

Blue Jays win opener in double-overtime

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Lucas Melvin's 2008 edition of the Norton Community High School football team established themselves as a never-say-die squad by continuing to come from behind to defeat longtime rival Phillipsburg 29-22 in double overtime in the season opener Friday night at Travis Field in Norton.

The fighting Blue Jays, who were outweighed by the Panthers, trailed the entire Mid-Continent League game until tying the contest at 22-all with 10:48 left in regulation and winning with a touchdown in the second overtime.

Fumbles, penalties and a few letdowns on defense caused them problems but they made up for it by continuing to gang tackle on defense and use imagination on offense.

"The key to the game was that we never quit; we played really hard," said coach Melvin. "We had adversity the whole game but kept playing hard and turned it around in the fourth quarter and overtimes.

"On defense, we had one or two plays where we didn't run to the ball and that cost us but most of the time we had people flying around to the ball.

"Phillipsburg has a tough, powerful team. Their new players impressed me. They have an opportunity to be pretty good. Their coach J.B. Covington is a good one.

"I'm really proud of our players. We had a lot of young players step up; several were starting their first varsity game. Our special teams helped us, too."

Coach Melvin started the following players on offense: senior Nish Millan, left tackle; senior Brock Lauer, left guard; sophomore Kaid McKenna, center; sophomore Luke Ninemire, right guard; junior Tyler Cook, right tackle; senior Zac Dreher, tight end; juniors Ashton Draper and Landon Hamel, wide receivers; junior Conner Pfannenstiel, quarterback; senior Matt Stanley, fullback; sophomore Terrell Lane, tailback.

Norton's defensive starters were: Brock Lauer and sophomore Dakota Dreher, ends; senior John Van Doren, Nish Millan, tackles; Matt Stanley, Zac Dreher, Terrell Lane, linebackers; senior Brad Nuzum, junior Zane Perez, Landon Hamel and Ashton Draper, defensive backs.

On Norton's second possession, the Blue Jays had the ball on their own 5-yard-line and Lane was tackled in the end zone for a safety, giving Phillipsburg a 2-0 lead after one quarter.

The Panthers padded their lead with a 4-yard touchdown run with 7:03 left in the half but Lane made a beautiful 90 yard touchdown run on the ensuing kickoff to make it a 9-7 game.

A fumbled punt reception gave Phillipsburg the ball on the Norton 5-yard-line and Phillipsburg's Dylan Frantz tallied from three yards out to put the Panthers ahead 16-7 with 1:18 left.

The never quit Blue Jays used a pass play from Pfannenstiel to Draper accompanied by a roughing the passer penalty to take the ball to the Phillipsburg 20. From there, Pfannenstiel hit Lane with a flat pass and he powered into the end zone with 18 seconds left. The extra point kick by J.D. Gall put Norton behind by just 16-14 at halftime.

The only score in the third quarter came when Ben Suchsland, Phillipsburg's 224 pound running back, ran 34 yards up the middle, breaking several tackles on his way to the end zone to make it 22-14.

But the Blue Jays continued to battle in the fourth quarter. APfannenstiel to Stanley pass carried to the Panther 16. Then, Dreher picked up a Norton fumble and ran into the end zone. Pfannenstiel ran a keeper for the extra points and ran in untouched to tie the score at 22-all with 10:48 left in regulation.

Each team got the ball on the 10-yard line with four downs to score in the overtime. Neither team scored in the first extra period. Norton got the ball first in the second overtime. Lane scored from the 3-yard-line and Gall kicked the extra point to put

State Banner presented

During a special ceremony at halftime of the Norton-Phillipsburg football game on Friday evening, the Norton Community High School girls track team presented their Class 3A State Championship banner to NCHS principal Rudy Perez for permanent display in Stull Gymnasium.

It was also announced that NCHS head track coach Jason Jones has been named the "2008 3A Girls Track and Field Coach of the Year".

Norton ahead 29-22.

That left Phillipsburg with four tries from the 10 but the fired up Blue Jay defense drove them back to the 24 on their first three plays. On the fourth down play, quarterback Weston Coomes passed complete to 222 pound senior tight end Zach Wood over the middle and he headed for the end zone. But, he didn't make it, thanks to a vicious tackle by 145 pound Pfannenstiel!

