

The Norton Blue Jays shut out Ellis

By DICK BOYD

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Coach Lucas Melvin's Norton Community High School football team started the 2010 season on Friday by shutting out Ellis 13-0 on their home field.

The Norton offense was the superior one of the two and threatened many times, including two field goal misses, but scored just once in each half. On the other hand, the Railroaders had just two opportunities to score and the vicious Blue Jay defenders would have none of it.

The Railroaders' first chance to score came on the opening kickoff when they ran the ball to the Norton 9-yard-line. A blocking-in-the-back penalty moved them back to the 25 and they were unable to get in the end zone.

Late in the first half, Ellis threatened to score but Norton defensive back Billy Broeckelman hit 6'4", 215 pound tight end Jared Herl so hard in the end zone that he dropped the ball! Norton fans will remember that last year's game between Norton and Ellis ended on a similar play when Herl caught a touchdown pass to defeat the Blue Jays.

Ellis did not threaten in the second half against the "Blue Swarm" defense and Norton drove the length of the field to score late in the game for the clincher that brought the satisfying victory!

The game was well played fundamentally by both squads with neither having a lost fumble or pass interception.

Norton rolled up 310 yards of offense compared to only 130 total yards for Ellis. Norton averaged 5.4 yards per carry and Ellis had an average of 4.3 yards per rush.

Neither team passed much. Norton had 28 yards passing and Ellis had 7 yards through the air.

Penalties were about even with Norton losing 64 yards on infractions and Ellis 55 yards.

"Our defense really did a good job the entire game," said coach Melvin. "Our offense was good as well but we left a lot of points off the scoreboard. We have to get better at decision making when we get in the red zone (inside other team's 20-yard-line).

"They had several big runs against our defense but we had guys out of position. On the opening kickoff, we didn't maintain our lanes running downfield.

"Our line did a great job of opening holes for our backs. We still need to work on our sweeps. Our backs were cutting back too quickly.

"Anytime you have a shutout, that's pretty special. We got a win in a tough environment.

"Our offense ran a lot more plays than they did and had a lot of drives and that kept our defense off the field. Our offense having no three-and-outs in the game was a testament to how well they did. Anytime you have more than 250 yards of offense, that's a good night!"

Starting lineup

Coach Melvin started the following players on the offensive line: senior Ryan Blecha, 185 pounds, left tackle; senior Landon

Keiswetter, 190 pounds, left guard; senior Kaid McKenna, 185 pounds, center; senior Luke Ninemire, 215 pounds, right guard; sophomore Alex Riggins, 270 pounds, right tackle; junior Dillon McConney, 150 pounds, wide receiver; senior Billy Broeckelman, 170 pounds, wide receiver; senior Justin Griffith, 190 pounds, tight end; senior Spencer Shirk, 180 pounds, quarterback; senior Brett Terrell, 160 pounds, fullback; senior Terrell Lane, 220 pounds, tailback.

On defense for the Blue Jays were: senior Rylee Stanley, 155 pounds; senior Jeremy Sproul, 205 pounds, ends; Luke Ninemire, Justin Griffith, tackles; Landon Keiswetter, Kaid McKenna, Brett Terrell, linebackers; Billy Broeckelman, Spencer Shirk, corner backs; Terrell Lane and junior Tye Nickell, 150 pounds, safeties.

Individual statistics

Norton's Terrell Lane had a great season opening game from his tailback spot. He carried the ball 22 times for 193 yards and an average of 8.8 yards per carry.

Other ball carriers for Norton and their yardage were: Spencer Shirk, 15 carries for 38 yards; Jeremy Sproul, 10 carries for 33 yards and Brett Terrell, 5 carries for 18 yards.

Lane punted three times for a 31 yard average. He also had 2 punt returns for 55 yards and Broeckelman had 1 return for 15 yards.

Spencer Shirk completed 5 of 9 passes for 28 yards. Lane had 2 receptions for 16 yards, Broeckelman had 2 for 8 yards and Griffith had 1 for 4 yards.

Senior kicker Caleb Laughlin had 3 kickoffs for a 40.3 yard average.

Leading rusher for Ellis was senior back Jacob Kinderknecht who gained 107 yards on 14 attempts for a 7.6 yard average.

Leading tackler for Norton was Landon Keiswetter with 4 solos, 4 assists, 8 total; followed by Kaid McKenna, 4 solos, 3 assists, 7 total; Billy Broeckelman, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Jeremy Sproul, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Tye Nickell, 4 solos; Luke Ninemire, 4 solos; Brett Terrell, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Justin Griffith, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Terrell Lane, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Trey Millan, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Rylee Stanley, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Carson McKenna, 1 solo; Casey Temmel, 1 assist.

