

Blue Jays are defeated by Cardinals

By Dick Boyd

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The Norton Community High School football team, after two early blowout wins over Ellis and St. Francis, found themselves on the losing end of a 53-13 game to a veteran Plainville team on Friday night on the Cardinals' home field.

Coach Lucas Melvin's Blue Jays have very few returning starters but their players who moved up from the junior varsity ranks were impressive in the two early contests. They met a junior-senior dominated Plainville squad with lots of experience and couldn't match up.

Norton defeated Ellis 38-7 in their opener when the Blue Jays gained 316 total yards of offense while holding the Railroaders to 123 total yards. In their win over St. Francis, Norton gained 365 total yards while holding the Indians to 150 total yards.

On Friday night, the tables were turned as Norton gained 220 yards offensively compared to 404 yards by Plainville.

The Blue Jays averaged a respectable 5 yards per carry rushing but the Cardinals averaged 9.3 yards.

Norton stopped Plainville on their first possession but the Cardinals got the ball back on a pass interception and moved downfield to score. Junior fullback Harrison Gilliland scored from 9 yards out, senior quarterback Kyle Becker ran for 2 extra points and Plainville led 8-0 with 6:01 left in the first period.

After the kickoff, Norton put together a drive that ended on the Plainville 16. The Cardinals moved into Norton territory but fumbled the pigskin. The first quarter ended with Norton at mid-field.

The Blue Jays were forced to punt, however, and Plainville put together a scoring drive, which included a diving catch of a Becker pass by senior tight end Andrew Casey on the Norton 35. Junior running back Trever Axelson scored from 9 yards out, Becker passed to Gilliland for 2 extra points, making the score 16-0 with 9:56 left in the half.

After the kickoff, Norton tried unsuccessfully to pass and punted again. With Axelson leading the way, Plainville scored again. Becker went into the end zone from 1 yard out and Becker passed to Casey for 2 extra points to make it 24-0 with 6:00 left in the half.

After the kickoff, a fake punt backfired on Norton and Plainville regained possession. Helped by a pass interference penalty and personal foul on Norton, the Cardinals scored again. Gilliland tallied from the 2 and Axelson ran for 2 extra points to extend the Plainville lead to 32-0 with 2:01 left.

Norton did not give up and put together a 64-yard drive to score just before intermission. Norton senior quarterback Jordan Wahlmeier passed to junior wide receiver Carson McKenna for an 11-yard touchdown that made the score 32-6.

Norton had to punt on their first possession of the second half and Plainville scored again. Becker passed 24 yards to Gilliland and Connor Collins kicked the extra point to make it 39-6 with 8:08 left.

A Wahlmeier pass was intercepted on Norton's next possession but the Blue Jay defense held and Norton regained the pigskin as the third quarter ended.

Once again, the Norton offense could not move and the

Blue Jays punted. Plainville moved downfield and Gilliland scored from 26 yards out. Collins kicked the extra point and it was 46-6 with 10:16 left in the game.

On the kickoff, Norton junior tailback Jacob Brooks got good blocks from his teammates and sprinted 75 yards for Norton's final touchdown. Sophomore Austin Hager split the uprights, cutting the Cardinal lead to 46-13 with 8:40 remaining.

Plainville answered with a touchdown of their own on the ensuing kickoff by Hager. Junior Nolan Werner returned the pigskin 80 yards for the score. Collins kicked the extra point, making the score 53-13 with 7:25 left in the game.

After the kickoff, Norton threatened to score again and had the ball on the Plainville 5-yard line when the game ended.

Coach's comments

"Early on we did okay on defense, then had some defensive breakdowns," said coach Melvin. "They did a good job against us with their play action passes.

"We ran the ball decent and had 133 yards rushing in the first half. We did a poor job in the passing game but a lot of that was forced by Plainville's defense.

"Our young men played hard but we need to be tougher and more physical."

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: senior Justin Waggoner, 145 pounds, left end; junior Lucas Engel, 180 pounds, left tackle; senior Damian Davis, 165 pounds, nose guard; sophomore Cole Renner, 165 pounds, nose guard; senior Tyler Lewis, 255 pounds, right tackle; junior Eli Bozarth, 160 pounds, right end; junior Treven Rossi, 165 pounds; junior Dalton Miller, 185 pounds; and Tye Nickell, linebackers; Carson McKenna and Jacob Brooks, cornerbacks.

