

Jays send Indians home with first defeat

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School football team scored through the air and on the ground in defeating previously unbeaten St. Francis of the Northwest Kansas League 36-16 in the Blue Jays' Homecoming contest Friday night at Travis Field.

The hard-hitting physical Norton defense allowed the No.2 Class 2-1A state ranked Indians, who are known to some as the "Smith Center of the West", one touchdown on their first possession of the game and another on their first possession of the second half.

Both teams are now 4-1 for the season.

Coached by Tim Lambert, a former Smith Center player, St. Francis mirrors the Redmen with their deceiving wishbone offense. Like Smith Center, they are used to grinding it out on the ground long enough to eventually find flaws in opposing defenses. They found some holes in the pad-popping Blue Jay defense but not nearly enough to overcome Norton's offensive assault on land and through the air.

The Norton rushing game produced 141 yards in 31 carries for a 4.5 yard average while St. Francis compiled 238 yards on 64 attempts for only a 3.7 yard average.

Norton's passing game was the best of the season. The Blue Jays completed 7 of 12 passes for 58 percent and 169 yards whereas the Indians completed 4 of 11 aerials for 36 percent and 51 yards.

Norton totaled 310 yards of offense compared to 289 yards for St. Francis.

Sophomore tailback Terrell Lane, Norton's leading rusher for the season, who entered the game with 477 yards on 83 carries for a 5.7 yard average, gained 50 Friday night on 12 tries for a 4.25 average. Senior fullback Matt Stanley rushed only 7 times for 65 yards and a 9.3 yard average.

Trent Raile, the Indians' junior running back, rushed for 1,398 yards last season and entered the game with 667 yards on 82 carries for an 8.2 yard average. Against the Blue Jays, he totaled 141 yards on 30 tries for a 4.7 yard average.

Norton's junior quarterback Connor Pfannenstiel had his best passing night as he completed 6 of 10 aerials for 60 percent and 131 yards. His top receiver was junior wide receiver Landon Hamel, who caught 3 passes for 104 yards and 1 touchdown. Junior wide receiver Ashton Draper also had a big night catching the pigskin. He caught 3 passes for 61 yards and 1 touchdown.

St. Francis scored first on a 71 yard drive completed when Adam Guthmiller scored from 1 yard out. Raile ran for two extra points and the Indians led 8-0 with 6:37 left. After an exchange of possessions, St. Francis fumbled on their 38 and Matt Stanley recovered for Norton. Once in awhile Terrell Lane has a chance to play quarterback and he got that chance after the fumble. He threw a pass to Ashton Draper and he made a great catch in the end zone for Norton's first score! J.D. Gall split the uprights and Norton trailed by just 8-7 with 59 seconds left in the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, St. Francis fumbled for the second and last time in the game and Norton took over on their 40. The Blue Jays were unable to take advantage but, after an exchange of possession, Norton had the ball on the 36. After one first down, Pfannenstiel passed to Hamel for another first down on the St. Francis 39, then Stanley showed his shiftiness as he scored Norton's second touchdown. Gall kicked the extra point and Norton led 14-8 with 1:58 left in the first half.

Norton received the kickoff to start the second half and Pfannenstiel connected with Hamel again, this time for 57 yards to the St. Francis 2-yard-line. Pfannenstiel sneaked for the touchdown and Gall's kick put the Jays ahead 21-8 with 10:34 still remaining in the third quarter.

St. Francis answered with an 80 yard drive for their final touchdown. Guthmiller tallied from 3 yards out and Raile ran for two points to cut the Blue Lead to 21-16 with 4:17 left. The Blue

Jays came right back with another touchdown of their own. Lane hit paydirt this time from 13 yards out, making it 27-16 with 40 seconds left.

Norton kept the momentum going in the fourth quarter when Pfannenstiel connected with Hamel again, this time 36 yards for a touchdown. Caleb Laughlin kicked the extra point, extending the Norton lead to 34-16 with 10:49 left in the game.

The Blue Jay defense kept the Indians from threatening the rest of the game and even picked up an extra two points when a St. Francis center snap on a punt attempt went over the punter's head and out of the end zone, making the final 36-16.

Coach Melvin was obviously very pleased with his team's play overall, despite a few lapses. "Defensively, we played pretty well, except for their first drive of the game and first in the second half," he said. "We came out a little flat defensively to start the game but got a better effort after that."

