

Blue Jay football ends season with 7-3 mark

By DICK BOYD

The "fighting" Norton Blue Jays battled the defending state champion Southeast of Saline football team to a 14-14 standoff at halftime on their home turf on Tuesday night, but the No. 1 ranked Trojans pulled away after intermission to win 36-14 in the Bi-District game.

Southeast of Saline scored on their opening drive when senior quarterback Nick Hardesty passed 28 yards to senior receiver Doug Beaton. Hardesty was stopped when he tried to run for two points. The Trojans increased their lead to 14-0 when Hardesty threw a 26 yard touchdown pass to senior receiver Bryson Flax early in the second quarter. Hardesty's pass to Beaton was good for two extra points.

It was all Blue Jays the rest of the half. On Norton's next possession, senior fullback Chris Davis burst up the middle for a 41 yard touchdown, then kicked the extra point to make it 14-7 with 5:25 left.

After Davis kicked off, Southeast of Saline fumbled and Norton recovered on the Trojan 47. The Jays were forced to punt back to the Trojans but, this time, they held Southeast and drove 46 yards to paydirt. Junior quarterback Logan Kats sneaked into the end zone with 4 seconds left on the clock. Davis kicked the extra point and it was tied at 14-14.

The second half was all the Trojans and Hardesty, however, as they scored twice in the third quarter and once early in the fourth quarter to pull ahead for good. Hardesty scored from four yards out and ran for two extra points to make it 22-14 with 6:42 left, then ran 42 yards for another score with 2:11 left in the third period. After Hardesty tacked on two extra points, it was 30-14.

Hardesty passed 44 yards to Beaton for the Trojans' final touchdown with 11:00 still remaining in the game. The Blue Jays had the ball several times after that but just couldn't dent the end zone against one of the best defenses they've seen this year.

"We played hard but not well enough to win," said Norton head coach Lucas Melvin. "Some tackling and blocking was not as good as I like to see but Southeast of Saline has a great team."

"When they scored their second touchdown, we didn't stop playing. We battled back and tied it up. At halftime, I thought we had a chance to win it but we didn't do a very good job of moving the ball the second half. Hardesty is an outstanding quarterback and Flax and Beaton are great receivers."

"We did our best and left it all on the field. We played hard against an excellent team."

Head coach of Southeast of Saline is Pat Haxton, a former outstanding football player for Norton Community High School. His Trojans are on a 23-game winning streak.

Starting on offense for the Norton Blue Jays were: senior Nic Lewis, center; senior Pat Burton and sophomore Brock Lauer, guards; junior Preston Herman and senior Lucas Bailey, tackles; junior Jared Cox, tight end; junior Wes Georgeson and senior Brian Juenemann, wide receivers; junior Todd Bolt, fullback; senior Blake VanEaton, tailback; junior Logan Kats, quarterback.

Norton's defensive starters were: Lauer, senior Brett Thomson, senior Mark Scheetz, junior Zach Mannel and Herman, linemen; VanEaton, senior Chris Davis and sophomore Zac Dreher, linebackers; Juenemann, junior Travis Ray and Bolt, defensive backs.

First quarter

Davis kicked off for Norton and Kyle Schmid returned the ball to the 33. Hardesty gained six yards before Lauer and Scheetz tackled him. Hardesty passed to Joel Pengra on the 43, then broke sev-

eral tackles as he ran for a first down on the Norton 40 before Bolt tackled him.

A good pass rush by the Blue Jays caused Hardesty to pass incomplete but, the next down, he hit Beaton on the 30 where Kats and Bolt tackled him. A flat pass to Flax was good for five yards. A long gainer by Hardesty came back due to holding but Hardesty passed over the middle for 28 yards and a touchdown to Beaton. VanEaton tackled Hardesty in the backfield as he tried to run for two extra points, making it 6-0 with 8:47 left.

Davis returned the kickoff to the Norton 30. Bolt gained nothing, VanEaton lost two yards and Kats passed to Ray in the flat but it was not enough for a first down. Davis punted and the ball rolled dead on the Southeast 41.

Hardesty hit Beaton on the Norton 42, then was run out of the pocket by the hard charging Blue Jay defense and got a first down on the 18. Hardesty passed to Pengra on the 8 but, the next play, VanEaton sacked Hardesty on the 15. Hardesty went back to pass again and Dreher and Davis sacked him. After an incomplete pass, Norton took over.

VanEaton was stopped for no gain, then Kats ran a keeper to the 20. After an incomplete flat pass, Norton was penalized half the distance to the goal for illegal substitution. Norton fumbled the ball but Stanley recovered on the 23. Davis punted.

Ethan Komp fielded the punt on the Southeast 43. Kent Windholz got loose to the Norton 26 as the quarter ended with the Trojans leading 6-0.

