

Norton loses to Smith Center

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School football team was overpowered in the trenches by the state-ranked and defending state champion Smith Center on Friday night and the result was a 51-13 Mid-Continent League loss at Hubbard Field in Smith Center.

Two long runs and a pass interception for touchdowns put the Smith Center lead at just 20-7 at halftime but two more rushing touchdowns and three more scores after pass interceptions in the second half were too much for the Blue Jays.

Norton kicked off to start the game and William Wilhite's kickoff hit the turf and rolled back to the 3-yard line where Logan Kats tackled Redman running back Taylor Jones. On first down, quarterback Joe Windscheffel faked to two backs, then handed the ball to Jones who ran untouched over left tackle for a 97 yard touchdown with just 18 seconds gone in the contest. The extra points run attempt was stopped but Smith Center led 6-0.

On their first possession, Norton put together a drive but fumbled on the Redmen 30. Smith Center repeated their touchdown play from their first possession and Jones ran 70 yards to score. Jones ran for two extra points and the Redmen led 14-0 with 10:49 still left in the first quarter.

Norton responded by driving down field to score the Jays' first touchdown. With quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel, tailback Blake VanEaton and fullback Lance Roe all gaining yardage, the Blue Jays moved to the 13-yard-line where they were faced with a fourth and six situation. Pfannenstiel passed to the wide receiver Clay Madden and he eluded several Smith Center defenders to score. Wilhite's kick split the uprights and Norton had narrowed the Smith Center lead to 14-7 with 5:17 left in the first period.

Wilhite kicked the ball into the end zone and the Redmen got the ball on their 20. They drove to the Norton 45 where gang tackling by the Blue Jay defenders caused a Smith Center fumble. Pfannenstiel fell on the ball for Norton with time running out in the first quarter.

Norton had to punt and Nathan Morse's kick went out of bounds on the Redmen 33. They moved the ball to the Norton 36 before turning it over to the Blue Jays.

Norton picked up two first downs by passing but a holding penalty cost the Blue Jays 15 yards. Pfannenstiel went back to the passing game but his pass was tipped up into the air by Drew Joy, who caught it and ran untouched into the end zone for Smith Center's third touchdown. Jones was stopped short on the extra points attempt, making it 20-7 in favor of the Redmen with 5:35 left.

On first down after the kickoff, Norton fumbled the ball back to Smith Center on the Norton 29. The Norton defense was equal to the occasion and regained possession of the ball on the 20.

After an exchange of punts, the teams went into the locker room with the Redmen leading by just 20-7.

The Norton defense did not appear to play with the same passion in the second half and Smith Center played errorless ball as the Redmen scored on two more rushes and on runs after three pass interceptions.

Smith Center kicked off to Norton to start the second half but the Blue Jays were forced to punt. The Redmen took advantage of a 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against Norton and moved the ball down field to score. Kerby Rice tallied from one yard out. Jones was stopped on the two-point run and it was 26-7 with 6:14 left in the third.

Norton was forced to punt again to the Redmen and they drove 80 yards to score again. This time Jones ran 19 yards to pay dirt. Jones was stopped in his try for two more points but the Redmen led 32-7 with 2:35 left in the third quarter.

In an attempt to narrow the Smith Center lead, Norton went to the air but Pfannenstiel's pass was intercepted on the Norton 47 by Jared Hayes. Tate Arnold ran 35 yards for another Smith Center touchdown. An extra points pass was incomplete but the Redmen led 38-7 with 23 seconds left in the third period.

Norton went back to the passing game and another Pfannenstiel pass was intercepted on the Redmen 40 yard line. On first down, Jones ran 60 yards for another Smith Center touchdown. Rice was inaccurate on the extra point kick but it was 44-7 in favor of the Redmen with 11:40 left in the game.

On Norton's next possession, another Pfannenstiel pass was in-



Norton senior wide receiver Clay Madden heads for the end zone after catching a pass from senior quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel in the first quarter of the Blue Jays' game

tercepted at mid-field. With the help of a 15-yard personal foul penalty against Norton, Smith Center scored their final touchdown. Rice ran 35 yards for the score and kicked the extra point to make it 51-7 with 8:19 left.

The continuous clock rule went into effect and the junior varsity players from both teams finished the game. Norton's sophomore tailback Todd Bolt carried the ball nine straight times and scored a 25-yard touchdown on the final play of the game. Bolt attempted a two-point conversion but was stopped just short of the goalline and the game ended with the Redmen prevailing 51-13.

"Those first two offensive plays of theirs weren't good," said Coach Graber.

"It would have been easy to quit at that point but we didn't.

"They didn't stop us in the first half; we stopped ourselves. But, we were still playing better than we did a week ago. We made some mistakes but we were competing hard. We came back from some negative plays and showed signs of being an improved football team. We were pretty much equal in the first half.

"I was as proud of us as I could be at the end of the first half. We had a chance to win. I don't know

what happened but we didn't play with the same sense of urgency and determination in the second half.

