

Norton rings up a 'W' on road at Trego

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School football team earned their first victory under new head coach Lucas Melvin on Friday night in WaKeeney when they defeated Trego Community 27-6 in Mid-Continent League play.

In the opener last week, the Blue Jays lost 14-3 to two-time defending Class 2A state champion Smith Center when they made a super defensive effort to hold the Redmen to their lowest game point total in two years. The Norton offense was unable to put enough points on the board to take advantage of the defensive effort.

On Friday night in WaKeeney, the Norton offense showed up as well. The Blue Jays gained 157 yards rushing on 36 attempts for a 4.4 yards per carry average. They also gained 100 yards through the air to finish with 257 yards of total offense.

The gang-tackling Norton defense was also equal to the occasion as they limited the Golden Eagles to 28 yards rushing on 41 attempts for a .7 yard per carry average and 62 yards passing for 90 total yards.

For the second straight week, the Blue Jays had no fumbles. They had six penalties for 40 yards but most of the penalty yardage came from two pass interference calls against the aggressive Norton defense.

Norton's senior tailback Blake VanEaton started the Blue Jays' scoring with a beautiful 28-yard touchdown run with 9:31 left in the first quarter. Senior fullback and kicker Chris Davis booted the extra point to make it 7-0. A 41 yard touchdown run by VanEaton later in the quarter was not allowed due to a blocking in the back penalty on the Jays.

A bad punt snap by Trego went out of the end zone in the second quarter to give Norton a safety and 9-0 halftime advantage.

After junior tailback Todd Bolt returned a Trego punt to their 15-yard line, junior quarterback Logan Kats passed to junior wide receiver Wes Georgeson in the corner of the end zone to give Norton a 15-0 lead with 7:51 left in the period.

Trego intercepted a Kats pass and returned it to the Norton 14 late in the third period. On the first play of the final stanza, a fourth down Trego pass was good for a two-yard touchdown to make it 15-6. Norton's next touchdown came with 5:35 left when Bolt sprinted 39 yards to score.

After another bad punt snap by Trego, Norton got the ball on the Golden Eagles' 9-yard line and Kats hit sophomore tight end Zac Dreher in the end zone with 3:04 left in the game.

Coach Melvin was happy to get this first win as head coach of the Blue Jay gridders after being an assistant under coach Bruce Graber, who took over the head grid job at El Dorado after 11 seasons guiding Norton.

Although happy with the win, coach Melvin was not 100 percent happy with his team's performance. "We didn't play as aggressive as a team as we did against Smith Center," he said. "Some of our players were as aggressive but not very many."

"We weren't as focused as last week. Maybe we overlooked them or just had an emotional let down after last week."

"They didn't have a very good punt game but we didn't always take advantage of that. That one time in the red zone after one of their bad punt snaps, we had four downs to score from their one yard line and didn't."

Norton came very close to keeping Trego out of the end zone. "When they scored on a fourth down pass, we had a break in coverage or they wouldn't have scored," said coach Melvin.

"Offensively, they blitzed us a lot and we didn't handle that as well as we should have."

"We can play a lot better. I'm happy we won but I'm not satisfied with the way we played."

Coach Melvin said his team came out of the game without any major injuries. Fullback Chris Davis left the game with a leg problem but it didn't appear to be serious. "Matt Stanley replaced Chris and did a good job," said

coach Melvin.

Norton had the same starters as in the opener versus Smith Center. Starting on offense were: 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

Kyle Edgett kicked off for Norton to start the game. Senior back Tobi Dirks returned the ball to the 32 where Engel made the tackle. Trego passed on first down and sophomore quarterback Spencer Hemmert connected with senior flanker Nick Geist for 28 yards to the Norton 40. Junior fullback Taylor Dirks carried the ball but Mannel and Scheetz stopped him for no gain. Hemmert got five yards on a keeper before Davis tackled him. Hemmert fumbled the center snap on third down but recovered for no gain.

On fourth down, punter Tobi Dirks had trouble with the center snap and shanked the punt, which carried to the 37 yard line for minus two yards.

Norton also passed successfully on their first offensive play. Kats connected with Georgeson for 35 yards to the Trego 28-yard line. VanEaton got the call and exploded through a hole on the left side of the line. He outran the defenders for the Blue Jays' first touchdown of the season. Davis kicked the extra point and Norton led 7-0 with 9:31 left.

Taylor Dirks returned the kickoff to the 33-yard line where Bolt tackled him. Tobi Dirks gained 12 yards on two carries for a first down on the 45. Next, Dirks picked up four yards before Cox stopped him. Taylor Dirks ran for three hard yards. A pass interference penalty against Norton put the ball on the Norton 32. Geist gained two yards before Davis tackled him. Hemmert ran five yards to the 25. Trego was penalized five yards for delay of game. A screen pass was incomplete on fourth down and Norton took over.

