



Norton's senior fullback Zane Perez scored three touchdowns in the Blue Jays' shutout of Ness City here Friday night. One of his scores came on this 68-yard kickoff return in the third quarter. After he broke into the open, he had an enthusiastic

escort from teammates J.D. Gall, No. 42; Tye Nickell, No. 5 (partially hidden); Justin Griffith, No. 82 and Ashton Draper, No. 6.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



Norton's defense against Ness City-Dighton was very stingy with the "Blue Swarm" allowing the Titans an average of .3 yards per carry. Above, Ness City's Guy Fullmer gets caught in a Blue Jay tackle sandwich created by Landon Keiswetter, No. 62 and Damien Davis, No. 50.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Blue Jays open districts with impressive win

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwksans.com

The Norton Community High School varsity football team opened District play with an impressive 48-0 victory over Ness City-Dighton on Friday night at Travis Field.

The Titans came to Norton with a 5-1 record, having lost only the previous week to La Crosse, and host Norton took a 4-2 record into the game, with losses only to Smith Center and Ellis.

It was no contest, however, as the Blue Jays controlled the game from start to finish. Norton scored touchdowns on five of their six possessions in the first half, leading 13-0 after one quarter and 35-0 at halftime. In the third quarter, the Blue Jays scored touchdowns on their only two possessions to take the lead to 48-0.

The Norton junior varsity got valuable experience in the fourth quarter.

Norton's senior fullback Zane Perez scored four touchdowns in the game but one was called back due to a penalty. He hit paydirt from 91 yards out with 9:08 left in the second quarter, on a 4 yard run with 2:22 left in the second quarter and returned a kickoff 68 yards to start the third quarter.

Senior quarterback Connor Pfanenstiel ran a 26 yard keeper for Norton's first touchdown with 8:30 left in the first quarter. Senior wide receiver Landon Hamel scored the Jays' second touchdown on a 50 yard pass play from junior quarterback Spencer Shirk with 2:13 left in the first quarter. Shirk ran an 18 yard keeper into the end zone with 7:06 left in the first half.

Junior tailback Terrell Lane scored the final Blue Jay touchdown on a 17 yard run with 4:24 left in the third quarter.

Senior kicker J.D. Gall was perfect on four extra point kicks and one was blocked. Pfanenstiel connected with senior wide receiver Aston Draper for two extra points after the fifth touchdown.

Norton rolled up 305 total yards on the Titans, who managed only 95 yards of offense. The Blue Jays averaged 7.5 yards per carry on the ground in rushing for 218 yards while the Titans gained only 50 yards rushing for a 1.3 yard average.

"We played hard on both sides of the ball and dominated them but still made some mistakes," said Norton head football coach Lucas Melvin.

"Our offensive line did a good job of blocking, especially on traps. Our defense tackled better. We ran to the ball and had multiple players in on tackles and tackled to the whistle.

"We realize it's playoff time and were fired up."

Coach Melvin started the following players on the offensive line: junior Ryan Blecha, 185 pounds, left tackle; senior Marcus Herman, 175 pounds, left guard; junior Kaid McKenna, 175 pounds, center; junior Luke Nimmire, 190 pounds, right guard;

junior Landon Keiswetter, 175 pounds, right tackle; senior J.D. Gall, 180 pounds, tight end; senior Ashton Draper, 180 pounds, wide receiver and junior Spencer Shirk, 165 pounds, wide receiver.

Starting in the backfield were: senior Connor Pfanenstiel, 155 pounds, quarterback; senior Zane Perez, 180 pounds, fullback and junior Terrell Lane, 210 pounds, tailback.

Starting on defense were: junior Justin Griffith, 180 pounds, left end; senior Tyler Cook, 215 pounds, left tackle; Herman, right tackle; junior Rylee Stanley, 150 pounds, right end; Lane, Gall, McKenna, linebackers; Draper, senior Landon Hamel, 160 pounds, cornerbacks; Perez, strong safety; Pfanenstiel, free safety.

Zane Perez was leading rusher for Norton with 99 yards on just 4 carries for a 24.8 yard per carry average. Other Norton rushers were: Terrell Lane, 9 for 52 yards; Connor Pfanenstiel, 5 for 29; Jeremy Sproul, 4 for 21; Spencer Shirk, 3 for 15; Trey Millan, 3 for minus 2; Tye Nickell, 1 for minus 1; Dalton Miller, 1 for 1.

Ashton Draper caught 4 passes in the game, 2 from each team! In addition to 2 receptions for 34 yards from the Norton side, he had 2 pass interceptions for 22 yards. Landon Hamel had 1 pass reception for 50 yards and J.D. Gall had 1 for 23 yards.

Connor Pfanenstiel also intercepted 1 Ness City pass and returned it 27 yards.

Hamel had 2 punt returns for 47 yards.

Leading rusher for Ness City was Guy Fullmer with 42 yards on 17 carries.

Connor Pfanenstiel was leading tackler for Norton with 6 solos, 2 assists, 8 total, followed by Landon Keiswetter, 5 solos, 2 assists, 7 total; Kaid McKenna, 2 solos, 4 assists, 6 total; Tyler Cook, 6 assists; Ryan Blecha, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; J.D. Gall, 2 solos, 3 assists, 5 total; Zane Perez, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Landon Hamel, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Tye Nickell, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Rylee Stanley, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Damien Davis, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Justin Griffith, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Terrell Lane, 3 solos; Jake Romey, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Jeremy Sproul, 3 solos; Cayleb Campbell, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Marcus Herman, 2 assists; Trey Millan, 2 solos; Ashton Draper, Dillon McConney, Treven Rossi, Spencer Shirk, 1 solo each; Robert Blecha, Jacob Brooks, 1 assist each.

