

# Blue Jays' football season ends at Beloit

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com  
Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School football team saw their outstanding 2008 season come to an end Saturday evening in Beloit with a 34-17 loss to the Trojans in the Class 3A Regional game, one of eight being played statewide.

The Blue Jays were on an emotional high to start the game and surprised the Trojans by taking a 14-0 lead before Beloit had a single first down. Unfortunately, the Trojans rallied, the cold adversely affected Norton quarterback Connor Pfannenstiel's throwing accuracy and the Jays lost leading rusher Terrell Lane with a knee injury late in the first half. Still, the Trojans led by just 20-17 after three quarters but three pass interceptions by Beloit in the second half, two of which led to touchdowns, allowed the Trojans to pull away for the victory.

Cas Spangler, Beloit's outstanding senior running back, took the opening kickoff to the Norton 21 but the Blue Jays held on their 16 and drove 84 yards for their first touchdown on a 1 yard plunge by senior fullback Matt Stanley. Sophomore Caleb Laughlin's extra point kick was wide but Norton led 6-0 with 4:21 left in the first period.

Sophomore tailback Terrell Lane, who gained 60 yards in the first half and was on track for another 100 plus yards game with his powerful running, scored the Blue Jays' second touchdown from 25 yards out with 11:38 remaining in the second quarter. Junior quarterback Connor Pfannenstiel passed to junior tight end J.D. Gall for 2 points and the fired up Blue Jays were on top 14-0.

The Trojans answered this time with a 22 yard touchdown run by Spangler with 9:28 left in the first half. A run for the 2 extra points made it 14-8. A 27 yard field goal by Norton's Laughlin extended the Blue Jay lead to 17-8 with 6:25 left. Again, Beloit answered as Spangler ran 30 yards for a touchdown with 2:10 left.

Norton's Lane was injured on the play and had to watch the rest of the game from the sidelines.

Norton was still very much in the game when the two teams left the field at halftime with the Blue Jays on top 17-14. In fact, Norton took the opening kickoff for the second half and appeared to be driving for another touchdown but Beloit stopped them on their 19 yard line. After an exchange of possessions, Beloit had the ball on their 10 but Spangler got loose for a 90 yard touchdown run to put the Trojans ahead 20-17 with 1:24 left in the third quarter.

After Beloit intercepted a Norton pass on their 35, Beloit senior running back Jordan File found an opening in the Blue Jay defense and sprinted 65 yards for another Beloit touchdown with 11:50 left in the game, extending their lead to 26-17.

After another exchange of possessions, Beloit intercepted another pass and junior running back Logan Eck ran 28 yards for the Trojans' final touchdown and added 2 extra points to make the score 34-17 with 7:27 left. A final Norton drive was halted by another pass interception.

### Coach's comments

"We didn't have much offense in the second half," said coach Melvin. "We didn't keep the ball away from them with sustained drives like in the first half."

"Defensively, we didn't make plays in the second half; we just didn't tackle well enough."

The Blue Jays were not as effective at mixing passes with runs in the second half. Coach Melvin pointed out that Pfannenstiel completed five of his first five passes but was only 3 of his last 13 when he had trouble gripping the ball in the cold weather.

"We hit real hard just like we did all season," said coach Melvin. "We have a lot to be proud of. We expected to win and could have if we had made a couple of more plays."

"We had a good season and probably exceeded a lot of people's expectations."

"I especially thank our senior players for their leadership and hard play. I hope our younger players will step up and start working hard for next season. I encourage

them to compete in other sports and work in the weight room.

"One of the best things about being in Norton is that we get support from some of the greatest fans in the state. I'm blessed to be able to work with these fine young men, blessed to be in a community with wonderful support and blessed to be able to work with such outstanding coaches."

Eight seniors will graduate from this year's Norton football squad. They are: Brad Nuzum, Matt Stanley, Nish Millan, Kyle Mindrup, John Van Doren, Donny Hildebrand, Brock Lauer and Zac Dreher.

The Blue Jays completed their excellent season with an 8-3 record. Norton defeated previously unbeaten Scott City and St. Francis and came within two points of handing Smith Center their first loss in five seasons!

Beloit (10-1) will continue on to play Conway Springs (9-2) this Friday in Sectional competition.

### Starters for Norton

Coach Melvin named the same starting lineup as in the win over Lakin. They were: Landon Hamel, Ashton Draper, wide receivers; J.D. Gall, tight end; Nish Millan, Zac Dreher, tackles; Brock Lauer, Brad Nuzum, guards; Kaid McKenna, center; Connor Pfannenstiel, quarterback; Matt Stanley, fullback; Terrell Lane, tailback, offense; Tyler Cook, Lauer, ends; Nuzum, John Van Doren, tackles; Stanley, Zac Dreher, Lane, linebackers; Pfannenstiel, Zane Perez, Hamel, Draper, backs, defense.

