

Norton falls to Smith Center in ‘06 opener

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School football team opened their 2006 season Friday under new coach Lucas Melvin with a hard-fought 14-3 loss to two-time Class 2A state champion Smith Center at Travis Field in Norton.

The “fighting Blue Jays” did not let the Redmen’s 27-game winning streak intimidate them. They held Smith Center to fewer points than they scored in any game the last two seasons on their march to two championships in a row. The Redmen outscored opponents 50-9 per game last year and 52-5 the previous season when they went 13-0. Norton lost to them 51-13 last season and 42-3 in 2004.

On Friday night, the gang-tackling Norton defense stood toe-to-toe with the powerful Redmen and didn’t back off as they battled the visitors in the trenches to slow down and stop their vaunted wish-bone offense.

Smith Center scored with 4:47 left in the first quarter after gaining field position when Norton was penalized for roughing the punter. Their 8-0 lead dwindled to 8-3 when Norton senior fullback and kicker Chris Davis booted a 31-yard field goal with 8:46 left in the half.

After a scoreless third quarter, the Redmen tallied one more time. With 11:56 remaining in the contest, they dented the end zone for just their second touchdown and it was also their last.

Despite only scoring two touchdowns, Smith Center stymied the Blue Jay offense.

“I was extremely happy with our effort,” said coach Melvin. “We played hard the whole night. Our defense was unbelievable. We were on the field two-thirds to three-fourths of the time and didn’t give up a big play.

“We had them stopped the first time they had the ball but gave the ball to them again with a roughing the kicker penalty. They scored only two touchdowns in the game and they had to earn both of them.

“I was disappointed with our offense. I felt that we should have been able to move the ball better. I’ll have to watch the film to check on our offensive execution but I blame myself for the play calling. I could have done a better job of that.

“We didn’t make many mistakes in the game. If we’d had a couple of breaks, it could have been a different game. We didn’t have a single turnover and that speaks well for our team. Smith Center has an outstanding team. They lost just four seniors from last year.

“We didn’t have any major injuries so our conditioning must be pretty good. Our goal is to be in better physical condition than the teams we play. I don’t know if we’re there but we are getting closer.”

Coach Melvin praised punter Chris Davis who had five kicks for a 32.4 yard average. Smith Center attempted to return only one of his punts and Norton tacklers were right on top of the punt receiver to stop him for no yardage.

Norton’s starting lineup on offense was: senior Nic Lewis, center; senior Pat Burton and sophomore Brock Lauer, guards; junior Preston Herman and senior Mark Scheetz, tackles; junior Jared Cox, tight end; senior Nathan Broeckelman and junior Wes Georgeson, wide receivers; senior Chris Davis, fullback; senior Blake VanEaton, tailback and junior Logan Kats, quarterback.

Starting on defense for the Blue Jays were: Lewis and senior Matt Engel, ends; Scheetz, Herman and junior Zach Mannel, tackles; VanEaton, Cox and Davis, linebackers; Broeckelman, junior Todd Bolt and Kats, defensive backs.

First quarter

Davis kicked off for Norton to start the game. Jared Hayes returned the ball to the Smith Center 35. Junior running back Tate

Arnold ran around left end to the Norton 40 on first down. But, Arnold gained only four yards on the next play and junior running back Kerby Rice was stopped after three yards. Braden Wilson, a 210 pound junior running back, tried the Norton line and was stopped by Cox and others after one yard. Smith Center was offside and lost five yards.

The Redmen punted but the Norton defense was a little over-aggressive and penalized for roughing the kicker. The ball was moved to the 35-yard-line. Joe Windscheffel, 205 pound junior quarterback, ran a keeper but Pat Burton came charging in to drop him for a two yard loss. Windscheffel carried the ball again and got to the 30. Wilson tried the interior of the line and the swarming Norton defense led by Cox limited him to just one yard. The next down, however, Rice found some room up the middle. VanEaton tackled him on the 21. Wilson plunged to the 15 as VanEaton made another tackle. Wilson drove to the 8, Rice made it to the 3, Arnold got one hard yard to the 2, then Wilson went into the end zone for the Redmen’s first touchdown of the game with 4:47 left. Wilson ran successfully for two extra points and Norton trailed 8-0.

Davis returned the kickoff to the 35. VanEaton churned up the middle for four yards, then got one more on second down. A third down pass by Kats fell incomplete and Davis went back in punt formation. The center snap went over his head and Smith Center got the ball on the Norton 20.

The Norton defense was not discouraged and, on first down, linebacker VanEaton hit the Smith Center ball carrier on the handoff with such velocity that he fumbled and Lewis recovered on the 25!

VanEaton ran up the middle for two hard yards. Bolt used a trap block to get to the 33. VanEaton tried the outside on third down but lost two yards. Davis punted and the ball fell dead on the Redman 43.

After Cox and Dreyer combined to throw a Smith Center back for a one yard loss, the Redmen fumbled and Dreyer fell on the pigskin on the 39. An eight yard pass from Kats to Broeckelman put the ball on the 31 as the first quarter came to a close.

