

# Blue Jays defeat Lakin in Bi-District

By DICK BOYD

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The Norton Community High School football team traveled to Lakin to play the District No. 16 champions on Tuesday evening and returned with an impressive 62-22 victory and the Bi-District championship!

The Blue Jays are now 7-3 for the season and will host Beloit, an 8-2 team, for the Regional championship tomorrow at 7 p.m. at Travis Field in Norton.

Early into the game, the eventual outcome was clear as Norton dominated on both offense and defense. Norton's Caleb Laughlin kicked off to start the game and it turned out to be his best night effort on kickoffs.

The Bronc running back was tackled on their 6-yard line and everything went downhill for Lakin from there.

Norton scored on every single possession in the first half, hitting the end zone five times in the first quarter for a 34-0 lead and four times in the second period for a 62-0 halftime advantage.

Blue Jay head coach Lucas Melvin played his junior varsity players against the Bronc varsity the last half and they also played well despite giving up three touchdowns.

Norton senior linebacker J.D. Gall set the tone on defense when he tackled Lakin senior running back Alex Saenz after a 1 yard gain on the first play from scrimmage. On second down, Lakin senior quarterback Dylan Shalberg went back to pass on his 7-yard line and connected with Gall who scampered into the end zone! Laughlin, who boomed kickoffs and extra point kicks all night long, split the uprights and Norton led 7-0 with 57 seconds played!

Junior tailback Terrell Lane scored from 24 yards out with 8:35 left and Laughlin's kick made it 14-0. Senior quarterback Connor Pfannenstiel got in on the scoring with 6:47 remaining after Gall's second pass interception when he hit paydirt from 13 yards out. Laughlin's kick made it 21-0.

Lane got his second touchdown of the night on a 13 yard run with 3:26 left which was set up by a 12 yard keeper by Pfannenstiel and a 14 yard carry by Lane after taking a pitch from Pfannenstiel. The extra point kick was blocked, leaving the score at 27-0.

After Norton junior defensive end Rylee Stanley recovered a Lakin fumble on the Bronc 19 and Norton was moved back on a holding penalty, junior quarterback Spencer Shirk passed to senior fullback Zane Perez for a 26 yard touchdown. Laughlin's extra point kick made it 34-0 with 2:02 left in the first quarter.

To start the second quarter, Norton senior defensive back Landon

Hamel found running room on a punt return and scampered 71 yards to the end zone! Laughlin split the uprights with another booming kick and it was 41-0 with 22 seconds gone in the period.

On Lakin's next possession, the Broncos had success with a 35-yard pass play so they tried another aerial. That was not a good decision. Pfannenstiel, who also plays defensive back, intercepted and returned the pigskin to the Norton 31. On first down, Lane ran over a Lakin player en route to a 43 yard gain to the Bronc 36. The next play, Hamel got the ball and sprinted through the Bronc defense for his second touchdown! Laughlin's kick made it 48-0 with 9:45 left in the first half.

After Laughlin's eighth kickoff and another three-and-out forced by the "Blue Swarm" defense, Hamel returned the Lakin punt 19 yards to the Bronc 49.

On first down, Gall got in on the scoring act again as he caught a pass from Pfannenstiel and he weaved his way through traffic for his second score of the night. Laughlin's extra point kick extended the Norton advantage to 55-0 with 6:59 left in the half.

Thanks to an illegal participation penalty against Norton and 25 yard pass play where Lakin senior wide receiver Josh Walters made a diving catch, the Broncos got to the Norton 18 but Blue Jay senior defensive back Ashton Draper killed any chances the home team had when he intercepted a pass on the Norton 7-yard line.

The distance to the goalline didn't bother the Blue Jays. Perez gained 12 yards and 34 yards on two carries. After a block in the back penalty against Norton, junior tailback Jeremy Sproul bowled over a Lakin defender en route to a 64 yard touchdown run! Laughlin split the uprights once again, extending the shutout to 62-0 with 1:26 left in the half.

The second half was shortened by the continuous clock, which runs in the second half following a lead by one team of over 40 points.