First quarter

The Blue Jays were surprised when the Railroaders' Austin Lopez returned Caleb Laughlin's game and season opening kickoff to the Norton 9-yard line!

A blocking-in-the-back penalty against Ellis moved the ball back to the 24.

The Blue Jay defense was equal to the occasion. Riley Hunsicker gained 4 yards on first down but Keiswetter came roaring through the line to drop Kinderknecht for a 2 yard loss!

The Norton line put on a good rush and a third down pass was incomplete. On fourth down, a pass was complete to Herl but he was out of bounds in the end zone and the Blue Jays went on offense for the first time in the game.



Norton's senior tailback Terrell Lane had plenty of running room against Ellis on Friday night after Blue Jay sophomore right tackle Alex Riggins cleared the way by blocking the Railroaders' Garrett Rupp. Thanks to the efficient blocking by his teammates all night long, Lane had plenty of holes and gained 193 yards on 22 carries for an average of 8.8 yards per tote. Riggins started his first game for the Blue Jays.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Lane got a good start on his night as he ran 12 yards on first down to the 34, added 10 more on the next down and got another nice hole on his third carry for 14 more yards to the Ellis 42.

Brett Terrell got his first carry of the pigskin and got loose over left tackle for a first down on the Ellis 28. Sproul got 1 yard, Lane 1 and Shirk 2 around left end as the Railroader defense stiffened. Laughlin tried a field goal. It was lined up right but fell just short and Ellis took over the ball on their 20.

After a 7 yard gain, Keiswetter tackled Riley Hunsicker for a 2 yard loss and Casey Temmel ran Hunsicker out of bounds for no gain. Ellis punted and Lane eluded potential tacklers all the way to the Ellis 17-yard line!

Sproul lost 2 yards, a flat pass to Griffith netted 5 yards and a flat pass to Broeckelman made 3 more yards. On fourth down, Ellis jumped off sides and Norton got a first down by inches on the 8-yard-line.

Lane found a big hole in the middle of the Ellis line and powered into the end zone for the touchdown! Laughlin split the uprights and it was 7-0 in favor of the visitors from Norton with 2:07 left in the first period.

Laughlin's kickoff went out of the bounds and Ellis got the ball on their 35. McKenna upset Kinderknecht for a 2-yard-loss. Ellis lost 5 yards on a false start, then Cadyn McCoy got loose for 12 yards before Nickell tackled him. Herl made a diving pass catch on the Ellis 45 for the Railroaders' only aerial completion of the game. McCoy made another good gain but it came back due to holding by the Railroaders. With the ball on the Ellis 40, the quarter ended with Norton leading 7-0

Second quarter

the first half with the Blue Jays still on top 7-0.

Third quarter

Ellis kicked off to Norton to start the second half. A series of penalties hurt the Jays and Lane punted to the Railroader 39. Kinderknecht ran around right end and Broeckelman ran him out of bounds after a 4-yard-gain. Ninemire tackled Kinderknecht after 1 yard and a long pass was incomplete. Ellis punted and Lane returned the ball to the Norton 38.

Shirk sneaked for 5 yards, then Lane got a big block from Riggins and rambled to the Ellis 33. Shirk gained 3 yards and the game was delayed for a lengthy period while an ambulance went to Hays and back.

After the delay, Norton was stopped on the Ellis 27. Terrell tackled Kinderknecht after 2 yards but Joey Augustine found a hole in the Norton line and ran to the Blue Jay 46. Kinderknecht gained 7 yards before Keiswetter dropped him to the turf. He got the ball again but Sproul and Company made him lose 2 yards. Ninemire and Keiswetter sacked the quarterback for a 13 yard loss and Ellis punted out of bounds on the Norton 22.

Lane broke two tackles and earned a first down on the Ellis 45! Lane and Terrell gained more yardage, then Shirk ran around left end for a first down on the Ellis 28. After an incomplete pass, the quarter ended with the Jays still on top 7-0.

Fourth quarter

The Norton drive bogged down as the final quarter began and Ellis took over.

With Sproul, Keiswetter and Ninemire wreaking havoc in the Railroader backfield, they punted the ball to the Norton 23.

The play by the fired up Norton defense carried over to the offense and they put together a determined

drive for the Blue Jays' second touchdown. With the guys up front moving out the Ellis defenders and Lane and Sproul running their hardest of the game, the Blue Jays drove 77 yards for their final score. Shirk got the touchdown on a sneak with 1:36 left in the game.

Laughlin's extra point attempt was blocked but the 13-0 Norton lead was safe. Trey Millan upset the Ellis kickoff receiver with a tremendous tackle on the Railroader 22-yard-line!

The Railroaders went exclusively to the passing game but it was very ineffective and the game ended with Sproul and Company sacking the quarterback!

