

# Despite penalties, Blue Jays prevail by 21

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School football team scored five touchdowns, three of which counted, and the "Blue Swarm" defense did their job in a 21-0 win over Lakin at Travis Field on Tuesday evening to win their Class 3A Bi-District championship!

For the third straight game, penalties hampered Norton's offensive production. In the District win over Goodland, Norton had 117 yards in penalties and, in the win over previously unbeaten Scott City, the Blue Jays recorded 89 yards in penalties.

On Tuesday evening, Norton had 90 yards in penalties. One touchdown was called back for holding and another for an illegal block, both in the scoreless second half.

Meanwhile, the Norton defense limited Lakin to 3.1 yards per carry and 43 percent pass completions. Lakin had just seven first downs in the game, four in the first half and three in the second. The Bronc offense was also frustrated by one pass interception and one fumble recovery by the aggressive Blue Jay defense. Lakin never seriously threatened to score.

After a scoreless first quarter, Norton had the pigskin on three occasions in the second quarter and scored on all three. The Blue Jays drove 64 yards to score their first touchdown with 6:31 left in the period. Senior fullback Matt Stanley got the scoring honors as he plunged 1 yard into the end zone.

With 3:15 remaining, sophomore tailback Terrell Lane ran 45 yards for the second Blue Jay touchdown. Lane scored again, this time from 14 yards out with 44 seconds on the scoreboard clock. Sophomore kicker Caleb Laughlin split the uprights on all three extra point kicks and the Jays led 21-0 at intermission.

Lane had another great rushing game, carrying the ball 30 times for 203 yards and a 6.8 yards per carry average.

#### Coach's comments

"Our defense played well again but we had some offensive problems," said coach Melvin.

"The wind hampered our passing game so they moved a lot of players up close to the line of scrimmage and took away our option game. Our offensive line did a good job against their extra players in the box.

"We lost a lot of yards on penalties again and must correct that phase of our game."

#### Starters for Norton

Coach Melvin named the same starting lineup as in the win over Goodland. They were: Landon Hamel, Ashton Draper, wide receivers; J.D. Gall, tight end; Nish Millan, Zac Dreher, tackles; Brock Lauer, Brad Nuzum, guards; Kaid McKenna, center; Connor Pfannenstiel, quarterback; Matt Stanley, fullback; Terrell Lane, tailback, offense; Tyler Cook, Lauer, ends; Nuzum, John Van Doren, tackles; Stanley, Zac Dreher, Lane, linebackers; Pfannenstiel, Zane Perez, Hamel, Draper, backs, defense.

#### Individual statistics

In addition to Lane's rushing yardage, other Norton ball carriers and their yardage were: Matt Stanley, 8 for 15; Connor Pfannenstiel, 2 for 10; Zane Perez, 6 for 11.

Pfannenstiel completed 3 of 14 passes for 37 yards. Ashton Draper caught 1 pass for 12 yards and Matt Stanley 1 for 25 yards.

Landon Hamel did another outstanding job of returning punts. He had 6 returns for 76 yards and a 13 yard average.

Lane had 1 kickoff return for 24 yards. He also had 6 punts for a 35 yard average. Caleb Laughlin had 4 kickoffs for a 43 yard average.

Leading rusher for Lakin was quarterback Beau Bird with 42 yards on 13 attempts. Bird was 6 of 17 in the passing department.

Leading tacklers for Norton were Zac Dreher with 9 solos, 4 assists, 13 total and Matt Stanley, 8 solos, 3 assists, 11 total. They were followed by: Ashton Draper, 5 solos, 2 assists, 7 total; Terrell Lane, 5 solos; Brock Lauer, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; John Van Doren, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Zane Perez, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Brad Nuzum, 3 solos; Landon Hamel, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Kaid McKenna, 2 solos; Tyler Cook, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Conner Pfannenstiel, 1 solo; Billy Broeckelman, 1 solo; J.D. Gall, 1 assist.

#### First quarter

Matt Stanley made the tackle for Norton on the opening kickoff on the Lakin 24-yard-line. A 5 yard gain on a pass was nullified by an illegal block penalty. Michael Pepper was tackled after 2 yards by Landon Hamel. Two passes by quarterback Beau Bird fell incomplete and Lakin punted.

The ball rolled dead on the Norton 33. Lane was stopped for no gain, then ran around right end for a first down on the Norton 47. Stanley plunged for 4, then Lane legged the pigskin to the Lakin 36 for another first down. Stanley got 3 on 2 carries and a Pfannenstiel pass was incomplete. Lane was stopped short of a first down and Lakin took over on their 34.

