

Blue Jays overpower Russell; record now 6-2

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School football team turned in another outstanding performance on Friday at Travis Field when they overpowered Russell of the North Central Activities Association 50-7 in District 10 play.

The impressive victory extended Norton's season record to 6-2 and district record to 2-0. The district championship will be decided this Thursday evening in Phillipsburg when the Blue Jays play the Panthers, who are 7-1 and also 2-0 in district play. Kickoff will be at 7 p.m.

Just as they did against Thomas More Prep of Hays the week before in a 42-7 win, Norton dominated the line of scrimmage on both offense and defense. The offense rolled up 327 yards and the defense held Russell to 153 yards. In the first three quarters, the Broncos managed only 55 yards of offense and only four first downs. The Norton reserves, including the freshmen team, played the fourth quarter and allowed Russell's only touchdown.

The Blue Jays received the opening kickoff and drove the ball into a stiff wind. The Broncos stopped the possession on their 29-yard line but the Blue Jays scored the next four times they had the ball.

Russell fumbled and senior Aaron Overlease recovered on the Russell 46. Five plays later Norton scored when Overlease tallied on a nine-yard run around left end from his tailback position. Junior kicker William Wilhite, who has been injured, missed the extra point and Norton led 6-0 with 3:23 left.

On Russell's next possession, they picked up a first down before being forced to punt. The center snap went over the punter's head for a safety, giving Norton two more points and making their lead 8-0 with 25 seconds remaining in the first quarter.

Sophomore Blake VanEaton replaced Overlease at tailback. With VanEaton getting most of the carries, Norton drove in for another touchdown. VanEaton tallied from the 1-yard line and this time Wilhite's extra point kick was good, making Norton's lead 15-0

with 10:34 left in the second quarter.

After the kickoff, Norton held and forced Russell to punt. Senior linebacker Ryan Maddy and freshman defensive back Travis Ray blocked the punt and Norton took over on the Bronco 10. Five plays later and Norton was in the end zone again. This time senior quarterback Seth Mills sneaked in from the 2-yard line. Wilhite's kick attempt for the extra point was no good and Norton led 21-0 with 7:54 left in the half.

Russell picked up one first down after the kickoff before running out of downs on their 45. A 28-yard pass from Mills to junior wide receiver Clay Madden put the Jays on the 17 and VanEaton scored his second touchdown on an 11-yard run. Wilhite missed the extra point kick but Norton led 27-0 with 2:34 left in the half.

Norton's defense held Russell after the kickoff, forcing a punt but the center snap went over the punter's head again for another safety, making the score 29-0 with 1:55 left. The Blue Jays took the kickoff and marched downfield, intent on scoring again but missed a first down by inches on the Russell 10 and Norton took a 29-0 lead into the locker room at intermission.

Norton kicked off to start the second half and held Russell on their 38. The Jays were unable to move, however, and punted for the only time in the game.

Sophomore kicker Chris Davis booted a 33-yard kick that rolled dead on the Bronco 2. Russell picked up their fourth first down before punting out of bounds on their 36. The Blue Jays took advantage and drove for another touchdown. Senior fullback Kyle Kats went the final 10 yards for the score and Davis kicked the extra point to make it a 36-0 ball game with 1:50 left in the third quarter.

After the ensuing kickoff, Norton's defense held again. For the third time, the center snapped the ball over the punter's head and Norton took over on the 12. Junior reserve quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel replaced Mills and scored on a keeper around right end. Davis kicked the extra point and Norton led 43-0 with 16 seconds left in the third quarter.

The Norton reserves, including the freshmen, played the fourth quarter. They held Russell on their first possession. After an exchange of fumbles, Norton drove to the Russell 16 before giving up the ball. The Broncos put together an 84-yard touchdown drive. Tyler Zachman scored from three yards out and Adam Sanchez kicked the extra point to make it 43-7 with 53 seconds left.

Freshman running back Todd Bolt provided the final excitement by getting loose for a 54-yard touchdown run with eight seconds remaining. Davis kicked the extra point to make the final 50-7.

"We didn't have a great offensive performance but it wasn't bad," said Coach Graber. "We had some big plays but we missed on some, too. We lost our composure late in the first half. We had a good opportunity to score and didn't. I was disappointed the way the first half ended.