### Individual statistics

Terrell Lane was Norton's leading rusher, despite playing in just the first half. He gained 60 yards on 14 carries for a 4.3 yard average. He was followed by: Matt Stanley, 9 for 39, 4.3 average; Connor Pfannenstiel, 7 for 28, 4.3 average; Landon Hamel, 5 for 17, 3.4 average and Zane Perez, 6 for 6.

Pfannenstiel completed 8 of 20 passes for 40 percent and 125 yards. His receivers were: Landon Hamel, 3 for 80, 26.6 average; Ashton Draper, 2 for 32, 16 average; Matt Stanley, 1 for 17; J.D. Gall, 2 for 16, 8 average.

Lane had 1 punt for 40 yards and Gall had 3 for a 38 yard average. Caleb Laughlin kicked off 4 times for a 32.5 average.

Five players had 1 kickoff return each. Pfannenstiel had a 16 yard return, followed by Perez, Gall, 10 yards each; Hamel, 7 and Draper, minus 3.

Leading rusher for Beloit was Spangler with 218 yards on 24 attempts. Spangler had 142 yards on his three touchdown runs. On his other 21 tries, the Norton defense limited the explosive Trojan to an average of just 3.6 yards per carry.

Leading tacklers for Norton were: Zac Dreher with 9 solos, 5 assists, 14 total; J.D. Gall, 8 solos, 4 assists, 12 total and Matt Stanley, 9 solos, 2 assists, 11 total. They were followed by: Landon Hamel, 4 solos, 3 assists, 7 total; Brock Lauer, 5 solos, 1 assist, 6 total; Brad Nuzum, 5 solos; Terrell Lane, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Connor Pfannenstiel, 2 solos; Tyler Cook, John Van Doren, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total each; Ashton Draper, Zane Perez, 1 solo each.

### First quarter

Caleb Laughlin kicked off for Norton and Cas Spangler displayed his running talent with a return to the Norton 21 where Brad Nuzum made the touchdown saving tackle!

Logan Eck gained 3 yards, then 2 to the 16 where Matt Stanley tackled him. Lane stopped Spangler for no gain, a pass was incomplete and Norton took over possession.

Pfannenstiel passed 30 yards to Landon Hamel. Lane gained 6 and 3 and Pfannenstiel sneaked for a first down on the Beloit 40. After Norton lost 5 for a false start and Hamel was stopped for no gain, Pfannenstiel connected with Hamel over the middle for a first down on the 27. Lane bulled to the 18 and Lane got a first down on the 11. Lane powered to the 4, then to the 3 and Stanley plunged to the 1. On fourth down, Stanley hit paydirt!

Caleb Laughlin's extra point kick was wide but Norton led 6-0 with 4:21 left.

Laughlin kicked the ball on the

ground and Spangler recovered it on the 26. Lane tackled Spangler after 4, Dreher stopped Spangler for no gain and Lane and Dreher tackled Spangler after 4. Beloit punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 35.

Lane gained 3 on 2 carries and Stanley caught a pass and ran to the Beloit 45. Lane gained nothing, a penalty cost Norton 5, Lane ran to the 45 and Stanley was stopped for no gain as the quarter ended with the visiting Blue Jays on top 6-0.

### Second quarter

Ashton Draper got the second period off to an exciting start by making a leaping catch of a Pfannenstiel pass on the Beloit 25! The next down, Lane followed good blocking into the end zone. Pfannenstiel passed to Gall for 2 extra points and the Blue Jays were leading 14-0 with 11:38 left in the half.

Laughlin kicked off on the ground again and Beloit got the ball on their 39. Jordan Adams found running room to the Norton 42 where Hamel made the stop. Spangler gained 4 and Draper made the tackle. Spangler made 5 more before Brock Lauer and Stanley tackled him. Norton was offsides, giving Beloit a first down on the Norton 27. File gained 5, then Spangler got loose over the left side for a touchdown. Adams ran for 2, making the score 14-8 with 9:28 left.

Hamel returned the kickoff to the Norton 37. Lane got 3 on 2 carries but a flat pass to Hamel gained nothing and Lane punted.

Spangler returned the punt and Beloit was moved back to their 10 due to a block in the back. The large Norton contingent of fans witnessed a good chance for a third Blue Jay touchdown when Beloit fumbled on first down and Tyler Cook pounced on the ball on the Trojan 8!

A pass fell incomplete, Lane slipped down on the wet turf on the 9 and another pass was incomplete. On fourth down, Laughlin kicked a 27 yard field goal for the Jays and they were on top 17-8 with 6:25 remaining.

