

Blue Jays win their Homecoming game

By Dick Boyd

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

The Norton Community High School Homecoming Week was a lot of fun but it wouldn't have been nearly as much fun if the Blue Jays hadn't won the Homecoming Game 27-14 over Oberlin.

Norton's long time rival played hard, looking for an upset, but the Blue Jay offense and defense were too much for the Red Devils, who recovered four of five Norton fumbles to keep the score closer than it probably would have been.

Norton scored the first time they had the ball on a 40 yard run by junior tailback Jacob Brooks, was stopped on Oberlin's 18-yard line on their second possession and led 7-0 after one quarter.

The Blue Jays fumbled the ball away on the Oberlin 27 on the first play of the second quarter. The Red Devils picked up their first first-and-ten of the game but had to punt for the fourth time. Senior quarterback Jordan Wahlmeier completed a 64 yard touchdown pass to Brooks with 7:32 left in the half. Two extra point kicks by sophomore Austin Hager made it 14-0.

Oberlin had the ball twice more in the first half but the Norton defense stopped them both times. The Blue Jays also had the ball twice more in the second quarter but lost the ball the first time on another fumble and ran out of time on the second possession, ending the first half 14-0.

Oberlin punted five times in the first half. Norton was not forced to punt in the half but lost the ball twice on fumbles.

Norton took the opening kickoff of the second half and drove for a third touchdown. Wahlmeier ran 13 yards for the score and Hager added the extra point to make it 21-0 with 8:26 left.

After forcing Oberlin to punt again, Norton was driving but Oberlin's Zach May picked up another Norton fumble and ran 70 yards to the end zone. The extra point attempt was no good, making the score 21-6 with 3:30 left.

The Oberlin defense was fired up after their touchdown and they forced Norton to punt for the first time in the game as the third quarter came to an end.

The Red Devils then drove for their final touchdown. May passed 6 yards to Brent Juenemann for the score. Juenemann passed to Dayton Dreher for 2 extra points and it was suddenly a close game with Norton leading by just 21-14 with 7:46 left to play.

The Red Devils really got excited when Norton fumbled the ball back to them on the Norton 26 after the kickoff. Four downs later and 4 lost yards later, and the Norton defense turned the ball over to the offense after a great stand!

Moments later, Wahlmeier found senior wide receiver Dillon McConney open downfield and hit him with a perfect pass for a 61 yard touchdown to make it 27-14 with 3:29 left. The Red Devils had the ball two more times but did not threaten. They lost the ball one of the times when a pass was intercepted by Norton defensive back Tye Nickell.

Norton dominated the statistics. The Blue Jays rolled up 247 yards rushing for an average of 5.7 yards per carry compared to Oberlin's 69 yards and an average of 1.8 yards per carry.

Norton had 185 yards passing compared to 94 yards for Oberlin. Total yardage for Norton was 432 yards compared to 163 for the Red Devils.

Coach's comments

"Our defense played a good game and gave up very few yards," said Norton head football coach Lucas Melvin. "Both teams played hard.

"We only punted twice in the game but had way too many turnovers. We have to stop the turnovers we've had the last two games.

"If we'd taken care of the ball, we'd have more points.

"It's a continuing process. You just have to keep working to get better."

Starting lineup

Coach Melvin started the following players on the offensive line: senior Casey Temmel, 190 pounds, left tackle; junior Treven Rossi, 165 pounds, left guard; junior Lane Bigge, 200 pounds, center; senior Kurt Douglas, 175 pounds, right guard; junior Alex Riggins, 275 pounds, right tackle; senior Dillon McConney, 150 pounds, wide receiver; junior Carson McKenna, 155 pounds, wide receiver; senior Robert Blecha, 180 pounds, tight end; senior Jordan Wahlmeier, 180 pounds, quarterback; senior Tye Nickell, 150 pounds, fullback; junior Jacob Brooks, 175 pounds, tailback.

