

Blue Jay grididders dominate St. Francis

By Dick Boyd

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Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School football team, who is playing this season with only a few returning starters, continued to show improvement in their second game of the 2011 season on Friday night at St. Francis where they dominated the Indians in a 53-8 victory.

The Blue Jays fumbled the ball away on their first possession of the night but had only two lost fumbles for the game. They also had one poor defensive play when they allowed a St. Francis runner to score a 94 yard touchdown.

Other than that, Norton was clearly the better team on this particular night and demonstrated it on the field.

The Norton offense gained 208 yards on the ground, averaging 6.1 yards per carry, and had 157 yards through the air for 365 yards of offense.

The Blue Jay defense limited the Indians to 150 yards rushing and none passing. Take out a 94 yard run for the Indians' only touchdown to start the second quarter, and the Norton defense limited the St. Francis offense to an average of just 1.3 yards per carry.

After losing the ball on the early fumble, the hard-hitting, gang-tackling Norton defense held the Indians and forced them to punt. On third down, Norton senior quarterback threw a long pass to junior wide receiver Jacob Brooks and he caught it in stride for a 76 yard touchdown and a 6-0 lead with 8:59 left in the first quarter.

After an exchange of punts, St. Francis fumbled and Justin Waggoner recovered the ball on the St. Francis 34-yard line!

Senior tailback Tye Nickell ran over a would-be tackler en route to a first down on the 24. Senior fullback Trey Millan ran to the 9 and, on the next down, scored Norton's second touchdown. Sophomore kicker Austin Hager split the uprights and it was 13-0 with 4:40 left in the first quarter.

After forcing St. Francis to punt again, Norton drove downfield for a third touchdown. Nickell plunged in from the 2-yard line and the Blue Jays led 19-0 with 19 seconds left in the first period.

The Indians' one big play of the game came after Austin Hager's kickoff where St. Francis was stopped on their 6-yard line. The hard-charging Blue Jay defense stuffed them for no gain on first down to end the first quarter, 19-0. But, on second down, Thomas Douhit got loose around right end and ran untouched up the sideline 94 yards for what turned out to be the Indians' only touchdown of the game. Douhit also ran for two extra points, making the score 19-8 with 11:44 left in the second period.

Norton answered with a long run of their own for another Blue Jay touchdown. Nickell received the kickoff, got outstanding blocking from his teammates and scampered 75 yards to the end zone! His touchdown extended the Norton lead to 25-8 with 11:32 remaining in the half.

After an exchange of punts, the rock solid Norton defense forced another Indian punt. Nickell was on the receiving end and, with the assistance of a tremendous block by Eli Bozarth, headed for the end zone. This time he was tackled on the St. Francis 23. After Nickell ran 4 more yards around right end to the 19, Millan ran around left end for another Blue Jay touchdown.

Hager split the uprights and Norton led 32-8 with 4:41 left in the half.

After Hager's kickoff, Norton's stingy defense stuffed the St. Francis wishbone offense and forced them to punt again. Nickell gathered in the pignskin and sprinted downfield once again. This time he was stopped at the Indian 9-yard line after a 40 yard run.

Millan found a hole over right tackle and scored his third touchdown of the night! Hager split the uprights again and it



Norton senior fullback Trey Millan didn't back off when he saw an Indian defender between him and the goal line on Friday night in St. Francis and just kept running until he got in the end zone on top of the St. Francis player! This photo was taken on Millan's first touchdown of the game; he added two more before the night was out to account for 18 of Norton's 53 points. Teammate, Dillon McConney, No. 11 watches as the play unfolds.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

was 39-8 with one minute left in the first half.

The second half got underway with Norton's defense stopping the Indians after the opening kickoff and them punting. On second down from the Norton 48, senior quarterback Jordan Wahlmeier ran the keeper for the only time in the game and used some fancy footwork as he dodged tackler after tackler en route to a 52 yard touchdown! Hager's extra point was good again and Norton led 46-8 with 7:41 left in the third quarter.

After an exchange of punts, St. Francis tried their only pass of the night and Brooks intercepted it for Norton! Highlighted by a 59-yard pass from Wahlmeier to junior wide receiver Carson McKenna, the Blue Jays moved downfield to score again. After McKenna's catch, Brooks had several outstanding runs to get the ball to the 5-yard line as the third quarter ended.