The Broncos' Zach Reed scored on a 5-yard pass from quarterback Shalberg with 4:55 left in the third quarter. The extra point kick was no good, making the score 62-6 after three quarters.

Lakin's second touchdown came on an 11 yard run by Alex Jones with 8:25 left in the game. Alex Saenz ran for two extra points and it was 62-14.

The Broncos' final score came with time running out on a 2 yard pass from Shalberg to Jones. Saenz ran for two extra points to make the final score 62-22.

"We played an excellent game," said coach Melvin.

"We were ready to play and executed very well. We were the aggressor and our young men played with a sense of urgency.



Norton senior wide receiver and defensive back Landon Hamel turned on the jets as he flew through the Lakin defense on this 71 yard punt return for another Blue Jay touchdown in the second quarter of Norton's 62-22 Bi-District Championship win at Lakin on Tuesday. Senior linebacker and tight end J.D.

Gall, No.42, also had a good game, scoring on a 7 yard pass interception at the start of the game and on a 49 yard pass from senior quarterback Connor Pfannenstiel.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

"We took care of business and kept playing hard even after we got a big lead on them.

"Caleb Laughlin kicked very well tonight.

"We were happy to have the opportunity to play our junior varsity in the second half and I thought they gave a good account of themselves."

Norton rolled up 275 yards rushing on 30 carries for a 9.2 yards per carry average.

Lakin managed 143 rushing yards on 35 tries for a 4 yard average. In the first half, the Broncos rushed for just 38 yards on 24 attempts for a 1.6 yard average.

The Blue Jays competed 3 of 9 passes for 78 yards and the Broncos were successful on 5 of 16 passes for 101 yards.

Total yardage was 353 for Norton and 254 for Lakin, most of which came in the second half versus the Blue Jay junior varsity.

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 Ninemire, 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 senior Landon Hamel, 160 pounds, wide receiver.

Starting in the backfield for the Blue Jays were: senior Connor Pfannenstiel, 155 pounds, quarterback; senior Zane Perez, 180 pounds, fullback; junior Terrell Lane, 210 pounds, tailback.

Starting on defense were: junior Jeremy Sproul, 200 pounds, left end; junior Justin Griffith, 180 pounds, left tackle; Herman, nose guard; senior Tyler Cook, 215 pounds, right tackle; junior Rylee Stanley, 150 pounds, right end; Lane, McKenna, Gall, linebackers; Draper, Hamel, Perez, defensive backs.

Terrell Lane was leading rusher for Norton with 100 yards on 8 carries for an average of 12.5 yards per carry.

Zane Perez ran the ball 3 times for 44 yards and an average of 14.7 yards. Jeremy Sproul gained 65 yards on 2 attempts for a 32.5 yard average. Connor Pfannenstiel gained 30 yards on 2 carries for a 15 yard average.

Other Blue Jay ball carriers were: Landon Hamel, 1 for 36; Tye Nickell, 4 for 17; Trey Millan, 3 for 2; Dalton Miller, 2 for minus 4; Jordan Wahlmeier, 3 for minus 16; Jacob Brooks, 2 for 1.

Hamel led Norton's special teams with 3 punt returns for 117 yards and a 39 yard average and 1 touchdown. Pfannenstiel had 1 punt return for 19 yards.

In addition to Gall's 2 pass interceptions, Pfannenstiel, Draper and Brooks each had 1.

Alex Jones was leading rusher

and pass receiver for Lakin. He gained 87 yards on 11 carries and caught 3 passes for 71 yards.

Kaid McKenna was leading tackler for the Blue Jays with 4 solos, 5 assists, 9 total; followed by Jeremy Sproul, 5 solos, 2 assists, 7 total; Landon Keiswetter, 2 solos, 5 assists, 7 total; Landon Hamel, 5 solos; Tyler Cook, 3 assists; J.D. Gall, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Tye Nickell, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Spencer Shirk, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Lane Bigge, Marcus Herman, 2 solos each; Terrell Lane, Trey Millan, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total each; Lane Archer, Eli Bozarth, Lucas Engel, Justin Griffith, Caleb Laughlin, Dillon McConney, Carson McKenna, Dalton Miller, Zane Perez, Connor Pfannenstiel, Treven Rossi, 1 solo each; Tyler Lewis, 1 assist.