Second quarter

After an incomplete pass, Davis got the call, was hit at the line of scrimmage, spun and gained a first down by inches on the 29. VanEaton picked up four yards. Kats ran a keeper and was stopped but defensive holding against Smith Center moved the ball to the Redman 10. After an incomplete pass, VanEaton and Bolt were each held to no gain. On fourth down, Davis kicked a 31-yard field goal and Norton trailed by just 8-3 with 8:46 left in the half.

Davis kicked off and Smith Center went on offense on their 28. Rice gained three yards before VanEaton stopped him. Windscheffel ran a keeper for a first down on the 40. Arnold ran for four yards before Ray tackled him. A false start cost Smith Center five yards. Windscheffel fumbled the snap from center and fell on the ball for a one-yard loss. Arnold was stopped for no gain. Smith Center punted.

The ball rolled dead on the



Norton’s Zach Dreher was on the bottom of the pile recovering a Smith Center fumble on the Redman 39-yard line in Friday night’s game at Travis Field. It was a big play since Norton moved on down field and Chris Davis kicked a 31-yard field

Norton 22. After an incomplete pass, Kats ran a keeper for eight yards. Norton was unable to gain any yardage on the next play but Smith Center was penalized for a late hit on the tackle and Norton had a first down on the 44. Georgeson got nothing on a gadget play. Broeckelman took a pitch but lost two yards. A pass fell incomplete but holding on Smith Center moved the ball to the Redman 49. Illegal procedure cost Norton five yards.

The Norton fans went wild as Kats threw a long pass to Georgeson and he sprinted into the end zone for an apparent Norton touchdown. It was called back, however, due to an interference penalty. Davis punted to the Smith Center 37.

Senior running back Kyle Petrik entered the game and ran around left end for a first down on the Norton 48. Petrik got the call again but was smothered after a one yard gain. Windscheffel ran a keeper but Ray and Thomson combined to drop him after two yards. Brian Juenemann tackled Windscheffel after he gained two more yards and the Jay defense held again.

Smith Center punted to the Norton 15. Davis gained five yards on two carries and VanEaton gained two as the first half came to a close with Smith Center on top by just 8-3.

Third quarter

Following another outstanding halftime performance by the NCHS Marching Band, under direction of David Will, the third quarter got underway with Smith Center kicking off.

The ball was kicked on the ground. Dreher picked it up and was tackled on the 39. Kats ran an option for three yards, followed by VanEaton’s two yard run. A third down pass attempt to Cox fell incomplete and Davis punted.

The ball rolled dead on the 23. Rice plunged for four yards before Broeckelman made the stop. Rice got the call again and Herman tackled him after just one yard. Arnold got a first down on the 35. Rice ran for two yards before Davis tackled him. Windscheffel fumbled the ball on the snap from center and lost one yard. Windscheffel threw Smith

Center’s first pass of the game and it went for an apparent Redman touchdown. The play was nullified by a blocking in the back penalty and Smith Center got the ball on their 36. Broeckelman broke up a second Smith Center pass and they punted.

Broeckelman made a fair catch on the Norton 31. Davis powered up the middle for a first down on the Norton 49. Davis drove for two more yards but Kats lost two on a keeper. A pass was incomplete and Davis punted to the Smith Center 11.

Rice gained one yard before Herman and Dreher dropped him to the turf. Windscheffel got loose around end for a first down on the Redman 40. Petrik and Wilson each gained three yards and Windscheffel ran for four yards and a first down before Burton tackled him. Petrik gained eight yards before Juenemann tackled him. Delay of game cost Smith Center five yards. Petrik got into the open momentarily but Ray alertly tackled him on the Norton 30. Petrik gained five more yards, then Wilson fumbled but recovered on the Norton 15 as the third quarter ended with Smith Center still leading 8-3.

Fourth quarter

To start the fourth quarter, Petrik got the call and made the best run of the game. He broke two Norton tackles as he ran around left end and into the end zone for Smith Center’s second and final touchdown of the game. Windscheffel tried to get two more points on a keeper but Lewis tackled him short of the end zone and it was 14-3 with 11:56 left in the game.

Broeckelman made a good return of the kickoff to the Norton 43. Kats picked up three yards but defensive holding against Smith Center moved the ball into Redman territory at the 45. After Kats gained one yard on a keeper, he tried twice to pass but was

sacked both times. Davis punted and Broeckelman and company tackled Hayes on the 19 for no gain. Petrik gained just one yard, then Ray tackled Windscheffel after just one yard. Petrik gained some good yardage on third down but holding against the Redmen brought the ball back to the 15.

Hayes made a good run but holding nullified it and brought the ball back to the 17. Hayes ran to the 29 but it wasn’t enough and Smith Center punted to their 48. With time running out, Norton went to their passing game but to no avail. Davis punted out of bounds on the Smith Center 45. Engel came roaring in to tackle the Smith Center running back for a five yard loss!

