

# Blue Jays to take on Monarchs in district action tonight

By DICK BOYD

The 4-2 Norton Community High School football Blue Jays will play the 1-5 Thomas More Prep Monarchs from Hays in district competition tonight with kickoff at 7 p.m. at Travis Field.

"Thomas More has won just one game but don't let that fool you," Norton Coach Bruce Graber told the Blue Jay Booster Club on Wednesday evening.

"They play in a tough league with Class 4A teams. Both Pratt and Ulysses have Division I players. They are better than what their record shows and we'll have to play well to beat them.

"In our win over Ellis last Friday, we played well defensively but we made a lot of mistakes on offense. We had trouble blocking the Ellis players. Hopefully, we have corrected our mistakes during practice this week.

"We are healthy so everyone will suit up to play."

Coach Graber said Thomas More likes to feature three different types of plays offensively.

"They like the quick pitch, to fake the quick pitch and run inside or to pass off the same action," he said.

The Monarch offense is led by senior halfback Rick Staples, who rushed for 492 yards and a five-yard per carry average last season.

Against the Monarchs, the Blue Jays will try to maintain their stingy defense which is allowing an average of just 12 first downs per game by opponents. In last Friday's 34-7 Mid-Continent League win over Ellis, the Norton defense allowed the Railroaders an average of just 2.7 yards per carry and limited the Ellis passing offense to 13 of 38 for just a 34



Norton junior defensive back Nathan Broeckelman makes an outstanding open field tackle of Ellis' Andrew Casey during the Blue Jays' 34-7 win over the Railroaders. Broeckelman is third leading tackler for Norton this season. — Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

percent completion rate and intercepted four Railroaders passes.

Senior linebacker Lance Roe continues to lead the Blue Jay defense. He has 46 tackles, followed by junior linebacker Blake VanEaton with 44, junior defensive back Nathan Broeckelman with 40 and senior linebacker Andrew Ables with 32.

VanEaton plays tailback on offense where he leads the Blue Jays

in all-purpose yardage. He has rushed for 372 yards and a 5.9 yards per carry average, caught seven passes for 112 yards and a 16 yards per catch average and returned 6 punts for 180 yards and a 30 yards per return average for 111 yards per game average. He also leads Norton in scoring with 48 points on eight touchdowns.

Senior quarterback Luke Pffannenstiel has been very accu-

rate with his passes. He has completed 33 of 64 attempts for a 52 percent completion average and 494 yards. He is averaging 15 yards per completion and has passed for five touchdowns and run for four.

Senior wide receiver Clay Madden is leading pass receiver for Norton. He has caught 10 passes for 154 yards and three touchdowns.

# Blue Jays defeat Ellis in Homecoming game

By DICK BOYD

Norton culminated Homecoming week on Friday with a 34-7 victory over the Ellis Railroaders

## First quarter

Ellis kicked off to start the game and Blake VanEaton returned the ball to the 27-yard-line. Tailback VanEaton gained 10 yards in two carries for a first down on the 37. Quarterback Luke Pffannenstiel carried the ball three straight times for eight yards and Chris Davis punted. The ball rolled dead on the Ellis 20.

Ellis quarterback Cole Erbert passed on first down but the Norton defense was equal to the occasion and it was incomplete.

On second down, Ellis ran the ball but Blue Jay defenders surrounded the ball carrier and Norton linebacker Lance Roe came out with the ball and sprinted into the end zone for Norton's first touchdown. William Wilhite kicked the extra point and the Blue Jays led the stunned Railroaders 7-0 with 8:44 still remaining in the first quarter.

Eleven seconds later and the visitors were even more stunned to see the Blue Jays back in the end zone.

On Wilhite's kickoff, Andrew Casey inadvertently put his knee down on the turf while receiving the ball and he was ruled down on the 8-yard-line. Ellis fumbled on first down and Pffannenstiel came in from his defensive back position to recover on the 5.

On first down, VanEaton got the call and blasted around right end for another Norton touchdown. Wilhite split the uprights with his kick and suddenly the Blue Jays were on top 14-0 with 8:33 left in the first quarter.

This time, Wilhite's kickoff was not as long as normal and Justin Gnad returned the ball to the Ellis 40. After one incomplete pass, Daren Haas was tackled by linebacker Davis for no gain. Erbert passed to Justin LaBarge for a first down on the Norton 45. Haas lost a yard, then gained three before Roe and VanEaton tackled him. A third down pass was broken up by defensive back Clay Madden. Ellis went to the air again on fourth down and defensive back Nathan Broeckelman intercepted the aerial and returned it to the Norton 30.

On first down, VanEaton got the call again, found nothing in the middle and bounced outside, broke into the open and sprinted 70 yards

for another Norton touchdown. Wilhite's kick made it 21-0 with 5:37 still left in the first stanza.