**Next action**

Beloit won their Bi-District championship on Tuesday evening with a come-from-behind 28-23 victory over a visiting Lyons eleven.

Trailing 23-22 with less than 2 minutes left in the game, Beloit held Lyons on its 2-yardline. On the first play from scrimmage, Logan Eck broke loose on a sweep around right end and scampered 98 yards for the game-winning touchdown.

Beloit trailed 20-8 at halftime and 23-14 at the end of three quarters. Luke Shamburg caught a 20-yard scoring pass from Eck in the fourth quarter to set the stage

for the dramatic ending.

Eck, a senior, finished the game with 317 yards rushing on 33 carries and two touchdowns. He averaged 9.6 yards per carry. The 5'9", 175 pound Eck had 1,500-plus yards rushing last season.

Beloit's only two losses this season were to Ellsworth and Southeast of Saline. Norton's only losses have been to unbeaten Smith Center, Ellis and Scott City.

"They run a double wing offense and run the ball most of the time," said coach Melvin. "Eck is an outstanding running back. He runs hard and is difficult to tackle.

"Our defensive line will have to play really well and get penetration. Our offensive line will also have to play well.

"We'll have to come out and play with the same intensity we had at Lakin.

"We're excited about playing Beloit and will be ready."

**GAME STATISTICS**

Norton	Lakin
12	10
275	143
78	101
353	244
3-9-2	5-16-5
1-2	2-3
2-42	4-36.5
9-78	2-15

# Huskies end football season

Northern Valley's football season concluded on Thursday, Oct. 29 with a 54-6 loss to a visiting Sharon Springs team.

"We played pretty solid football for the first quarter and a half," said Northern Valley head football coach Chuck Fessenden.

"Some mistakes at the end of the half let them gain control of the game.

"In the second half, we let them make some big plays.

"I appreciate our seniors' hard work. We will miss Mike Callaway, Hutch Gehrke and Jacob Gallentine."

The Huskies' only touchdown came with 10:42 left in the second quarter when Dusty Eagleburger ran 51 yards to score. A run for two points failed, making the score 8-6 at that time.

Taylor Pearce scored Sharon Springs' first touchdown on a 77 yard run, ran 60 yards for another and also ran 40 yards for their final score. Tate Andrews scored touchdowns on runs of 25 yards and 44 yards and caught a 13 yard touchdown pass from Gavin Mote, who also scored once from 9 yards out.

Northern Valley rushed for 127 yards on 30 carries for an average of 4.2 yards per carry. Leading rusher for the Huskies was Dusty Eagleburger with 65 yards on 6 attempts for 10.8 yards per carry. Gallentine gained 35

yards on 12 carries for a 2.9 yard average and Calen Bach rushed 6 times for 22 yards and a 3.7 yard average. Austin Herman gained 5 yards and 6 attempts.

Herman punted 3 times for a 30 yard average and Colton Lowry punted 2 times for a 24.5 yard average.

Gallentine kicked off 2 times for a 44.5 yard average.

Vincent had 1 kickoff return for 16 yards and Lowry had 1 kickoff return for 4 yards

Hutch Gehrke was leading tackler for Northern Valley with 8 solos, 3 assists for 11 total. He was followed by Colton Lowry,

6-2-8; Calen Bach, 3-4-7; Dillon Hogan, 4-3-7; Jacob Gallentine, 3-3-6; Zachary Vincent, 4-2-6; Steven Brown, 2-3-5.



Norton senior fullback Zane Perez caught a pass from quarterback Spencer Shirk, followed good blocking and hit the breezes for a 26-yard touchdown late in the first quarter of the Blue Jays' 62-22 Bi-District Championship win at Lakin on Tuesday.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

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