

Blue Jays advance after crushing Oberlin

Host Ellsworth here this evening

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School football team advanced in the Class 3A playoffs Thursday evening with a decisive 43-0 shut-out of Oberlin at Travis Field to finish District play 3-0 and extend their season record to 7-2.

Oberlin's season ended with a 2-7 record.

Norton defeated Beloit and Phillipsburg in their other District contests. The Blue Jays' only losses have been to perennial Class 2A state champion Smith Center and Ellis by one point.

Norton will host Ellsworth at 7 p.m. this evening in Bi-District competition. Ellsworth lost to unbeaten Sacred Heart of Salina 42-14 on Thursday evening to place second in their District. From here on out to the state championship, however, no losing teams receive a second chance.

Ellsworth is also 7-2, having lost to Beloit in addition to Sacred Heart.

In Blue Jay Country on Thursday evening, Norton scored two of the first three times they had the ball in the first quarter, added another touchdown in the second quarter and tallied the first three times they had the pigskin in the third quarter before starting the continuous clock and turning it over to the reserves.

Senior tailback Todd Bolt rushed for 162 yards on 15 carries for 10.8 yards per carry, scored three touchdowns and had one called back and intercepted two Oberlin passes.

Freshman fullback Terrell Lane carried the ball 16 times for 136 yards and an 8.5 yards per carry average and scored one touchdown.

As a team, Norton rushed for 377 yards on 52 carries for a 7.25 yard average and senior quarterback Logan Kats completed 7 of 12 passes for 95 yards, bringing the Jays' total offense to 482 yards.

The Norton defense limited the Red Devil offense to 45 rushing yards on 25 carries for a 1.8 yard average and 87 yards passing for 132 total yards of offense. Four pass interceptions helped the Norton cause.

Norton recorded 25 first downs compared to 7 for the visitors from the Northwest Kansas League.

Starting on offense for Norton were Robert Derauf, Nish Millan, tackles; Kyle Edgett, Brock Lauer, guards; Preston Herman, center; Jared Cox, tight end; Wes Georgeson, Ashton Draper, wide receivers; Logan Kats, quarterback; Todd Bolt, tailback; Matt Stanley, fullback.

Blue Jay defensive starters were: Alex Thomas, Zach Mannel, tackles; Herman, Lauer, ends; Terrell Lane, Stanley, Zac Dreher, linebackers; Kats, Bolt, Draper and Zane Perez, defensive backs.

Senior wide receiver and defensive back Travis Ray, who was injured in the win over Phillipsburg, did not play.

Leading tacklers for Norton were: Terrell Lane and Preston Herman, 3 solos, 3 assists, 6 total each and Todd Bolt and Matt Stanley, 4 solos, 1 assist for 5 total each. They were followed by: Jared Cox, Zac Dreher, Brad Nuzum 4 total each; Tyler Cook, Brock Lauer, 3 total each; J.D. Gall, Zach Mannel, Zane Perez, Connor Pfannenstiel, 2 total each; Billy Broeckelman, Ashton Draper, Kyle Edgett, Logan Kats, Zeb Lynd, Kaid McKenna, Casey Robison, Jeremy Sproul, Alex Thomas, 1 each.

It was "Senior Night" and Norton's senior athletes and managers were honored during the evening.

First quarter

Oberlin started the game on their 9-yard-line after J.D. Gall's kickoff and things went downhill the rest of the game for the Red Devils. With Dreher making most of the tackles, Oberlin gained seven yards and punted to their 46.

It took the Blue Jays just five plays to hit paydirt. Three straight running plays by Bolt reached the 31. Kats passed to Georgeson for a first down on the 26, then Bolt ran around left end for Norton's first touchdown. Edgett split the uprights with the extra point kick and it was 7-0 with 7:44 left.

On Gall's kickoff, Lane came charging downfield to tackle Ace Manning on the Oberlin 21. Dreher and Herman tackled Sam Stapp for no gain, quarterback Jacob Fortin passed incomplete, then was run out of the pocket and tackled by Herman after a 4 yard pickup.

Bolt made a fair catch of the Oberlin punt on the Norton 44. After Norton lost 5 yards for illegal motion, Kats passed to Dreher for a first down on the 34. Lane ran around right end for a first down on the 16. Two penalties and several incomplete passes stopped the Blue Jay drive on the Oberlin 30.

Lane, Lauer and Stanley dropped Fortin for a 1 yard loss. Manning got loose on a reverse for 9 yards before Herman and Lane knocked him out of bounds. Fortin gained 4 yards for a first down. Thomas and Herman tackled Lucas Juenemann after 2 yards and Fortin gained 3 on a keeper before Lane and Stanley stopped him. Oberlin spread out their offense across the field but it did no good as Fortin was tackled for no gain. After Oberlin was penalized 5 yards for illegal motion, Draper intercepted a Fortin pass on the Norton 31.

