

Norton shut out Stockton 21-0

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School football team had a lot tougher time with winless Stockton on Friday night than they thought they would as they struggled to a 21-0 Homecoming win in Mid-Continent League action at Travis Field.

To the Norton defense's credit, the Tigers were never able to score but, to the Stockton defense's credit, they held the Blue Jays out of the end zone in the first half and allowed Norton just two offensive touchdowns the second half. Norton's only real offensive drive of the first half came late in the opening quarter when the Blue Jays were backed up on their 6-yard line after a Stockton punt and illegal block penalty.

With senior quarterback Seth Mills completing passes to senior tight end Justin Shirk, senior tailback Aaron Overlease and senior fullback Kyle Kats and Overlease, Kats and Mills gaining yards on the ground, Norton reached the Stockton 20 yard line before the drive bogged down. Junior kicker William Wilhite came to the rescue and booted a 37 yard field goal with 34 seconds left in the quarter to give the Jays a 3-0 lead.

Wilhite, who also kicks off, received a knee injury on the ensuing kickoff and was lost for the rest of the game. Wilhite's kicking has been perfect so far this season. He has kicked 13 of 13 extra points and now has kicked 2 of 2 field goals. Coach Graber said after the game that Wilhite's injury was a big loss and that he would probably not play again for two or three weeks.

On Stockton's first possession of the second quarter, the Tigers earned their initial first down of the game, then Overlease intercepted a pass on the Norton 44. The Blue

Jays moved the ball to the Stockton 23 but no longer had Wilhite available for a field goal try and gave up the ball. A pass interference call against the Blue Jays and lost fumble kept Norton from threatening to score again in the first half.

The Blue Jays came out of the locker room with fire in their eyes for the second half, received the kickoff and scored their first touchdown of the game in three plays from their 38 yard line. With the Norton linemen taking charge in the trenches, Overlease found running room for a first down on the Stockton 46. Kats earned another first down on the 35. Then Overlease followed his blockers, broke into the open and sprinted into the end zone. Norton led 9-0 with 11:23 still remaining in the third period. Without Wilhite to kick the extra point, Norton tried to run for two extra points but Kats was stopped short.

As the third quarter came to an end, a Norton goalline stand kept the Tigers out of the end zone and the Blue Jays took over on their 4 yard line. Norton had to punt the ball away and held Stockton this time on the Norton 36. From there, the Jays needed just five plays to get into the end zone for their second touchdown. Mills hit Shirk for a first down on the Stockton 45, Kats ran for another first down on the 28, Mills ran a keeper to the 23 and Overlease ran around right end for a first down on the 11. Kats ran over the right side for the touchdown. Mills went back to pass for two extra points but was sacked and Norton led 15-0 with 9:00 showing on the scoreboard clock.

The Tigers got bad field position on the kickoff. An illegal block moved them back to their 7 yard line. After two plays netted no

yardage against the fighting Blue Jays, they fumbled and Shirk alertly picked up the pigskin and ran into the end zone for Norton's final touchdown. Mills tried for two extra points but was denied and Norton led 21-0 with 8:01 left in the game.

