

# Blue Jays 'ring necks' at homecoming

By DICK BOYD

Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School football team defeated Hill City 50-20 in their homecoming clash on Friday night at Travis Field in Norton but the Blue Jays had to come from behind for the Mid-Continent League win.

The visitors kicked off, held the Blue Jays and caused them to punt. Ringneck senior fullback Jason Walker ran 48 yards on first down and junior tailback Kenny Slattery scored from five yards out to put the Ringnecks on top 6-0 just two and one-half minutes into the game.

It was a wakeup call for Norton and they promptly drove 56 yards on nine plays to score and take the lead for good. Junior quarterback Logan Kats, who ran for two touchdowns and passed for two more in the game, dented the end zone from four yards out on a keeper. Senior fullback and kicker Chris Davis split the uprights and Norton led 7-6 with 6:19 left in the first quarter.

After Davis' kickoff, the fired up Norton defense allowed Hill City just one yard in three downs and they punted. Senior wide receiver Nathan Broeckelman made a beautiful 60 yard return for Norton's second touchdown. Davis kicked the extra point and the Blue Jays led 14-6 with 4:15 left.

Hill City lost eight yards on their next possession before punting. Five plays and 45 yards later and the Blue Jays were in the end zone again. Kats ran an option from five yards out to score. Davis' kick attempt was blocked but Norton led 20-6 with 53 seconds remaining in the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, the Hill City center snapped the ball over the punter's head and out of the end zone for a two point Norton safety. Hill City kicked the ball back to Norton and senior tailback Blake VanEaton returned the ball to the Ringneck 35. From there, Norton junior tailback Todd Bolt received the ball from Kats on a reverse and fired a pass to Broeckelman in the end zone. Davis kicked the extra point, making it 29-6 with 10:59 left in the first half.

After one first down, Hill City punted again. This time, Norton mishandled the punt return and Hill City got the ball on the Norton 33. The Ringnecks drove the short distance for their second touchdown. Senior quarterback Zach Thompson sneaked the final yard. Norton stopped the attempt for two extra points, making the score 29-12 with 4:21 left.

On Norton's next possession, the Blue Jays went 68 yards on seven plays to score again. Kats passed five yards to junior tight end Jared Cox for the score. Davis kicked the extra point and the Blue Jays led 36-12 at halftime.

Norton drove 43 yards on six plays to score on their first possession of the third quarter. VanEaton ran five yards for the touchdown. The extra point attempt was no good and the Jays led 42-12 with 8:03 left in the period.

After Norton's smash-mouth defense held the Ringnecks again, senior defensive end Nic Lewis came charging into the Hill City backfield to block their punt. Norton took over on the Hill City 28 and, two plays later, the Jays had scored again. Kats hit junior wide receiver Wes Georgeson in the end zone for a 21 yard touchdown. Kats passed to Cox for two extra points and it was 50-12 with 5:05 left in the third quarter.

After the kickoff, Norton forced Hill City to punt once again and the Norton reserves played the rest of the game. Hill City's varsity remained in the game. The Blue Jay junior varsity played hard and held the Ringnecks out of the end zone until, with just 37 seconds left in the game, Walker scored from 10 yards out and added two points on a successful run to make the final score 50-20.

"We played hard again but weren't quite as focused as we needed to be early in the game," said coach Melvin. "We didn't tackle well early and they scored but we bounced back. I am proud of the way we came back.

"After we settled down, we played pretty well offensively. Kats did a good job of running the option. They played hard but we

were just able to do a lot of things against them offensively.

"Our defense played well again. Zach Mannel stood out on defense.

"Our junior varsity played well against their varsity."

The Norton varsity rushed for 184 yards on 27 carries for a 6.8 yards per carry average. VanEaton went over 100 yards again as he gained 114 yards on 16 carries to average 7.1 yards. Kats ran the ball only five times but gained 48 yards for a 9.6 yard average. Kats also completed 6 of 9 passes for 67 percent and 102 yards.

Norton's defense allowed Hill City just 55 yards on 42 attempts for a 1.3 yard average. The Ringnecks added 80 yards on 7 of 17 passes for 41 percent.

Coach Melvin started the following players on offense: senior Nic Lewis, center; senior Pat Burton and sophomore Brock Lauer, guards; junior Preston Herman and senior Lucas Bailey, tackles; junior Jared Cox, tight end; senior Nathan Broeckelman and senior Brian Juenemann, wide receivers; senior Chris Davis, fullback; senior Blake VanEaton, tailback and junior Logan Kats, quarterback.