"We gave them short fields because we didn't get much going offensively. We didn't sustain blocks. We didn't sustain anything offensively and were on defense too much in the second half. They outthit us and outplayed us. We just got kicked in the second half.

"The two halves were like two different ball games. Why the turnaround? I don't know. We tried to make adjustments at halftime but went in the wrong direction. I'll take the responsibility.

"Luke was a real warrior. His back was bothering him from the first quarter. He made some mistakes but showed a lot of heart."

Norton gained 131 yards rushing and 95 passing for 226 yards of offense. Smith Center rushed for 611 yards but did not complete a pass. Pfannenstiel completed eight of 17 passes but had four interceptions. The Blue Jays lost two fumbles and the Redmen lost just one.

Norton had 16 first downs and Smith Center recorded 19 first-and-10s.

Leading rusher for Norton was Bolt with 10 carries for 64 yards. He was followed by VanEaton, 12

at Smith Center on Friday. The 13-yard touchdown play and William Wilhite's extra point narrowed the Redmen's early game lead to 14-7.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

carries for 25 yards; Roe, 8 for 28; Pfannenstiel, 15 for 16. Leading pass receiver was Madden with 5 catches for 64 yards, followed by Broeckelman, 1 for 11; Cox, 1 for 16; VanEaton, 1 for 15.

Pfannenstiel had 6 kickoff returns for 82 yards, followed by Broeckelman, 1 for 33; VanEaton, 1 for 20; Dreher, 1 for 3.

Wilhite had two kickoffs for a 59.5 yard average.

Chris Davis, Norton's starting senior fullback and linebacker, did not play in the game due to illness. He carried the ball 10 times for 139 yards in last week's 29-8 win over Plainville.

Defensive back Pfannenstiel was leading tackler for Norton with 9 solo tackles, 2 assists. He was followed by Broeckelman, 9 solos; VanEaton, 4 solos, 5 assists; Roe, 6 solos, 2 assists; Cox, 4 solos, 1 assist; Engel, 1 solo, 3 assists; Ables, 3 solos; Brooks, 1 solo, 2 assists; Dreher, 2 solos; Scheetz, 2 assists; Bolt, Kats, Vincent, 1 solo each; Mannel, 1 assist.

Game Statistics

Norton	Smith Center
16	19
44-131	47-611
95	0
226	611
	611

8-18-4	Passes Compl.	0-4-0
4-40	Penalties	6-45
2-2	Fumbles Lost	1-2
4-24.2	Punts	1-50

Norton will play Osborne in a Mid-Continent League game Friday at Travis Field, beginning at 7 p.m.

"Osborne has eight returning starters from a year ago," said Coach Graber.

"They have as many returning starters as anyone in the league. Coach Clint Merritt, who played for Smith Center, has done a great job of instilling a hard-nosed attitude in his players. They'll come over very confident and they'll hit you.

"We have to re-group and learn from this game. We had a lot of positives in the first half. We must learn from the things we did well.

"I think we'll bounce back. We were in this same position a year ago and we ended the season 8-3 and did some really good things. We can mature into a competitive football team.

"I told our players after the game that we need to keep things in perspective. A lot of people have been displaced and can't sleep in their own beds tonight. Life deals some situations you can learn from and grow from. That is where we are right now."

Norton Blue Jays fall to Redmen in Mid-Continent League loss

Play-by-Play

The Norton Blue Jays fell 51-13 to the Smith Center Redmen Friday night in Smith Center.

First quarter

Norton's William Wilhite kicked off for Norton and the Redmen let the ball hit the turf and roll deep into their territory. Taylor Jones picked up the ball but Norton's Logan Kats tackled him on the 3-yard-line. The Blue Jays appeared to have the Redmen right where they wanted them to start the game but, on the first play from scrimmage, Smith Center ran a play that has been all too familiar to Norton through the years. They lined up in their wishbone offense and quarterback Joe Windscheffel faked to two backs, then handed the ball to Jones who found a hole over left tackle and ran untouched 97 yards for a touchdown.

Norton stopped the extra points but Smith Center was on top 6-0 after just 18 seconds.

Nathan Broeckelman returned the kickoff all the way to the Smith Center 45, giving the Blue Jays good field position to move in for a touchdown of their own. Quarterback Luke Pfannenstiel passed for nine yards to wide receiver Clay Madden on the Redmen 36. On second down, Norton tried a running play for a first down but fumbled and Smith Center recovered on their 30.

The Redmen repeated their touchdown play from their first possession and Jones ran over the left side of the line for a 70-yard score. Jones ran for two extra

points and the Redmen led 14-0 with 10:49 still left in the first quarter.

Smith Center kicked off and kicked the ball on the ground. It was picked up by Zach Dreher who returned it to the Norton 38. Pfannenstiel kept for two yards but was sacked for a four yard loss on second down. A flat pass from Pfannenstiel to Madden was good for a first down at mid-field.

