

Norton football team defeats Plainville

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School football boys eliminated some of their first game mistakes and evened their record at 1-1 with a 29-8 Mid-Continent League football victory at Plainville on Friday.

Coach Bruce Graber's Blue Jays scored in every quarter as they doubled the yardage and first downs on the Cardinals.

Norton gained 245 yards on 43 rushing attempts to average 5.7 yards per carry and added 93 yards through the air for 338 yards total offense.

The Blue Jay defense limited the Cardinals to 84 yards rushing on 39 carries and 75 yards through the air for 159 yards of offense.

Norton had 18 first downs compared to nine for Plainville.

The Blue Jays received the kickoff and, on the first play from scrimmage, junior fullback Chris Davis found a big hole in the Plainville line and ran 39 yards to the Cardinal 25. The Plainville defense stiffened and Norton faced a fourth down on the 15.

Senior kicker William Wilhite kept his season record perfect by kicking a 32-yard field goal to give the Jays a 3-0 lead with 7:26 left in the quarter.

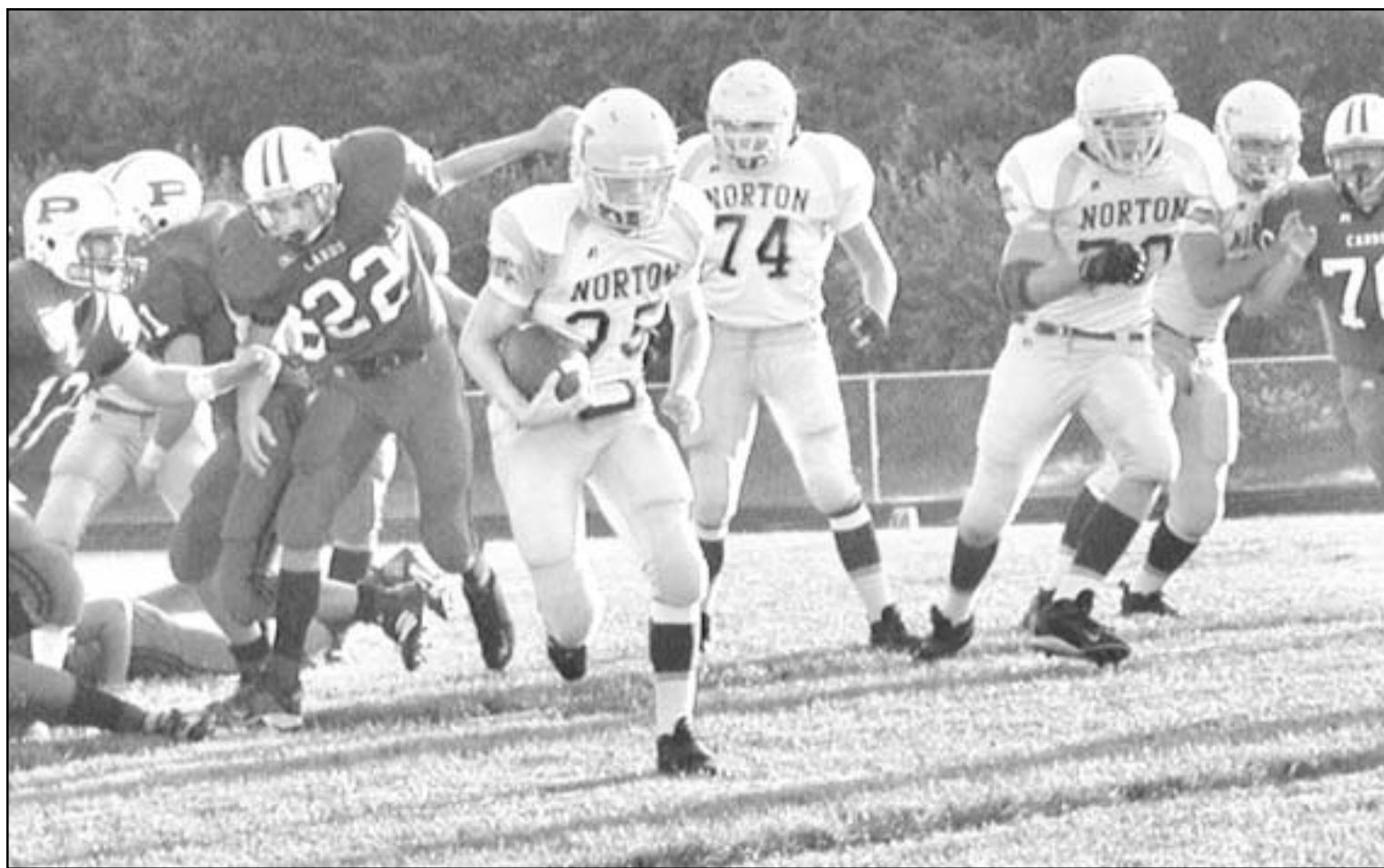
After an exchange of punts, Plainville punted again and Norton fumbled the reception. The Cardinals recovered on the Norton 47 as the first quarter came to a close.