Next action

Norton will host the St. Francis Indians at 7 p.m. this Friday in the Blue Jays' season home opener.

St. Francis lost a high scoring 47-22 game to an outstanding Colby eleven last Friday night.

The Indians are a solid team under second year head coach Nathan Smith, who guided them to a solid 7-4 mark last season.

They run a wishbone offense of the Smith Center variety and employ a 4-3 defense.

St. Francis has 14 returning lettermen.

"St. Francis should have a good team," said coach Melvin. "We've beaten them the last couple of years so they will want revenge.

"They have some good sized linemen. Their backs aren't too big but they are quick.

"Our goal is to work to get better this week and play as hard as we can against St. Francis."

GAME STATISTICS

Norton		Ellis
16	First Downs	4
282	Yards Rushing	125
28	Yards Passing	5
310	Total Yards	130
5-9-0	Passes Compl.	1-11-0
0-1	Fumbles Lost	0-0
3-31	Punts	6-36.3
6-64	Penalties	8-55



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Lady Huskies split matches at Ransom

The Lady Huskies traveled to Ransom to take on the Longhorns of Thunder Ridge and the host Bobcats of Western Plains.

We faced the Longhorns in our opening match and basically one word was agreed upon by the girls to describe our play ^ embarrassing. What we put out on the floor for skill work and playing effort was to say the least embarrassing. It was no where near the level of play that the same group showed in our opening contests just days before. So, we lost 11-25, 15-25.

Now, as I have mentioned already this season we are young and lessons need to be taken from each contest so that we may become an experienced team. So, the lesson after this embarrassing match was to not let one defeat or bad outing carry over into the next and cause a second loss.

Well, the lesson was heard and the girls carried it out to perfection as we started off by jumping to a 7-0 lead but relaxed and let the Bobcats come back with 6 of their own. We regrouped and started playing well by using a good defense to keep their offerings off the floor while we converted their free balls into attacks with Staci Dole leading the way for our hitters. Our setters did well as did our passers as we won the first set 25-14.

In the second set it became a case of relaxing and letting the opponent have some success as we battled back and forth with the Western Plains girls to the point that it was 23-23. Western Plains then went ahead 23-24 but our youngsters held strong to tie the score once again.

We both held strong at 24 all but the Bobcats gained the advantage

at 24-25 and only needed one point to win and they had the serve.

Now, at this point in the contest is where another very valuable lesson pops up. What do good teams do in situations like this? Behind by one, they only need one point to win and they have the serve.

Our young ladies did what all good teams do, they held tough. Handled the Bobcat serve converted it into a combination (pass ^ set ^ spike) for us and scored the tying point. Then we, with the serve to our advantage, went on to score the final two points for the victory.

So, what started out as a bad day turned out to be a day in which lessons were learned on how to be a good team and a team that can determine their own destiny if they work together and play to the best of their abilities.

High School Sports This Week



FOOTBALL:

- Norton Blue Jays vs. St. Francis Indians 7 p.m. Friday in Norton
- Norton Junior Varsity vs. St. Francis 5:30 p.m. Monday in St. Francis
- Northern Valley Huskies vs. Stockton Tigers 7 p.m. Friday in Almena
- Northern Valley Junior Varsity vs. Stockton 6 p.m. Monday in Stockton
- Logan Trojans vs. Lakeside 7 p.m. Friday in Downs

VOLLEYBALL:

- Norton Lady Jays Varsity vs. Atwood/Brewster/Dundy 10 a.m. Saturday in Atwood
- Norton Lady Jays JV in Quinter JV Tourney 9 a.m. Saturday in Quinter
- Northern Valley Lady Huskies in Gove County Classic . 8:30 a.m. Sat. in Grainfield/Grinnell
- Northern Valley vs. Southern Valley/Palco 4 p.m. Tuesday in Almena
- Logan Lady Trojans vs. Southern Cloud 8 a.m. Saturday in Miltonvale
- Logan Lady Trojans vs. Stockton/Franklin/Thunder Ridge 3 p.m. Tuesday in Logan

CROSS COUNTRY:

- Norton Cross Country in Wamego Invitational 9 a.m. Saturday in Wamego
- Northern Valley Huskies in Rock Hills Invitational 4:30 p.m. Thursday in Mankato

TENNIS:

- Norton Lady Jays in Trego JV Round Robin 1 p.m. Thursday in WaKeeney
- Norton Lady Jays JV Quadrangular 10 a.m. Saturday in Norton
- Norton Lady Jays in Phillipsburg Varsity Quad 3 p.m. Tuesday in Phillipsburg
- Norton Lady Jays JV in Russell Invitational 3 p.m. Tuesday in Russell

Supporting all your area ball teams!