Haas returned Wilhite's kickoff to the 31 where he was smothered by a host of Norton players. Erbert ran a keeper and a face mask penalty against Norton moved the ball to the Norton 41. After three straight incomplete passes, Erbert went back to the air on fourth down and completed a pass to Casey on the Norton 18. VanEaton came charging in to sack Erbert back on the 26. Haas ran up the middle to the 15 where VanEaton made the tackle again. The next down, Ellis fumbled and Roe recovered on the 17!

Davis plunged for three yards, then VanEaton got loose over left tackle for a first down on the Norton 43. Pffannenstiel's pass was incomplete, VanEaton lost four yards and Pffannenstiel gained two. Davis punted and the ball rolled dead on the 21.

An Erbert pass was incomplete, Haas gained four yards before Roe tackled him. Another pass was incomplete and Ellis punted. Broeckelman received the punt and was tackled on the Norton 5-yard line as the first quarter ended with the Blue Jays leading 21-0.

## Second quarter

VanEaton lost two yards on two carries and a pass was incomplete. Davis punted to Casey and Austin Brooks tackled him on the Norton 39. After an incomplete pass, Haas gained a yard as Roe and defensive back Todd Bolt tackled him. Another Erbert pass fell incomplete. On fourth and nine, Erbert passed again and this time Pffannenstiel intercepted and returned the ball to the Ellis 48!

Pffannenstiel ran for six yards, then Davis plowed up the middle for a first down on the Railroader 33. Davis ran for two more yards, then VanEaton ran to the 20 for another apparent first down. An illegal block penalty brought the ball back to the 35, however, and a Pffannenstiel pass fell incomplete. Pffannenstiel gained 10 yards on a keeper but he was sacked the next play on the 30 and Ellis took over possession of the pigskin.

Haas gained five yards before VanEaton tackled him, then Roe dropped Haas for no gain. On third down, Erbert went back to pass and was buried on the 19 by Roe, Brooks and Davvid Stanley. Ellis

punted and the ball rolled dead on the Ellis 43.

On first down, Norton fumbled and Ellis recovered on their 47. A flat pass was good for six yards before Davis and Broeckelman made the tackle. After an incomplete pass, Erbert connected with LaBarge for a first down on the Norton 35. Haas gained 10 yards in two rushes, then Erbert surprised the Norton defense as he ran out of the shotgun and was finally dragged down on the Norton 1. Haas ran over right tackle for an Ellis touchdown. Eric Gaschler kicked the extra point and Norton's lead had been cut to 21-7 with 2:02 left in the first half.

VanEaton returned the kickoff to the 35. A pass fell incomplete, then Pffannenstiel ran for two yards. VanEaton lost three yards and Davis punted. Casey made a fair catch on the 33. Illegal procedure and blocking in the back penalties moved Ellis back to their 16. A pass to Casey was good on the 30, then Erbert ran for a first down on the Norton 45. Roe blitzed and Erbert threw incomplete. Chase King replaced Erbert at quarterback and Matt Engel came in from his defensive end position to sack him for a 10 yard loss. After an incomplete pass, it was halftime with the Blue Jays leading 21-7.

## Third quarter

Wilhite had another short kickoff to start the second half and Brett Mickelson returned the ball to the 32. Haas gained three yards and Eric Gaschler two more before Heath Vincent tackled him. Haas ran for a first down on the 46 where VanEaton made the tackle. Gaschler gained four yards. After a one yard gain, Erbert tried a screen pass to Gaschler but Roe alertly tackled him short of a first down. Ellis punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 12.

VanEaton lost two yards and Davis plunged for one. A flat pass to Broeckelman carried only to the 17 and Davis punted.

Casey made a fair catch on the Ellis 48. On first down, the Railroaders fumbled and Norton recovered on the Norton 48. Pffannenstiel passed to Broeckelman and he carried the ball to the 19. After VanEaton lost two yards, Davis plunged for five. A pass was incomplete and a Wilhite field goal try was no good.

Ellis took over on their 20.

After Haas gained nothing, Erbert went to the air again and this time Pffannenstiel intercepted and ran 40 yards for a Norton touchdown! Wilhite's extra point kick was no good and the Blue Jays led 27-7 with 5:11 left.

Haas returned Wilhite's kickoff to the 39. Illegal motion cost the Railroaders five yards, then Davis tackled Erbert for no gain. Ellis was penalized back to the 25 for an illegal block. A flat pass to Haas lost five yards as VanEaton came up to make the tackle. Haas gained nothing but a face mask penalty against Norton moved the ball to the 23. After an incomplete pass, Ellis punted.