Again, the Norton defense held and forced a punt. This time the defense blocked the punt and Norton took over on their 39.

With Davis, junior tailback Blake VanEaton and senior quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel running the ball, the Jays moved to the Plainville 37. Senior wide receiver Clay Madden got behind the Cardinal secondary and Pfannenstiel hit him with a perfect pass for Norton's first touchdown. Wilhite's extra point kick gave the Blue Jays a 10-0 lead with 9:21 left in the half.

After the kickoff, the Norton defenders continued to run to the ball and gang tackle and forced Plainville to punt again. The Cardinals faked a punt but the strategy backfired and Norton tackled the ball carrier on the 30, short of a first down.

Five plays later, Pfannenstiel



Norton junior fullback Chris Davis breaks into the open on the first play from scrimmage in the Blue Jays' win over Plainville and

sneaked into the end zone for the Jays' second touchdown. Norton tried a fake extra point kick but the pass was no good and Norton led 16-0 with 5:16 left in the first half.

Plainville responded with their best drive of the night. With senior quarterback Justin Casey leading the offense, the Cardinals ran and passed the ball down the field to score their only touchdown. Casey passed 11 yards to senior receiver Scott Peavey for the score. Casey then passed to junior tight end Luke Brin for two points, making the score 16-8 at halftime.

The Cardinals picked up in the third quarter where they left off in the second. They took the kickoff and drove down field, passing and running. Aided by a late hit call on Norton, Plainville drove to the Norton 10. From there, Casey tried to pass for a touchdown but defensive back Madden intercepted, returning the ball to the 15.

Plainville held and Davis went back to punt. The center snap went over his head but he ran back, caught the ball on a bounce and, with the help of some blocks, ran for a first down on the Norton 28.

With Davis and VanEaton run-

ning and Pfannenstiel passing, the Blue Jays drove down the field to score their third touchdown. VanEaton tallied from 14 yards out, Wilhite kicked the extra point and Norton led 23-8 with 2:45 left in the third quarter.

After the kickoff, the Norton defense held again and blocked a Plainville punt, recovering the ball on the Cardinal 25. Norton fumbled back to Plainville on the 12 as time ran out in the third period.

Norton held and Plainville punted to the Blue Jay 30. On first down, Davis broke into the open and ran 35 to the Cardinal 35. Plainville held and Norton punted out of bounds on the 23.

The Norton defense held and Plainville punted for the fifth time. Pfannenstiel returned the pigskin to the Cardinal 25. VanEaton plunged to the 21, then Davis took a handoff from Pfannenstiel, broke through the line and outran the Cardinal secondary for the final Norton touchdown. The extra point kick was blocked and Norton led 29-8.

Plainville had the ball again but had to turn it over on the Cardinal

37 and the Norton junior varsity ran out the clock.

"It was a real good night for us," said Coach Graber. "We played with more consistency in a lot of places. We played with more passion and bounced back better after mistakes. We'll have to get better at a lot of technique things. We have to learn to keep our pad level down. We handled their size, were more aggressive and tackled better. Our offensive line made a huge improvement."

"For awhile we looked pretty good but once we got up by 16-0 in the second quarter we didn't play very well. We came back in the second half and brought the tempo back up. Clay Madden had a huge interception when it looked like they might tie the score on us."