Starting on defense for the Blue Jays were: junior Eli Bozarth, 160 pounds and senior Justin Waggoner, 145 pounds, ends; senior Damian Davis, 165 pounds and junior Lucas Engel, 180 pounds, tackles; junior John Risewick, 140 pounds; junior Dalton Miller, 185 pounds; senior Cayleb Campbell, 185 pounds and senior Taylor Meder, 145 pounds, linebackers; Jacob Brooks, Carson McKenna, Tye Nickell, defensive backs.

Individual statistics

Jacob Brooks was the leading ball carrier for Norton with 107 yards on 14 carries for an average of 7.6 yards per carry. Tye Nickell gained 70 yards on 17 carries for an average of 4.1 yards per tote. Jordan Wahlmeier picked up 42 yards on 7 carries for an average of 6 yards per carry.

Other Norton ball carriers and their yardage were: Dillon McConney, 2 for 6; Austin Hager, 1 for 19; Jared Bohl, 1 for 5.

Wahlmeier completed 6 of 13 passes for 46 percent and 185 yards. His receivers were: Robert Blecha, 2 for 23; Jacob Brooks, 2 for 92; Dillon McConney, 2 for 69.

Wahlmeier punted twice for a 41 yard average.

Nickell had 2 punt returns for an average of 18.5 and Brooks had 2 punt returns for an average of 21.

Brooks had 2 kickoff returns for a 12.5 average and Nickell had 1 kickoff return for 16 yards.

Hager kicked off 5 times for an average of 43.8.

Leading rusher for Oberlin was Zach May with 29 yards on 13 carries. Brent Juenemann had 23 yards on 21 tries.

Dayton Dreher caught 8 passes for 68 yards. Juenemann completed 9 of 17 passes for 53 percent and 80 yards.

Tackles

Leading tackler for Norton was Cayleb Campbell with 8 solos, followed by: Lucas Engel, 4 solos, 2 assists, 6 total; John Risewick, 6 solos; Dalton Miller, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Eli Bozarth, 4 solos; Treven Rossi, 4 solos; Damian Davis, 3 solos; Kolton Harting, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Tye Nickell, 2 solos, 1 assists, 3 total; Jacob Brooks, 2 solos; Austin Hager, 2 solos; Carson McKenna, 2 solos; Taylor Meder, 2 solos; Justin Waggoner, 2 solos; Lane Bigge, 1 solo; Trever Lewis, 1 solo; Tyler Lewis, 1 solo; Stewart Whitney, 1 solo.

First quarter

Oberlin's Dayton Dreher returned Austin Hager's kickoff to the Oberlin 25. Taylor Meder tackled Brent Juenemann after 2 yards. Eli Bozarth and Damian Davis dropped quarterback Juenemann for a loss on the 15. Davis and Cayleb Campbell stopped Juenemann after 4 and Oberlin punted.

Tye Nickell returned the ball 21 yards to the Oberlin 32. Jacob Brooks made a good gain around left end but it was nullified by a holding penalty. After an incomplete Wahlmeier pass, Brooks ran 40 yards for Norton's first touchdown.

Austin Hager's extra point kick was perfect and the Blue

Jays led 7-0 with 9:15 on the clock.

Juenemann returned Hager's kickoff to the 27-yard line where Kolton Harting and Stewart Whitney combined for the tackle. Eli Bozarth tackled Juenemann after 5, Chris Anderson gained 2 up the middle and Bozarth and John Risewick stopped Juenemann after 1. Oberlin punted.

The ball went out of bounds on the Norton 41. Wahlmeier ran the keeper to the 49, then passed over the middle to Robert Blecha for a first down on the Oberlin 42.

Brooks got nothing, Nickell gained 3 and Brooks ran around right end to the 26 for a first down, Wahlmeier ran the keeper to the 11 but Norton was flagged for holding and was penalized back to the 32. Nickell ran for 2, a pass was incomplete and Wahlmeier ran to the 22. A reverse to Dillon McConney went to the 18 but it was short of a first down.

