

Blue Jays turn up heat on Red Devils

By DICK BOYD

Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School "fighting Blue Jays" were a different team than the Friday before when they took the field against Oberlin last Thursday in their final district game.

After losing a 51-13 heart-breaker to Phillipsburg on Oct. 20, the Jays scored on the second play from scrimmage against the Red Devils and never looked back as they fought to a 36-6 win.

With three backs rushing for over 100 yards, Norton rolled up 439 yards on the ground and averaged 9.1 yards per carry. Meanwhile, the gang-tackling Blue Jay defense held Oberlin to 135 yards rushing. Oberlin's only touchdown came on a 75 yard run so the Red Devils managed only 60 yards and 1.4 yards per carry the rest of the night.

Senior fullback Chris Davis burst 60 yards for the Jays' first touchdown. Senior tailback Blake VanEaton dashed 92 yards over left tackle for the second score with 8:08 left in the second quarter. Oberlin fumbled after the kickoff and junior quarterback Logan Kats passed 25 yards to junior wide receiver Wes Georgeson for a third touchdown and Norton led 21-0 at halftime.

Oberlin's Garrit Peters got loose for a 75 yard touchdown run with 7:51 left in the third quarter but the Jays responded when junior tailback Todd Bolt ran 54 yards to score and extend Norton's lead to 28-6 after three quarters.

An 82 yard drive culminated in a 1 yard touchdown run by Kats with 3:37 left in the game. Davis, who had kicked extra points after all the other touchdowns, ran for two points this time to make the final 36-6.

"We still need to tackle and block better but I'm proud of our players for coming back and playing harder," said coach Melvin.

Norton defeated Beloit 28-8 in their first district game to earn the runnerup spot in the district with a 2-1 record. The Jays are 7-2 overall, with their only other loss to two-time Class 2A defending state champion Smith Center by a 14-3 score in the season opener.

VanEaton carried the ball 12 times in the win over Oberlin and gained 179 yards for a 14.9 yards per carry average. Bolt rushed for 136 yards on 14 tries for a 9.7 yard average and Davis ran for 105 yards on 11 attempts for a 9.5 yard average.

Starting on offense for the Blue Jays were: senior NicLewis, center; senior Pat Burton and sophomore Brock Lauer, guards; junior Preston Herman and senior Lucas Bailey, tackles; junior Jared Cox, tight end; junior Wes Georgeson and senior Brian Juenemann, wide receivers; junior Todd Bolt, fullback; senior Blake VanEaton, tailback; junior Logan Kats, quarterback.

Norton's defensive starters were: Lauer, senior Brett Thomson, senior Mark Scheetz, junior Zach Mannel and Herman, linemen; VanEaton, senior Chris Davis, and sophomore Zac Dreher, linebackers; Juenemann, junior Travis Ray and Bolt, defensive backs.

First quarter

Oberlin kicked off and Bolt returned the ball to the 37 yard line. After a three yard gain by Bolt, Davis entered the game at fullback and ran through the Red Devil defense 60 yards to score. Davis also kicked the extra point and Norton led 7-0.

Jace Robinson, Oberlin's speedy quarterback who entered the game with around 1,000 yards rushing and averaging eight yards per carry, returned Davis' kickoff to the Oberlin 39. VanEaton tackled Logan Fortin after a one yard gain, then sacked Robinson for a three yard loss. Robinson gained

six yards before Kats tackled him. Oberlin punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 29.

Bolt gained six yards and VanEaton ran over right tackle for a first down on the Norton 47. Kats gained four yards on two carries but a pass fell incomplete. Davis punted out of bounds on the Oberlin 21.

Lauer and Dreher tackled Lucas Juenemann for a two yard loss but he broke loose for 20 yards on the next down before Ray tackled him on the 39. Robinson dropped back to pass but Scheetz and Lauer buried him for a four yard loss. He lost three more yards when VanEaton and others dropped him to the rain-soaked turf. Robinson gained eight yards to the 40 where Scheetz tackled him again. The Red Devils punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 15.

VanEaton plowed for five yards and Bolt gained four. Bolt churned over right tackle for a first down on the 35. After no gain by Bolt, Kats pitched to him and he ran for another first down around right end to the 45. VanEaton ran for a first down on the Oberlin 45. A false start cost Norton five yards, then Bolt was thrown for a loss back to the Norton 45 as the first quarter ended with Norton leading 7-0.