"Then, Chris Davis made a great play after the bad snap on the punt. He could have punted but he made a great run. The rest of the guys made some blocks and he made some cuts. After his run, we put together our best drive and scored to make it 23-8. Chris made some great runs on the trap game inside. "Luke Pfannenstiel did a great

job of reading the option and that opened up our offense. His touchdown pass was a good one into the wind. He completed 7 of 10 passes which we'll take anytime."

"We knew their quarterback would be hard to contain. If we had done a better job of tackling him, we'd have taken away more of their offense. We need to keep improving in our tackling."

"Our secondary played well. Nobody beat us. We also had some good punt returns."

"We had a point-after kick blocked up the middle so we'll have to make adjustments there."

"We just need to keep improving and play at a higher level."

"Some of our younger players like Zach Dreher and Todd Bolt got some playing time and that allowed our older players to get a break. We got everyone in the game and that was good. Our junior varsity players looked great."

Davis was leading rusher for Norton with 139 yards on 10 carries for an outstanding 13.9 yards per carry. He was followed by VanEaton, 15 for 60; Pfannenstiel, 11 for 13; Roe, 1 for 5; Bolt, 1 for 4; Matt Stanley, 1 for 0; Logan

Kats, 1 for 11; Brock Lauer, 1 for 3; Brian Ulmer, 1 for 0; Brad Nuzum, 1 for 0.

Six Norton players caught passes.

Madden caught 1 pass for 37 yards, followed by Nathan Broeckelman, 1 for 15; VanEaton, 1 for 5; Cox, 1 for 15; Davis, 2 for 10; Bolt, 1 for 11.

Pfannenstiel had 1 punt return for 21 yards and two kickoff returns for 35 yards.

Wilhite kicked off five times for a 47-yard average and Davis kicked off once for 35 yards.

Junior defensive end Matt Engel was leading tackler with eight solos and one assist followed by junior linebacker Blake VanEaton, seven solos, one assist; senior linebacker Andrew Ables, five solos, three assists; Luke Pfannenstiel, seven solos; Heath Vincent, five solos, one assist; Lance Roe, four solos, two assists; Nathan Broeckelman, four solos, one assist; Todd Bolt, three solos, one assist; Austin Brooks and Chris Davis, one solo, three assists each; Davvid Stanley, three solos; Clay Madden, one solo, one assist; Brett Thomson and Brian Juenemann, one solo each; and Logan Kats, Jared Cox and Zach Mannel, one assist each.

Norton will travel to Smith Center Friday to play the defending Class 2A state champion Redmen in Mid-Continent League action.

Kickoff will be at 7 p.m. Smith Center easily defeated Plainville and Hill City in their first two games.

"We are excited about the opportunity to play the state champions," said Coach Graber. "Our victory over Plainville should be a confidence builder going into the Smith Center game. "They lost a lot of players to graduation and are playing a lot of sophomores but they still have an outstanding team."

"We will have to be more physical up front and keep our pad level down low."

Game Statistics		
Norton		Plainville
18	First Downs	9
43-245	Yards Rushing	39-84
93	Yards Passing	75
338	Total Yards	159
7-11-0	Passes Compl	9-18-1
7-47	Penalties	1-10
2-2	Fumbles Lost	0-1
2-34	Punts	5-28

Norton Blue Jays gain first victory of season with 29-8 win

Play-by-play

Norton downed Plainville 29-8 for the Blue Jays first victory this year.

First quarter

Luke Pfannenstiel returned the kickoff to the 36-yard-line. On first down, fullback Chris Davis burst through a hole in the Plainville line and ran to the Cardinal 25 before being tackled. A two-yard gain by Davis and loss of one-yard by quarterback Pfannenstiel on two plays, made it fourth and nine for the Blue Jays.

Pfannenstiel threw his first pass of the game. The ball was tipped near the line of scrimmage but wide receiver Nathan Broeckelman made a diving catch of the ball on the Plainville 10. Tailback Blake VanEaton lost a yard on first down, then took a pitch from Pfannenstiel for a two-yard gain. Pfannenstiel was sacked back on the 15, bringing up fourth down.