Risewick stopped Juenemann for no gain and Risewick and Tyler Lewis tackled the next Red Devil for no gain. Kennedy Fortin gained 3 and Oberlin punted.

Brooks got a good block by Jared Bohl and returned the punt to the Oberlin 44. Nickell ran around right end for 7 but lost 3 on second down. Wahlmeier passed to Blecha and he made a diving catch on the Oberlin 27 for a first down.

Second quarter

Norton fumbled on the first play of the second quarter and Oberlin recovered on their 25. Zach May picked up 6, then ran again and a face mask penalty against Norton moved the ball to the 41 for Oberlin's initial first down of the game. Campbell put a hard hit on May for no gain. Tyler Lewis was hurt on the play and went out of the game. Oberlin was penalized for a chop block and the ball was moved back to the 27.

Hager tackled May for a 1 yard loss, then he got 4 on a sweep before Meder tackled him. A halfback pass was ineffective and Carson McKenna came up to make the tackle.

Oberlin punted and Nickell returned the ball to the 36. Wahlmeier went back to pass, avoided several would-be tacklers and fired a pass to Brooks, who dashed down the sideline for a 64-yard Norton touchdown! Hager split the uprights and it was 14-0 with 7:32 left in the half.

Dreher returned Hager's kickoff to the 25. Juenemann gained 6 before Campbell stopped him. May got a first down on the 36, then ran to the 41 where Lucas Engel tackled him. Nickell tackled Fortin on the Norton 46 for Oberlin's second first and ten. A host of Norton tacklers stopped Juenemann after 2, a pass was incomplete, Campbell sacked Juenemann for a loss and Oberlin punted.

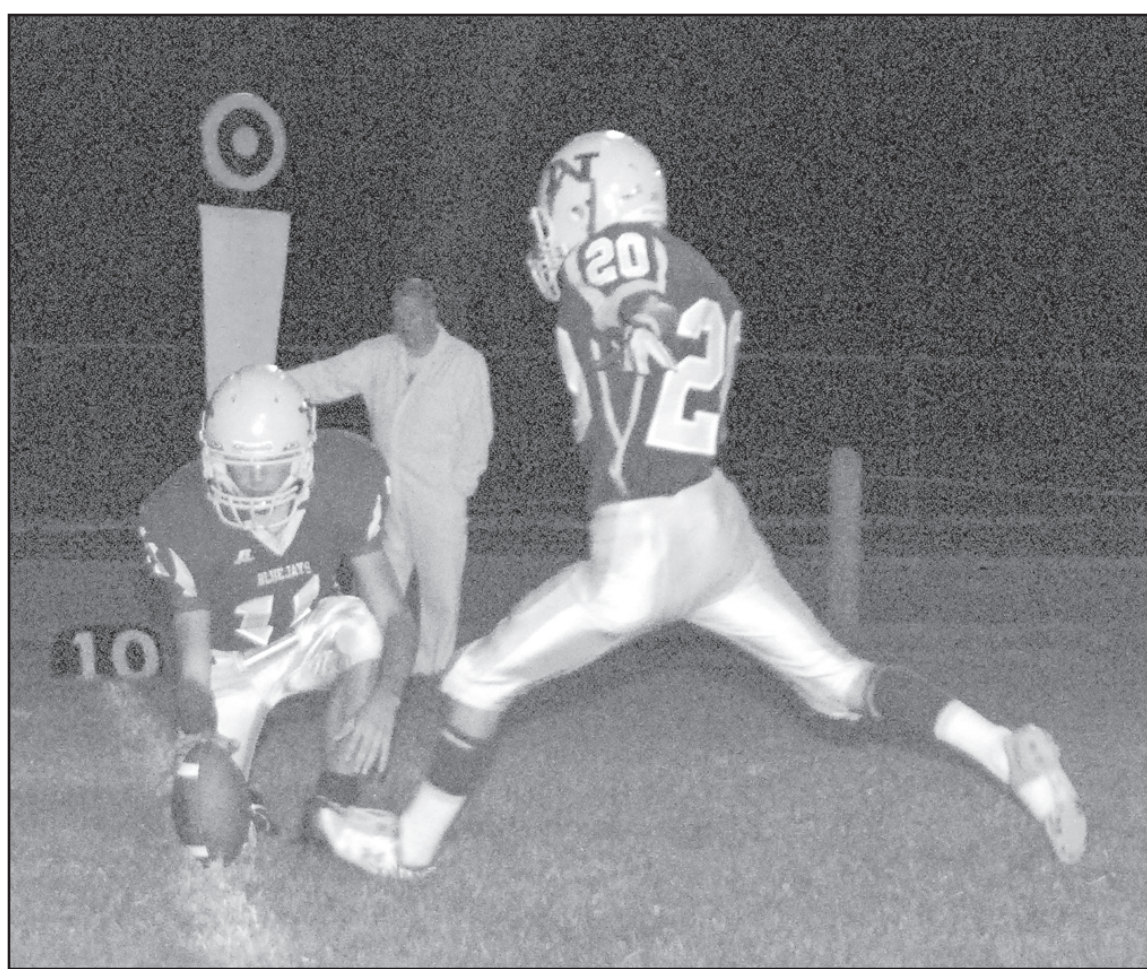
Brooks returned the punt to the Norton 30 but a Norton fumble on first down gave Oberlin the ball on the Blue Jay 38. May gained 5 before Campbell tackled him. May then got a first down on the 27. Juenemann gained 2 and May tacked on 3. The Norton defense stuffed the next play for no gain, a pass was incomplete and the Blue Jays regained possession.