"On offense, our passing game was very good. We passed more on them because we thought we could. We executed well in the running game except for some penalties that called back some huge plays for us."

"We had a good week of practice and that is always important in preparing for an opponent. The games don't get any easier so we'll have to continue to practice well."

Starters for Norton

Coach Melvin started the following players: Nish Millan, left tackle; Brock Lauer, left guard; Kaid McKenna, center; Luke Ninemire, right guard; Robert Derauf, right tackle; Zac Dreher, tight end; Connor Pfannenstiel, quarterback; Matt Stanley, fullback; Terrell Lane, tailback; Ashton Draper, Landon Hamel, wide receivers, offense; Lauer and Dakota Dreher, ends; Millan and Tyler Cook, tackles; Brad Nuzum, noseguard; Zac Dreher, Stanley, Lane, linebackers; Draper, Spencer Shirk, cornerbacks; Pfannenstiel, safety, defense.

Individual statistics

Norton ball carriers other than Lane and Stanley and their yards gained were: Connor Pfannenstiel, 6 for 5; J.D. Gall, 1 for 4; Landon Hamel, 1 for 15; Tye Nickell, 1 for 2.

Terrell Lane passed once and completed it for a 38-yard touchdown. He also caught 1 pass for 4 yards.

Gall had 1 kickoff return for 7 and Zac Dreher had 1 for 1.

Lane had 3 punts for an average of 37 yards and Laughlin had 6 kickoffs for a 43.5 yard average.

Leading tacklers for Norton were Zac Dreher with 14 solos, 3 assists, 17 total and Landon Hamel, 12 solos, 2 assists, 14 total. They were followed by: Tyler Cook, Ashton Draper, Terrell Lane, Brad Nuzum, 5 solos, 3 assists, 8 total each; Connor Pfannenstiel, Matt Stanley, 6 solos, 1 assist, 7 total each; Dakota Dreher, 4 solos, 2 assists, 6 total; Brock Lauer, 5 solos; J.D. Gall, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Rylee Stanley, 3 solos; Donny Hildebrand, Nish Millan, Luke Ninemire, 1 solo each.

First quarter

Caleb Laughlin kicked off for Norton and Jesse Pacheco returned the ball to the 29 where Nuzum tackled him. Trevor Hilt gained 6, Guthmiller got 1 before Dakota Dreher stopped him. Hilt got a first down at the 50 before Pfannenstiel tackled him. Guthmiller gained 2 and Trent Raile carried around left end to the 20. Guthmiller ran for 3 before Hamel made the tackle, then Raile gained 3 more before Dakota Dreher made the stop. Another St. Francis running play carried to the Norton 11 before Hilt got a first down on the 7. Hilt plunged to the 2, then to the 1 and Guthmiller scored. Raile ran for 2 and St. Francis led 8-0 with 6:37 left.

Gall returned the kickoff to the Norton 33; Lane gained 1 and Pfannenstiel 2. Lane ran around right end for a first down on the 50. Lane gained 9 more but a blocking in the back penalty brought it back to the Norton 41. Stanley was stopped for no gain and, two incomplete passes later, Lane punted to the St. Francis 25.

Raile gained 1 before Zac Dreher dropped him; he got the call again and made just 1 more before Hamel tackled him. Quarterback Matt Raile got just 3 on a keeper as Draper, Lane and Pfannenstiel ganged up on him! The Indians punted but Norton was offsidies and they retained possession with a first down on the 35. Millan tackled Guthmiller after 2 and Drew Zweygardt gained 2 before Zac Dreher stopped him. The next down, St. Francis fumbled and Stanley recovered for the Blue Jays on the 38.

Lane lofted a pass to Draper in the corner of the end zone and he made a great catch in traffic for Norton's first touchdown! Gall kicked the extra point and Norton trailed 8-7 with 59 seconds left in the first quarter.

Laughlin kicked off and Zweygardt received it but fell on the St. Francis 8-yard-line. Pfannenstiel tackled Zweygardt for a 2 yard loss but quarterback Raile connected with Trent Kinen on a long pass to the 36. Stanley tackled Guthmiller after 2 as the quarter ended with the Blue Jays trailing 8-7.