Cook made the tackle on the Beloit 41 after Laughlin's kickoff. Eck made 5 before Gall tackled him, a pass was incomplete and Eck ran to the Norton 40 for a first down. Beloit recovered their fumble for a 3 yard loss, Spangler was stopped by Dreher for no gain and a flat pass to Spangler carried to the 31. Spangler gained 1 before Gall tackled him but it was good for a first down. Quarterback Adams ran a keeper for 4, then ran again for 2 before Dreher tackled him. Dreher, Lauer and Stanley gang tackled Eck, limiting him to 1. On fourth down, Spangler broke several tackles to get to the end zone.

There was sadness among the Norton fans as, after the play, Lane was on the ground with a knee injury. After Lane was examined by medical personnel and taken to the sidelines, Spangler was stopped short of the goalline on a try for 2 extra points, leaving the score at 17-14 with 2:10 left.

Perez returned the kickoff to the 34. Perez got 3 on 2 carries and a pass was incomplete. Gall punted and the ball rolled dead on the 27. Spangler got 4 on a flat pass before Stanley tackled him. File gained 2 before Stanley and Dreher stopped him. Dreher limited Spangler to 2 and it was halftime, with Norton leading 17-14.

### Third quarter

Draper had trouble returning the kickoff and was tackled on the 9. Pfannenstiel passed to Hamel for a first down on the Norton 40. Illegal motion cost Norton 5, but Pfannenstiel ran the keeper to the Norton 45. Perez gained 5 but Pfannenstiel lost 7 when he couldn't find a receiver. The Blue Jays kept the drive going, however, when Draper caught a pass on the Beloit 43 on a fake punt. Pfannenstiel ran the keeper to the 35, a pass was incomplete and Stanley plunged for a first down on the 31. Stanley plowed for 4 more and Perez picked up 3. Stanley ran to the 20 for another first down. Stanley gained 1 more, Pfannenstiel got nothing, then ran a draw to the 19. A fourth down pass was incomplete and Beloit took over possession of the ball.

On first down, Spangler got loose to the Norton 30 where Stan-



Members of Norton's Blue Swarm defense continued their season-long hard hitting against Beloit in their Regional loss to the Trojans on Saturday evening. Most of the time, they stopped Beloit ball carriers for little or no gain. On this play, a Beloit ball carrier along with his blocking lineman were buried by, from left, senior linebacker Matt Stanley, No. 33, senior tackle John Van Doren, No. 58 and senior tackle Nish Millan, No. 51.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

ley made the tackle. Cook stopped Spangler for no gain and, the next down, Beloit fumbled and Lauer recovered on the 25!

Pfannenstiel lost 1, Hamel ran for 7, then got a first down on the 39. Pfannenstiel connected with Gall over the middle for another Norton first down at midfield. The Jays were unable to advance any further, however, as Perez lost 2, 2 passes were incomplete and Gall punted to the Beloit 10. Spangler found running room and sprinted 90 yards for a Trojan touchdown. The try for 2 extra points was stopped but the Trojans were on

top 20-17 with 1:24 left.

Gall returned the kickoff to the Norton 42. Hamel gained 3 on 2 carries, then a Pfannenstiel pass was intercepted by Spangler. A blocking in the back penalty against Beloit put the ball back on the 36. They lost 5 more for illegal motion. Spangler ran for 4 before Stanley and Cook made the tackle as the third period came to a close with a tight 20-17 score.

### Fourth quarter

One play changed things quickly as the final period began. File found running room and sprinted 65 yards for another Trojan touch-

down. A pass for 2 extra points was no good but Beloit now led 26-17 with 11:50 left in the contest.

Stanley returned the kickoff to the 27. Pfannenstiel got 1, 2 passes were incomplete and Gall punted to the Beloit 34. The Blue Jay defense was equal to the occasion. John Van Doren and Gall dropped Spangler for a 2 yard loss, Van Doren tackled File for no gain and a flat pass to Spangler got nothing as Hamel wrapped him up. Beloit punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 30.

Stanley gained 2 but, on the next (Continued on Page 8)

**RED TAG EVENT**

from America's #1 Selling Home Furniture Brand

**2 FREE CHAIRS**

when you purchase the Carlyle 5 Piece Dining Room

**\$699**

Includes 60" to 78" Rectangular Extension Table & 4 Chairs

**2 WEEKS ONLY**

carlylecollection

**FREE QUEEN BED**

when you purchase the Piernont Dresser, Mirror & Night Stand

Piernont Dresser, Mirror & Night Stand

**\$799**

**MANY FREE ITEMS TO CHOOSE FROM!**

**GET THE LOVESEAT FOR FREE!**

with purchase of the matching sofa

**DURAPELLA®**  
Microfiber Oyster 85" Sofa

**\$599**

**KANSAS'S LARGEST ASHLEY FURNITURE HOMESTORE!**

**ASHLEY FURNITURE HomeStore**

2702 Vine Street Hays 785.621.2664

Monday thru Friday: 11am-7pm  
Saturday: 10am-6pm Sunday: 1pm-5pm

visit us online @ [www.ashleyfurniturehomestore.com](http://www.ashleyfurniturehomestore.com)