Brooks ran around left end for a first down on the 32. Nickell added 8 more, then Austin Hager came in, got a big hole and ran 17 yards for another Norton first down.

With time running out in the first half, Norton went to the air but could not score again before intermission.

Third quarter

The Blue Jays didn't waste any time getting in the end zone when they received the second half kickoff. Brooks returned the pigskin to the 33. Nickell ran for 3, then Wahlmeier ran the keeper for a first down on the Oberlin 44. Nickell gained 7, a pass was incomplete and



Norton sophomore Austin Hager splits the uprights for another extra point kick after a Blue Jay touchdown in the Homecoming win over Oberlin on Friday night. Holding the ball for him was senior Dillon McConney. Hager also kicks off for the Blue Jays.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Brooks gained 1. Nickell found a hole and sprinted to the 20 for another first down. Jared Bohl gained 4 and Nickell plunged for 3 more. Wahlmeier ran the keeper around left end for the touchdown. Hager's kick made it 21-0 with 8:26 remaining.

Juenemann returned Hager's kickoff to the 35. On first down, Meder dropped him for a 2 yard loss. A pass to Dayton Dreher was good for 4 as Campbell made the stop. After an incomplete pass, Oberlin punted out of bounds on the Norton 11.

With Norton mixing runs by Brooks and Nickell and passes to Brooks and McConney from Wahlmeier, Norton moved downfield and appeared to be headed for another touchdown. May changed things when he picked up a fumble and ran 70 yards for Oberlin's first touchdown. The kick for extra point failed, making the score 21-6 with 3:30 left.

Brooks returned the kickoff to the Norton 28. The Blue Jays were unable to make a first down, however, and Wahlmeier punted for the first time in the game. Oberlin moved the ball to the Red Devil 42 as the quarter ended.

Fourth quarter

With Junemann and May picking up yards, Oberlin moved downfield and finished their first and only touchdown drive of the game with three passes to Dreher and a 6-yard pass from Juenemann to May for the score. Dreher passed to Juenemann for 2 points, making

the score 21-14 with 7:46 left in the contest.

Nickell returned the kickoff but a holding penalty moved the Jays back to their 15-yard line. Brooks gained 7 around right end but Norton fumbled the next down and the Red Devils recovered on the Blue Jay 26.