Davis drove for two yards and VanEaton was stopped for no gain but Kats passed to Broeckelman in the flat and he ran for a first down on the Norton 43. VanEaton gained two yards, illegal procedure cost Norton five yards and VanEaton ran for three more yards. Kats passed to Cox for a first down on the Trego 41.

Stanley replaced Davis in the backfield but was stopped for no gain. VanEaton got another big hole over the left side of the line and sprinted into the end zone for an apparent touchdown. But, it was called back due to a block in the back penalty. The ball was moved back to the Norton 42. Kats was stopped for no gain, Bolt replaced VanEaton and ran for one yard. A pass intended for Broeckelman was incomplete and Trego took over on offense.

Illegal procedure cost Trego five yards, then senior defensive back Brian Juenemann and sophomore linebacker Zac Dreher tackled Hemmert for a four-yard loss as the first quarter ended with Norton on top 7-0.

Second quarter

Tobi Dirks gained five yards on two carries but it was fourth and 14. The punt snap went over the punter's head and Norton got the ball on the Trego 1-yard line. The Golden Eagle defense stiffened, however, and Norton was unable to score. VanEaton lost two yards, Stanley and Davis each ran for no gain and VanEaton was stopped on the one-foot line on fourth down.

The Golden Eagles took over but did not fare any better. After two incomplete passes and a two-yard gain by Taylor Dirks, their punter went into the end zone to kick. The center snap was wide and went out of the end zone, giving the Blue Jays a two-point safety and extending their lead to

GAME STATISTICS

Norton		Trego
6	First Downs	4
36-157	Yards Rushing	41-28
100	Yards Passing	62
257	Total Yards	90
7-16-1	Passes Comp.	4-18-0
0-0	Fumbles Lost	0-1
5-3	Punts	10-16
6-40	Penalties	7-35

9-0 with 8:00 left in the half.

Trego punted to Norton from their 20. Broeckelman returned the ball 20 yards to the Trego 45. VanEaton gained three yards and Davis one. Kats hit Juenemann for seven yards and a first down on the 34. After an incomplete pass, VanEaton ran to the 28. Kats gained two yards but a fourth down pass was incomplete and Trego took over.

After Tobi Dirks gained nothing, Hemmert passed to Geist and he picked up a first down on the Trego 44. Hemmert lost five yards as a whole host of Norton players tackled him. After an incomplete pass, Hemmert went back to pass again but was run out of the pocket by the aggressive Norton defenders. He ran to the Norton 47, where he was just one yard away from a first down. Tobi Dirks got the call on fourth down and the Blue Jay defense stopped him short.

Officials had thrown a flag, however, and Norton was penalized five yards on an inadvertent face mask penalty. After another incomplete pass, the Norton defenders smothered Hemmert for no gain. Taylor Dirks gained one yard and Trego punted.

This time, they got the kick away and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 5-yard line. VanEaton gained seven yards on three carries and Davis punted to the Norton 33. After an incomplete pass, Trego was penalized 10 yards for holding. Hemmert tried a draw play but Norton stopped him for no gain. It was halftime with the Jays leading 9-0.

Third quarter

Trego kicked off but was offside so kicked again and this time from the 35. VanEaton made a good return to the 43-yard line. After VanEaton gained five yards on two runs, Kats passed to Georgeson for a first down on the Trego 45. Kats ran the keeper for one and Stanley gained four yards but a pass was incomplete and Davis punted to the Trego 9.

Engel came charging in to drop Hemmert for a three yard loss. Hemmert went back to pass again and his pass was knocked down by an alert Blue Jay defender. On third down, Hemmert threw a pass after running across the line of scrimmage and the Golden Eagles were penalized. They punted out of their own end zone and Bolt returned the ball 35 yards to the Trego 15-yard line.

Kats connected with Georgeson in the corner of the end zone for a Norton touchdown. A pass for a possible two extra points was incomplete and the Blue Jays led 15-0 with 7:51 left.

Davis kicked off for Norton and Tobi Dirks got a good return to the Blue Jay 36. The Golden Eagles lost a yard on two running plays. Hemmert went back to pass and was sacked by Engel on the Norton 44. On fourth down, Trego tried to punt but Cox came roaring in to block the punt and Norton took over on the Trego 49.

The Blue Jays tried a little razzle-dazzle but it backfired. Broeckelman appeared to have a clear lane to run on a reverse but he mishandled the lateral from Kats and the result was a seven yard loss. Kats gained nothing and a pass was incomplete. Davis punted and the ball rolled dead on the 25. VanEaton sacked Hemmert on the 16. Tobi Dirks gained nothing and a pass was incomplete. Trego punted and Broeckelman made a fair catch on the Norton 46. A pass was incomplete and Bolt lost one yard. Kats went back to the air and Hemmert intercepted and returned the ball to the Norton 14 where Cox made the tackle.