First quarter

Lane kicked off for Norton and Trevor Smith returned the ball to the 27-yard-line. Hamel tackled Frantz after 4 yards, Dreher and Stanley tackled Derek Rowland after 2 yards. Franz made nothing; the Panthers punted.

Hamel made a fair catch on the Norton 29. Norton gained 5 yards on 3 plays and punted to the Panther 42. Nuzum tackled Franz after 6 yards and Lauer and Dreher dropped Colin Kirchhoff for a 2 yard loss. Illegal procedure cost the Panthers 5 yards but a pass from Coomes to Tanner Thompson was barely good for a first down on the Norton 47 as Hamel made the tackle.

Nuzum, Dreher and Lane threw Smith for a big loss back on the Phillipsburg 45. Rowland gained 6 yards and a flat pass to Wood gained 6 yards. Phillipsburg punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 5.

Lane found no running room on first down and was tackled in the end zone for a safety to put the Panthers on top 2-0.

Smith made a good return of Lane's punt after the safety but a holding penalty set the Panthers back to their 36. Frantz gained 11 yards before Perez tackled him. Lauer and Dreher tackled Frantz after 3 yards and Lane stopped Suchsland after 1. Smith got loose and was run out of bounds one foot short of a first down. Frantz got a first down by inches on the Norton 42. Coomes ran straight ahead for 4 yards then Draper made a good play, knocking down a pass intended for a receiver down the sideline. Illegal procedure cost Phillipsburg 5 yards. On third down, Coomes was sacked by a whole host of Norton defenders!

Phillipsburg punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 14. The Blue Jays made nothing on two running plays as the quarter ended with Phillipsburg on top 2-0.

Second quarter

Perez gained 2 yards before Lane punted to the Norton 49. Rowland lost 1 yard but Frantz ran around left end for a first down on the 32 before Lane tackled him. A whole host of Norton players limited a Phillipsburg back to 2 yards before Lauer tackled Frantz after a short gain. The next down, however, the Panthers got a first down on the 15. Suchsland bulled for 2 hard yards against the stubborn Blue Jay defense, then Dreher blitzed to drop Coomes for a 5 yard loss!

Frantz picked up 7 on the next down before Perez tackled him, then Coomes passed to Thompson for a first down on the 5 by inches!

An illegal procedure penalty cost Phillipsburg 5 yards but Frantz got 4 of it back. The next down, Smith took a pitch from Coomes and ran around right end into the end zone. Wood kicked the extra point, extending the visitors' lead to 9-0 with 7:03 left.

Lane took the Panther kickoff, followed a wall of Norton blockers, then set off on his own and outran the entire Phillipsburg team 90 yards to the end zone! Gall kicked the extra point and it was 9-7 with 6:50 left.

Frantz returned Lane's kickoff

to the 30. On first down, the gang tackling Norton defense dropped Rowland for no gain as Dreher, Lauer and Stanley piled on top of him. Rowland got the call again and lost 1 this time. The Panthers decided to go airborne and were successful as Coomes connected with Chance Keiswetter for a first down on the Phillipsburg 49. A flat pass to Frantz netted 1 but Frantz picked up 11 yards the next down for a first down on the Norton 39.

Frantz got the call again but a big time hit by Dreher dropped him after 1 yard. Frantz ran for 4 yards but Nuzum blitzed and sacked Coomes for an 11 yard loss. The Panthers punted and got a big break when the Norton receiver fumbled and they recovered on the Blue Jay 5-yard-line.

Frantz got nothing on first down as Lane and Dreher were there to meet him. Next, Coomes passed and Norton was penalized half the distance for pass interference. The next play, Frantz scored up the middle. Wood kicked the extra point and Phillipsburg led 16-7 with 1:18 left in the half.

The determined Blue Jays came fighting back and took to the air after Hamel returned the kickoff to the Norton 27. Lane bulled for 1 yard, then Pfannenstiel and Draper connected on a beautiful pass play to the Phillipsburg 34. A roughing the passer penalty took the ball to the 20. Next, Pfannenstiel threw a flat pass to Lane, who eluded several would-be tacklers on his way into the end zone. Gall kicked the extra point, making it 16-14 with just 18 seconds left.

After Gall's kickoff, Phillipsburg got one play and it was half-time.

Third quarter

The second half did not start well for the Blue Jays but they did not give in to adversity. Lane returned the kickoff to the 28 but gained nothing on first down and had a bad exchange with Pfannenstiel on second down. The Panthers recovered the fumbled ball on the Norton 22-yard-line.