"We didn't do much on our first series of the second half either. I told our starters they had one more chance and they scored again. We played hard but didn't execute as well as I like to see.

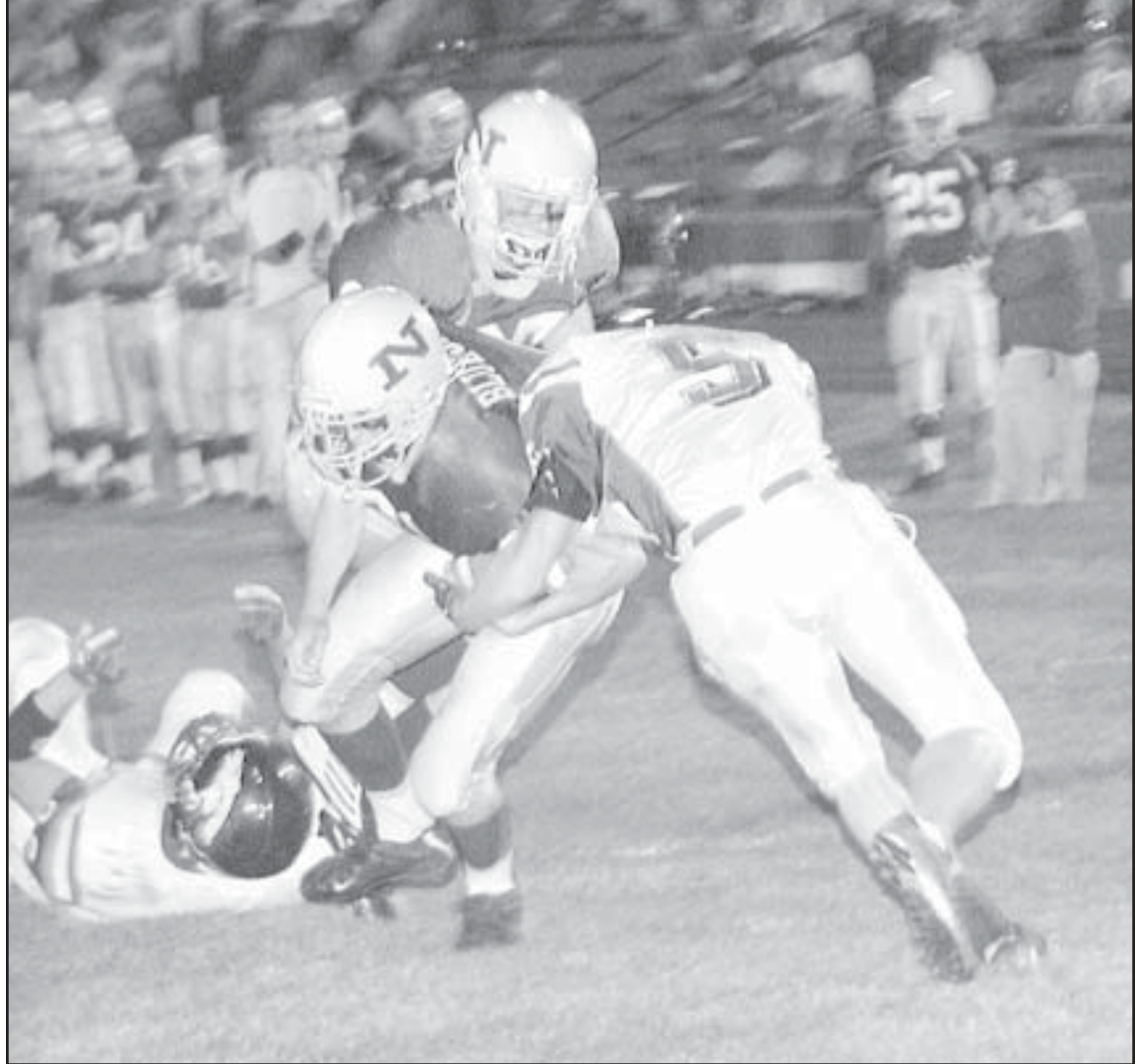
"Our defensive first team played very well again." Including the 75 yards rushing Russell picked up in the fourth quarter against the Norton reserves, the Broncos averaged only 2.8 yards per carry.