Tobi Dirks plunged to the 11. A pass into the end zone was broken up by Juenemann. The next play, Norton was penalized to the 5-yard line for pass interference and Trego received a first down. After



The hard-charging Norton defense limited the Trego rushing game to just 28 net yards on 41 carries. On this play, Blue Jay defenders Brian Juenemann, Matt Engel and Zac Dreher gang-tackled Golden Eagle tailback Tobi Dirks after a two-yard gain.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

an incomplete pass, Tobi Dirks ran for a yard before he was gang-tackled by the interior of the Norton line. On third down, Tobi Dirks ran for two yards before he was smothered by Dreher, Juenemann and Engel on the last play of the quarter, which ended with Norton leading 15-0.

Fourth quarter

The Golden Eagles got their only score of the game on fourth down when Hemmert passed complete to Geist in the end zone. A pass for two points was incomplete and Norton led 15-6 with 11:51 remaining. The Trego kickoff went out of bounds and they kicked again. VanEaton returned the kickoff to the Norton 40. VanEaton gained two yards and Kats three. A pass was incomplete and Davis punted. The ball rolled dead on the Trego 26.

Tobi Dirks ran for nine yards on first down but Trego was whistled for being offside. Next down, they were penalized five more yards for illegal procedure. Tobi Dirks got Trego out of the hole by running for a first down on the Norton 48. Geist tried to run a reverse but Brett Thomson tackled him for a 10 yard loss! Hemmert passed to Luke Fabrizio for an 11 yard gain. Tobi Dirks gained one yard and Trego punted. The ball rolled dead on the Norton 22.

Bolt gained nothing on first down but earned 10 yards on second down. Stanley found running

room over right tackle and gained yardage to the Trego 40. Kats gained two yards to the 38. Bolt got the call again and ran over the left side of the line. He got a good block from fullback Stanley, cut back to the right and outran the defense for another Blue Jay touchdown. The extra point kick was no good but Norton had increased their lead to 21-6 with 5:35 left.

Taylor Dirks returned the Norton kickoff to the Trego 40 where Brad Nuzum and Engel made the tackle. Tobi Dirks ran for six yards. Hemmert fumbled the center snap and made nothing. On third down, Dreher sacked Hemmert. The center made another bad snap on the punting attempt and Norton took over on the Trego 9-yard line.

After one incomplete pass, Kats fired the ball to Dreher in the back of the end zone for Norton's final touchdown. The extra point kick attempt was blocked and Norton led 27-6 with 3:04 left.

Geist returned the kickoff to the 36. It was three-and-out for the Golden Eagles, however, and they punted to the Norton 34. Blue Jay reserves ran three running plays before the time ran out with Norton earning the 27-6 Mid-Continent League victory.

Individual statistics

VanEaton was leading rusher for Norton. He gained 57 yards on 14 carries. Bolt earned 53 yards on

5 carries. Other rushers for Norton were Stanley, 3 carries for 28 yards; Kats, 7 for 8 yards; Davis, 4 for 5 yards; Brad Nuzum, 1 for 3 yards; Zane Perez, 1 for 2 yards; J.D. Gall, 1 for 1 yard.

Pass receivers for the Jays were: Georgeson, 3 for 58 yards; Cox, 1 for 16; Broeckelman, 1 for 10; Dreher, 1 for 8; Juenemann, 1 for 8.

Bolt had one punt return for 35 yards, VanEaton had 1 for 22 yards and Broeckelman had 1 for 20 yards.

Leading rusher for Trego was Tobi Dirks who gained 32 yards on 17 carries. Leading receiver for Trego was Geist with 3 catches for 55 yards.

Leading tackler for Norton was sophomore linebacker Zac Dreher with seven solo tackles, two assists for nine total. He was followed by Blake VanEaton, 4 solos, 4 assists, 8 total; Chris Davis, 5 solos, 1 assists, 6 total; Matt Engel, 5 solos, 1 assists, 6 total; Jared Cox, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Lucas Bailey, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Todd Bolt, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Nathan Broeckelman, 2 solos, 1 assists, 3 total; Brian Juenemann, 3 solos; Zach Mannel, 3 solos; Travis Ray, 3 solos; Mark Scheetz, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Brett Thomson, 2 solos; Aaron Husted, 1 solo; Logan Kats, 1 solo; Brock Lauer, 1 solo; Nic Lewis, 1 solo; Nish Millan, 1 solo; Matt Stanley, 1 assist.

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