

# Blue Jays have victory over Plainville

By Dick Boyd

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With both the offense and defense clicking on all cylinders, the Norton Community High School football team produced its best performance of the young season on Friday night with an impressive 28-8 Mid-Continent League victory at Plainville.

"We hoped our offensive schemes would fit their defensive schemes, and they did," said Norton coach Lucas Melvin. "We were also happy that our defense, except for their first possession, shut them out.

"We prepared well in practice this week and did a better job of executing. We've always played hard, but we took it up a notch and played hard on each down. Our offense and defense dominated the line of scrimmage.

"We still need to improve and will keep working on that. We still had too many fumbles."

Senior Austin Hager kicked off for Norton, and the Cardinals' game highlight came when 6'5", 215 pound senior quarterback Hadley Gillum went back to pass on third down and ran up the middle instead. He was finally brought down on the Norton 1-yard line. Gillum scored on a sneak and also scored two extra points to put the home team ahead 8-0 with 11:25 left in the first quarter.

After the kickoff, each team was three-and-out before Norton drove to the Cardinal 33 before running out of downs. The Bluejays defense was equal to the occasion again and Plainville punted to the Norton 39.

At this point, senior tailback Tanner Furbush ignited the Norton offense with a big run, breaking at least two tackles on the way to a 61 yard touchdown. Hager split the uprights and Norton trailed 8-7 with 5:07 left in the first.

After Hager's kickoff, Plainville was hurt by a holding penalty and punted to the Norton 38. On second down, senior fullback Toby Nickell eluded one tackler and sprinted 40 yards to the Plainville 19.

Furbush gained 10 yards on two carries, then junior running back Jared Tallent picked up a first down on the 7. Norton fumbled, but recovered, and Furbush plunged to the 3 as the quarter ended.

Plainville held the Bluejays out of the end zone but fumbled the ball back to Norton. On fourth down, Norton sophomore Jordan Dole



The Norton defense was exceptional in Friday's Mid-Continent League win at Plainville. Pictured here sacking the Cardinal quarterback are from left, Mickey Hahn (under the pile), Kendall Miller, No. 11; Conor Cox, No. 88 and Jacob Green, No. 53.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

ran into the end zone untouched. Hager kicked the extra point, putting Norton ahead 14-8 with 9:25 left.

After Hager's kickoff, a holding penalty hurt Plainville but a facemask penalty cost Norton. The Cardinals were forced to punt to the Norton 28. A long pass from quarterback Dole to junior wide receiver Kobie Unterseher excited the Norton fans until they learned that the Bluejays had been called for holding on the play. The ball came back to the Norton 18.

The Bluejays offense went back to their running game. Furbush bulled to the 27, and Nickell picked up a first down on the 39. Dole passed to senior wide receiver Drew Schrum for another first-and-10 on the Cardinal 38. Two Norton fumbles, although they were recovered by Norton, stopped

the drive, and Nickell punted to the Plainville 7.

The Cardinals responded, but senior cornerback Austin Hager intercepted a Gillum pass on the Norton 13-yard line with just 22 seconds left in the first half.

Furbush returned the second-half kickoff to the Norton 40. He and Tallent gained yards into Cardinal territory but the Bluejays fumbled the ball away on the Cardinal 24.

After one first down, Plainville punted to the Norton 15. With Furbush taking all the carries, Norton moved to midfield. Tallent got in on the carries as the Bluejays drove for another touchdown. Furbush bulled in from the 8-yard line, Hager split the uprights and Norton extended its lead to 21-8 with 3:08 left.

After the kickoff, Plainville went strictly to the passing game, but the

Norton defense was equal to the challenge. Except for one pass to the Norton 35, Gillum was sacked many times by the Bluejays. Norton took over on their own 40 as the fourth quarter got underway.

After one first down, Norton fumbled again and Plainville recovered. The Cardinals drove to the Norton 16 before they ran out of downs. Nickell got Norton out of their own end of the field with a great run to the Plainville 49.

Coach Melvin let five backs - Junior Christian Boser, Furbush, Tallent, Nickell and sophomore Gavin Lively - get in on the final running plays, and all gained good yardage. Lively's run was a 17 yarder to the 1. After a fumble recovered by Norton and a five-yard penalty for encroachment, Dole passed 8 yards to junior tight end Conor Cox for another touchdown.

Hager was perfect again on the extra point, extending the Norton lead to 28-8 with 2:14 left.

After Hager's kickoff, time ran out on the home team.

## Individual statistics

Norton had a big edge in statistics. The Bluejays totaled 384 yards rushing with a 7.7 yards-per-carry average. The Bluejays defense limited the Cardinals to 132 yards rushing and a 3-yard average.

Furbush had a career rushing game. He carried the pigskin 22 times for 198 yards and a 9 yards per carry average. Nickell also had a great night, 7 carries for 97 yards and a 13.9 yards average. Tallent had 10 carries for 76 yards and a 7.6 yards average. Other Norton ball carriers were Lively, 1 for 17; Boser, 1 for 2 yards; and Dole, 9 for minus 6 with sack losses.