On the second play of the fourth quarter, Brooks scored his second touchdown of the game. Hager kicked the extra point and Norton led 53-8 with 11:16 left.

The Norton junior varsity played the rest of the way and was able to hold St. Francis scoreless.

Coach's comments

"We handled the short week pretty well," said coach Melvin. "I'm pretty happy. Everything we did, we did well."

"They blitzed a lot on defense and our offense was able to pick that up."

"We did have a couple of turnovers that weren't good. On their scoring play, we missed some tackles and missed an assignment."

"It was a hard hitting game and we got banged up a little."

"We have to keep getting better in order to keep winning."

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 Jacob Brooks, 175 pounds, wide receiver; senior Robert Blecha, 180 pounds, tight end; senior Jordan Wahlmeier, 180 pounds, quarterback; senior Trey Millan, 165 pounds, fullback; senior Tye Nickell, 150 pounds, tailback.

Starting on defense for the Blue Jays were: junior Eli Bozarth, 160 pounds; Lane Bigge, ends; junior Lucas Engel, 180 pounds; senior Damien Davis, 165 pounds; senior Tyler Lewis, 250 pounds, tackles; Trey Millan; junior Dalton Miller, 185 pounds; senior Cayleb Campbell, 195 pounds, line-backers; Jacob Brooks; junior

Carson McKenna, 155 pounds, cornerbacks; Tye Nickell, safety.

Individual statistics

Tye Nickell was leading rusher for Norton with 69 yards on 14 carries for an average of 4.9 yards per carry. Trey Millan gained 58 yards on 7 carries for an 8.3 yards per tote average.

Jordan Wahlmeier had 52 yards on his touchdown run.

Other Norton ball carriers and their yardage were: Jacob Brooks, 5 for 23; Austin Hager, 3 for 11; Jared Bohl, 2 for 3; Caysean Campbell, 1 for minus 5; Dillon McConney, 1 for minus 3.

Wahlmeier completed 5 of 9 passes for 56 percent and 157 yards.

Pass receivers were: Jacob Brooks, 3 for 83 yards; Trey Millan, 1 for 15 yards; Carson McKenna, 1 for 59 yards.

Wahlmeier also punted 3 times for an average of 43.7 yards.

Austin Hager had 9 kickoffs for an average of 50 yards. Millan had 2 punt returns for 10 yards and Nickell had 3 for 62 yards. Nickell also had 1 kickoff return for 75 yards and Brooks had 1 for 8 yards.

Leading rusher for St. Francis was Thomas Douhit with 112 yards on 14 carries. Cade Bracelin had 21 yards on 13 carries and Dylan Wolaver gained 21 yards on 11 carries.

Leading tackler for Norton was Eli Bozarth with 8 solos, 1 assist, 9 total; followed by Treven Rossi, 8 solos; Lucas Engel, 6 solos, 2 assists, 8 total; Jared Bohl, 5 solos; Cayleb Campbell, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Kolton Harting, 2 solos, 3 assists, 5 total; Tye Nickell, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; John Risewick, 4 solos; Damian Davis, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Taylor Meder, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Dalton Miller, 3 solos; Stewart Whitney, 3 assists; Jacob Brooks, 2 solos; Andrew Ellis, 2 solos; Tanner Furbush, 2 assists; Carson McKenna, 2 solos; Cole Renner, 2 solos; Justin Waggoner, 2 solos; Lane Bigge, 1 assist; Tyler Lewis, 1 solo; Trey Millan, 1 solo; Lane Vanover, 1 solo.

First quarter

St. Francis kicked off and Brooks returned the pignskin 8 yards to the Norton 27. Nickell gained 21 yards but fumbled and St. Francis recovered on the Norton 48. Wolaver and Douhit tried the Norton line and gained nothing. Douhit got the ball again and made 6 yards but the Indians had to punt.

The ball rolled dead on the Norton 21-yard line. A Wahlmeier pass fell incomplete. Nickell gained 3 yards, then Wahlmeier fired a long pass to a wide open Brooks who was behind the defender and sprinted to the end zone for a 76 yard touchdown!