"William Wilhite returned from injury to kick for us but struggled although he had kicked great in practice," said Coach Graber. "We went back to Chris and he was perfect again. William will be fine; he just needs to get back in the groove. We now have two excellent kickers.

"Lots of people had a hand in the win. I'm happy for Todd Bolt. His brother Will, who also played for us, will be leaving soon with the military for Iraq and was present for the game. Matt Scheetz, another former Norton player, will also leave soon for military service in Iraq and our prayers go with both of them."

Coach Graber said everyone appeared to be healthy at the end of the game with just the normal bumps and bruises.

Leading rusher was Overlease with 16 carries for 98 yards. He



Norton tailback Blake VanEaton gets a block from tight end Justin Shirk and blasts into the end zone for an 11 yard touchdown during the Blue Jays' 50-7 district win over Russell on Friday night. The Broncos' Jay Hackerott, No. 5, came up too late to make a tackle.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

also caught two passes for 30 yards for 128 yards of total offense. Bolt gained 79 yards on 8 carries and VanEaton earned 59 yards on 5 totes. Other rushers were: Kyle Kats, 5 for 27; Mills, 8 for 21; Pfannenstiel, 2 for 12; Brian Sproul, 1 for 3; Logan Kats, 1 for minus 1.

Clay Madden caught 1 pass for 28 yards; Ryan Maddy grabbed 2 for 15 yards and VanEaton pulled in 1 for 5.

Pfannenstiel had 2 kickoff returns for 21 yards.

Michael Sprigg had 3 kickoffs for a 39 yard average and Chris Davis had 5 for a 36 yard average.

Tyler Zachman was leading rusher for Russell with 10 carries for 52 yards.

Leading tackler for Norton was senior linebacker Ryan Maddy with nine solos, three assists. He was followed by Lance Roe, five solos, two assists; Blake Hillebrand, Blake VanEaton, three solos, three assists each; Andrew Ables, four solos, one assist; Luke Pfannenstiel, three solos, two assists; Paul Juenemann, one solo, four assists; Matt Engel, Justin Shirk, three solos, one assist each; Jason Green three solos; Lucas Wiseman, two solos, one assist; Michael Sprigg, one solo, two assists; Chris Davis, Brian Juenemann, Kyle Kats, Heath

Vincent, two solos each; Nathan Broeckelman, Travis Ray, one solo, one assist each; Todd Bolt, Clay Madden, Seth Mills, Aaron Overlease, Davvid Stanley, one solo each.

Next action

Norton will play a strong Phillipsburg team for the district championship on Thursday evening. The Panthers' only loss is to Smith Center. Norton also lost to Smith Center and to Oakley in the first game of the season. Norton defeated Thomas More by 35 points and Phillipsburg defeated them by 39 points last Friday. Both had big wins over Russell. On paper, the two teams look equal so the winner should be decided by the team which plays with the most emotion and makes the fewest mistakes.

"The game with Phillipsburg will be a totally different one than we've had the last several weeks," said Coach Graber. "It will take our best effort to beat them. We'll have to be on the top of our game. We'll definitely be keyed up but they will also play with intensity.

"J.B. Covington is a great coach. I have so much respect for the job he does. He uses their speed to the best advantage, putting them in a position to be successful."

Phillipsburg has four returning starters on offense and nine on

defense from last season's 6-3 team. Matt Koelsch, a 6-foot, 2-inch, 212-pound senior, is the leader on the line. He was named second team All-Mid-Continent League last season at center and received honorable mention as a defensive end, along with Kurt Thomas, a 6-2, 221-pound senior.

"Speed and quickness, I'd say they're the quickest and fastest team we've seen all year," said Thomas More Coach Gene Flax after their loss to the Panthers on Friday night. "They're a quality football team.

"I'm proud of our players," said Coach Graber. "We've improved a lot from our season opening 1-2 record. We've fought the battles and gotten a lot better. Our players and coaches have prepared well for each game. If we continue to play like we have in the past two weeks, we'll have a chance to beat Phillipsburg."

GAME STATISTICS

| NORTON | RUSSELL |
|--------|---------|
| 16 | 9 |
| 46-249 | 46-128 |
| 78 | 25 |
| 327 | 153 |
| 6-14-0 | 7-18-0 |
| 1-1 | 2-3 |
| 6-26 | 9-68 |
| 1-33 | 1-14 |

Play by play of Norton's 50-7 district football win over Russell

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School Blue Jay football team will complete district play at Phillipsburg on Thursday night after a 50-7 victory over Russell on Friday in Norton.