Starting on defense for Norton were: senior Brett Thomson and senior Matt Engel, ends; Herman and junior Zach Mannel, tackles; VanEaton, Cox and sophomore Zac Dreher, linebackers; Broeckelman, junior Todd Bolt, Kats and junior Travis Ray, defensive backs.

### First quarter

VanEaton returned the kickoff to the 17 yard line. Senior fullback Chris Davis made one yard, VanEaton got eight but Bolt got nothing from the tailback spot. Davis punted to the Hill City 47.

On first down, Jason Walker broke a tackle at the line of scrimmage and scampered all the way to the Norton 5 before defensive back Broeckelman ran him down from behind. The damage was done, however, and tailback Kenny Slattery scored on the next play. The extra point kick try was unsuccessful but Hill City led 6-0 with 9:32 remaining in the first quarter.

VanEaton returned the kickoff to the Norton 43. VanEaton gained 11 yards and a first down on two rushes. Kats ran the keeper for nine yards to the 35, then pitched to VanEaton and he ran around left end for another first down on the 20. VanEaton plowed to the 14 before Bolt took a pitch from Kats and ran around right end for an apparent touchdown. Norton was whistled for holding and the ball came back to the 22. Kats passed to Cox to the 7, Davis ran to the 4 and Kats ran the keeper into the end zone. Davis kicked the extra point and the Blue Jays led 7-6 with 6:19 left.

Christian Covington returned Davis' kickoff to the 29. The Blue Jay defense allowed one yard on three tries and Hill City punted. Broeckelman gathered in the punt, started to run right, then reversed his field, found a great wall of blockers and sprinted 60 yards down the far sideline for Norton's second touchdown. Davis kicked the extra point and it was 14-6 with 4:15 remaining.

Hill City started on their 29 again after the kickoff. Slattery tried to run around left end but Kats threw him for a two yard loss. Quarterback Zach Thompson went back to pass but a fierce rush by Engel and John Van Doren kept him from completing the aerial. Thompson was sacked for a six yard loss and Hill City punted again. The ball rolled dead on the Ringneck 45.

In five plays, the Blue Jays were in the end zone again. VanEaton gained 37 yards on three carries and Norton was on the 8 yard line. Kats threw a slant pass to Brian Juenemann for a first down on the 5. Kats ran the option for the touchdown. The point-after kick try by Davis was blocked but Norton was on top 20-6 with 53 seconds left.

Travis Ray tackled Covington on the 31 on the kickoff. The smash-mouth Norton defense drove the Ringnecks backwards. After Thompson lost two yards, Van Dorn stopped Slattery for no gain as the first quarter ended with Norton leading 20-6.

### Second quarter

After Hill City was penalized,

Thompson was sacked again. The punter went back to receive the snap from center but it went over his head and out of the end zone for a two-point safety. The Jays led 22-6 with 11:16 remaining in the second period.

Hill City had to kick to Norton after the safety and VanEaton got a good return all the way to the Hill City 35. On first down, Bolt received the ball from Kats on a reverse and he threw the ball downfield to Broeckelman for Norton's fourth touchdown. Davis kicked the extra point and it was 29-6 with 10:59 still remaining in the half.

Davis' kickoff was returned to the 30. Slattery got a first down for Hill City on their 44. Walker tried the Norton line but Juenemann tackled him for no gain. After an incomplete pass, Thompson was sacked again and Hill City punted.

Norton was unable to catch the punt and Hill City fell on the ball on the Norton 33. A pass interference penalty against the Ringnecks moved the ball back to the 43. Walker lost four yards but Thompson passed to tight end Brady Jeffrey on the 33. Thompson was sacked but Norton was penalized for a personal foul and the ball was moved to the 23 with a Hill City first down. VanEaton sacked Thompson for a three yard loss. A holding penalty against Hill City moved the ball back to the 37. Walker gained two yards before Broeckelman tackled him. Thompson passed to Walker on the 11 where Bolt tackled him, but it was a first down. Thompson passed over the middle to Jeffrey and Kats tackled him on the 2. Walker plunged to the 1 for another first down. Thompson sneaked in for the touchdown. Walker ran up the middle for extra points but he was stopped short by the interior of the Norton line and the score remained 29-12 with 4:21 left in the half.

