

# Norton loses football opener to Oakley

By DICK BOYD

Mistakes and the inability to take advantage of Oakley miscues were costly to the Norton Blue Jays Friday night resulting in a 24-3 loss before the home crowd to the visiting Plainsmen in the first football game of the season for both teams.

It was the second straight year for Oakley to defeat the boys from Norton Community High in the opener.

Norton rebounded last year and went on to an 8-3 season. Oakley was also a playoff team and compiled a 10-2 record.

Inexperience at many positions was a problem for Norton.

Oakley kicked off. After senior quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel gained seven yards on two keeper plays, a procedure penalty and quarterback sack caused a punt by Chris Davis.

Norton's defense held and Oakley had to punt back to the Jays.

Norton fumbled the punt, however, and Oakley took advantage, recovering the ball on the Norton 22.

Oakley running back Calder Keller got loose around left end and scored. The quarterback Chase Sperber passed to end Paul Kuhlman in the end zone on a fake kick to make the score 8-0 in favor of Oakley with 8:04 left in the first quarter.

Blake VanEaton made a good return of the Oakley kickoff to the Norton 37.

Fullback Chris Davis gained eight but Pfannenstiel lost three on a keeper. VanEaton got the call on third down, reversed field and sprinted down the sideline. He was finally run out of bounds on the Oakley five-yard-line.

Norton was unable to put the ball in the end zone and Oakley took over.

The Plainsmen moved to their 34 where Pfannenstiel recovered a fumble.

Norton gained just four yards by Davis in four downs and turned the ball back to Oakley. The Plainsmen fumbled the ball back to Norton when Davvid Stanley recovered the pigskin on the Oakley 25.

The first quarter ended two plays later with Oakley leading 8-0.

Norton was unable to move the ball and, after an exchange of possessions, the Blue Jays had the ball on the Norton 42. With the offen-



Norton junior tailback Blake VanEaton avoids would-be tackler Kyle Reitcheck of Oakley during a 15-yard gain

sive line blowing holes in the Oakley defense and Davis and VanEaton eating up yardage, Norton drove to the Oakley eight-yard-line.

However, Norton was unable to advance further and William Wilhite was called on to kick. He sailed the ball through the uprights for a 24-yard field goal that made the score 8-3 with 5:37 left in the first half.

After Norton's kickoff, Oakley took the ball to the Norton 40 before Nathan Broeckelman fell on a Plainsman fumble. The Blue Jays fumbled the ball away on their 37 with 3:08 left in the half.

Oakley's Robert Cooksey gained 24 and one play later got an eight-yard touchdown. Cooksey ran for the two extra points and Oakley led 16-3 with 2:29 left in the half.

After the kickoff, Norton moved the ball through the air for a first down on the Oakley 38. An illegal motion penalty and pass interception stopped the Jays.

Oakley put a drive together

which stopped when Nathan Morse intercepted a Plainsmen pass on the Norton 21 with 48 seconds left in the half.

After an exchange of possessions in the third quarter, a long pass from Sperber to Keller gave Oakley the ball on the Norton 39. An apparent touchdown by Cooksey on the next play was called back due to clipping by the Plainsmen.

Oakley punted to the Norton 15 and a false start dropped the Blue Jays back to their 10-yard-line. Norton had to punt out and Keller put the Plainsmen in good field position with a return to the Norton 36. Cooksey ran to the 26, then Sperber passed to Keller in the end zone for Oakley's third touchdown. Cooksey ran for two extra points to make the score 24-3 with 1:42 left in the third quarter.

After Oakley's kickoff, Norton moved to the Plainsmen 34 as the third quarter ended.

As the fourth quarter began, Norton was forced to punt and the kick by Davis put the ball on the Oakley 13.

Austin Brooks recovered a Plainsmen fumble on the 11-yard-line but, two plays later, Norton fumbled the ball back to Oakley.

That fumble ended Norton's last chance to score. Both teams had the ball twice again but did not score and Oakley left town with a 24-3 victory for the Northwest Kansas League over the Mid-Continent League.

"My worst fears were proven by this game," said Norton Head Coach Bruce Graber. "We are not a very physical team. We'll have to play a lot more physical to be a contender.

"We didn't play well. We're inexperienced on defense and it showed. Going into the game, we were concerned about their tailback (Cooksey). He's a big kid and he ran wild. We had a lot of opportunities to hit him and didn't.

"Offensively, we didn't do a very good job up front. We occasionally did some good with the trap but never got the ball to the perimeter and I'm disappointed with that. We had some kids im-

portant to our success who really struggled.

"Turnovers were big. We picked up some good yardage but made too many mistakes. We hurt ourselves as much as anything. I'm not taking anything away from them because they are a good ball club and played well.