Tailback Blake VanEaton skirted left end for a first down on the 39. Fullback Lance Roe plowed to the 33 and an offside penalty cost the Redmen five more yards. Roe plunged for two yards, then Pfannenstiel ran a keeper to the 20. VanEaton ran around right end for a first down on the 17. VanEaton made nothing, Pfannenstiel gained one yard and then three yards. On fourth and six, Pfannenstiel passed to Madden, who eluded several Smith Center defenders and ran into the end zone for a Blue Jay touchdown. Wilhite's kick split the uprights and Norton trailed 14-7 with 5:17 left in the first quarter.

Wilhite kicked the ball into the end zone on the ensuing kickoff and the Redmen had to start their next possession on their 20-yard line. Kerby Rice gained six yards, then Tate Arnold gained four for a first down. Arnold picked up four more yards, then Jones got the call on the same play that had produced the first two Smith Center touchdowns. This time, the Norton defense was waiting for him and linebacker VanEaton tackled him for

no gain.

Windscheffel got loose on the quarterback keeper for a first down on the Redmen 43. Rice gained two yards before linebacker Roe tackled him. Arnold ran to the Norton 48, then Rice got a first down on the Blue Jay 44. Jones lost a yard as linebacker Andrew Ables and Roe cornered him.

Gang tackling by the Norton defense on the next play resulted in a Smith Center fumble and Pfannenstiel fell on the ball on the Norton 45. VanEaton ran to the Smith Center 49 and Pfannenstiel was run out of bounds on the 47. VanEaton gained nothing, then Norton lost five yards for illegal participation as the first quarter ended with Smith Center leading by just 14-7.

Second quarter

VanEaton ran for three yards on third down but it was not enough for a first down and Nathan Morse punted for Norton. The ball went out of bounds on the Redmen 33. Windscheffel ran a keeper for a first down on the 46. Jones ran to the Norton 47, then Braden Wilson picked up a first down on the 42. Jones plunged up the middle to the 37 and Nelson gained two yards before Pfannenstiel tackled him. Broeckelman came charging into the Smith Center backfield to tackle Windscheffel for a one yard loss and the Redmen faced a fourth and four situation.

Smith Center rarely passes but they decided to try one in hopes of surprising the Blue Jays.

Windscheffel tried a long pass but Pfannenstiel provided good defensive coverage and it was incomplete, turning the ball over to Norton.

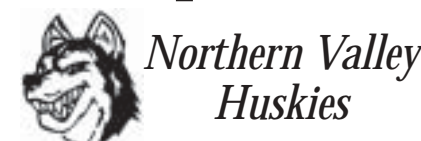
Pfannenstiel passed complete to Broeckelman in the flat and he gained a first down on the Norton 47. VanEaton gained three yards, then Pfannenstiel added three more to mid-field. Pfannenstiel

connected with Madden over the middle for a first down on the Smith Center 38. It looked as if the Blue Jays were headed for a game-tying touchdown but things changed suddenly. Norton was penalized for holding and the ball went back to the Norton 47. The next down, Pfannenstiel threw a pass with a Redman in his face. The Redman was Drew Joy and he

tipped the pass up in the air and intercepted it. Since he was in the Norton backfield, he had a clear path to the end zone and promptly took advantage of the situation, dashing for the score. Jones was stopped short in his attempt for two extra points but Norton was suddenly trailing 20-7 with 5:35 left in the first half.

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High School Sports This Week



FOOTBALL:

Norton vs. Osborne (here)	7 p.m., Friday
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Osborne (away)	6 p.m., Monday
Logan vs. Mankato (here)	7 p.m., Friday
Northern Valley vs. Western Plains (in Ransom)	7 p.m., Friday

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Varsity vs. Stockton, Hoxie, Hill City (in Stockton)	4 p.m., today
Norton C-Team vs. Smith Center, Colby (here)	4:30 p.m., Thursday
Norton C-Team in Hill City Junior Varsity Tournament (away)	Saturday, 8:30 a.m.
Norton C-Team vs. Osborne (there)	5 p.m., Monday
Norton Varsity, Junior Varsity vs. Colby, Atwood (in Colby)	4:30 p.m., Tuesday
Northern Valley vs. Alma, Logan (here)	5 p.m., today
Northern Valley Junior Varsity in Plainville Tournament (away)	8:30 a.m., Saturday
Logan vs. Northern Valley, Alma (in Alma)	5 p.m., today
Logan in Osborne Round Robin (away)	8 a.m., Saturday
Logan vs. Palco, Western Plains (in Palco)	4 p.m., Tuesday

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton and Northern Valley in Hill City Invitational (away)	5 p.m., Thursday
Norton in Oberlin Invitational (away)	5 p.m., Tuesday

TENNIS:

Norton Junior Varsity vs. Goodland (away)	3 p.m., today
Norton Varsity in Trego Invitational (in WaKeeney)	9 a.m., Saturday
Norton Junior Varsity in Phillipsburg JV Invitational (away)	9 a.m., Saturday
Norton Varsity vs. Colby (away)	3 p.m., Tuesday