Second quarter

A Hardesty pass was incomplete, then VanEaton, Cox and Lauer came storming in to sack Hardesty for a two yard loss. Hardesty completed a pass on the next down but the receiver lateraled forward illegally. After much discussion by both sides with the officials, they penalized Southeast and gave them the ball on the 26. Hardesty went to the air again and connected with Flax in the corner of the end zone for a touchdown. Hardesty passed to Beaton for two extra points and it was 14-0 with 11:01 left in the first half.

Davis returned the kickoff to the Norton 39. VanEaton gained five yards on two carries, then Kats passed incomplete. The Trojans were penalized 15 yards for roughing the passer and Norton had the ball on the Southeast 41. The next play, Kats handed the ball to Davis and he burst through a hole up the middle and outran the Trojan defense for a 41 yard touchdown! Davis also kicked the extra point and Norton had narrowed the Trojan lead to 14-7 with 5:25 remaining.

Schmid returned Davis' kickoff to the 38. Hardesty passed to Beaton on the Norton 48 but, the next down, he fumbled when hit and Cox recovered on the Southeast 47. Davis plunged for two yards but Kats was sacked on the 49. Next, Kats ran the keeper for a good gain but Norton was penalized for holding. The ball was moved back to the Norton 39. VanEaton made a nice 14 yard run to the Trojan 47 but it was short of a first down. Davis punted and Komp made a fair catch on the 21.

After Windholz gained three yards, Hardesty passed to Flax on the 35. A false start cost Southeast five yards, then a pass was incomplete. Hardesty's next pass was also incomplete but Norton was whistled for defensive holding. Hardesty passed over the middle to Pengra and Kats tackled him. After an incomplete pass, Lewis tackled Hardesty after a one yard gain. Another pass was incomplete and Hardesty was sacked on the Norton 46, turning the ball over to the Blue Jays.

Bolt gained one yard and Davis

got three more. Kats passed to Cox over the middle on the 36. VanEaton gained two yards, then Kats ran the keeper to the 31. VanEaton was stopped for no gain but Kats went to the air and Georgeson made a spectacular diving catch over his head for a Norton first down on the 6!

Bolt plunged for one yard, then ran around left end to the 2. Davis plunged to the 1 and Kats sneaked into the end zone as the large contingent of Norton fans went wild! Davis booted the extra point and the game was tied 14-14 with four seconds left in the half.

After Davis' kickoff was fumbled out of bounds on the 34, Hardesty gained 10 yards and it was halftime.

Third quarter

VanEaton returned the kickoff to the Norton 36. Bolt and Kats each gained a yard, then a pass was incomplete. Davis punted and the ball rolled dead on the Southeast 30.

Hardesty gained four yards before Dreher and Cox tackled him. Hardesty passed to Komp on the 36 and Bolt and Davis combined for the tackle. Hardesty got loose for a first down on the 43. A flat pass was complete to Flax on the Norton 49 where Kats made the tackle. Beaton got the ball on a reverse but it didn't fool Cox and he tackled him for a one yard gain. Hardesty got away on the next down, however, as he broke several tackles and Bolt finally downed him on the 18. Hardesty ran to the 4, then ran the keeper for a touchdown. He also ran for the two extra points and the Trojans led 22-14 with 6:42 remaining.

Bolt returned the kickoff to the Norton 37. VanEaton gained one yard but Bolt lost two. Kats passed to Cox on the 43. Davis punted to the Southeast 36.

Hardesty got away again, this time he was tackled on the Norton 49. Windholz gained two yards before Dreher tackled him. Windholz got the ball again and was dropped for a loss on the Southeast 46 by Stanley. Hardesty passed over the middle to Flax on the Norton 42 and it was fourth and three for the Trojans. Hardesty ran a keeper and scampered into the end zone. He also ran for the two extra points to extend the Southeast lead to 30-14 with 2:11 left in the quarter.

Bolt returned the kickoff but an illegal block by Norton moved the ball back to the Norton 23. After a short pass to Georgeson, Bolt gained two yards, VanEaton got six and a pass fell incomplete. Davis punted to the Southeast 33.

Hardesty gained just two yards before VanEaton and Cox dropped him to the turf. Hardesty passed to Flax on the 42 where Bolt made the tackle. It was third and 1 as the quarter ended with Southeast on top 30-14.

Fourth quarter

Hardesty kept the ball on fourth down and gained only three yards but it was enough for the first down. A good rush by the Blue Jay defensive line caused Hardesty to throw incomplete but, the next down, he completed an aerial to Pengra on the Norton 44. Hardesty went for it all on the next down and got it when he connected with Beaton for the Trojans' final touchdown. Hardesty was stopped short of the goalline in his try for two extra points and it was 36-14 with 11:00 still remaining in the game.