"In the first half, we were in the red zone three times and came away with just three points. On the bright side, Davis punted the ball well and special teams coverage was pretty good, although we missed some opportunities in the punt return game.

"I don't think conditioning was a problem. Our pride was hurt worse than our bodies. We just have to be a whole lot better. I'm sure we will work hard and bounce back.

"I told our players after the game that we just lost a game and that we don't know anything about the pain and suffering of the people in Louisiana.

"I was disappointed in our execution but I still love our kids and we'll keep coaching them and get

things turned around." Oakley had 301 yards of total offense compared to Norton's 185. The Norton total is misleading due to 40 yards lost by quarterback Pfannenstiel, who had 14 carries.

Leading rusher for Norton was Davis with 43 yards on 10 carries; followed by VanEaton, 34 on 12; Bolt, 14 on five; Kats, four on two; and Matt Stanley, one on two.

Pfannenstiel completed 9 of 17 passes for 129 yards with one interception. Kats was 0 for two.

VanEaton was leading Norton receiver with four catches for 86 yards followed by Madden, two for 20; Cox, one for 13; Davis, one for nine; and Broeckelman, one for one.

Pfannenstiel had two punt returns for 29 yards.

VanEaton had 2 kickoff returns for 38 yards. Pfannenstiel had 1 kickoff return for 23 yards.

Davis kicked off twice for a 40-yard average.

Leading tackler for Norton against Oakley was Pfannenstiel with 8 solos and 4 assists for 12 total tackles. He was followed by Ables, 5 solos, 4 assists, 9 total; Broeckelman, 7 solos, 1 assist, 8 total; VanEaton, 3 solos, 4 assists, 7 total; Bolt, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Madden, 5 solos; Davis, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Davvid Stanley, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Matt Engel, 4 solos; Brooks, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Vincent, 3 solos; Cox, 2 solos; Mannel, 1 solo; Kats, 1 solo; Ray, 1 assist.

Cooksey was leading rusher for Oakley with 118 yards on 19 carries followed by Sperber, 96 yards on 15. Keller caught three for 56 yards.

Friday, Norton will travel to Plainville for the Jays' first Mid-Continent League game. Kickoff is at 7 p.m.

"Plainville will be hungry after losing to Phillipsburg on Friday," said Coach Graber. "And, we are going to their house.

"They are a lot bigger than we are. They average 230 pounds across the front. But, even though we're not as big, that doesn't mean we can't win."

#### GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Oakley
9	15
44-56	47-235
129	66
185	301
9-19-1	5-12-1
10-55	7-58
5-35	6-27
3-6	4-5

# Mistakes cost Blue Jays first home football game

(Continued from Page 8) and Nathan Broeckelman fell on it for the Blue Jays on the 40.

Norton was unable to take advantage. Davis was stopped for no gain, a pass was batted down and a third down fumble was recovered by Aaron Racette on the Norton 37.

Cooksey gained big yardage around right end to the Norton 13. Keller ran for five, then Cooksey ran around the right end for the touchdown. That worked so well Oakley's Coach Randall Rath called the same play for two extra points and it worked again, putting Oakley on top 16-3 with 2:29 left in the half.

Oakley kicked on the ground and Matt Engel recovered for Norton on the Blue Jay 35.

Pfannenstiel went to the air. He hit tight end Jared Cox over the middle for a first down on the Norton 49. Davis bulled for one to midfield, then Pfannenstiel passed to Madden for a first down on the Oakley 38.

Once again, the Blue Jays were unable to sustain a drive.

After losing five for illegal motion, Norton lost the ball on a pass interception by Oakley's Aaron Sperber on the Oakley 31. With Cooksey getting the carries again, Oakley moved to the Norton 36. Nathan Morse alertly dived for a Sperber pass and intercepted on the 21-yard-line with 48 seconds left in the half.

VanEaton ran for seven yards and Davis picked up a first down on the 34. VanEaton gained two more but Norton lost five on an illegal procedure penalty. Pfannenstiel was sacked but a face mask penalty against Oakley moved the ball to the 37. A flat pass to VanEaton gained nothing

as the half ended with Oakley on top 16-3.

#### Third quarter

Younkin returned Davis' kickoff to the 31 to start the second half. Younkin ran for one, then Sperber ran a keeper to the 40. Sperber sneaked for a first down on the 42. Cooksey picked up four and Keller got one but Oakley was penalized back to the 37 for holding. Cooksey was stopped with a one yard gain. Sperber went to the air and the Blue Jays got a break when Keller got behind the Norton secondary and dropped a pass from Sperber that would have been a big gainer.

Oakley punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 47.