Dole completed 3 of 10 passes for 33 yards. His receivers were Schrum, 1 for 23; Cox, 1 for 8; Nickell, 1 for 2.

Nickell had two punts for a 37.5 yard average. Hager had five kickoffs for a 46.8 yard average and one pass interception for 3 yards. Furbush had 1 kickoff return for 21 yards. Breven Sondergaard had one fumble recovery.

## Tackles

Leading tackler for Norton was Lively with 8 solos, 4 assists. Second high was Hager with 6 solos, 3 assists. They were followed by Nickell, 6 solos, 1 assist; Stewart Whitney, 2 solos, 4 assists; Trever Lewis, 2 solos, 3 assists; Mickey Hahn, 3 solos, 2 assists; Cole Renner, 3 solos, 2 assists; Sondergaard, 3 solos, 2 assists; Dole, 4 solos; Kendall Miller, 1 solo, 2 assists; Boser, 2 solos; Furbush, 1 solo, 1 assist; Jacob Green, 2 solos; Kobie Unterseher, 2 assists; Derick Campbell, Cox, Hager, Tyus Henson, Ethan Ross, and Cody Temmel, all with 1 solo; and Tallent, 1 assist.

## Next action

Norton will play the Oberlin Red Devils at home at 7 p.m. this Friday night.

## GAME STATISTICS

NORTON		PLAINVILLE
15	First Downs	10
384	Yards Rushing	132
33	Yards Passing	91
417	Total Yards	223
3-10-0	Passes Completed	5-13-1
2-7	Fumbles Lost	1-3
2-37.5	Punts	5-37
10-75	Penalties	11-85

# Lady Jay runners bring home another championship

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School girls cross country team won the championship for the third year in a row and the boys cross country team placed sixth in the annual Hays Invitational Meet on Thursday.

The Lady Jays scored 38 points and were followed by Ellinwood, 51; Colby, 88; Goodland, 88; Plainville, 110; Thomas More Prep Marian of Hays, 119.

Ellinwood was the boys champion with 33 points, followed by Goodland, 57; Thomas More Prep, 65; Colby, 105; Plainville, 120; Norton, 123.

## GIRLS

Norton junior Sierra Griffith placed fourth individually with a time of 16:59. She was followed by senior Darcy Bainter, sixth, 17:21; senior Katelyn Engelbert, eighth, 17:34; sopho-

more Molly Maddy, 10th, 17:41 and senior Marisa Maddy, 16th, 18:04.

Also running for the Norton varsity was sophomore Raenee Patterson. She finished 22nd in 18:40.

Junior varsity girls running for Norton and their places and times were freshman Macayla Kent, 28th, 20:47; freshman Shania Burns, 37th, 21:13; sophomore Kylie Perez, 56th, 21:36; freshman Starla Tischhauser, 92nd, 33:04.

"This was a fantastic race for our girls," said Norton head cross country coach George Rossi. "We were coming off a great Wamego race with just a little turn around to face a very good Ellinwood team which finished second in the very large Hesston meet a week ago.

"Our girls average time was second only to Garden City, which is a 6A powerhouse.

"Sierra had another fantastic race, followed closely by Darcy, Katelyn, Molly, Marisa and Raenee. Our 1-5 split was much better at 1:05, which is half of what it was last week. It was the smallest split of any girls team from 1 to 6A.

"This is good race to have between Wamego and Rim Rock because it is a flat out foot race. This time it was a bit tougher with a pretty strong headwind the last half mile.

"Our girls did a great job of getting in a position and holding it. Right now, the hardest thing is to keep the sharp mental focus. We are in the middle of the season and sometimes you let off. We can't afford to be complacent or get a big head. We travel to Lawrence on Saturday to run at Rim Rock where there are around 3,000 entries for the 12 races. This is the ultimate test with a college football

atmosphere and around 5,000 to 6,000 people at the course."

The top five runners were: Joanna Strecker, Ellinwood, 16:29.40, first; Jessie Rubottom, Ness City, 16:43.26, second; Andrea Browne, Colby, 16:49.12, third; Sierra Griffith, Norton, 16:59.36, fourth; and Lacie Siruta, Goodland, 17:04.73, fifth.

## BOYS

Senior Marc Miller hit the finish line first for the Blue Jays with a fourth place finish in 18:14.

He was followed by junior Dalton Vanover, 23rd, 20:31; senior Garret Otter, 37th, 22:16; senior Keith Sander, 39th, 22:24 and sophomore Weston Erbert, 41st, 22:52.

Also running for the Norton varsity and finishing just behind Erbert in 42nd place with a time of 23:09 was sophomore James King.

Junior varsity runners for Norton and their places and times were sophomore Skylar Johnson, 87th, 22:53; senior Kailen Kawahara, 150th, 26:33; junior David Smith, 151st, 26:33; freshman Harrison Woodyard, 152nd, 26:38.

