

NEWS

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Stephanie Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email sjump@kcnonline.com

NORWICH

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“There hasn’t been a group that’s stuck together through turmoil the way this group has and they’re so deserving of the limelight because of it,” Kyle said.

After holding Crest to 36 points in the Sub State semifinals, Norwich’s defense came up big again. The Blu-Jays were held to single digits in each of the four quarters. Kyle said that’s a testament to how he and his staff emphasize defense and guarding an opponent’s top scorers.

“You know, in no way, shape, or form would I compare myself to Coach (Kelvin) Sampson of (University of) Houston, but he has a great philosophy in the fact that if you can’t guard, you can’t win,” Kyle said. “And so our kids know that to earn

their minutes, they’ve got to be able to guard.”

Benge said that the players take what the coaches preach to heart.

“Our coach always says that defense is 100 percent effort and offense comes and goes, so if we can give our all on defense, offense is going to break and just get it done,” he said.

Norwich’s offense didn’t come easy early on, as the game was scoreless for the first three minutes. But then the Eagles made an 8-0 run in the next minute-and-a-half, forcing Pleasanton to call time out.

And to start the second quarter, Norwich went on a 9-0 run in the first three minutes. Benge got the bulk of the Eagles’ scoring, but sophomore Lane Hilger stepped up as well, adding 14 points for the game, while Lucas Adams scored 10.

“Night in and night out, if we can hang our hat on (defense), whether shots fall or not, you’re going to find yourself in a game,” Kyle said. “And if they are falling, you’re probably going to be on the right side of it.”

He added that the early lead the Eagles built forced the Blu-Jays to abandon their game plan and that allowed Norwich to capitalize.

“We knew that if they were able to go to that high pressure zone, that our guards and their ball handling will be able to get into some gaps and create for others,” Kyle said. “And that’s exactly what happened. I’m really proud of the way our point guards and bench managed the game. Without them, we certainly wouldn’t be where we are right now.”

Pleasanton got to the hole or forced fouls several times

in the third quarter, but every time the Blu-Jays made a play, Norwich answered right back.

“We live and die by the philosophy that if they can do it, we can do it too,” Kyle said. “We know that can be done to us on the other end of that. So if we can go up by 19 at halftime, we know that they can come out and win a half by 19 if we don’t show up too.

“So that consistent approach and the mindset that these guys have to not settle, knowing that it’s going to take every single possession night in and night out to be successful is something they’ve really bought into.”

Last time the Eagles reached the State tournament, they lost in the first round. Kyle said this year’s team looks to go farther, but understands they will have to beat tough opponents



BOB MORRIS / Leader-Courier

Norwich's Jayden Benge, right, accepts the Class 1A-I Sub State championship plaque after the Eagles beat Pleasanton 54-28 in last Friday's title game at Madison High School.

each time.

“We’ve respected everyone that we played and known that every night is going to be a tough battle for

us,” Kyle said. “But we knew that there was five games in this team since they started. And so we’re two down and have three to go.”

STATE

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Benge, but Kyle said that Benge did a good job of running the offense and finding ways to contribute.

“It’s really hard to keep the ball out of 15’s (Benge) hands, but they did a great job of trying to make it dif-

ficult for him,” Kyle said. “We were able to see a little bit of what they did against Olpe, which they had a similar standout player in which they tried to focus a little bit. And so we were able to prep for that the best we could.”

Kyle said he thought it helped with Benge’s confi-

dence, knowing he’d draw a tough assignment but then stayed the course as the leader on the floor.

“You know, if he were to get shaken in those situations, we’re going to feel that throughout our entire squad,” Kyle said. “And so I was really proud of how he handled that, was able to

continue to find success with the ball in his hands and create for others.”

Lucas Adams had a double-double with 19 points and 13 rebounds. Benge finished with 18 points, Kelly had 7, Schroeder had 3 and Lane Hilger had 2. Benge had six steals and he and Kelly each had three as-

sists. Hilger added seven rebounds.

Norwich had just nine turnovers in the game while Rural Vista had 14. The Eagles shot 40.5 percent from the field while the Heat shot just 22.9 percent.

The Eagles advanced to the Class 1A-I State semifinals Thursday night at 8 p.m.

at the United Wireless Arena in Dodge City. They will face St John’s-Tipton, who beat Flinthills 62-41 Tuesday. A win Thursday means that Norwich will play for the championship Saturday at 4:30 p.m. and a loss means they will play in the third-place game Friday at 3:30 p.m.



BOB MORRIS / Leader-Courier

Norwich's Jate Samuelson looks for an open teammate during the Class 1A-I Sub State championship game against Pretty Prairie last Saturday at Madison High School. Also pictured is Pretty Prairie's Brennan Schrag. Samuelson led the Lady Eagles with 16 points in the 41-35 loss in double overtime.

GIRLS

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He said that the girls did a lot to give themselves the opportunity to win the game, but then critical mistakes cost them the chance.

“Tough loss — we had them,” Klaver said. “We had them where we wanted, and it just wasn’t meant to be.”

The Lady Eagles shot 26.7 percent from the field and made just three of 12 free throws. Meanwhile, the Lady Bulldogs shot 30 percent from the field, went to the line 28 times and made 14. Norwich outrebounded Pretty Prairie 41 to 32.