Evan Holmes was thrown for a 5 yard loss by Stanley. Pepper gained 1 before Zac Dreher and Brock Lauer tackled him. Bird passed to tight end Tanner Berning for a first down on the Lakin 44 where Zane Perez made the stop. Alex Jones caught a flat pass but Dreher, Stanley and Perez smothered him for a 1 yard loss. Bird ran a draw for 7 before Stanley and Dreher made the tackle. Next, Bird ran a keeper for 2 and Stanley and Lauer combined for the stop. Bird sneaked on a first down attempt but the "Blue Swarm" stopped him six inches short!

Lane plowed the middle for 5 but illegal procedure cost Norton that 5. Pfannenstiel lost 1 on the keeper, a pass was incomplete and Lane punted.

Bird made a fair catch on the Lakin 20. Lauer tackled Holmes after 2 but Holmes found a hole on the next play and rambled for a 23 yard gain before Perez and Lane ran him out of bounds. The next play, Ashton Draper alertly intercepted a Lakin pass with a diving catch on the Norton 38.

Perez gained 1 on 2 carries, then Pfannenstiel connected with Hamel to the Lakin 32 but holding on Norton brought the ball back to the Norton 42. Lane ran around right end for a first down on the Lakin 42. Stanley bulled for 2, then Hamel got the ball on a reverse that went no where and Norton was penalized back to the Blue Jay 44 for a personal foul.

#### Second quarter

Perez gained nothing and Lane punted. The ball rolled dead on the Lakin 15. J.D. Gall and Dreher ganged up on Blake Garcia and he lost 4. Bird passed to Pepper on the 22 and Draper and Dreher made the tackle. Pepper gained 1 before Lauer and Gall dropped him to the turf. Lakin lost 5 for an illegal substitution and punted.

Hamel returned the ball to the Lakin 36. Lane gained 3, then ran for a first down on the 25. Lane ran to the 15 and then powered to the 10. Stanley bulled to the 5, Lane plunged to the 1 and Stanley ran up the middle for Norton's first touchdown of the night. Laughlin split the uprights with his extra point kick but it was nullified by an illegal motion penalty. After a 5 yard penalty, Laughlin kicked it again and Norton led 7-0 with 6:31 left in the period.

Chandon Moreno returned Laughlin's kickoff to the Lakin 29 where Lauer made the tackle. Garcia ran up the middle for 8 before Pfannenstiel and Draper stopped him. Bird tried a draw but Van Doren, Tyler Cook and

Stanley stopped him for no gain. Lauer smashed Bird for a 2 yard loss and Lakin punted.

Hamel returned the ball to the Norton 40. Lane ran for 11 and Stanley 5. Then, Lane powered around the right end and broke several tackles en route to the end zone for a 45 yard touchdown! Laughlin's extra point kick made it 14-0 with 3:15 left in the half.

As he usually does, Stanley came downfield like a shot out of a cannon on Laughlin's kickoff to tackle Jones on the Lakin 16! Stanley stopped Pepper after a 4 yard gain, a pass was incomplete and Dreher and Stanley tackled Pepper after 2. Lakin punted, Hamel got a great block from Gall and returned the pigskin to the Lakin 41.

A pass was incomplete and Norton was penalized 5 for illegal procedure. Lane gained 2, then Pfannenstiel completed a 24 yard pass to Stanley on the Lakin 20. A flat pass to Lane was good for a number of yards but a holding penalty nullified it. Pfannenstiel threw a 12 yard pass to Draper on the 14, then Lane ran around right end for the Jays' third touchdown. Laughlin kicked the extra point, making it 21-0 with 44 seconds remaining.

Perez tackled Jones after a good kickoff return but an illegal block by Lakin brought the ball back to the Lakin 44. Bird ran a draw but Kaid McKenna, Van Doren and Stanley wouldn't budge and he came up with nothing. A flat pass to Berning gained 9 and Bird ran out of the pocket for a first down on the Norton 36 where Pfannenstiel and Dreher ran him out of bounds. Lakin had 2 incomplete passes, a 5 yard penalty and Lauer sacked Bird as halftime arrived with the Blue Jays ahead 21-0.

#### Third quarter

Lane returned the kickoff to the Norton 35. After Lane gained 1, two passes were incomplete and Lane punted. Bird was tackled by McKenna on the Lakin 27.

Bird made a good run but it was nullified by a holding penalty. After two incomplete passes, Bird threw again and this time connected with Dylan Shalberg downfield for a 54 yard gain to the Norton 19 where Hamel and Lane tackled him. The "Blue Swarm" said enough was enough, however as Van Doren and Cook dropped Pepper for a 2 yard loss, Lauer tackled Bird on the 15, a pass was incomplete, and Stanley stopped Bird for a 1 yard loss on fourth down.