Stanley returned the kickoff to the Norton 31. Kats ran for two yards, then connected with Georgeson for seven yards. Stanley and VanEaton were stopped for no gain, however, and Southeast took over on the Norton 37. Hardesty was dropped for a loss on the 41. Hardesty kept the ball again and gained two before Dreher and Lewis tackled him. Stanley led the third down pass rush and Hardesty's aerial fell incomplete. Hardesty passed over



Norton's junior tailback Todd Bolt dashed for the end zone flag with time running out in the first half of the Jays' Bi-District loss to Southeast of Saline. Starting on the Trojan 5-yard line, he almost scored a touchdown but was knocked out of bounds on the 2. Two plays later quarterback Logan Kats sneaked in for the tying touchdown to make it a 14-14 game at halftime.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

the middle to Flax but he was tackled on the Norton 30 and the Blue Jays had held.

Bolt made four yards around right end, VanEaton ran over left tackle for three and Bolt made two more. Stanley plunged for a first down on the 40. Norton's offense stalled again, however, when a pass was incomplete, VanEaton was stopped for no gain and a flat pass to Georgeson gained nothing. Davis punted and the ball rolled dead on the Southeast 35.

Hardesty ran to the Norton 40 and Schmid ran for nine more yards. Hardesty got a first down on the 23 before Preston Herman tackled him. Southeast was penalized five yards for being offside but, the next down, Hardesty was run out of the pocket and reached the 15. Stanley came roaring in to drop Schmid for a four yard loss but Hardesty ran a keeper for a first down on the 13. Hardesty took a knee on the next play and the scoreboard clock ran out with the Trojans earning the Bi-District championship.

Individual statistics

Rushers for Norton were: Davis, 4 carries for 47 yards; VanEaton, 11 for 30; Bolt, 11 for 5; Stanley, 2 for 1; Kats, 9 for minus 12.

VanEaton ended the season with 943 yards rushing on 126 attempts for a 7.5 yards per carry average.

Kats completed 6 of 11 passes for 46 yards. His receivers were: Georgeson, 2 for 32; Cox, 2 for 16; Ray, 1 for 3; Bolt, 1 for minus 5.

Bolt had 2 kickoff returns for 31 yards, Davis had 2 for 21, VanEaton had 1 for 16 and Stanley had 1 for 15.

Davis kicked off 3 times for a 32 yard average. Davis punted 6 times for a 28 yard average and Bolt punted 2 times for a 30.5 average.

Hardesty carried the ball 31 times and gained 216 yards and completed 18 of 26 passes for 236 yards. Beaton caught 5 passes for 108 yards and Flax had 8 receptions for 81 yards.

Senior linebacker Blake VanEaton was leading tackler for Norton with 8 solos, 1 assist for 9 total tackles. He was followed by Todd Bolt, 5 solos, 3 assists, 8 total; Nic Lewis, 6 solos, 1 assist, 7 total; Logan Kats, 6 solos; Aaron Husted, Jared Cox, 3 solos, 3 assists, 6 total each; Zac Dreher, 4

solos, 2 assists, 6 total; Chris Davis, Brian Juenemann, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total each; Travis Ray, Matt Stanley, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total each; Brock Lauer, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Preston Herman, Mark Scheetz, Brett Thomson, 1 solo each.

The loss ended the Blue Jays' season with a 7-3 record.

Southeast of Saline is a perfect 10-0 and will host No. 3 state ranked Scott City, who is also 10-0, in the Regional game at 6 p.m. this Saturday.

Scott City defeated Lakin 45-12 on Tuesday.

Phillipsburg, who won Norton's district competition, lost their Bi-District game to Saline-Sacred Heart by a 53-26 score.

In other games of interest on Tuesday, defending Class 2A state champion and Mid-Continent League champion Smith Center shutout Plainville 69-0, Oakley outscored Atwood 34-14, St. Francis defeated Trego 30-6, Ellis

rolled over Lincoln 61-20; Kensington blanked Hanover 46-0 and Sharon Springs outscored Palco 60-12.

"We had a good season," said coach Melvin, who moved up from assistant coach to head coach of the Blue Jays this season. "We played well in every game with the exception of the Phillipsburg game."

"We did some good things on both sides of the ball this season. We played a lot of young men and had great leadership from our seniors."

"I'm really proud of our players."

	Game statistics	SE of Saline
Norton		
5	First Downs	22
71	Yards Rushing	256
46	Yards Passing	236
117	Total Yards	492
6-11-0	Passes Comp.	18-26-0
0-1	Fumbles Lost	2-3
5-38	Penalties	4-40
8-29	Punts	0-0

FLUORESCENT

NO HUNTING SIGNS

50¢

EACH

OR

5 FOR \$2.00

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

215 South Kansas, Norton • 877-3361

Jay wrestling meeting slated

Coach Bill Johnson will hold a meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday in the high school wrestling room for anyone who has a son/daughter interested in participating in the

wrestling program.

Kansas State High School Activities Association rule changes will be discussed along with Norton Community High School

policies and procedures. Coach Johnson encourages all parents to attend.

He said the meeting will last about 30 to 40 minutes.