First quarter

Norton received the kickoff. Luke Pfannenstiel returned the ball to the 20-yard line. Tailback Aaron Overlease ran 20 to the 40, then gained seven more. Fullback Kyle Kats powered up the middle for a first down on the Russell 44. Overlease gained nine more on three carries. Quarterback Seth Mills sneaked for a first down on the 32. Kats bulled for three but Mills was stopped for no gain and two passes fell incomplete, turning the ball over to Russell.

Bronco quarterback Matt Cook passed to Ryan Driscoll on the 35. Running back Westan Schurz was dropped for a one-yard loss by defensive end Justin Shirk and linebacker Kats. After an incomplete pass, Russell fumbled and Overlease recovered on the Russell 46. Overlease gained nine, then took a pitch from Mills and ran around left end for a first down on the 19. Overlease got the ball again and ran to the 10. Kats plunged up the middle for a first down on the 9 and Overlease skirted left end for Norton's first touchdown. William Wilhite's extra point kick was wide and Norton led 6-0 with 3:27 left in the first quarter.

Jay Hackerott returned Michael Sprigg's kickoff to the 25 where Jason Green tackled him. Schurz picked up nine on two plays, then ran up the middle for Russell's initial first down on the 36. Shirk

threw Cook for a 10-yard loss back to the 26. Schurz lost seven as VanEaton tackled him. On fourth down, Russell tried to punt. The center snap went over the head of the punter. He ran back and picked up the ball in the end zone but was tackled by Shirk for a safety, extending Norton's lead to 8-0 with 25 seconds remaining in the first quarter.

Russell kicked off to Norton from their 20 and Pfannenstiel returned the ball to the Norton 42. Mills ran for three yards as the quarter ended with Norton leading 8-0

Second quarter

Mills gained three more to start the second quarter, then VanEaton replaced Overlease and got loose over the left side of the line. He was finally run down by the Russell defenders on their 14 after a 38-yard run. VanEaton ran to the 8 on the next play and an offside penalty against Russell gave Norton a first down on the 4. VanEaton drove to the 1 and ran over the right side to score on the next down. Wilhite's kick was good this time and Norton led 15-0 with 10:34 left.

Schurz returned Norton's kickoff to the 20 where Lucas Wiseman and VanEaton tackled him. Schurz gained three before Paul Juenemann and Blake Hillebrand stopped him. A delay of game penalty cost the Broncos five yards, then Shirk sacked Cook back on the 8. Driscoll ran to the 15 and Russell went into punt formation. Ryan Maddy and Travis Ray came charging in to block the punt and Norton took over the ball on the 10.

Overlease ran around left end to the 6. Defensive holding against Russell moved the ball to the 3.

After an incomplete pass, Overlease plowed ahead for one , then Mills sneaked into the end zone. Wilhite's kick was no good but Norton led 21-0 with 7:54 left.

Davis kicked off and Driscoll returned the ball to the 24 where Lance Roe tackled him. On first down, defensive tackle Davvid Stanley tackled Driscoll for a two-yard loss. Cook passed to tight end Blake Stoppel for five. Cook dropped back to pass again but got a tremendous rush from the Norton defenders. He ran out of the pocket for Russell's second first down on the Bronco 43 where defensive back Nathan Broeckelman tackled him. Cook threw two more incomplete passes, then connected with Stoppel for a two-yard gain as VanEaton came up to make the tackle. Cook tried another pass on fourth down but it was incomplete and Norton took over on the 45.

Mills tried the airways and his first down aerial was incomplete. On second down, he connected with Madden for a first down on the 17. Mills ran the keeper out of the shot gun but gained nothing. Next down, he ran up the middle to the 11. A delay of game penalty cost Norton five but the Jays got the yardage back on a screen pass to Overlease. The next down, Shirk led the way around left end for VanEaton as he ran into the end zone for his second touchdown. Wilhite's extra point kick missed the mark again and Norton led 27-0 with 2:34 left.