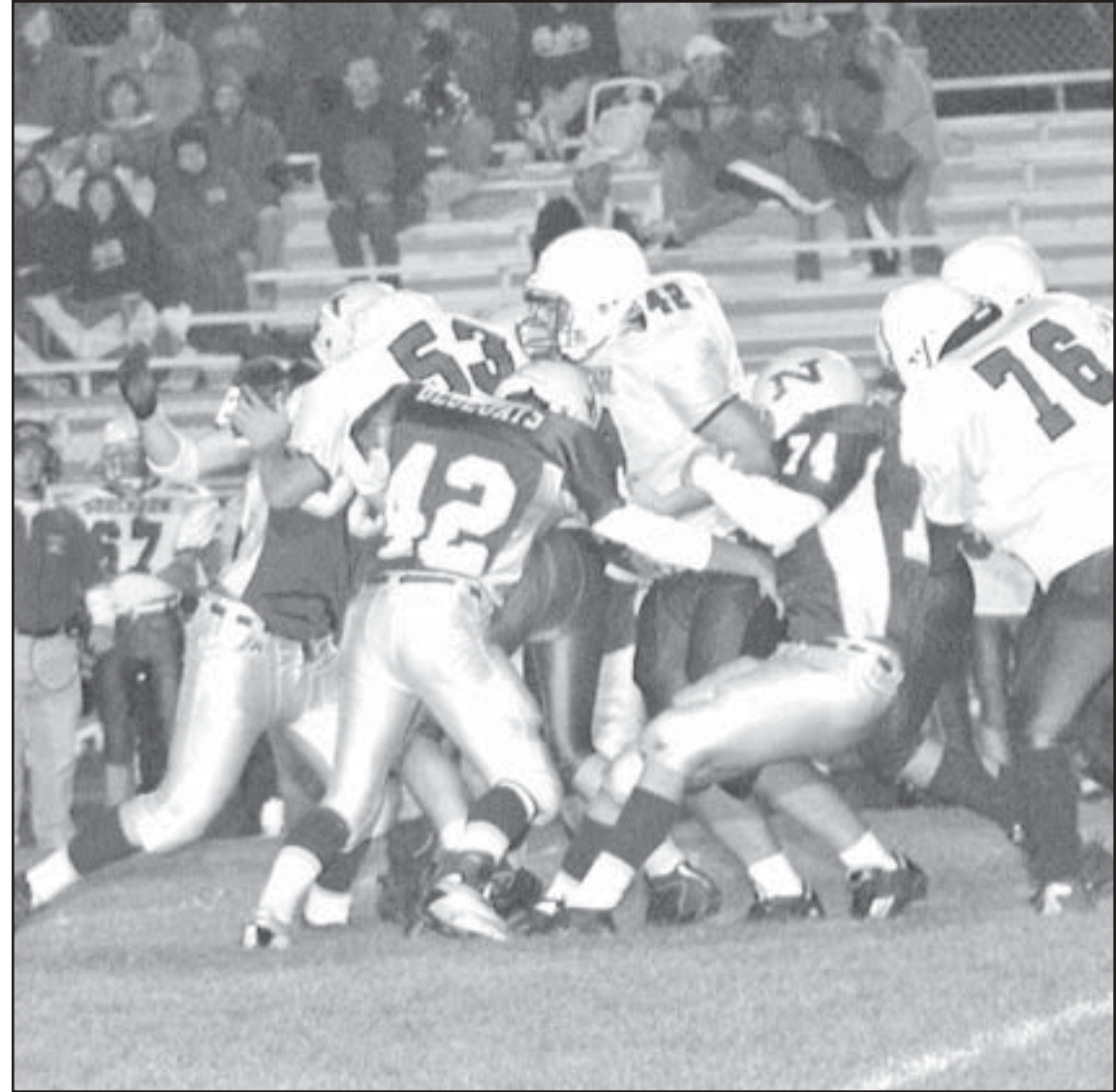
"The first half wasn't very pretty but our defense played hard and contained them," said Coach Graber. "Our offense didn't show up at all in the first half. The 37 yard field goal by William was really big and gave us a lead but we had to claw and scratch to hold onto it.

"I challenged our seniors pretty harshly at halftime and they responded well. We played much better in the second half. You have to give Stockton some credit. They played extremely well. It is a testament to them and their coaches. They outplayed and outthrew us in the first half but I'm proud of the way we accepted the challenge and bounced back in the second half.

"Offensively, we have to get a lot better. We had too many major blunders in execution, pass protection breakdowns, dropped passes, penalties and other miscues. Defensively, we had some trouble with their one-back option and some problems with pass coverage but basically played well all night.

"We don't have a lot better talent than the teams we play so we'll have to continue to work on correcting our mistakes and playing hard 48 minutes if we expect to keep winning."

Norton had 16 first downs in the game, 156 yards rushing and 97 passing for 253 yards of total offense. Mills completed 9 of 15 passes with no interceptions. Meanwhile, the Norton defense limited the Tigers to just 9 first downs, 78 yards rushing and 30



Norton's hard-hitting defense limited Stockton to just over two yards per carry during Friday night's 21-0 shutout. A whole host of Blue Jay gridgers, including sophomore Lance Roe, No. 42 and junior Davvid Stanley, No. 74, stopped Tiger fullback Justin Hall for a short gain on this play. Roe had the most solo tackles for Norton in the game with seven.

—Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

passing for 108 total yards offensively. Stockton averaged just over two yards per carry.