Pffannenstiel returned the ball to the 35 but offsetting penalties made Ellis punt again. The re-punt turned out in Norton's favor. Brooks pressured the Ellis punter and the kick carried just to the Ellis 26. After an incomplete pass, Pffannenstiel ran the keeper to the 20. Pffannenstiel threw a flat pass to Davis and he avoided several tacklers as he ran to the 15 for a first down. A pass fell incomplete, Norton lost five yards for illegal procedure and Pffannenstiel lost two yards on a keeper as the third quarter ended with the score 27-7 in favor of the Jays.

## Fourth quarter

After an incomplete Pffannenstiel pass, Ellis took over the ball. Haas gained yardage on two carries and a face mask penalty against Norton moved the ball to the 21. Two incomplete passes later, Madden intercepted an Erbert pass and returned the ball to the 23. Pffannenstiel lost two yards on first down but, the next down, he spotted Broeckelman behind the Ellis secondary and hit him with a 25-yard touchdown pass! Wilhite split the uprights and the Blue Jay advantage was extended to 34-7 with 9:51 left.

Haas returned Wilhite's kickoff past midfield but the Railroaders were penalized back to the 28. Haas lost one yard as VanEaton made the tackle. A pass fell incomplete, then Vincent tackled Gaschler for no gain. Ellis punted and Pffannenstiel returned the ball to the Ellis 37.

Logan Kats replaced Pffannenstiel at quarterback. VanEaton lost three yards and

# Junior varsity loses 13-12 to Phillipsburg

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School junior varsity football team completed an outstanding 5-1 season on Monday evening with a hard-fought 13-12 loss at Phillipsburg.

"Once again, our young men came out and played great football," said Norton Assistant Coach Lucas Melvin.

"We just made a couple of mistakes. One was a block in the back that took a touchdown off the board.

"I am so proud of our athletes. They did a tremendous job this year and they have nothing to be ashamed of.

"I know they will continue to work hard to help the varsity and many of them will get some time on the field in the rest of our varsity games."

The ball game started with Brad Nuzum returning the kickoff to the Norton 33-yard-line. Norton was unable to move the ball and punted. Norton's defense was equally effective and the Blue Jays took over the ball after stopping a Panther receiver on a fourth and short. The very next play, tailback Todd Bolt dashed for a quick two yards. After another run was shut down, the Jays went to the air and quarterback Logan Kats connected with Bolt downfield for a first down.

Several plays later, Kats found the end zone on an option keeper. The Jays were stopped short on a two-point conversion try and led 6-0.

On the Panthers' third play of their next offensive series, defensive tackle Perell Stanley shut the runner down in the backfield. Then, the Phillipsburg quarterback got loose on a long run down to the 15-yard-line. The Panthers rushed for a touchdown on the next

play. The point-after kick was good and Phillipsburg led 7-6.

The Jays started their next offensive series deep in their own territory. The offense came through with another touchdown. This time Kats tallied from 45 yards out. The two-point conversion attempt was no good but the Blue Jays led 12-7.

After the kickoff, the Norton defense forced Phillipsburg to punt after three plays. Brian Juenemann returned the punt to the Panthers 45. The Jays were unable to move downfield and punted. After allowing the Panther offense to drive down the field, the Blue Jay defense stopped Phillipsburg short of the goalline as time ran out in the first half with the Blue Jays leading 12-7.

It was raining when Norton kicked off to start the second half. After allowing one first down, the Jay defense stiffened and forced a punt. Kats returned the punt 10 yards to the Norton 30. After Bolt gained a first down, Kats passed to wide receiver Jordan Durham for a 20 yard gain. On the next play, Kats ran another option keeper for 20 yards to the Panther 20. Phillipsburg's defense held the Jays at that point and the Panthers took over. Norton's defense forced the Panthers to three-and-out. The Panthers got off a good punt that put Norton back on their 30 yard line to start the fourth quarter.

Norton was unable to move the ball and the punt team came out. The punt was blocked and Phillipsburg recovered the ball on the 15. On first down, the Panthers ran the ball to the one-foot-line. The Norton defense held Phillipsburg out of the end zone for two more plays. On fourth down from the one-inch-line, Phillipsburg was able to get into the end zone for a touchdown. The two-point conversion try failed but the Panthers were on top 13-12.

After the kickoff, Bolt made a big gain on second down but the Blue Jay offense stalled and they punted back to the Panthers. Phillipsburg's first play went for two yards, then linebacker Zach Dreyer sacked the Panther quarterback. Phillipsburg punted and Bolt returned the ball for five yards. Norton had no time outs left and 3:04 remained on the scoreboard clock. With time running out, Norton had to rush their offense the rest of the game. Bolt gained a first down, then Juenemann caught a pass for 20 yards to put the Jays on the Phillipsburg 35. On fourth down, Kats passed to Juenemann and he appeared to have caught the pass and kept the Blue Jay drive going. But, the official ruled that it was incomplete. Phillipsburg took over and ran out the clock and the Blue Jays' perfect season ended with a loss.

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