"We took another hit to our boys team this week with Nate Hartwell sidelined by an injury," said coach Rosin.

"Marc Miller did have a great race, trimming about 30 seconds off last year's time for a fourth place finish and it also placed him in the top ten overall with the 5 and 6A race.

"Skylar Johnson on the junior varsity side had almost a two minute improvement from last year.

"Our boys are trying as best as they can but when three of our top four runners aren't running, it makes things pretty tough. We will play the hand we have been

dealt and make the best of it and, hopefully, each of our boys will continue to improve."

The top five runners were: Pedro Montoya, Ellinwood, 15:14.27, first; Dray Carson, Ness City, 16:03.75, second; Kyle Oglesbee, Ellinwood, 18:05.15, third; Marc Miller, Norton, 18:14.20, fourth and Connor Hawkins, Ness City, 18:25, fifth.

## Next action

The Norton junior varsity runners will compete on Thursday in the Hill City Cross Country Meet at the Prairie Trails Golf Course at 5 p.m.

The Norton varsity will compete on Saturday in the Rim Rock Classic, which will be held north of Lawrence.

The Norton boys will run at 10:30 a.m. and the girls at noon.

# Northern Valley Huskies return with a win over the Hill City Ringnecks

By Mike Stephens

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The Northern Valley Huskies traveled to Hill City on Friday and came away with a 56-22 win over the Ringnecks.

The Huskies built an early lead behind the running of seniors Jordan Baird and Hunter Chandler. Baird got things started with a 53-yard touchdown just 37 seconds into the game. Chandler would add a 20-yard touchdown run of his own and it was 12-0 Huskies. Chandler opened the second quarter with a 1-yard dive into the end zone, and it was quickly 20-0 Huskies.

The Ringnecks got on the board late in the second quarter when Clay Money scored on an 11-yard run. Hill City would score first in the third quarter. Ethan Gansel was on the receiving end of a 5-yard Chase Smith touchdown pass, and the Huskies' lead was cut to 20-14, but that would be it for the Ringnecks for a while.

The Huskies would score five unanswered touchdowns after that. Chandler connected with

Matt Stutsman on a 16-yard strike, making it 28-14 Huskies. Next possession, Phillip Bryant broke through the Ringnecks' defense for a 34 yard touchdown run and Chandler would dive in again from the 1. The Huskies were cruising 42-14. Baird closed out the third by recovering a Ringnecks fumble in the end zone, giving the Huskies a 34-point lead going into the fourth quarter.

Chandler would score his fourth touchdown on the night midway through the fourth on a 21-yard run, making the score 56-14. The Ringnecks scored as time ran out, but it didn't change the outcome, as the Huskies won 56-22.

"We got off to a good start and built a 20-0 lead," said Northern Valley coach Chuck Fessenden. "Hill City did a nice job and cut the lead to 20-14.

"Our kids really responded well at that point. We scored five straight touchdowns to take control of the game. Hill City forced us to put the ball in the air, and Hunter (Chandler)

threw some nice passes.

"The adjustments we made on defense slowed down Hill City's running game after their second touchdown."

## Huskies rushing:

Baird, 16 rushes, 167 yards, 10.4 avg.  
Bryant, 14 rushes, 110 yards, 7.9 avg.  
Chandler, 14 rushes, 79 yards, 5.6 avg.  
Drake Shearer, 3 rushes, 18 yards, 6.0 avg.  
Carson Wallace, 2 rushes, 6 yards, 3.0 avg.  
Philip Rupp, 2 rushes, -2 yards, -1.0 avg.

## Huskies passing:

Chandler, 5 completions, 6 attempts, 71 yards, 1 TD  
Huskies receiving:  
Baird, 2 receptions, 24 yards  
Clint Cole, 1 reception, 28 yards  
Stutsman, 1 reception, 16 yards, 1 TD  
Brant Cox, 1 reception, 3 yards

## Huskies tackles:

Ame Baird, 8 solo, 4 assists  
Chandler, 8 solo, 3 assists



Huskies running back Jordan Baird finds a big hole in the Ringnecks defense on Friday in Hill City. Baird rushed for 167 yards and scored two touchdowns in the Huskies dominating victory, 56-22, over the Hill City Ringnecks.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

Cox, 8 solo, 2 assists  
Stutsman, 7 solo, 2 assists, 1 interception (0 yards)  
Jordan Baird, 6 solo, 3 assists, 1 interception (22 yards)

Phillip Bryant, 7 solo, 1 assist  
Ian Vincent, 5 solo, 2 assists  
Clint Cole, 3 solo, 3 assists  
Jared Seals, 2 solo, 0 assists  
Philip Rupp, 1 solo, 0 assists

Carson Wallace, 1 solo, 0 assists  
Dalton Smith, 1 solo, 0 assists  
Matt Florence, 0 solo, 1 assist