The Blue Jay defense was equal to the occasion, however, stopping Frantz for no gain, limiting him to two yards and dropping Thomas Rachow after 1 yard. On fourth down, Stanley and Lauer forced Smith outside, Nuzum turned him in and a whole host of Blue Jays tackled him for a 2 yard loss!

The Blue Jays were unable to move the ball themselves after Stanley got 3 up the middle on Phillipsburg 49.

Kirchhoff gained 4 and Frantz got nothing but Coomes went back to pass and was run out of the pocket. He picked up a first down on the Norton 38.

After Frantz gained 4 yards, the 224 pound Suchsland made the best run of the game for Phillipsburg as he broke several tackles en route to a touchdown. The extra point kick was wide but the Panthers were on top 22-14 with 5:15 left in the quarter.

Norton was determined to get another touchdown and moved downfield quickly after Lane returned the kickoff to the 34. Lane carried three straight times for a first down on the Norton 46. Next, Lane threw a tailback pass to Hamel. It was incomplete but the Panthers were penalized for pass interference. The ball was moved to the Phillipsburg 39.

Stanley bulled ahead for 9, then Perez gained a first down with a 4 yard carry around right end. Pfannenstiel lost 3 yards but made up for it with a 5 yard pass to Dreher. Perez made a good run over the left side of the line but fumbled and the Panthers recovered on the 12.

Frantz gained 3 but Coomes lost 3 as the quarter ended, 22-14.

Fourth quarter

A long Phillipsburg pass was incomplete and they punted to their 40. Pfannenstiel passed to Stanley and he made a great catch before being tackled on the 16. Nuzum plunged for 1 yard. On second down, a Norton fumble on the 2 was picked up by Dreher who sprinted into the end zone for a Blue Jay touchdown!

Pfannenstiel ran the keeper around left end and ran untouched for 2 extra points and a 22-all score with 10:48 left in regulation.

Gall's kickoff was returned to the 34. Kirchhoff gained 5 yards before Hamel and Stanley tackled him. Lane and Stanley stopped Kirchhoff after 2 more but Frantz



The gang-tackling Norton defense got much credit for the Blue Jays' 29-22 double-overtime win over Phillipsburg here Friday, holding the Panthers to 2.76 yards per carry. Above, from left, Nish Millan, No. 51, Zac Dreher, No. 88, Dakota Dreher, No. 81 and Matt Stanley, No. 33, gang up on a Panther ball carrier.

—Telegram phot by Dick Boyd

got a first down up the middle on the 45. Dreher blitzed and tackled Kirchhoff for a minus 1. Lane and company tackled Suchsland for no gain. Hamel and Nuzum dropped Wood for no gain after he caught a flat pass. Phillipsburg punted to the Norton 29 with 7:18 left.

After two running plays went nowhere, Pfannenstiel passed to Dreher for a first down on the Norton 41. A run and two unsuccessful passes later, Lane punted to the Phillipsburg 18. The fighting Jay defense was again equal to the occasion and held the Panthers to three-and-out. They punted to the Norton 27.

Lane gained 6 yards on two carries, then Phillipsburg was off-sides and the Jays got a first down on the 40. The Panthers held this time, however, and Lane punted to the Panther 24. Coomes was sacked and Rowland was stopped for no gain as the whistle sounded to end regulation at 22-all.

First overtime

Norton won the coin toss and took defense to start the extra period on the 10-yard-line. Phillipsburg tried to sweep left end but fumbled and recovered on the 13. Nuzum broke up a pass in the end zone. Norton was called for pass interference and the Panthers got the ball half the distance to the goal with a first down on the 7. Stanley and Van Dorn tackled Frantz for a 1 yard loss. Phillipsburg was penalized for an illegal substitution. A pass was incomplete in the end zone, Rowland ran to the 4 and, on fourth down, Lane and Hamel broke up a pass in the end zone.

Norton was awarded the ball on the 10-yard-line and the Jays also were denied the end zone. Lane gained 3 but Stanley lost 2. A flat pass to Stanley gained back to the 7 and a Gall field goal try missed,

creating another overtime.

Second overtime

Phillipsburg won the coin flip and took defense. Lane gained 2 around left end. Stanley plunged for 2 and Phillipsburg was penalized half the distance on a face mask penalty. Lane got the call again, ran into a crowd over right tackle and emerged standing in the end zone! Gall kicked the extra point and Norton led 29-22, the Blue Jays first lead of the game!