The extra point kick by Hager was no good but the visiting

Blue Jays led 6-0 with 8:59 left in the quarter.

A block-in-the-back penalty against St. Francis on the kickoff gave them the ball on their own 16. Bracelin gained 2 yards, Douhit got 1 yard. Norton was offside and was penalized 5 yards. Bracelin plunged for 1 yard but it was fourth down and St. Francis punted.

The ball rolled dead on the Norton 29. Norton lost 8 yards on a fumbled pitch, Millan ran for 2 yards, a pass was incomplete and Wahlmeier punted. The Indians fumbled the punt reception and Waggoner alertly recovered the pignskin on the St. Francis 34.

Nickell ran for 10 yards and a first down and ran over a would-be tackler to get the yardage. Millan ran hard to the 9-yard-line, then got the call again, this time over the right tackle, and ran through a would-be tackler into the end zone!

Hager split the uprights and the Jays were on top 13-0 with 4:40 left.

Hager kicked off and Wyatt Landenberger returned the ball to the 29 where Bohl and Hager made the tackle. Johnathan Butler was sacked for a 6 yard loss by Millan and Lewis. Wolaver gained 2 yards as a host of Norton tacklers made the stop. Wolaver got the call again and made only 1 yard as Brooks made the tackle.

The Indians punted and Millan fumbled the reception but the Blue Jays' Davis recovered the ball on the St. Francis 44. Nickell gained 1 yard, then ran to the 30 but Norton was penalized for holding and the ball went back to the 44.

Wahlmeier passed to Millan for a first down on the St. Francis 29. Nickell ran around left end for 22 yards to the 7, then gained 5 yards to the 2. On third down, Nickell plunged into the end zone for a touchdown. The extra kick attempt was unsuccessful but Norton led 19-0 with 19 seconds left in the quarter.

Wolaver returned Hager's kickoff but the ball squirted through his hands and he retrieved it on the Indian 6-yard-line. St. Francis gained nothing on the last play of the quarter.

Second quarter

The Indians started the second period with what turned out to be their best play of the game. Douhit got loose around right end and ran untouched up the sideline 94 yards to paydirt. He also ran for 2 extra points, making the score 19-8 with 11:44 left in the first half.

The Blue Jays responded immediately when Nickell gathered in the kickoff, took advantage of good blocking by his teammates and sprinted 75 yards to the end zone! The extra point kick was unsuccessful, leaving the score at 25-8 with 11:32 left in the half.

Hager kicked off into the end

zone and the Indians got the ball on their 20. McKenna tackled Wolaver after 4 yards. Bracelin was held to 2 yards by a host of Norton tacklers. Davis stopped the St. Francis back for no gain and they punted to the Norton 48. Millan lost 2 yards, then made 4. A flat pass from Wahlmeier to Brooks was nullified by Norton's illegal use of hands. Another pass was incomplete and Wahlmeier punted. The ball rolled dead on the St. Francis 2-yard-line!

Douhit gained 1 yard, Bracelin got 2 and Butler gained 3. St. Francis punted to Nickell. With the help of a tremendous block by Bozarth, Nickell returned the pignskin 15 yards to the St. Francis 23. Nickell gained 4 yards around right end, then Millan dashed around left end for his second touchdown of the night.

Hager split the uprights again and Norton led 32-8 with 4:41 left in the first half.

Landenberger received Hager's kickoff but couldn't escape Bohl who tackled him on the 12-yard-line! Wolaver gained 3 yards and then 6 yards. Bracelin ran for 3 more yards and a rare Indian first down. Douhit lost 3 yards to the swarming Blue Jay defense, then gained 1 but Butler lost 5 as Bozarth and Davis sacked him!

The Indians punted and Nickell returned the ball 40 yards to the Indian 9-yard-line! Millan found a hole over right tackle and scored his third touchdown of the game! Hager kicked the extra point and Norton's lead was now 39-8 with 1:00 remaining in the first half.

Landenberger returned Hager's kickoff to the 27. Douhit lost 3 yards and Michael Leibbrandt lost 2 and it was halftime with the Blue Jays comfortably on top 39-8.