Norton didn't wait long to score in the game. Gall kicked off and the "Blue Swarm" defense forced the visitors into a three-and-out. Hamel returned the punt 10 yards to the Ness City 41. Lane gained 7 yards, then Perez broke into the open for what appeared to be the Blue Jays' first touchdown. It was called back on an offsides penalty but Lane ran around left end for a first down on the 26 and Pfan-

enstiel ran a keeper for the final 26 yards. A run attempt by Lane for 2 extra points was stopped short and Norton led 6-0 with 8:30 left in the first quarter.

Gall kicked off and again the swarming Blue Jay defense was equal to the occasion. The Titans tried to run on fourth down instead of punting and Norton got the ball in good position but couldn't move and Gall punted the first of two times in the contest. The Titans couldn't advance and punted back. On second down, quarterback Spencer Shirk hit Hamel with a flat pass and he ran down the sidelines 50 yards to paydirt! Gall split the uprights and Norton led 13-0 with 2:13 left in the first period.

After Gall's kickoff, Ness City picked up a first down on the Norton 47-yard line when Guy Fullmer fumbled a punt snap and ran with the ball.

To start the second quarter, Ness City earned one first down by inches before being forced to punt. Norton took over on their 6-yard line. Lane ran for 3 yards, then Perez got the ball and ran over the right side of the line, found lots of running room and sprinted 91 yards to the end zone! Gall split the uprights again and the Jays led 20-0 with 9:08 left in the second quarter.

After Gall's kickoff, the Titans made nothing on a running play then went to the air. Draper alertly intercepted the Ness City pass, then caught an aerial from teammate quarterback Spencer Shirk for a 32 yard gain to the Ness City 18. The next play, Shirk ran a keeper around left end and ran into the end zone untouched. Gall kicked the extra point again and Norton led 27-0 with 7:06 left in the half.

After Gall's kickoff, rain began to pour down at Travis Field. The teams continued to play and Ness City completed a 33 yard pass that helped them get to mid-field. But, three plays later, they threw to the wrong color jersey again and Draper made his second interception of the game! Draper returned the ball to the Norton 40 and it took

just five more plays for Norton to score again.

Pfanenstiel ran a keeper for 14 yards, Sproul gained 12 more, Pfanenstiel passed to Gall for 24 more yards, Sproul bulled 11 yards to the 4 and Perez ran in from there. Pfanenstiel passed to Draper for two extra points, extending the Norton advantage to 35-0 with 2:22 left in the third quarter.

Lane kicked off for the only time during the game and Fullmer made a good return to mid-field. Two plays later, Pfanenstiel intercepted a Titan pass and returned it to the Ness City 48. Time in the first half ran out before the Blue Jays could drive down for another score but they held a comfortable 35-0 halftime advantage.

Ness City kicked off to start the second half and Perez caught the ball, ran upfield, picked up an escort of blockers and sprinted 68 yards to the end zone! Gall's extra point kick made the score 42-0 with 11:50 showing on the

scoreboard clock.

The lead of over 40 points started the clock running continuously for the rest of the contest. After Norton's kickoff, Ness City got one first down before punting. Hamel returned the punt 37 yards to the Titan 39. Lane had 2 carries to the 19 and Perez plunged for 2 more. Lane then ran 17 yards for the touchdown. Gall's extra point kick was blocked and the Blue Jay lead was extended to 48-0 with 4:50 left in the third quarter.

After the kickoff, Ness City earned one first down before the end of the third quarter. The Norton junior varsity played the fourth quarter against Ness City and, despite being unable to score themselves, played hard and kept the Titans out of the end zone to preserve the shutout.

Next action

Norton will have a tougher opponent this Friday when the Blue Jays travel to Scott City to take on the undefeated and state ranked Beavers in a 7:30 p.m.

District game.

Scott City was also unbeaten last season when the two teams met and Norton handed them their first defeat. The Beavers defeated Lakin, Pratt, Ulysses, Holcomb, Larned and Thomas More Prep in regular season games and shutout Goodland 42-0 last Friday in their first District game.

"It will be the biggest game of the season for us since the District championship is on the line," said coach Melvin. "They'll be fired up since we beat them last year.

"They have a good offense and defense and we will have to play with the same excitement we had this week to beat them."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Ness City-Dighton
7	First Downs 7
218	Yards Rushing 50
87	Yards Passing 45
305	Total Yards 95
4-8-0	Passes Compl 4-9-3
0-0	Fumbles Lost 0-3
2-39	Punts 6-33.8
5-40	Penalties 4-20

High School Sports This Week



Norton Blue Jays



Northern Valley Huskies



Logan Trojans

FOOTBALL:

Norton Blue Jays vs. Scott City Beavers 7:30 p.m. Friday in Scott City

Northern Valley Huskies vs. Wheatland-Grinnell 7 p.m. Friday in Alma

Logan Trojans vs. Palco 7 p.m. Friday in Logan

VOLLEYBALL:

Norton Lady Jays vs. Goodland, Ulysses, V, JV 5 p.m. Today in Goodland

Norton Lady Jays in Sub-State Tournament Tourney begins at 2 p.m. Saturday in Hays (at TMP-Marian)

Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Thunder Ridge/Palco winner in Regional Tournament Today in Logan

Logan Lady Trojans vs. Lucas-Luray in Regional Tournament 3 p.m. Today in Logan

CROSS COUNTRY:

Norton Cross Country in Class 3A Regional Meet 3 p.m. Saturday in Cimarron

Northern Valley Cross Country in Class 1A Regional Meet ... 3 p.m. Saturday at Wheatland

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