Individual statistics

Jacob Brooks was leading rusher for Norton with an even 100 yards on 15 carries for an average of 7.1 yards per carry.

Tye Nickell rushed for 48 yards on 13 tries for a 3.7 yard average and Austin Hager gained 44 yards on 5 carries.

Other Norton ball carriers were: Jared Bohl, 2 for 4; Dalton Miller, 3 for 9; Jordan Wahlmeier, 1 for 12.

Jacob Brooks had 4 kickoff returns for 110 yards and a 27.5 yard average. Carson McKenna had 2 returns for 18 yards and Tye Nickell had 1 for 16 yards.

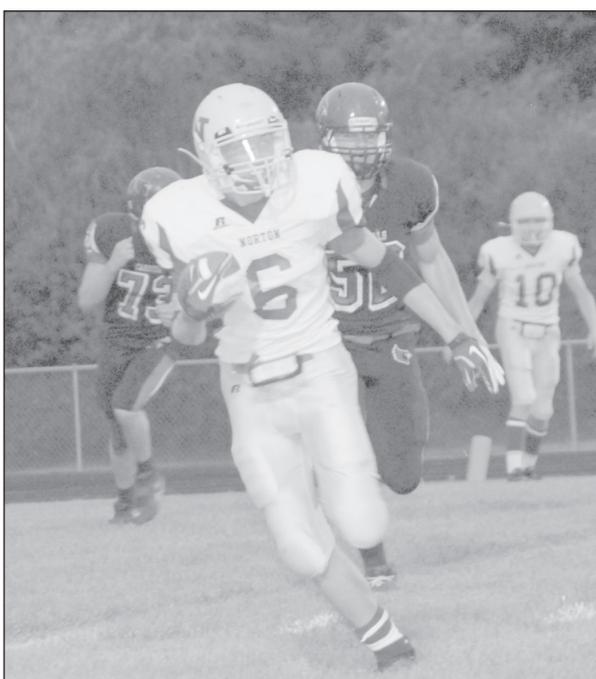
Nickell also had 1 fumble recovery.

Wahlmeier completed 2 of 10 passing attempts for 16 yards. He also punted 4 times for a 35 yard average.

McKenna caught 2 passes for 16 yards.

Hager kicked off 3 times for a 36.7 yard average.

Trever Axelson led Plainville



Norton junior Jacob Brooks played tailback for the Blue Jays for the first time on Friday night against Plainville and the change resulted in a 100 yard rushing game and one touchdown for Brooks. He was switched when senior fullback Trey Millan was injured a week ago and regular starting tailback Tye Nickell was moved to fullback. Brooks is shown here during one of his long runs versus the Cardinals.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

in rushing with 189 yards on 12 attempts. Kyle Becker had 58 yards on 8 tries and Harrison Gilliland ran for 44 yards on 7 carries.

Becker completed 6 of 8 passes for 70 yards.

Leading tackler for Norton was Carson McKenna with 6 solo tackles. He was followed by Kolton Harting, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Jared Bohl, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Cayleb Campbell, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Ty Nickell, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Treven Rossi, 4 solos; Lane Bigge, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Jacob Brooks, 3 solos; Damian Davis, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Tyler Lewis, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; John Risewick, 3 solos; Wyatt Harting, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Taylor Meder, 2 solos; Cole Renner, 2 solos; Eli Bozarth, 1 solo; Lucas Engel, 1 solo; Dalton Miller, 1 solo.

First quarter

Austin Hager kicked off for Norton to start the game. The Blue Jay defense did what they had been doing the first two weeks and forced the Cardinals to punt.

The ball rolled dead on the Norton 19-yard line. Jacob Brooks, who started at tailback instead of Tye Nickell who moved to fullback to replace the injured Trey Millan, gained 3 yards around left end. A Wahlmeier pass was incomplete and, on third down, a Wahlmeier pass was intercepted by Plainville's Connor Collins on the Norton 40.

The Cardinals got their offense going this time. After a 15-yard gain to the Norton 25 by Trever Axelson, Harrison Gilliland gained just 2 before Lucas Engel tackled him. Quarterback Kyle Becker ran a keeper around left end and Carson McKenna tackled him on the 10. Tye Nickell and a host of Norton tacklers stopped Axelson after just 1 yard. On the next down, however, Becker connected with Gilliland for a 9 yard touchdown.