Davis kicked off and Andrew Ables tackled Schurz on the 18. On first down, Schurz fumbled but recovered on the 14. After an incomplete pass, Maddy sacked

Cook back on the 9. Russell went into punt formation and once again the center snap went over the punter's head and into the end zone for a safety. With 1:55 remaining in the first half, Norton led 29-0.

Russell kicked off to Norton and the ball went out of bounds on the Russell 45. Mills went upstairs and hit Overlease for a first down on the 20. After two incomplete passes, Mills ran a keeper to the 16. A fourth down flat pass to VanEaton carried to around the 10. Officials called for a measurement and Norton missed a first down by inches.

Driscoll was stopped for no gain but a face mask penalty cost Norton five. Schurz ran for a first down on the 25, only the third of the half for the Broncos. An offside penalty cost Russell five and Schurz was stopped for no gain as the first half ended with Norton on top 29-0.

Third quarter

Ryan Driscoll returned Davis' kickoff to the Russell 34. Connor Driscoll ran for five but Schurz lost two. Cook ran for three. On fourth down, Cook ran again but Maddy tackled him for a two-yard loss and Norton took over the ball on the 38.

A Mills pitch to Overlease lost a yard and two pass attempts were incomplete. Norton punted for the only time in the game. Davis' boot rolled dead on the Russell 2. Driscoll ran for five, then Schurz picked up four before Roe tackled him. Schurz got loose around the right end for a first down on the 24 as Pfannenstiel knocked him out of bounds. Shirk dropped Schurz for a one-yard loss, then Schurz lost another yard. On third down,

Cook was run out of the pocket again and Maddy and Hillebrand tackled him on the 23. Russell finally got a punt away without it being blocked or the center snap going over the punter's head. However, the ball went out of bounds on the 37 and netted only 14 yards.

Overlease ran for three, Kats picked up six and Overlease ran to the 20 for a first down. Overlease gained nothing on first down, a pass was incomplete, then Mills hit Maddy over the middle for a first down on the 8. A delay of game penalty cost Norton five. Mills passed to Maddy in the flat and he ran to the 10. Kats barreled up the middle for the touchdown. Davis kicked the extra point and it was 36-0 with 1:50 left.

Davis kicked off and Driscoll returned the ball to the 35. Russell gained nothing on two running plays and a pass fell incomplete. The Broncos went into punt formation and, once again, the center snap went over the punter's head. He was tackled on the 12. The next down, Pfannenstiel replaced Mills at quarterback and ran a keeper around the right end for a touchdown. Davis kicked the extra point and Norton was on top 43-0.

Norton was offside on the kickoff, so Davis kicked again after a five yard penalty. Schurz returned the ball to the 40 and ran for four on first down as the third quarter ended with Norton leading 43-0.

Fourth quarter

Norton put in the junior varsity to start the final period. Helped by a holding penalty and unsportsmanlike penalty against Russell, the Norton defense moved the Broncos back to their 30. Cook

completed a pass to Cody Lang for a first down on the Norton 47. After an incomplete pass, Heath Vincent sacked Cook back on the Russell 44. The Broncos were unable to make a first down and Norton took over.

Todd Bolt ran for one, then Norton lost five for illegal procedure. Bolt ran to the Russell 42 but a Norton fumble was recovered by Russell on the Russell 44. After an incomplete pass, Ryan Driscoll got off a long run but an illegal block penalty against Russell brought the ball back to the Russell 45. After an incomplete pass, Russell fumbled. Andrew Ables fell on the pigskin on the Russell 44. Bolt carried the ball five straight times and reached the 24. Quarterback Logan Kats ran to the 16 but Norton lost the ball on downs.

Russell lost five for illegal procedure. With Tyler Zachman and Cook getting most of the carries, the Broncos moved down field against the Norton reserves to score their only touchdown of the game. Zachman ran three for the score. Alan Sanchez kicked the extra point, making the score 43-7 with 53 seconds left.

Russell's short kickoff went only to the Norton 43 but was not advanced by the Blue Jays. Brian Sproul ran for three, then Bolt got the ball, ran right, reversed his field and outran the Russell defenders for a 54-yard touchdown. Davis kicked the extra point and Norton led 50-7 with eight seconds left.

Davis kicked off and Laramie Cline returned the ball to the 27. Two incomplete passes by Russell and the game was over with Norton winning 50-7.