Second quarter

Lane tackled Guthmiller after a 4 yard gain, then Lane and Zac Dreher dropped Raile after 1. On fourth and 3, St. Francis went for the first down and made it on a run by Raile to the Blue Jay 45; Guthmiller got 1 before Lane tackled him, then Lauer stopped Zweygardt for no gain. Raile ran to the Norton 36 and it was fourth and 1. St. Francis fumbled and Dakota Dreher grabbed the ball for the Blue Jays on the 40.

Stanley plunged for 1, then Lane ran to midfield. Pfannenstiel lost 1 and Lane punted to the St. Francis 20.

Gall tackled Raile for a 1 yard loss but Raile then ran to the 27. Offsidies against St. Francis set them back 5 yards. Quarterback Raile passed to Kinen but Pfannenstiel tackled him after 3. St. Francis punted out of bounds on the Norton 36.

Lane gained 9 yards on 3 carries and Pfannenstiel sneaked for a first down at midfield. Lane got 1 yard around right end, a pass was incomplete but Pfannenstiel then passed to Hamel for a first down on the Indian 39. The next down, Stanley found running room, picked up some blocks and weaved his way through traffic for the go-ahead touchdown! Gall booted the extra point and Norton led 14-8 with 1:58 left in the first half.

Laughlin kicked off and Zweygardt returned the ball to the 19. He got 2 on first down, then Draper, Lane and Dakota Dreher gang tackled Raile for a 3 yard loss. The next down, however, he ran to the 30 for a first down. Lane sacked the quarterback Raile for a 7 yard loss as halftime arrived.

Third quarter

St. Francis had a short kickoff to start the second half and Rylee Stanley covered the ball on the Norton 40. Lane was limited to 1 yard, then Pfannenstiel went upstairs and hit Hamel with a perfect pass. Hamel sprinted for the goalline but was tackled by an Indian on the 1-yard-line. Lane was stopped short on a plunge up the middle, then Pfannenstiel sneaked into the end zone. Gall split the uprights for an extra point, putting the Blue Jays on top 21-8 with 10:34 left.

Zweygardt returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 20 where Shirk tackled him. Raile gained 8 before Stanley and Millan made the tackle. Zac Dreher stopped Guthmiller after 1 but Raile got a first down on the St. Francis 39. Dreher and Lauer stopped Raile for no gain, then Hilt got 4 before Dreher stopped him. Raile got loose to the Norton 49 for a first down, then ran for 5 more. Hilt got a first down on the Norton 37 where Lane made the tackle. Guthmiller ran to the 24 for another first down. Hilt plunged to the 18 where Stanley made the tackle; Hilt gained 3 more yards but Dreher and Cook stopped Raile for no gain. Nuzum



Blue Jay senior fullback Matt Stanley left St. Francis players behind as he raced down the sideline for a 39-yard touchdown during Norton's homecoming win over the Indians Friday night. Stanley rushed for 65 yards on 7 carries for a 9.3 yard average.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

tackled Raile on the 13 after he got another first down. Hilt ran to the 7 and Raile got a first down on the 3. Guthmiller ran into the end zone for the Indians' final touchdown. Raile ran for 2 extra points and the Norton lead had been reduced to 21-16 with 4:17 left.

The kickoff went out of bounds and Norton received the ball on their 35. Pfannenstiel ran the keeper for 3, Lane gained 3 and Gall got a first down on the 45. Stanley ran for 3 before Hamel got a first down on the St. Francis 36 on a reverse. Lane caught a flat pass for 4, then ran to the 27 but Norton was whistled for holding and the ball came back to the St. Francis 37. Pfannenstiel passed to Draper to the 29, then Stanley ran to the 13 for a first down. Lane carried around right end on a powerful run through the Indian defenders for a touchdown! The extra point kick was wide but Norton had extended their lead to 27-16 with 40 seconds left.

Zweygardt returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 16 where Pfannenstiel tackled him. After a 2 yard gain, time expired in the third quarter.

Fourth quarter

St. Francis lost 5 yards for having too many players on the field. Zweygardt ran around right end and Nuzum tackled him on the St. Francis 24. On fourth and 3, the Indians decided not to punt but the Blue Jay defense was immovable and Norton took over possession of the pigskin. Lane ran around right end to the Indian 11 but Norton was whistled for holding and the ball came back to the 36.

Pfannenstiel went into the air again and passed to Hamel for a touchdown. Laughlin kicked the

extra point and it was 34-16 with 10:49 left.