Jate Samuelson led scoring with 16 points, Leighton Durr had 10, Reagan Smith had 4, Murphy had 3 and Bates had 2. Durr had 13 rebounds for a double-double, Samuelson had eight and Smith had six. Smith had four assists and Haely Hilger had four steals.

The Lady Eagles finished with a 17-9 overall record. Klaver noted that the Lady Eagles played some tough competition, such as Conway Springs and Little Riv-

er, but hung in there despite not winning every game.

“They could have lost confidence and gave up, but we hung in there and did a good job of listening and growing,” Klaver said. “And I thought our players grew a lot as the year went along. So, I’m very proud of them. I’m very proud of them.”

“And we were, in every tournament, we were in the finals. And you can’t ask for much more than that. We came in second on two of them and won one of them, but pretty good. Pretty great accomplishment for this group. I mean, the legacy of Norwich basketball continues on, no doubt.”

Klaver also praised Bates and Smith, the two seniors, for all they have done the past four seasons.

“Reagan and Carly were great leaders for us this year,” he said. “They kept the team together when we were struggling midway through the season. They’re the ones that were the glue and kept it together and did a good job of leading this team. So, they did a great job. It was tough for them to go out that way.”

WILDCATS

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Heatherman’s 13 points. Halderson posted 12 points and four boards in the win. Rogers finished with 10 points, four rebounds and one steal. Cole Hageman finished with 7 points and seven rebounds.

Wright finished with a game-high 15 points in the losing effort. He also had a team-high five boards.

Cunningham outscored WHS 21-15 from the free throw line and 15-6 from beyond the 3-point arc. Weskan did not rebound Cunningham by one, 32-31 on the night.

The Wildcats improved to 17-8 and now earned a crack at top-seeded Axtell (26-1) in the semi-final round, which will be played on Thursday in Emporia at the White Auditorium. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

It will be a rematch of last year’s State champion-

ship game in which AHS won easily 57-39 ending Cunningham’s 39-game winning streak. The Wildcats come into this year’s matchup on a 13-game winning streak.

Axtell handled Heart of the Plains League’s Hutchinson-Central Christian 68-44 Tuesday night in the State opener at White Auditorium in Emporia. CHS beat Central Christian by nine during league play. AHS’ only loss of the season came on Jan. 23 to No. 2-seeded Hanover, 75-48 on a neutral site. Axtell then avenged that loss with a win over HHS at home on Feb. 6 65-62.

On the other side of the State bracket, Hanover (26-1) hammered No. 7 Deerfield 100-52 at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina on Tuesday. HHS will face No. 3 Lebo (20-7), which took out No. 6 Victoria 46-40 Tuesday at White Auditorium.

LEGAL NOTICE

(First published in the Leader-Courier, on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026) 3t

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF KINGMAN COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF BRETT ROBERT MOORE, Deceased
Case No. KM-2025-PR-000033

(Petition Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 59) **NOTICE OF HEARING**

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are notified a Petition has been filed in this Court by Patricia Anne Moore, duly appointed, qualified and acting Administrator of the Estate of Brett Robert Moore, deceased, requesting that Petitioner’s acts be approved; account be settled and allowed; the heirs be determined; the Estate be assigned to the persons entitled to it pursuant to the laws of intestate succession; fees and expenses be allowed; costs be determined and ordered paid; the administration of the Estate be closed; the Administrator be discharged and Petitioner be released from further liability.

You are required to file your written defenses to the Petition on or before March 23, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. in the District Court, Kingman, Kingman County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail to file your written defenses, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

/s/ Patricia Anne Moore Patricia Anne Moore Petitioner
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Norwich, Cunningham Hoops Players Named All-League

STAFF REPORT

Several Norwich and Cunningham basketball players were named to the Heart of the Plains League all-league basketball teams.

For the boys, Norwich’s Jayden Benge and Drew Kelly were first-team selections, as was Cunningham’s Stephen Kerschen. Norwich’s Lucas Adams and Cunningham’s Dylan Halderson and Cole Hageman received honorable mention.

For the girls, Norwich’s Reagan Smith and Leighton Durr were first-team selections, as was Cunningham’s Grace Hageman. Cunningham’s Rylee Miller received honorable mention.

The all-league basketball teams are chosen by the head coaches of the Heart of the Plains League.

For the boys, the other first-team members are Attica’s Krew Abbott, Fairfield’s Jalen Busick, Hutchinson Central Christian’s Piercen Huff and

Cal Barnett, Pretty Prairie’s Owen Anderson and Eli Young, Pratt Skyline’s Isaac House and South Barber’s Garen Cantrell and Austin Swonger.

For the girls, the other first-team members are Attica’s Libby Swingle, Fairfield’s Kenley Fowler, Hutchinson Central Christian’s Jessa Losew, Avery Kauffman and Reese Swanson, Pretty Prairie’s Ava White, Kayleigh Vogl and Ava Goering and Stafford’s Arianna Delgadillo.

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/s/ Patricia Anne Moore Patricia Anne Moore Petitioner
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