Arnold gained eight yards, however, and Rice ran up the middle for a first down on the 38. Colt Rogers ran for two yards but, on the next play, VanEaton recovered a Smith Center fumble on the 33.

After an incomplete pass by Kats, he ran for five yards. Next, he passed to Davis in the flat but he couldn’t get loose and there was no gain. An incomplete pass turned the ball over to Smith Center. They gained three yards on three plays, then fumbled. Engel recovered but, after an incomplete pass, the game was over and Smith Center had survived a strong upset attempt by the battling Jays!

Game statistics

Yardage gained by Norton ball carriers was: Davis, 27 yards on 6 carries; VanEaton, 12 yards on 8 carries; Bolt, 1 yard on 2 carries; Kats, minus 8 yards on 11 carries; Georgeson, no gain on 1 carry; Broeckelman, minus 3 yards on 1 carry.

Kats completed 2 of 12 passes for 7 yards. Broeckelman caught 1 pass for 9 yards and Davis caught 1 for minus 2 yards.

Davis had 5 punts for a 32.4 yard average and Bolt had 1 for 28 yards. Davis averaged 38 yards on 2 kickoffs.

Broeckelman had 1 kickoff return for 31 yards, Davis had 1 for 7 yards and Dreher had 1 for 3 yards.

Arnold was leading ground gainer for Smith Center with 49 yards on 9 carries. Rice had 46 yards on 11 carries.

Rice rushed for 1,251 yards, scored 35 touchdowns and averaged 6.6 yards per carry last season and Arnold rushed for 778 yards, scored seven touchdowns and averaged 8.4 yards per carry in 2005.

Norton had 78 total tackles in the game. Leading tackler was senior linebacker Blake VanEaton with 8 solos, 2 assists, 10 total; followed by Travis Ray, 4 solos, 5 assists, 9 total; Nathan Broeckelman, 2 solos, 6 assists, 8 total; Jared Cox, 5 solos, 3 assists, 8 total; Chris Davis, 2 solos, 4 assists, 6 total; Zach Dreher, 1 solo, 5 assists, 6 total; Nic Lewis, 1 solo, 4 assists, 5 total; Logan Kats, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Todd Bolt, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Pat Burton, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Brian Juenemann, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Matt Engel, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Preston Herman, 2 assists; Mark Scheetz, 2 assists; Brett Thomson, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Lucas Bailey, 1 assist; Zach Mannel, 1 assist.

Next action

Norton will travel to WaKeeney on Friday night for another Mid-Continent League contest versus Trego Community, beginning at 7 p.m.

Trego lost to Ellis 27-13 in their opener on Friday.

Team Statistics

Norton	Smith Center
5	First Downs 14
3	Yards Rushing 244
7	Yards Passing 11
10	Total Yards 255
2-12-0	Passes Completed 1-2-0
0-0	Fumbles Lost 4-7
3-25	Penalties 11-101
6-31.6	Punts 4-31.5

High School Sports This Week



Norton
Blue Jays



Northern Valley
Huskies



Logan
Trojans

FOOTBALL:

Norton Blue Jays vs. Trego Community Golden Eagles ... 7 p.m. Friday, in WaKeeney
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Smith Center 6:30 p.m. tonight (Tues.) in Smith Center
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Trego Community 6:30 p.m., Mon., Sept. 11 in Norton
Northern Valley vs. Eastern Heights 7 p.m. Friday in Almendra
Logan vs. Kensington 7 p.m. Friday in Logan

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Lady Jays V-JV vs. Northern Valley/Phillipsburg 5 p.m. today (Tues.) in Phillipsburg
Norton Junior Varsity in Quinter Tournament 9 a.m. Saturday in Quinter
Norton C-Team vs. Trego Community Monday 5 p.m. in Norton
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Palco/Eastern Heights 4 p.m. Tuesday in Almendra
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Hill City/Trego 4:30 p.m. today (Tues.) in WaKeeney
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Stockton/Phillipsburg 5 p.m. Tuesday in Stockton

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton Blue Jays in Wamego Invitational 9 a.m. Saturday in Wamego
Northern Valley Huskies in Mankato Invitational 4:30 p.m. Thursday in Mankato
Northern Valley Huskies JH/HS vs. Greeley County 9 a.m. MT Saturday in Tribune

TENNIS:

Norton Lady Jays in Phillipsburg Varsity Quad 1 p.m. today (Tues.) in Phillipsburg
Norton Lady Jays in JV Trego Round Robin 1 p.m. Thursday in WaKeeney
Norton JV Quad 10 a.m. Saturday in Norton
Norton Lady Jays in Varsity Quad 3 p.m. Tuesday in Phillipsburg
Norton Lady Jays vs. Goodland 3 p.m. Tuesday in Goodland



Warehouse Auctions

Tuesday, September 26

5:00pm CDT
Wellsville Storage Auction
711 Maple St
Wellsville, KS

Wednesday, September 27

5:00pm CDT
Manhattan Warehouse Auction
8831 Quail Ln - 8845 Quail Ln
8859 Green Valley Dr - Manhattan, KS

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