Becker ran around right end for 2 extra points and Plainville led 8-0 with 6:01 left in the first period.

The Blue Jays answered on the kickoff and appeared to be heading for a touchdown of their own. McKenna returned the kickoff to the Norton 40. Nickell gained 3,

then Brooks ran around right end for a first down on the Plainville 48. Brooks got nothing, then on second down, he found a hole and sprinted through it for another first down on the 25.

Jared Bohl gained 4 yards and Nickell ran around left end to the 16. Bohl gained nothing on third down and Brooks was thrown for a 3 yard loss on fourth down and Plainville took over possession.

On first down, the speedy Axelson got loose around right end and sprinted down the sideline for a 71 yard gain before McKenna tackled him. Norton got a break when Plainville fumbled on first down and Nickell fell on the ball!

Brooks lost a yard on first down, then ran around right end for a first down on the 20. Nickell carried the pigskin over right tackle and earned a first down on the 30. Brooks got the call again and powered over right tackle for a first down on the Norton 45. A pass was incomplete but Nickell plunged for 5 yards as the quarter ended with Norton still very much in the game and Plainville leading by only 8-0.

Second quarter

On third down, Nickell was thrown for an 8 yard loss and Wahlmeier punted. Connor Collins returned the ball to the 39. Dalton Werner lost 3 yards but, on second down, Becker passed to tight end Andrew Casey, who made a diving catch of the ball

on the Norton 35.

Becker ran the keeper and a personal foul against Norton put the pigskin on the Blue Jay 9-yard line. Axelson ran over right tackle for a touchdown. Becker passed to Gilliland for 2 extra points and it was 16-0 with 9:56 left.

Brooks returned the kickoff to the Norton 34. Brooks gained 4 yards but two incomplete passes forced Norton to punt. The ball rolled dead on the Plainville 34. With Axelson leading the way, Plainville drove downfield for another touchdown. They scored from the 1-yard line on a quarterback sneak by Becker. Becker passed to Casey for 2 extra points to extend the lead to 24-0 with 6:00 left.

Brooks returned the kickoff to the Norton 36. Nickell gained 2 up the middle, then Brooks ran to the Norton 42. Nickell gained 1 yard and Norton went into punt formation. It was a fake and Dalton Miller received the center snap. He was unable to pick up a first down, however, and Plainville took over.

After Brooks made the best tackle of the night on Axelson for no gain, Becker went to the air and a pass interference penalty and personal foul against Norton moved the ball to the Norton 7-yard line.

Werner was tackled on the 2 by McKenna but Gilliland scored on the next play. Axelson ran for 2 extra points, making the score 32-0 with 2:01 left in the half.

McKenna returned the kickoff to the Norton 36. Brooks gained 4, Nickell picked up 14 to the Plainville 46. Brooks skirted right end to the 35. After an incomplete pass, Nickell danced to the 26. Brooks plunged for 1 and Wahlmeier passed complete to McKenna on the Plainville 20. Nickell plunged to the 18 with 20 seconds left in the half. Illegal procedure cost Norton 5 yards. Wahlmeier ran the keeper to the 11, then passed to McKenna in the end zone for Norton's first touchdown. An extra points pass was incomplete and Norton trailed 32-6 at halftime.

Third quarter

Brooks returned the kickoff to the Norton 35. After Brooks gained 2 yards, a center snap over Wahlmeier's head, delay of game penalty against Norton and incomplete pass forced Norton to punt.

The ball rolled dead on the Plainville 49. Werner gained 3, then Axelson ran to the 36. Becker got a first down on the 24, then Becker passed to Gilliland for a touchdown. Connor Collins kicked the extra point and it was 39-6 with 8:08 left.

Brooks returned the kickoff to the 20. Nickell gained 5 yards on 2 carries before a Wahlmeier

pass was intercepted by Nolan Weiser and returned to the Norton 30. Werner gained 5 yards before Kolton Harting tackled him. Becker ran around right end for a first down on the 14.

With tackles by Lane Bigge, John Risewick and McKenna and a blocking in the back penalty against Plainville, Norton held and took over possession on their 23. Brooks lost 1, Norton was penalized for an illegal block in the back, and Nickell gained nothing as the quarter ended with the score 39-6.

