responded with an eight-point run to take a 28-21 halftime lead.

The third quarter was a low-scoring affair, but Norton outscored Goodland 8-5 to take a 10-point lead, 36-26, into the final period.

Within the first 90 seconds of the fourth quarter, the Cowgirls cut Norton's lead to five points, 36-31, on a three-pointer by sophomore Samantha Raymer, followed by a basket by Koehler.

After that Norton's defense became more stubborn, allowing Goodland just two more points in the final six minutes while Jays scored 11, mostly on free throws, to win 47-33.

Junior Whitney Archer led the Cowgirls with 11 points, followed by Koehler with 10. Both Clancy and Raymer scored three, with juniors Kaylee Billinger and Emily Murray and with senior Melissa Swager each scoring two.

Norton's Rebecca Ebert led all

scorers in the game with 16 points while teammate Chelsea Cox scored 12.

In winning their first Topside Tip-Off championship, the Lady Jays gave Coach Kevin Jilka the 401st win of his career, after beating Burlington 66-37 on Friday for No. 400. All of Jilka's wins have been with the Bluejays, starting with the 1982-1983 season.

Jilka has been at Norton Community High for 24 years now, where he teaches mathematics and physical education. He is a graduate of Hill City High School and attended Colby Community College before finishing up at Fort Hays State University.

"One of the advantages of an early season tournament," Cowgirls coach Don Smith said, "is that it provides an opportunity to learn about your team's strengths and weaknesses. Reaching the finals should tell the Cowgirls that they can compete well during the season."

"Saturday night gave us a long list of areas needing improvement.

With concentration and hard work most of those can be corrected or at least improved. We look forward to having a rematch with a very fine Norton team the last part of January."

The Cowgirls are now 4-1 heading into tonight's home game against Hays. Tipoff will be around 5:30 p.m. at Max Jones Fieldhouse. The Lady Indians are 2-3 after losing to Topeka High Friday 57-35 in Hays.

"Norton's size gave us difficulty," Smith said. "Hays will present even a tougher challenge as they likely will start a much bigger team than Norton. Since we defeated them in Hays last year, they will definitely not overlook us."

The Goodland girls started the tournament with 53-37 win Thursday over the Lady Eagles of Wray High of Colorado. A seven-point run by Wray halfway through the opening period left the Eagles up 9-8, then Goodland scored seven of the next nine points for an 18-11 lead going into the second quarter.

Both teams scored nine points in the second to make the halftime score 27-20.

Goodland outscored Wray 14-5 in the third period to make it 41-25, with Koehler getting eight of the Cowgirls' points. Both teams scored 12 in the fourth quarter making the final 53-27.

Koehler led the team with 17 points with Murray scoring 10. Raymer added eight points, Swager five, and both Billinger and Clancy four. Senior Megan Rubio hit a three-pointer in the fourth quarter.

The Cowgirls won their fourth straight game Friday with a 50-45 win over the Lady Dragons of Holyoke High of Colorado.

Billinger scored the first points of the game and later scored the last basket of the opening period to give Goodland a 10-9 lead. In the second quarter, the Cowgirls kept the Dragons scoreless for the first three minutes and outscored Holyoke 10-3 for a 20-12 halftime lead.

Defense dominated the action in the third period for both teams, as

each only scored two points during the first four minutes.

Both teams scored eight points in the second four minutes to make the score 30-22 at the end of three.

The scoring picked up immensely in the fourth, as Holyoke outscored Goodland 23-20 and was able to take a 45-44 lead with just 1:40 left in the game.

However, the Cowgirls were able to score four straight to make it 48-45 with 24 seconds left.

Archer blocked a three-point attempt by the Dragons with 12 seconds left, then seconds after inbound the ball Holyoke was called for traveling and turned the ball over. Archer was fouled in the final seconds and made both free throws to make the final 50-45.

Koehler scored 23 points to lead the Cowgirls.

Billinger scored 10 and Archer six, all in the fourth period. Murray added five points, Swager four and Clancy two. Koehler also led in rebounds with 13.



Jilka



Senior Jace Herl (dark jersey in left photo) tried to score on a jumper over Ottawa's Teran Cole in Saturday's boys championship game of Goodland's Topside Tip-Off. Ottawa defeated the Cowboys 72-52 to win its third title in four years. Senior Jon Beeson (with ball above) scored three points in Goodland's 79-71 win over the Bisons of McCook on Thursday.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

# Cyclones spoil Cowboy plans

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland Cowboys' chance to repeat as the Topside Tip-Off champions was spoiled Saturday night as they got beat by Ottawa Cyclones 72-52 in the tournament finals.

Ottawa scored the game's first four points and never trailed, as the closest Goodland got was two points. By the end of the first period, the Cyclones led 27-16, increasing their advantage to 42-27 at halftime.

Ottawa used a 10-point run in the middle of the third period to build up a 22-point at 56-34, after which the Cyclones responded to nearly every score Goodland made and hung on for a 72-52 win.

This was Ottawa's third tournament championship in five straight appearances in the Topside Tip-Off. The Cyclones also won in 2002 and 2003, and finished third last year.

Seniors Jace Herl and Derek Fenner led the Cowboys with 14 and 11 points, respectively, followed by senior Wyatt Dautel with nine. Juniors Landon Williams and Nick Angelos both scored eight, and junior Mikey Doll two.

Herl led the team in rebounds with 12 followed by Angelos with seven.

Goodland opened the tournament on Thursday with a 72-52 win over Wray High School of Colorado. Herl started the scoring with a basket and a free throw for a 3-0 Cowboy lead. After the Eagles scored their first two points, Goodland went on a 13-point run to make it 15-2 and led 22-12 going into the second period.

After the teams exchanged baskets, the Cowboys took off on a 12-point run to make the score 36-14. Later, Doll stole the ball and scored on a layup with three seconds left in the half to give Goodland a 44-18 lead during the break.

A three-pointer by Herl early in the third period gave the Cowboys a 31-point lead at 52-21. Three straight three-point baskets by Wray's Branson Real appeared to cut Goodland's lead down a bunch, but the Cowboy's responded with their second 13-point run of the game to make it 65-30.

Trailing 65-32 at the start of the final period, the Eagles outscored Goodland 20-7, but it was not enough as the Cowboys won 72-52.

Four Goodland players scored in double-digits, led by Angelos with 17. Herl scored 16, Doll 13 and