VanEaton returned the kickoff to the 32. VanEaton gained 17 yards on two carries. Kats passed to Davis for a first down on the Hill City 48. Kats ran the keeper to the 10. Norton was penalized for holding and Hill City for a personal foul and they offset each other. VanEaton drove up the middle to the 7, Davis plunged to the five. Kats passed to Cox in the back of the end zone for another Blue Jay touchdown. Davis split the uprights and the Jays had extended their lead to 36-12 with 1:37 left.

On the kickoff, Engel tackled Covington on the 28. After an incomplete pass, Hill City made nothing on two running plays. They punted and Bolt made a fair catch at midfield.

Kats passed to Broeckelman for a first down on the Ringneck 39. After an incomplete pass, Kats threw an aerial that was intercepted by Covington on the 30. The clock ran out on the Ringnecks and it was halftime with Norton leading 36-12.

### Third quarter

After another excellent halftime performance by David Will's Norton Community High School marching band, the second half began with Davis kicking off to the Ringneck 26. After an incomplete screen pass, Slattery was tackled by Bolt after a three yard gain. Mannel came charging in to sack Thompson for a four yard loss. Hill City punted and Bolt returned the ball to the Ringneck 43. VanEaton took a pitch from Kats and ran around left end for a first down on the 27. VanEaton gained three more yards, then Kats ran a keeper for a first down on the 14. Davis plowed up the middle to the 11 and VanEaton got to the 5. Next, VanEaton followed his line up the middle for a touchdown.



Norton junior tailback Todd Bolt, No. 24, scored from 14 yards out on this play in the first quarter of the Blue Jays 50-20 win over Hill City at home Friday night. Norton was penalized for holding so the touchdown didn't count. Boltz passed 35 yards to wide receiver Nathan Broeckelman in the second quarter for a Norton TD that did go on the scoreboard. At right for Norton is senior fullback Chris Davis.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

The extra point kick try by Davis was unsuccessful but the Jays had extended their advantage to 42-12 with 8:03 left in the third quarter.

Covington returned Davis' kickoff and Ray made a good ankle tackle of Covington. Van Dorn and Engel sacked Thompson for a two yard loss. Thompson gained four yards before Engel and Ray stopped him. Wingback David Gerstner got the call and he was stopped for no gain by Mannel and Cox. Hill City tried to punt but Nic Lewis came storming in to block it and the Blue Jays had the ball on the 28. VanEaton took a pitch to the 21 and Kats passed to Wes Georgeson in the end one. Kats passed to Cox for two extra points and Norton led 50-12 with 5:05 remaining in the third quarter.

Covington returned the kickoff to the 33. Junemann nailed Thompson after a one yard gain. Walker ran for a first down on the Hill City 46. Bolt and Cox tackled Slattery after a two yard gain. A screen pass was incomplete, then Mannel and Cox tackled Walker for no gain. Hill City punted again.

Broeckelman returned the punt to the 35. Except for special teams, the Norton junior varsity played the rest of the game. They were not able to move the ball against the Hill City varsity so Davis punted to the Ringneck 30. Thompson was sacked for a five yard loss by the junior varsity as the third quarter ended with Norton leading 50-12.

### Fourth quarter

Both teams had the ball three times in the fourth period before Hill City scored their final touchdown. The Norton junior varsity lost the ball once on a fumble. Hill City scored when Walker ran up

the middle and into the end zone. Walker then ran for two points to make it 50-20 with 37 seconds remaining in the game.

The Ringnecks got the ball back on the Norton 49 when they recovered an on-side kickoff. On their first play after the recovery, Hill City passed, the ball was batted into the air and Norton freshman defensive back Landon Hamel intercepted. He ran to the 5 yard line before he was tackled. Time ran out on the junior varsity Jays before they could score a touchdown and the game ended with the Blue Jays winning 50-20.

### Individual statistics

Norton ball carriers and their yardage were: VanEaton, 16 for 114 yards; Kats, 5 for 48 yards; Davis, 4 for 10 yards; Bolt, 2 for 12 yards; Brad Nuzum, 6 for 7 yards; Zane Perez, 2 for minus 5 yards; J.D. Gall, 4 for 11 yards; Connor Pfannenstiel, 3 for 7 yards.