With punter Chris Davis still sidelined due to injury, the Blue Jays struggled in the kicking game and that hurt their field position. Norton averaged just 27.5 yards per punt compared to Stockton's 41.8 yard average.

Overlease was Norton's leading ground gainer with 100 yards on 15 carries, an average of almost seven yards per carry. Kats gained 45 yards on 10 carries. Other

Norton ball carriers were: Mills, 7 carries for minus 8 yards; Luke Pfannenstiel, 3 for 3; Blake VanEaton, 4 for 22; Todd Bolt, 2 for 0.

Shirk was the leading pass receiver. He caught 5 passes for 57 yards. Overlease caught 2 aeriels for 29 yards. Kats had one grab for 6 yards and Maddy had 1 for 5 yards. Overlease had 3 punt returns for 23 yards and Pfannenstiel had 1 for 7. Shirk had 1 kickoff return for 3 yards.

Kats punted the ball 3 times for a 30 yard average and Bolt had 1 punt for 18 yards. Wilhite had 2 kickoffs for a 50 yard average and Michael Sprigg had 2 for a 44 yard average.

Sophomore linebacker Lance Roe and junior defensive back Luke Pfannenstiel tied for leading tackler with nine total stops each. Roe had seven solos and two assists and Pfannenstiel had four solos and five assists. Senior defensive end Paul Juenemann and senior defensive tackle Blake Hillebrand each had eight total tackles. Juenemann had five solos and three assists and Hillebrand had three solos and five assists.

They were followed by Ryan Maddy, four solos, three assists, seven total; Michael Sprigg and Seth Mills, five solos, one assist, six total each; Blake VanEaton, five solos; Justin Shirk, three solos, two assists, five total; Jason Green, two solos, two assists, four total; Aaron Overlease, two solos, one assist, three total; Lucas Wiseman, one solo, two assists, three total; Clay Madden and Davvid Stanley, one solo each; Andrew Ables and Nathan Broeckelman, one assist each.

Luke Kriley gained 30 yards on 8 carries and Justin Hall gained 27 yards on 13 attempts for Stockton.

Norton will travel to Ellis for another Mid-Continent League game on Friday night. Kickoff will be at 7 p.m.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Stockton
16	9
41-156	37-78
97	30
253	108
9-15-0	3-15-1
1-1	1-1
6-56	5-38
4-27.5	5-41.8

Play by play of Norton's Homecoming victory

By DICK BOYD

First quarter

Norton opened their 21-0 win over a visiting Stockton team when Wilhite kicked off. Kriley returned the ball to the 22. Lance Roe tackled Hall for no gain, then VanEaton, Pfannenstiel and Jason Green gang tackled Kriley for a four yard loss. Kriley gained five yards before Mills tackled him. Stockton punted and Overlease returned the ball to the Norton 36.

Overlease gained three yards, Kats gained nothing and Mills was sacked. Bolt punted and the ball went out of bounds on the Stockton 48. Tiger quarterback Logan Bennett gained two yards, then threw two incomplete passes. Stockton punted and Pfannenstiel returned the ball to the 16 but Norton was penalized 10 yards for an illegal block. After Overlease lost one yard, he caught a first down pass from Mills on the 19. Overlease was stopped for no gain but Kats took a pitch from Mills and gained five yards.

Mills rolled out and passed to Shirk for a first down on the 30. Mills connected with Kats for seven yards, then Overlease ran to the Norton 49 for another first down. A Mills keeper earned another first down on the Stockton 40. Mills hit Shirk with a flat pass to the 31. Overlease ran to the 27 but a personal foul against Stockton moved the ball to the 14. Kats gained one yard but Mills was sacked and a third down pass fell incomplete. Wilhite kicked a 37 yard field goal and Norton led 3-0 with 34 seconds left in the first quarter.

Cody Dix returned Wilhite's kickoff to the 25. Wilhite was hurt on the play and helped off the field. Mills tackled Kriley after a two yard gain and the first quarter came to a close with Norton on top 3-0.

Second quarter

Bennett tried the keeper around left end and Juenemann and Green tackled him after three yards. Kriley gained a first down on the 36 and Bennett gained a yard. The next down, Bennett's pass was intercepted by Overlease on the Norton 44. Mills passed to Shirk for a first down on the Stockton 40. A Mills pass was incomplete but Norton was penalized 10 yards for holding. Mills ran for one yard, then passed to Overlease on the 35 and passed to Shirk for a first down on the 29. Overlease ran up the middle for four yards, a pass fell

incomplete and Kats gained two yards to the 23. On fourth and four, Mills was sacked on the 29 and Stockton took over the ball.