Coach Graber called on kicker William Wilhite. He stayed perfect for the season with a 32-yard field goal and a 3-0 Norton lead with 7:26 left in the first quarter.

Scott Peavey returned Wilhite's kickoff to the 24 where Pfannenstiel tackled him. On first down, Plainville fumbled but recovered on their 26. Lucas Hachmeister was stopped for no gain by Norton linebacker VanEaton. Quarterback Justin Casey passed seven yards to Peavey and sneaked for the first down on the 35.

Casey was stopped for no gain. Holding was called on Plainville but Norton declined the penalty. Casey tried another keeper but Matt Engel tackled him for a two-yard loss. Next, Austin Brooks came charging into the Plainville backfield to sack Casey on the 19.

Plainville punted to the Norton 36.

VanEaton gained nine yards on two carries but a delay of game penalty cost the Blue Jays five yards. A Pfannenstiel pass fell incomplete and Davis got off a great punt that carried into the Plainville end zone. The ball came out to the 20-yard-line. Tyler Brungardt gained just two-yards against the Blue Jay defense and Josh Eichman lost a yard. After an incomplete Casey pass, Plainville punted.

Norton fumbled the punt reception and Plainville recovered the fumble on the Norton 47. Hachmeister again gained nothing and Eichman was tackled by Brooks after a four-yard gain as the first quarter came to a close with the Blue Jays on top 3-0

Second quarter

Pfannenstiel came flying in from his linebacker position to sack Casey for a two-yard loss. The entire interior of the Norton defense came storming in to block the Plainville punt and Davis fell on the ball on the Norton 39.

The Blue Jay offense shifted into high gear as Davis ran to the Plainville 49, then plowed to the 42. VanEaton plunged to the 40 and Pfannenstiel sneaked for a first down on the 37. Pfannenstiel surprised the Plainville secondary as he threw a long pass down the far sideline and wide receiver Clay Madden gathered it in for a touchdown. Wilhite split the uprights and Norton led 10-0 with 9:21 left.

The Cardinals returned the kickoff to their 25. Brooks broke through the Plainville offensive line to sack Casey on the 16. Then, linebacker Lance Roe tackled Hachmeister after a two-yard gain. Casey was run out of the pocket and defensive tackle Heath Vincent tackled him for no gain. The Cardinals tried a fake punt but the Blue Jays weren't fooled and tackled

Hachmeister on the 30.

Pfannenstiel ran the keeper to the 14 for a big first down. A flat pass from Pfannenstiel to VanEaton carried to the 9. Davis plunged to the 6. Pfannenstiel ran the keeper and was stopped on the one-foot line. On first down, Pfannenstiel followed his blocking on a sneak into the end zone for Norton's second touchdown of the night. A fake extra point kick and pass was no good and the Blue Jays led 16-0 with 5:16 left in the half.

Peavey returned the Norton kickoff to the 38. Casey passed to Aaron Becker for an apparent first down on the Norton 45 but the Cardinals were penalized for holding and the ball came back to midfield. After an incomplete Casey pass, Hachmeister was tackled by Vincent for no gain. Casey went back to pass again and was run out of the pocket. He was not tackled until he had run to the Norton 41. Brungardt ran for a first down on the Norton 36. A slant pass to Becker was good for six yards. After an incomplete Casey pass, Hachmeister ran for a first down on the 20 as VanEaton tackled him. Hachmeister gained six more yards to the Norton 14. Casey ran a keeper up the middle to the 11 where VanEaton tackled him. Casey passed to Peavey for a Cardinal touchdown. Casey then passed to Luke Brin for two extra points and it was 16-8 with 50 seconds left in the half.

Pfannenstiel returned the Plainville kickoff to the Norton 44 and was shaken up on the play. Logan Kats replaced him at quarterback. He pitched to VanEaton but he was tackled for no gain. Pfannenstiel returned to the lineup and ran the keeper to the Plainville 44. VanEaton gained nothing as the first half ended with the Blue Jays leading 16-8.