Pass receivers for Norton were: Cox, 3 for 23 yards; Broeckelman, 2 for 45 yards; Georgeson, 1 for 22 yards; Davis, 1 for 19 yards; Juenemann, 1 for 15 yards.

VanEaton had four kickoff returns for 80 yards. Broeckelman had three punt returns for 95 yards and Bolt had two punt returns for 19 yards.

Davis kicked off eight times for a 40 yard average.

Leading rusher for Hill City was Walker with 13 carries for 88 yards.

Six players led Norton in tackling with four tackles each. They were Todd Bolt, 3 solos, 1 assist; Nathan Broeckelman, 3 solos, 1 assist; Jared Cox, 3 solos, 1 assist; Logan Kats, 4 solos; Zach Mannel, 2 solos, 2 assists; Travis Ray, 2 solos, 2 assists. They were followed by Aaron Husted, 2 solos,

1 assist, 3 total; Brett Thomson, 3 solos; Zac Dreher, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Matt Engel, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Landon Hamel, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Brian Juenemann, 2 solos; Blake VanEaton, 2 solos; Pat Burton, 1 solo; Chris Davis, 1 solo; Ashton Draper, 1 solo; Brock Lauer, 1 solo; Connor Pfannenstiel, 1 solo; Zane Perez, 1 solo; John Van Dorn, 1 assist.

### Next action

Norton will play Ellis in Mid-Continent League action this Friday at Travis Field in Norton, beginning at 7 p.m.

The Railroaders played Smith Center last Friday and were even with the Redmen at 6-6 early in the second quarter but Smith Center eventually overpowered them 47-12.

Junior running back Justin Gnad scored on Ellis touchdown from three yards out and sophomore quarterback Chase King threw an 11 yard touchdown pass to Honas.

Senior Cole Erbert, who also plays quarterback, was a first team All-Mid-Continent League linebacker and received honorable mention at quarterback last season. Senior Brett Mickelson was a first team defensive tackle, senior center Randy Hamel was a second team offensive selection and senior Andrew Casey was a first team wide receiver on the all-league team.

### Game statistics

Norton	Hill City
16	8
45-204	42-55
140	80
344	135
8-11-1	7-17-1
2-4	0-4
5-50	5-55
2-31	10-26

## Sports Line:

785

877

3361

## High School Sports This Week

Norton  
Blue Jays

Northern Valley  
Huskies

Logan  
Trojans

**FOOTBALL:**

Norton Blue Jays vs. Ellis Railroaders ..... 7 p.m. Friday in Norton

Northern Valley Huskies vs. Cheylin (Homecoming) ..... 7 p.m. Friday in Almena

Logan Trojans vs. Eastern Heights ..... 7 p.m. Friday in Logan

Norton Junior Varsity vs. Phillipsburg ..... 6:30 p.m. Monday in Phillipsburg

**VOLLEYBALL:**

Norton Lady Jay Varsity and Junior Varsity vs. Colby and Atwood ..... 4:30 p.m. Today in Norton

Norton Lady Jay Varsity and Junior Varsity in Oberlin Tournament ..... 9 a.m. Saturday in Oberlin

Norton C-Team vs. Phillipsburg ..... 5 p.m. Monday in Phillipsburg

Norton Lady Jay Varsity and Junior Varsity vs. Smith Center and Trego (Senior Night) ..... 5 p.m. Tuesday in Norton

Northern Valley Lady Huskies in Ellis Tournament ..... 8:30 a.m. Saturday in Ellis

Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Golden Plains and Wheatland ..... 4 p.m. Tuesday in Almena

Logan Lady Trojans vs. Palco and Western Plains ..... 4 p.m. Today in Logan

Logan Lady Trojans vs. Kensington and Eastern Heights ..... 4 p.m. Tuesday in Kensington

**TENNIS:**

Norton Lady Jay Varsity vs. Colby ..... 3 p.m. Today in Colby

Norton Lady Jays in JV Quad ..... 3 p.m. Thursday in Norton

Norton Lady Jays in MCL Pre-Regional Tournament ..... 9 a.m. Saturday in WaKeeney

Norton Lady Jay Junior Varsity in Colby JV Tournament ..... 9 a.m. Saturday in Colby

**CROSS COUNTRY:**

Norton Blue Jays in Oberlin Invitational ..... 5 p.m. Today in oberlin

Northern Valley Huskies in Hays Invitational ..... 3:45 p.m. Thursday in Hays