On first down, Shirk made a statement as he came storming in from his defensive end position, hit Kriley just as he received the ball from Bennett, stood him up and dropped him for a four yard loss. After an incomplete pass, Bennett went back to the air and got some help from the Norton defensive secondary. The Jays were called for pass interference and the penalty moved the ball to the 40. Bennett passed to Kyle Weiser on the 48, then ran a keeper to the Norton 45. Kriley ran to the 33, then gained just two yards before Juenemann made the tackle. Bennett tried the keeper again and Shirk tackled him for a four yard loss. After Weiser lost six yards to the stingy Norton defense, a pass fell incomplete and Norton took over on their 35.

Kats gained nothing and a pass fell incomplete. A fumble in the backfield was recovered by Stockton on the Blue Jay 34 yard line. After an incomplete pass, Kriley gained seven yards. On the next down, the Tigers made a good gain but it came back when they were penalized to the 35 for holding. Juenemann sacked Bennett on the 39, a pass was incomplete and Norton took over the ball. Kats gained nothing but Overlease ran to the Stockton 44 for a first down. Time ran out on any possible Norton scoring drive. A Mills pass fell incomplete and Overlease was stopped for no gain as the half ended with Norton leading by just 3-0.

Third quarter

Norton started the second half with the ball on their 38 yard line after Stockton's kickoff. Overlease ran for a first down on the Stockton 46 and Kats picked up a first down on the 35. Overlease followed his blockers, broke into the open and scored Norton's first touchdown of the game. Kats was stopped short in his bid for two extra points and Norton led 9-0 with 11:23 still left in the third quarter.

Sprigg kicked off and Stockton returned the ball to their 26. Hall carried for six yards on three tries and the Tigers punted. Overlease got a good return of the punt but an illegal block brought it all the way back to the Blue Jay 20 yard line. Overlease gained just two yards on two plays and a Mills pass fell in-

complete. Kats punted to the Stockton 48. Hall gained six yards but Stockton lost five yards for delay of game. Bennett passed to Weiser for a first down on the Norton 41 as Pfannenstiel made the tackle. Barnett ran for seven yards and Kriley picked up a first down by inches on the 32. Barnett ran a keeper around right end for a first down on the 20. Hall gained two yards and Bennett pitched to Dix for a first down on the Norton 10. Bennett ran a keeper for one yard and a pass fell incomplete. Hall bulled to the 6 but Bennett was tackled on the 4 yard line on a fourth down keeper and Norton's goalline stand had been successful.

Overlease gained one yard but lost two. Mills passed to Maddy to the 7 and Kats punted. Weiser received the punt and was tackled on the Norton 45. Hall gained one hard yard against the tough Norton defense, a pass fell incomplete and the third quarter ended with the Blue Jays on top 9-0.

Fourth quarter

Bennett passed to Weiser for a first down on the Norton 30. Hall gained two yards but Bennett was sacked by a blitzing Roe and it was fourth and 16 for the Tigers. Kats made a great play as he broke up a Bennett pass that would have been complete and the Blue Jays took over. Mills connected with Shirk for a first down on the Stockton 45, then Kats found running room to the Tiger 28. Mills ran to the 23 on the option and Overlease ran outside for another first down on the 11. Kats exploded over the right side for the touchdown. Mills was sacked on the two extra points try but Norton led 15-0 with 9:00 left on the scoreboard clock.

Stockton was penalized back to their 7 yard line for an illegal block on Sprigg's kickoff and everything went downhill from there. Hall was tackled for no gain and a pass fell incomplete. On third down, the Tigers fumbled in the backfield and Shirk alertly picked up the pigskin and ran into the end zone for another Norton touchdown! Mills was stopped short on the two-point try, making the Norton lead 21-0 with 8:01 remaining in the contest.

Dix returned Sprigg's kickoff but made it only to the 21 before being tackled by the fired up Norton defense. Hall gained six yards on three runs and the Tigers punted back to the Blue Jays. Overlease returned the ball to the Stockton 43 and Coach Graber

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