Six plays later and Norton was in the end zone again. Lane broke loose on a 36 yard run to the Oberlin 33. Kats scampered on a keeper for 15 more yards to the 18. Lane bulled over right tackle to the 12 and Bolt plunged to the 7. Lane ran up the middle to the 1 and Kats sneaked into the end zone for the Blue Jays' second touchdown. Kats passed to Bolt for two extra points, making it 15-0 with 28 seconds left in the first quarter.

Second quarter

Gall kicked off and Fortin was

tackled on the 36. The fired up Blue Jay defense held the Red Devils to just 3 yards and they got off a short punt to their 43. Norton tried to move the ball through the air but was unsuccessful and Bolt punted for the only time in the game.

Oberlin took over on their 14. After a 4 yard gain by Juenemann, a 5 yard penalty and incomplete pass, Oberlin completed a pass to Cody Kane for a first down on the 25. A 15 yard penalty against Norton moved the ball to the 40 but Bolt intercepted a Fortin pass and returned the ball to the Norton 38.

Kats passed 15 yards to Georgeson and Bolt sprinted 25 yards to the Red Devil 23. Stanley drove for 7 yards, Bolt gained 5 more. Lane ran 7 yards to the 3, then bulled into the end zone for Norton's third touchdown. Edgett's kick attempt for an extra point was wide of the mark and Norton led 21-0 with 4:37 left in the first half.

After Gall's kickoff to the Oberlin 28, the stingy Norton defense forced another three-and-out by the Red Devils. Their punt rolled dead on the Norton 26. On first down, Bolt weaved through the Oberlin defense for an apparent 74 yard touchdown run but an illegal motion penalty nullified the excellent scamper. Stanley gained 5 yards, then a face mask penalty against Oberlin moved the ball to the 35. Bolt gained a first down on the 41. The next down, Toby Peters stepped in front of a Kats pass and intercepted the aerial on the Oberlin 45.

Fortin passed to Kaden Macfee for 15 yards to the Norton 40. The Red Devils had their best drive of the game going as two passes carried to the Norton 17. The next down, however, Landon Hamel intercepted Fortin's pass and returned it to the 17.

Norton moved the ball out of their territory as Lane gained 18 yards on 3 carries. Kats passed to Bolt who made a diving catch for 7 more yards, then Kats and Bolt connected for 14 more yards. A flat pass to Lane carried for 24 more yards but half-time arrived with the Blue Jays on top 21-0.

Third quarter

The Blue Jays picked up where they left off when the second half got underway. It took Norton just 7 plays to score again after Dreher recovered an Oberlin inside kick on the Blue Jay 48. Stanley gained 2 yards, Bolt got 4 and Lane picked up a first down on the 38. Bolt ran to the 24 but a block in the back penalty brought the ball back to the 38. Bolt broke two tackles as he powered to the 16 for a first down, then got another first-and-ten on the 5. Lane drove to the 3 and then to the 1. Norton was offside and lost 5 yards but Brad Nuzum ran the 6 yards for a Blue Jay touchdown. Aaron Husted returned from a long period of time on the injured list to kick a perfect extra point, extending the Norton lead to 28-0 with 8:17 left



Blue Jay sophomore defensive back Ashton Draper and an unidentified teammate brought Oberlin running back Toby Peters to the turf during the Norton victory at Travis Field Thursday night. Junior back Brad Nuzum is No. 2 for Norton.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Coach's comments

"Early in the game, their defense was good at limiting our passing game but we were able to run the ball all night," said Norton head coach Lucas Melvin. "Defensively, we were able to do well against both their running and passing game."

"Although we didn't execute well enough at times, we played hard."

"We will have a much stronger opponent on Tuesday. Ellsworth has a very good tailback and a big fullback and their line averages 220 pounds per man. We will have to play well to beat them."

The Ellsworth tailback is Caleb Kruse and he is one of the top run-

ning backs in the *Salina Journal* circulation area. In the 42-14 loss to Sacred Heart on Thursday, Kruse gained 215 yards on 27 carries. For the season, he has rushed for 1,969 yards on 227 carries for an 8.7 yards per carry average. He has scored 24 touchdowns.

The Ellsworth fullback is senior Kaleb Stefek.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton		Oberlin
25	First Downs	7
52-377	Yards Rushing	25-45
95	Yards Passing	87
482	Total Offense	132
7-12-1	Passes Comp.	5-17-4
1-4	Fumbles Lost	1-2
11-80	Penalties	7-46
1-36	Punts	6-28

Cross country, volleyball coverage, photos appear on page 8 of today's *The Norton Telegram*

SportsLine: (785) 877-3361



Norton freshman running back Jeremy Sproul and his junior varsity teammates saw plenty of playing time in the second half of the Blue Jays' 43-0 district win over Oberlin here Thursday night. Sproul is pictured here being tackled after carrying the pigskin for a good gain.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



Norton's senior tailback Todd Bolt had a career night in the 43-0 district win over Oberlin on Thursday night. He rushed for 162 yards on 15 carries to average over 10 yards per carry, scored three touchdowns and had one called back, and intercepted two Red Devil passes.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

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