The ball then went to Phillipsburg for four tries from the 10. On first down, an illegal procedure penalty set them back to the 15. Coomes fumbled and recovered the ball on the 20. On second down, Dreher and company sacked Coomes on the 24. Coomes got a third down pass off but Hamel knocked it down in the end zone. On fourth and 24, the Panthers had one final chance to salvage a victory after leading the entire game.

Coomes completed a pass this time. It went to 222 pound senior tight end Wood over the middle and he started for the goalline. He didn't make it, however, as 145 pound junior defensive back Pfannenstiel hit him low, knocked his legs out from under him and he fell to the turf on the 3, ending the game with a thrilling 29-22 victory for the "fighting Blue Jays"!

Individual statistics

Norton rushers were: Lane, 16 for 27; Stanley, 7 for 16; Perez, 4 for 8; Nuzum, 1 for 1; Pfannenstiel, 4 for minus 3.

Pfannenstiel completed 7 of 11 passes for 64 percent, 113 yards and 2 touchdowns. His receivers were: Dreher, 2 for 20; Stanley, 2 for 20; Draper, 1 for 37; Lane, 1 for 19; Gall, 1 for 15.

Lane had 3 kickoff returns for a 42 yard average. He punted 6

times for a 35.2 yard average. Lane also kicked off 2 times for a 46 yard average. Gall kicked off twice for a 31.5 yard average

Leading rusher for Phillipsburg was Frantz with 76 yards on 24 carries. Suchsland had 39 yards on 5 attempts.

Leading tackler for Norton was Zac Dreher with 13 solos, 4 assists, 17 total tackles. He was followed by Matt Stanley, 9 solos, 2 assists, 11 total; Zane Perez, 7 solos, 3 assists, 10 total; Landon Hamel, 6 solos, 1 assist, 7 total; Brock Lauer, 5 solos, 2 assists, 7 total; Ashton Draper, 5 solos, 1 assist, 6 total; Terrell Lane, 6 solos; Brad Nuzum, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Tyler Cook, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; J.D. Gall, 1 solos, 2 assists, 3 total; Nish Millan, 3 assists; John Van Dorn, 3 assists; Dakota Dreher, 2 solos; Kaid McKenna, 2 assists; Landon Keiswetter, 1 solo; Spencer Shirk, 1 assist.

Next action

Norton will venture into the Northwest Kansas League this Friday to play Oberlin in a 7 p.m. contest.

The Red Devils lost their opener to Osborne on Friday night, 34-14.

"They will run a double-wing offense with some shotgun, said coach Melvin.

"Oberlin always plays hard against us so we will have to be ready for them."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton Phillipsburg
9 First Downs 12
50 Yards Rushing 141
113 Yards Passing 65
163 Total Yards 206
7-12-0 Passes Compl. 8-15-0
4-6 Fumbles Lost 0-3
3-12 Penalties 10-73

(785) 877-3361

High School Sports This Week



Norton
Blue Jays



Northern Valley
Huskies



Logan
Trojans

FOOTBALL:

Norton Blue Jays vs. Oberlin Red Devils..... 7 p.m. Friday in Oberlin
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Oberlin 6:30 p.m. Monday in Norton
Northern Valley Huskies vs. Stockton 6:30 p.m. Friday in Almena
Logan Trojans vs. Thunder Ridge 7 p.m. Friday in Logan

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Lady Jays Junior Varsity in Quinter JV Tournament..... 9 a.m. Saturday
Norton Lady Jays C-team vs. Oberlin 5 p.m. Monday in Norton
Logan lady Trojans in Jewell Tournament..... 8 a.m. Saturday in Jewell
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Stockton/Thunder Ridge 4 p.m. Tuesday in Stockton

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton Cross Country in Wamego Invitational 9 a.m. Saturday
Northern Valley Huskies in Rock Hills Invitational 4:30 p.m. Thursday in Mankato

TENNIS:

Norton Lady Jays in Trego JV Round Robin..... 1 p.m. Thursday in WaKeeney
Norton Lady Jays JV Quadrangular 10 a.m. Saturday in Norton
Norton Lady Jays in Goodland Varsity Tournament 3 p.m. Tuesday
Norton Lady Jays in Phillipsburg Varsity Quad..... 3 p.m. Tuesday