Lane gained 8, then ran for a first down on the Norton 41. Illegal procedure cost Norton 5, Lane gained 3 but 2 passes were incomplete and Lane punted.

The ball rolled dead on the Lakin 25. Pepper gained 3, then Bird ran for a first down on the 36 before he was collared by Cook, Perez and Stanley. Pepper got nothing as Stanley was immovable. Norton was called for pass interference and the ball was moved to the Norton 46. On the next down, Bird was slow getting up after Lauer and Cook made a furious pass rush and hit him high and low as he released a pass that was complete but nullified by a pass interference penalty against the Broncs which moved the ball back to the Lakin 38. Bird passed to Pepper for 5, then Lakin punted.

Hamel made a great return, almost getting loose for a touchdown and finally being tackled on the Lakin 43, the original line of scrimmage! Norton could not move in for another score, however, as Lane gained 8 on two carries, Norton lost 5 for illegal motion, Van Doren gained 1 and a fourth down pass was incomplete.

Lakin took over on their 39. Garcia gained 7 before Draper wrapped him up. The next down, Lakin fumbled and Stanley pounced on the all on the Bronc 44! Lane ran around left end for an apparent touchdown but a holding penalty nullified the run. Lane got



On this play from Norton's Bi-District football win over Lakin on Tuesday evening, the "Blue Swarm" defense stopped a Bronc runner cold in his tracks! Senior linebacker Zac Dreher is shown shoving a Lakin blocker aside as he, junior defensive back Zane Perez and another unidentified Norton player make the tackle!

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

3, Pfannenstiel ran a keeper for 8 yards and Lane gained 6 more as the quarter ended with the score still 21-0.

#### Fourth quarter

Lane gained a first down on the 19 as the fourth period started. Stanley lost 4 on a pitch and Lane made it to the 16 in two carries. On fourth down, Laughlin tried for a field goal and his kick was long enough but just wide.

Spencer Shirk and Stanley stopped Garcia for no gain, a pass was incomplete, Bird ran for 4 and Lakin punted.

Hamel returned the ball to the Bronc 46. Pfannenstiel completed a pass to Stanley for an apparent Norton touchdown but it was called back to the Norton 46 on an illegal block penalty. Lane gained 5, a pass was incomplete and Lane punted out of bounds on the Lakin 24.

Dreher and Stanley tackled Garcia for a 2 yard loss. A flat pass to Pepper gained 3. Fabian Perea caught a 3 yard pass and Hamel made the tackle. Lakin punted and Hamel returned the ball to the Bronc 48. After Norton lost

5 for offsides, Perez gained 9 on 3 carries and Lane punted to the Lakin 11.

Garcia got loose for a 25 yard gain before Draper made the tackle. Alex Saenz made nothing by running into Gall and Dreher. After an incomplete pass, loss of 5 due to delay of game and an 8 yard pass to Saenz, Lakin punted to the Norton 30.

The Norton junior varsity ran three plays and the Blue Jays were the Bi-District champions!

#### Next action

The Norton Blue Jay gridders, who are now 8-2, advance to Regional competition and will play Beloit, who is 9-1, in Beloit on Saturday in a 6 p.m. contest.

Beloit's only loss was 13-12 to Phillipsburg in District play and the district runner-up Trojans defeated Hoisington 52-20 to win their Bi-District on Tuesday.

Until the Hoisington game, Beloit had not allowed an opponent to score more than two touchdowns and the Beloit offense had not been held below 38 points until the loss to Phillipsburg.

Beloit's high scoring offense

runs from the trap heavy Double Wing system. Senior back Cas Spangler was a 2,000 yard rusher with 30 touchdowns last year. He is having another outstanding season and is well over 1,000 yards rushing this season. He has been joined in the 1,000 yards plus club by junior running back Logan Eck.

"Beloit has one of the best offenses in the state and has some great athletes," said coach Melvin. "Spangler and Eck are both over 1,000 yards rushing this season."

"We are not the biggest or strongest players but we'll hit!

"We're excited to be playing this outstanding Beloit team. If we play the way we are capable, we'll be okay."

#### GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Lakin
13 First Downs	7
239 Yards Rushing	92
37 Yards Passing	111
276 Total Yards	203
3-14-0 Passes Compl	10-23-1
6-35 Punts	8-28
0-0 Fumbles Lost	1-1
12-90 Penalties	7-55

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