After Laughlin's kickoff, St. Francis started on their 15-yard-line. Guthmiller ran for 3, then Ninemire and Nuzum tackled Guthmiller after a 1 yard gain. Raile got the call and Cook tackled him after a 5 yard gain. On fourth and 1, Norton's defense was rock solid once again. Hilt was tackled for no gain by Matt and Rylee Stanley!

Lane got a good gain but Norton was penalized back to the 32 for holding. Stanley gained 2, a pass was incomplete, then Pfannenstiel connected with Draper, Hamel got a good block and Draper ran to the 15 but it was short of a first down and St. Francis regained possession with 7:53 left.

Hilt gained 1 before Ninemire and Stanley tackled him. Raile got 5 more before Nuzum stopped him. Quarterback Raile ran the keeper but Cook, Stanley and Gall threw him for a 2 yard loss. On fourth and 5, St. Francis was penalized 5 yards for delay of the game. They went into punt formation but the center snapped the ball over the punter's head and out of the end zone for a Norton safety. The two points for the safety extended the Norton lead to 36-16 with 5:51 remaining.

St. Francis kicked the ball to Norton and Zac Dreher returned it to the St. Francis 49. Norton was unable to move the ball so Lane punted back to the Indians on their 15. Raile carried twice for a first down on the 32 and twice more for a first down on the 44. Hilt gained 5 before Raile caught a flat pass and Hamel tackled him on the Norton 44 for another first down. A pass interference penalty

against Norton moved the ball to the Norton 30. St. Francis lost 5 yards on an illegal procedure penalty. Pacheco caught a pass and Hamel tackled him on the 24. St. Francis ran out of downs and time with 34 seconds left in the game. The Norton junior varsity ran one play and Blue Jays were 36-16 winners!

Next action

Norton will return to Mid-Continent League play this Friday when the Blue Jays travel to Ellis to take on a quality Railroader team, which is also 4-1. After defeating Atwood, Oakley, Osborne and Hoxie, the Railroaders played Smith Center last Friday and suffered an unexpected 40-0 loss.

Ellis has 16 returning lettermen from last year's squad which defeated Norton 13-12 in a game which was also played in Ellis, and went into the second round of the playoffs where their season ended after a 39-36 offensive slugfest with Minneapolis.

Talented senior quarterback Chase King leads the Ellis offense. He passed for over 1,000 yards last season. Junior fullback Gideon Fuchs averaged 8 yards per carry last year. A big, experienced offensive line blocks for them.

"Ellis has a very good team and we will have to play hard to beat them," said Norton coach Melvin.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton St. Francis
6 First Downs 13
141 Yards Rushing 238
169 Yards Passing 51
310 Total Yards 289
7-12-0 Passes Compl 4-11-0
3-32-5 Punts 2-30
0-1 Fumbles Lost 2-2
7-64 Penalties 5-20

High School Sports This Week



FOOTBALL:

Norton Blue Jays vs. Ellis Railroaders	7 p.m. Friday in Ellis
Norton Junior Varsity vs. Colby	5:30 p.m. Monday in Colby
Northern Valley Huskies vs. Weskan	7 p.m. Friday in Almena
Logan Trojans vs. Pawnee Heights	7 p.m. Friday in Logan

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Lady Jays vs. Smith Center/Trego (V, JV)	5 p.m. Today in Smith Center
Norton Lady Jays in Scott City Tournament	9 a.m. Saturday
Norton Lady Jays vs. Golden Plains, Logan (V, JV)	4:30 p.m. Tuesday in Norton
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Golden Plains/Triplains	4 p.m. Today in Almena
Northern Valley Lady Huskies in Hill City Tournament	8:30 a.m. Saturday
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Stockton/Western Plains	4 p.m. Tuesday in Stockton
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Palco/Thunder Ridge	4 p.m. Today in Logan
Logan Lady Trojans in Cougar Invitational	9 a.m. Saturday in Mankato
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Norton/Golden Plains	4 p.m. Tuesday in Norton

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton Cross Country in Phillipsburg/Mid-Continent League Meet	4:30 p.m. Thursday in Phillipsburg
Northern Valley Cross Country in Phillipsburg Invitational	4:30 p.m. Thursday

TENNIS:

Norton Lady Jays in Class 3A Regional Tournament	10 a.m. Thursday in Phillipsburg
Norton Lady Jays in Class 3A Sub-State Tournament	11 a.m. Saturday in WaKeeney

Look for YOU! Friday