Once again the tough Norton defense was equal to the occasion. After an Oberlin back lost 4 on first down, they went to the air but a good pass rush and alert secondary kept the Red Devils from completing a pass. Norton regained possession on their 30.

Nickell gained 4, Brooks got 7, Norton fumbled but recovered for a minus 5, Nickell ran for 4, then Wahlmeier threw a perfect pass to a wide open Dillon McConney streaking down the sideline for a 61 yard touchdown! A run for 2 extra points was just short but Norton had extended their lead to 27-14 with only 3:29 left in the game.

Juenemann returned Hager's kickoff to the 25 and a face mask penalty against Norton moved the ball to the 40. Two passes were complete to Dreher but Nickell stepped in front of a third for an interception on the Norton 37. Brooks lost 3, Nickell gained 3 and a pass was incomplete. Wahlmeier punted for just the second time in the game.

Juenemann returned the punt and Miller and Harting combined to tackle him on the Oberlin 29. A pass was incomplete, then the quarterback was sacked.

After another incomplete pass and short keeper by the quarterback, the gun sounded with the Blue Jays earning their third win of the young season by a 27-14 score.

Next action

Coach Melvin's Blue Jay grid-ders will meet a tough foe this Friday night when they travel to Smith Center to take on the Redmen, who suffered their first loss of the season last Friday to an outstanding Plainville eleven by a score of 30-23.

Leading the charge for Smith Center's high-powered offense will be senior running back Truitt Kuhlmann. The speedy Kuhlmann gained almost 1,000 yards rushing last season and scored 17 touchdowns.

"It will be a tough game at Smith Center," said coach Melvin. "Their game with Plainville could have gone either way.

"We can't afford to make any mistakes against them. We must play very sound, disciplined football and everyone must do his job on every play.

"Our young men will have to really step up and we'll have to make some plays.

"Kuhlmann is a very good runner and they have a good defense."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton		Oberlin
11	First Downs	9
247	Yards Rushing	69
432	Total Yards	163
6-13-0	Passes Compl.	11-22-1
4-5	Fumbles Lost	0-0
2-41	Punts	6-38.5
5-47	Penalties	1-15

Proud of the Norton Blue Jay Football team. Game well played!

High School Sports This Week



Norton
Blue Jays



Northern Valley
Huskies



Logan
Trojans

FOOTBALL:

Norton Blue Jays vs. Smith Center	7 p.m. Friday in Smith Center
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Phillipsburg	6 p.m. Monday in Phillipsburg
Northern Valley Huskies vs. Palco	7 p.m. Friday in Palco
Northern Valley Junior Varsity vs. Palco	6 p.m. Monday in Almena
Logan Trojans vs. Victoria	7 p.m. Friday in Victoria

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Lady Jays vs. Colby and Atwood V, JV	4:30 p.m. Today in Colby
Norton Lady Jays in Hays Quad V, JV	4 p.m. Thursday in Hays
Norton Lady Jays in Decatur Invite V, JV -Hoxie, St. Francis, Atwood, Oberlin	9 a.m. Saturday in Oberlin
Norton Lady Jays vs. Smith Center, Trego V, JV	5 p.m. Tuesday in Smith Center
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Southern Valley, Franklin	4 p.m. Today in Almena
Northern Valley Lady Huskies in Ellis Invitational	8:30 a.m. Saturday in Ellis
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Golden Plains, Tri-Plains	4 p.m. Tuesday in Almena
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Palco, Thunder Ridge	4 p.m. Tuesday in Logan

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton Cross Country V, JV in Oberlin Invitational	5 p.m. Today in Oberlin
Northern Valley Huskies Cross Country in Oberlin Invitational	5 p.m. Today in Oberlin

TENNIS:

Norton Lady Jays in Colby Tournament	3 p.m. Today in Colby
Norton Lady Jays in MCL Tourney in WaKeeney	9 a.m. Saturday in WaKeeney
Norton Lady Jays in Colby JV Tournament	9 a.m. Saturday in Colby