Second quarter

After an incomplete pass, Davis punted to the Oberlin 17. Juenemann ran around right end for a first down on the 31 where Ray tackled him. Peters ran up the middle for seven yards. After Juenemann gained one yard, Lewis tackled Robinson for a four yard loss. Oberlin punted and Bolt was tackled just as he caught the ball. Norton was penalized for blocking in the back and the ball was moved back to the 11.

Bolt lost his footing on the wet turf and fell on the 8. But, that play was forgotten on the next down when VanEaton followed his blocking over the left side of the line, broke free and outran the Red Devil secondary for a 92 yard touchdown!

Davis boomed the ball between the uprights for the extra point and the Jays led 14-0 with 8:08 left. Peters returned Davis' kickoff to the 33. Peters lost two yards, then Juenemann was stopped for no gain by Norton's Juenemann. The next down, Oberlin fumbled and Matt Stanley pulled the ball out of the pile for Norton on the Red Devil 25. On first down, Kats hit Georgeson, who made a perfect over-the-head catch and sprinted into the end zone. Davis kicked the extra point and it was 21-0 with 6:35 left in the half.

Peters returned Davis' kickoff to the 19 where Stanley made the tackle. After an incomplete pass, Robinson ran for one yard. Then, he completed a 25 yard pass to Kyle Glodt on the 45 where Dreher made the tackle. Lauer stopped Robinson after a one yard gain. Kats broke up a Robinson pass, then Robinson was sacked by VanEaton on the 35. Oberlin punted and Bolt returned the ball five yards to the Norton 40.

Norton lost five yards for a false start. Davis gained 11 yards on two carries, then Bolt ran to the Oberlin 47 for a first down. After an incomplete pass, Kats ran the keeper to the 43. VanEaton churned to the 35 for a first down. Davis bulled to the 31. The next down, Norton fumbled the wet ball and an Oberlin player picked up the ball. Lewis tackled him on the Oberlin 43.

Robinson gained three yards before Dreher tackled him. After an incomplete pass, the Red Devils were whistled for holding and the ball went back to the 33. After another incomplete pass, Robinson ran the ball but Juenemann tackled him after just a two yard gain. Oberlin punted to the Norton 26.

Kats lost one yard and a pass fell



When the hard hitting Norton defense caused an Oberlin fumble during the Jays' 36-6 district win on Thursday evening in Oberlin, the Red Devils' Kyle Glodt, No.44, tried to retrieve the pigskin. But, the

Blue Jays' Matt Stanley had other ideas and grabbed the ball for a first down on the Oberlin 25. The play resulted in a touchdown pass from Logan Kats to Wes Georgeson. - Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

incomplete. Davis powered to the 40 for a first down. But, time ran out as another Kats pass fell incomplete and the players went to the lockerroom with Norton on top 21-0.

Third quarter

Davis kicked off for Norton to start the second half and VanEaton tackled Robinson on the Oberlin 5. Peters gained two yards, then ran to the 14, where Ray tackled him. Juenemann was tackled for a four yard loss and Oberlin punted. Ray returned the ball to the Oberlin 29. Norton was not able to take advantage of the good field position, however, as Bolt gained nothing and Davis ran for three yards in two tries. After an incomplete pass, Oberlin took over on their 25.

On first down, the Red Devils caught the Blue Jay defenders out of position. Peters found a hole over left tackle and ran untouched for a 75 yard touchdown. Juenemann was stopped short on the two extra points try, making the score 21-6 with 7:51 left.

VanEaton returned the kickoff to the Norton 33. VanEaton gained nine yards over right tackle, then Davis powered for a first down on the Oberlin 46. Next, center Nic Lewis, right guard Pat Burton and right tackle Preston Herman created a hole big enough to drive a truck through and Bolt ran free for a 46 yard touchdown. After Davis' extra point kick, Norton led 28-6 with 6:41 remaining.

Peters returned Davis' kickoff to the 29. Juenemann came roaring in to tackle Robinson for a five yard loss. Oberlin's Juenemann was stopped for no gain. Oberlin fumbled but recovered the ball on the 25. The Red Devils went into punt formation. It was a fake and Robinson carried the ball to the Oberlin 46 for a first down. Juenemann made the tackle. Oberlin's Juenemann tried the Norton line but Scheetz dropped him for no gain. Robinson dropped back to pass but slipped down on the 38. After losing five yards for a false start and five more on a fumble in the flat which they recovered, Oberlin punted.