Fourth quarter

Brooks had a 17 yard gain to start the final period but Norton had to punt. The ball rolled dead on the Plainville 29. Axelson got loose around right end for a first down on the Norton 40. Gilliland ran to the 26 and then scored from there on the next play. Collins kicked the extra point, making the score 46-6 with 10:16 remaining.

The Norton fans enjoyed the next play when Brooks got good blocking on the kickoff and raced 75 yards into the end zone for the Blue Jays' final touchdown! Hager split the uprights, making the score 46-13 with 8:40 remaining.

Plainville responded immediately, however, when Werner returned Hager's kickoff 80 yards for the Cardinals' final touchdown. The extra kick by Collins made it 53-13 with 7:25 remaining.

With Dalton Miller and Austin Hager carrying the ball, Norton moved downfield after the kickoff and the Blue Jays were on the Plainville 5-yard line when the game ended after a shortened fourth quarter due to the continuous clock rule.

Next action

Norton's fourth game of the season will be the Homecoming contest this Friday night at Travis Field versus the Oberlin Red Devils.

Homecoming ceremonies will begin at 6:25 p.m. with kickoff set for 7 p.m.

"Oberlin is 1-2 but they play hard," said coach Melvin. "They have a big line and will throw a lot of different offensive formations at you. They have a good quarterback and some good running backs."

"It will be a challenge; we need a good week of practice to get our confidence back."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Plainville
11	First Downs 14
204	Yards Rushing 334
16	Yards Passing 70
220	Total Yards 404
2-11-2	Passes Compl. 6-8-0
0-0	Fumbles Lost 1-1
4-35	Punts 1-48
9-81	Penalties 5-43

High School Sports This Week



Norton
Blue Jays



Northern Valley
Huskies



Logan
Trojans

FOOTBALL:

Norton Blue Jays vs. Oberlin (Homecoming) 7 p.m. Friday in Norton
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Oberlin 5:30 p.m. Monday in Oberlin
Northern Valley Huskies vs. Pike Valley 7 p.m. Friday in Almena
Logan Trojans vs. Palco 7 p.m. Friday in Logan
Northern Valley Junior Varsity vs. Golden Plains 6 p.m. Monday in Rexford

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Lady Jays vs. Hill City and Hoxie V, JV 4:30 p.m. Today in Norton
Norton Lady Jays vs. Colby and Atwood V, JV 4:30 p.m. Tuesday in Colby
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Alma, Logan 5 p.m. Today in Alma
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Southern Valley, Franklin 4 p.m. Tuesday in Almena
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Alma, Northern Valley 5 p.m. Today in Alma
Logan Lady Trojans in Osborne Tournament. 8 a.m. Saturday in Osborne

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton Cross Country V, JV in Hill City Invitational 5 p.m. Thursday in Hill City
Norton Cross Country in Rim Rock Classic. 9 a.m. Saturday in Lawrence
Norton Cross Country V, JV in Oberlin Invitational 5 p.m. Tuesday in Oberlin
Northern Valley Huskies Cross Country in Hill City Invitational 5 p.m. Thursday in Hill City
Northern Valley Huskies Cross Country in Oberlin Invitational 5 p.m. Tuesday in Oberlin

TENNIS:

Norton Lady Jays in Russell Invitational. 1 p.m. Thursday in Russell
Norton Lady Jays in Trego Invitational. 9 a.m. Saturday in WaKeeney
Norton Lady Jays in Colby Tournament 3 p.m. Tuesday in Colby
Norton Lady Jays Junior Varsity vs. Tribune/Greeley County 3 p.m. Today in Goodland
Norton Lady Jays junior Varsity in Phillipsburg Tournament. 9 a.m. Saturday in Phillipsburg

Lady Huskies lose two in a row against Natoma and Logan

By Chuck Zimmerman

The Lady Huskies have been in a "funk" lately as we have played, but, nowhere close to our abilities. Our latest outing was against league foes Natoma in which the Tigers defeated us 12-25, 17-25 by attacking our defense. Now, this is not new to any volleyball game, we are not

"following suit" which means we are then not hitting it back to them. We are hesitant and are "free balling" the ball over which just allows our opponents to hit at us even more.

Against long time foe Logan, we were still in the same rut as the Trojans, being senior dominated, have figured out the game

and are supplying plenty of power at the net which we were not able to handle. The Trojans defeated us 17-25, 11-25.

We will continue to work to improve, but the strange thing is every day in practice they show that they have the skills, they are not bringing those skills to the game floor. In time, they will.