Third quarter

Hager kicked off for Norton to start second half action. Harting and Bohl hustled downfield to tackle Landenberger on the 18. Bracelin gained 2 yards, Wolaver got 3 and Wolaver ran up the middle for a first down on the 31. A fumble cost the Indians 2 yards, Douhit ran for 2 and Bracelin gained 3 more. The Indians punted and Millan returned the ball 10 yards to midfield. He was injured on the play and did not return to the game.

Nickell lost 2 yards on first down, then Wahlmeier ran the keeper, got around left end and into the secondary where he used some good footwork to avoid tackles and sprint down the sidelines 52 yards for another Blue Jay touchdown!

Hager split the uprights and Norton had extended their lead to 46-8 with 7:41 left.

Wolaver returned Hager's kickoff to the 30. Illegal procedure moved the Indians back 5 yards. Wolaver carried the ball and a host of Norton defenders threw him for a 5 yard loss.

Caleb Campbell was injured on the play and did not return to the game. Wolaver ran again and picked up nothing against the stone wall Blue Jay defense. St. Francis punted and Nickell returned the ball. An illegal block penalty against Norton moved the ball back to the Norton 28.

Nickell plunged up the middle for 2 yards, Brooks ran around right end but an illegal block brought the pignskin back to the 20. Brooks gained nothing, a pass was incomplete and Wahlmeier punted to the St. Francis 47. Norton was penalized for too many men on the field and the ball was moved to the Blue Jay 39. Bracelin gained 1 yard; Wolaver made 3 before Bohl tackled him. Holding against St. Francis cost them yardage back to the Norton 45.

Brooks intercepted a pass and Norton had possession on their 24-yard line. After Nickell was stopped for no gain, Wahlmeier threw a flat pass to Brooks for 6 yards. Next, Wahlmeier passed to Carson McKenna and the play covered 59 yards to the Indian 21!

On first down, Brooks lost 8 yards but made up for it on the next play when he broke three tackles as he literally ran through the Indian defense and was finally stopped on the 9-yard-line!

Brooks got the call again and ran for 5 more yards as the third quarter came to a close with Norton on top comfortably 46-8.

Fourth quarter

Nickell lost 1 yard to start the final period, then Brooks got the ball again and ran around right end for Norton's final touchdown and his second of the game. Hager split the uprights once again and it was 53-8 with 11:16 remaining.

After that Norton touchdown, the continuous clock ran and shortened the fourth quarter considerably.

Wolaver returned Hager's kickoff to the 25. John Risewick dropped him for a 3 yard loss on first down. Douhit got the ball and Harting and Risewick stopped him for no gain. Butler ran a quarterback keeper to the 28. St. Francis punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 32.

Hager gained 7 yards and Bohl picked up 2 but a fumble was recovered by St. Francis on the Norton 31. By this time, the Norton junior varsity was playing and they stopped St. Francis from getting a first down and took over possession on their 38.

Hager carried the ball twice for 5 yards, Bohl gained 1 and Caysean Campbell was unable to pick up any yardage as the final whistle sounded on Norton's impressive 53-8 victory!

Next action

The Blue Jays will have another road game this Friday night when they travel to Plainville for a 7 p.m. Mid-Continent League contest.

Both teams are 2-0 for the early season. Plainville defeated Phillipsburg 37-21 in the season opener and outscored Ellis 42-6 on Friday night.

Norton beat Ellis 38-7 in their opener so, comparing scores with the same Ellis opponent, makes it look like Norton and Plainville will be evenly matched.

Plainville returns nine starters on each side of the ball, including 5'10", 185 pound junior running back Harrison Gilliland, who ran for a team high 648 yards last season; 5'8", 135 pound junior Trevor Axelson, who ran for 449 yards and 6'1", 175 pound senior quarterback Kyle Becker.

Andrew Casey, a 6'2", 200 pound senior tight end, line-backer, caught 20 passes for 244 yards and picked up 80 tackles last season, both team highs.

"This will be our toughest game of the season," said coach Melvin.

"Plainville players are good sized, athletic and tough."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	St. Francis
6	First Downs 2
208	Yards Rushing 150
157	Yards Passing 0
365	Total Yards 150
5-9-0	Passes Comp. 0-1-1
2-4	Fumbles Lost 1-2
3-43.7	Punts 9-33.9
7-65	Penalties 5-35