Ray returned the ball but a block in the back penalty against Norton

moved the pigskin back to the Norton 30. Kats lost a yard, then VanEaton plunged for two. Next, VanEaton found running room around right end for a first down on the 42. Bolt gained four, then VanEaton ran around right end for a first down on the Oberlin 42. Davis plunged for one yard as the quarter ended with the Jays on top 28-6.

Fourth quarter

Norton fumbled and Oberlin recovered on their 40. Robinson ran around left end for a first down on the Norton 44 where VanEaton tackled him.

Peters gained two yards before Scheetz tackled him. Robinson ran a quarterback sneak but Mannel and Lauer tackled him for no gain. The next play, Oberlin fumbled but the ball went forward to the Norton 30 where they recovered.

John Van Doren tackled Peters for no gain. Juenemann tried to run around right end but VanEaton came charging through the line to throw him for a loss on the 33. A pass interference penalty against Norton moved the ball to the 19. Robinson passed over the middle to Kurt Olson for an eight yard gain.

But, Lewis came roaring in on the next play to tackle Robinson back on the 17. Juenemann was stopped for no gain, a pass was incomplete and the Blue Jays took over.

Bolt ran around left end for a first down on the 34. After VanEaton gained four yards, Bolt found a nice hole over the right side of the line, broke a tackle and ran deep into Red Devil territory before being tackled. A personal foul by Oberlin moved the ball to the Red Devil 13. Davis plunged to the 10. VanEaton ran over the right side to the 7. VanEaton ran around left end and cut back to the 1. Kats ran a keeper for the touchdown. Davis was back to kick an extra point but the center snap was bobbled so Davis ran the ball into the end zone for two points. With 3:37 remaining, Norton was leading 36-6.

Peters returned the kickoff and VanEaton tackled him on the 35. Breck Simonson went back to pass

but Dreher came charging in to tackle him for a 10 yard loss. Oberlin lost five more yards for delay of game. Robinson was dropped for no gain, then passed into the secondary and Norton's Landon Hamel intercepted on the Red Devil 45.

The Norton reserves ran four plays and Oberlin ran one as time expired with Norton leading 36-6.

Individual statistics

Rushers for Norton, in addition to VanEaton, Bolt and Davis, were: Kats, 7 carries for 9 yards; J.D. Gall, 2 for 4; Brad Nuzum, 1 for 3; Zane Perez, 1 for 1.

VanEaton had 1 kickoff return for 23 yards and Bolt had 1 for 15. Ray had 2 punt returns for 16 yards and Bolt had 2 for 13 yards.

Davis kicked off the ball 6 times for a 40 yard average.

Peters was leading rusher for Oberlin with 86 yards on 10 carries. Juenemann gained 32 on 13 tries and Robinson gained 29 on 17 carries.

Leading tacklers for Norton were: Blake VanEaton, 9 solos, 1 assist, 10 total; Travis Ray, 5 solos, 5 assists, 10 total and Zac Dreher, 7 solos, 2 assists, 9 total. They were followed by: Brock Lauer, 2 solos, 4 assists, 6 total; Nic Lewis, 5 solos; Chris Davis, Brian Juenemann, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total each; Mark Scheetz, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Brett Thomson, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Jared Cox, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Zach Mannel, John Van Doren, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total each;

Logan Kats, 2 solos; Preston Herman, 2 assists; Landon Hamel, Aaron Husted, 1 solo each; Todd Bolt, Tyler Cook, Matt Stanley, 1 assist each.

Next action

In sub-district action this evening, Norton will play defending state champion Southeast of Saline at their consolidated school near Gypsum, south of Salina. Kickoff is at 7 p.m.

Southeast is ranked No.1 in the state and will bring a perfect 9-0 record into the game.

"We'll have to play like we're capable of and a little bit more to have a chance to beat this team," said coach Melvin.

"You don't get an opportunity very often to play the state champions."

"Their quarterback Hardesty is a great athlete. He's an outstanding runner and passer. He'll be the best quarterback we've faced all year."

"Their offensive and defensive lines are excellent. They come off the ball hard. They also have two very good pass receivers. They're a great team."

Game statistics		
Norton		Oberlin
16	First Downs	7
439	Yards Rushing	135
23	Yards Passing	34
462	Total Yards	169
1-8-0	Passes Compl.	2-8-1
2-2	Fumbles Lost	1-4
5-45	Penalties	4-35
2-32	Punts	7-39

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