Third quarter

Peavey returned the opening kickoff of the third quarter and was tackled by Andrew Ables on the 26. Hachmeister gained one. Casey ran the keeper and was stopped by Engel on the 33. Casey threw a slant pass over the middle to Peavey for a first down on the 40. Eichman gained nothing, then Casey passed to Peavey for a first down on the Norton 48. After a Cardinal first down on the Norton 33, Casey was run out of the pocket and scampered to the Blue Jay 25. Norton was whistled for a late hit and the ball was moved to the Norton 13. Hachmeister plunged to the 10 where Roe made the tackle.

Casey tried to pass for a touchdown but defensive back Clay Madden alertly stepped in front of the intended receiver and intercepted the aerial. Madden was tackled on the Norton 15.

VanEaton gained one-yard and Davis picked up seven. Pfannenstiel appeared to have a big gain on a keeper but the Blue Jays were penalized for an illegal shift and the ball went back to the 16. After an incomplete flat pass, Davis went back to punt for Norton.

The center snap went over his head so he ran back, caught the ball on one bounce and headed upfield. His teammates realized what was happening and several good blocks helped him run to the Norton 28 for a first down.

VanEaton gained nine yards on a pitch and a pass fell incomplete. Pfannenstiel ran the sneak for a first down on the Norton 40. VanEaton ran for two yards, then Pfannenstiel passed to tight end Jared Cox for a first down on the Plainville 43. Davis plunged up the middle to the 40 and Pfannenstiel passed to Davis for another Norton first down on the 27. Roe replaced Davis and ran for five yards.

VanEaton got loose for a first down on the 14. VanEaton scored on the next play as he took advantage of some good blocks and dodged tacklers to run untouched into the end zone.

Wilhite kicked the extra point and Norton extended their advantage to 23-8 with 2:45 left in the quarter.

Peavey returned the kickoff and must have wondered what hit him because Ables came running downfield like a heat-seeking missile, penetrated the Plainville defenders with reckless abandon and dropped Peavey on the 24. Ables' good tackle fired up the rest of the Norton defenders. Hachmeister tried to run and was stopped for no gain by Davvid Stanley and Vincent. Hachmeister got the call again and a whole host of Norton defenders led by linebacker Davis hit him for no gain. A Casey pass was incomplete and the Cardinals punted.

Norton was penalized five yards for encroachment and Plainville went back into punt formation. This time, the interior of the Norton line broke through the Plainville line to block the attempted punt. Brooks recovered the pigskin on the Plainville 25 and the Blue Jays were in great position to score another touchdown.

Pfannenstiel passed to Todd Bolt for a first down on the 14; however, the Blue Jays fumbled on the next play and Plainville recovered on the 12. Casey ran up the middle for six yards, a pass fell incomplete and Hachmeister was stopped for no gain. Brungardt ran for a first down on the 23 as the third quarter ended with Norton still leading 23-8.

Fourth quarter

A Casey pass was incomplete to start the final period, then Casey ran for seven yards to the 30. On third down, VanEaton tackled Casey

back on the 25 and Plainville punted. Pfannenstiel made the punt reception on the Norton 30. On first down, Davis took a handoff from Pfannenstiel and broke into the open. He was finally stopped by Plainville on their 35. Pfannenstiel ran the option for five yards and VanEaton picked up five. VanEaton was then stopped for no gain. Norton was penalized five yards for delay of game and Pfannenstiel was sacked back on the 33. A flat pass to Davis lost a yard and Norton punted out of bounds on the 23.

Brooks and Vincent sacked Casey back on the 17, then Casey was sacked by a whole host of Norton players on the 12. Casey lost another yard and Plainville punted.

Pfannenstiel received some good blocking on the reception and weaved his way to the Plainville 25. VanEaton plunged to the 21. The next play, Davis took a handoff, broke through the line and weaved his way through the Cardinal secondary for a touchdown. The extra point kick attempt was blocked and Norton led 29-8.

Peavey returned the kickoff to the 30. Casey was sacked for a two-yard loss. Hachmeister was stopped for little gain but Norton was penalized five yards for grabbing his face mask. Casey passed to Taylor Dix for a first down on the Cardinal 46. Hachmeister gained nothing on first down, however, and two passes fell incomplete. Jared Cox and Brett Thomson sacked Casey on the 37 and Norton took over possession of the pigskin.

The Norton junior varsity moved the ball to the 15-yard-line before time ran out with Norton winning 29-8.