Davis ran for four but VanEaton lost one. A Pfannenstiel pass was incomplete and Davis punted out of bounds on the Oakley 19.

Sperber ran a keeper around the right for a first down on the 41. Sperber was then sacked on the 35 by a whole host of Norton players. Oakley got out of the hole, however, as Sperber completed a long pass to Keller on the Norton 39. Cooksey ran for an apparent touchdown on the next play but clipping against Oakley brought the ball back to the Norton 47.

Norton limited Cooksey to just two on the next play. A pass was incomplete, a flat pass to Keller was good on the 40 and Oakley lost five on a delay of game penalty. The Plainsmen punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 15.

A false start cost Norton five back to the 10. VanEaton gained three but another false start cost the Jays again. A one yard gain by VanEaton and flat pass to Broeckelman on the 10 were not enough for a first down and Davis punted.

Keller returned the ball to the Norton 36, putting the Plainsmen in good field position. Cooksey got loose to the 26, then Sperber passed to Keller in the end zone for Oakley's third touchdown. Cooksey ran for two and it was 24-3 with 1:42 left in the period.

Pfannenstiel made a good return of the Oakley kickoff to the Norton 48. VanEaton gained no yards on first down but caught a flat pass from Pfannenstiel and ran to the Oakley 34 for a first down.

Once again, Norton was unable to sustain momentum. A fumble was recovered by Norton for a three yard loss, a false start cost the Jays another five and a pass fell incomplete as the third quarter ended with the visitors leading 24-3.

#### Fourth quarter

Pfannenstiel was stopped for no gain and Davis punted. The ball

**After Prom Tailgate Party**  
SERVING  
5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.  
**Friday, September 9**  
Norton vs. Plainville  
Hamburgers, Hotdogs,  
and Brats - North End  
of the Plainville  
Football Field

rolled dead on the Oakley 13. The Plainsmen fumbled and Austin Brooks recovered on the 11.

Pfannenstiel lost two on first down, then the Jays fumbled back to Oakley on their 31.

Cooksey bulled ahead for five on first down, then tried to go around the right end again. This time he lost two as 135-pound Todd Bolt came flying in to make the best tackle of the night on the 207-pound Cooksey!

A pass was incomplete and Oakley punted to the Norton 29. Logan Kats replaced

Pfannenstiel at quarterback and Bolt replaced VanEaton at tailback. Bolt lost three, then Norton lost five for being offsides. Bolt gained four but Kats was sacked back on the 19. Davis punted to the Oakley 40.

Cooksey gained two, then Oakley recovered their own fumble for no gain. Sperber ran the keeper and Cox came up to tackle him after a four-yard gain. It was fourth down with four yards to go and Oakley drew Norton offsides to get a first down on the Norton 47. Sperber gained two, then

Cooksey got loose to the 35 but the Plainsmen were whistled for holding and the ball went back to midfield. Encroachment cost Oakley five. Keller ran a reverse but was stopped for no gain. A pass fell incomplete and Oakley punted. The ball rolled dead on the Norton 39.

Coach Bruce Graber put the Norton junior varsity offense in the game and they made one first down before running out of downs and time as Oakley earned a 24-3 season opening victory over the Blue Jays.

## High School Sports This Week



**FOOTBALL:**

Norton vs Plainville (away)	7 p.m., Friday
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Oakley (away)	5:30 p.m., today
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Plainville (here)	6:30 p.m., Monday
Northern Valley vs. Golden Plains (here)	7 p.m., Friday
Logan vs. Kensington (away)	7 p.m., Friday

**VOLLEYBALL:**

Norton Varsity/Junior Varsity vs. Northern Valley/Phillipsburg (here)	5 p.m., today
Norton Junior Varsity in Quinter Tournament (away)	9 a.m. Saturday
C-Team vs. Plainville (here)	5 p.m. Monday
Northern Valley vs. Norton/Phillipsburg (in Norton)	5 p.m., today
Northern Valley vs Palco/Eastern Heights (away)	4 p.m., Tuesday
Logan vs. Hill City/Trego (here)	5 p.m., today
Logan vs. Phillipsburg/Stockton (away)	5 p.m., Tuesday

**CROSS COUNTRY:**

Norton Cross Country at Wamego Invitational Meet	10 a.m., Saturday
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**TENNIS:**

Norton in Phillipsburg Varsity Quad (away)	1 p.m., today
Norton Junior Varsity in Trego Quadrangular (WaKeeney)	1 p.m., Thursday
Norton Junior Varsity Quadrangular (here)	10 a.m., Saturday
Norton in Phillipsburg Varsity Quad (away)	3 p.m., Tuesday
Norton vs. Goodland (away)	3 p.m., Tuesday