

Blue Jays win one for Nan Smith

By DICK BOYD
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This one's for you, Nan!
The Norton Community High School football team had extra incentive during their 48-16 win over St. Francis on Friday night at Travis Field.

They had dedicated the game to Nan Smith, beloved third grade teacher who lost her long battle with cancer last week.

Since Nan was many of the players' teacher, the Blue Jay gridders wore pink wrist bands in her honor.

Norton used a balanced offense in the game, rolling up 272 yards on the ground with a 7.6 yards per carry average and passing for 237 yards for total offense of 509 yards!

St. Francis runs the Smith Center wishbone very effectively and gained 359 rushing yards but only broke through the gang-tackling Norton defense for one touchdown. Their second and final touchdown came late in the game versus the Norton junior varsity.

St. Francis had just one pass in the game and it was incomplete.

Neither team had any turnovers. St. Francis punted 6 times and Norton kicked 3 times. Norton had 4 penalties for 36 yards and St. Francis had 2 for 10 yards.

Norton took a 7-0 lead on the first play from scrimmage when senior quarterback Spencer Shirk hit a wide open senior wide receiver Billy Broeckelman for a 64-yard touchdown pass! Senior kicker Caleb Laughlin split the uprights for the extra point

Senior running back Jeremy Sproul got the Blue Jays on the scoreboard again with 7:23 left in the second quarter on a 71-yard run. Again, Laughlin added a point with his accurate place kick.

St. Francis kept it close when senior running back Garrett Figgins got loose up the middle and ran 94 yards to the end zone. Junior back Ty Zwegardt ran for two extra points, making it 14-8 with 6:26 left in the half.

Undaunted, Norton answered with a 67-yard drive in 8 plays to score again. With big runs by Sproul, passes from Shirk to senior tight end Dakota Dreher, playing his first game since a knee injury mid-season in 2009, Norton moved quickly downfield. The final 9 yards was covered by senior tailback Terrell Lane. After Laughlin's extra point kick, Norton led 21-8 with 2:37 left.

After Laughlin's kickoff, the Blue Jay defense held and forced a punt. With 23 seconds left in the first half, Norton ran the familiar but little used hook and ladder play. Lane was on the receiving end and he scampered into the end zone 45 yards away. Laughlin's extra point kick missed but Norton went to the half time locker room leading 27-8.

The Blue Jays continued to play well in the third quarter when they locked up the win with two more touchdowns to extend their advantage to 41-8. After stopping St. Francis on a drive to the Norton 15-yard-line on the Indians' first possession of the second half, Norton scored with 7:08 left on an 8 yard run by Lane.

The Blue Jays hit paydirt again with 3:45 remaining in the third

period when they moved through the air with passes from Shirk to Broeckelman and Dreher and Sproul bulled 9 yards up the middle to score. Laughlin drilled both extra points.

After a long pass to junior running back Trey Millan, junior running back Tye Nickell scored from 9 yards out and Laughlin kicked the extra point to make it 48-8 with 4:39 remaining in the game.

The visitors scored their second and final touchdown against the Norton junior varsity on a 25-yard run by Zwegardt with 1:21 left. Zwegardt also successfully ran for the two extra points to make the final 48-16.

Coach's comments

"We gave up more yardage than we like but our defense slowed them down," said Norton head coach Lucas Melvin. "Their first touchdown gave them enough life that they played pretty hard."

"On offense, they tried to stop our running game so we took advantage of the opportunities they gave us to throw the ball. We did a good job in the passing game. Dakota Dreher and Billy Broeckelman were on the receiving end of a number of passes from our quarterback Spencer Shirk. It was nice to have Dakota back on the field with us."

"We can't be satisfied. We need to learn from this game and get better."

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 Dakota Dreher, 170 pounds, ends; Luke Ninemire, Justin Griffith, tackles; Ryan Blecha, noseguard; Landon Keiswetter, Kaid McKenna, Brett Terrell, linebackers; Billy Broeckelman, Spencer Shirk, cornerbacks; Terrell Lane, safety.

Individual statistics

Jeremy Sproul gained a career-best 100 yards on 7 carries for a 14.3 yard average.

Terrell Lane also had another good rushing game, picking up 80 yards on 14 carries for a 5.7 yards per carry average.

Other Norton backs and their yardage were: Brett Terrell, 4 for 47 yards, 11.75 average; Spencer Shirk, 5 for 25; Tye Nickell, 3 for 13; Trey Millan, 1 for 5; Jared Bohl, 1 for 2.

Shirk completed 7 of 13 passes for 237 yards and 2 touchdowns. His receivers were: Dakota Dreher, 3 for 84; Billy Broeckelman, 3 for 81; Terrell Lane, 1 for 42; Trey Millan, 1 for 30.

Kickoff returns for Norton were: Terrell, 1 for 2; Jacob Brooks, 1 for 15 and Andrew Ellis, 1 for 0.

Broeckelman had 1 punt return for 19 yards.

Caleb Laughlin had 8 kickoffs for a 52.25 yard average.

Leading rushers for the Indians were Garrett Figgins, 17 carries for 140 yards with a long of 94 yards and Ty Zwegardt, 11 for 83 yards with a long of 38 yards.

The Norton defensive players gang-tackled all night long and often smothered the opposing runner with three or four Blue Jays on top of him. Leading tackler was senior linebacker Kaid McKenna with 9 solos and 8 assists for 17 total tackles. Senior linebacker Landon "Tug" Keiswetter was right behind him with 8 solos, 5 assists for 13 total tackles.

Junior defensive lineman Casey Temmel had a career best game with 8 solo tackles and 4 assists for 12 total tackles.

Other Norton defenders and their tackles were: Terrell Lane, 5 solos, 3 assists, 8 total; Spencer Shirk, 6 solos, 2 assist, 8 total; Lane Bigge, 4 solos, 1 assist, 5 total; Tyler Lewis, 1 solo, 4 assists, 5 total; Tye Nickell, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Billy Broeckelman, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Jacob Brooks, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Luke Ninemire, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Rylee Stanley, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Brett Terrell, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Dakota Dreher, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Justin Griffith, 2 solos; Kolton Harting, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Trey Millan, 2 solos; Dalton Miller, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Robert Blecha, 1 assist; Ryan Blecha, 1 solo; Eli Bozarth, 1 assist; Taylor Meder, 1 assist; Jeremy Sproul, 1 solo.

First quarter

St. Francis kicked off and Brett Terrell returned the ball to the Norton 36-yard line. On first down, Norton surprised St. Francis when Spencer Shirk passed to a wide-open Billy Broeckelman over the middle and he ran untouched to the end zone for a 64-yard touchdown! Caleb Laughlin kicked the extra point and Norton led 7-0 with just 15 seconds off the clock.

Laughlin kicked off and Broeckelman tackled the Indians' Jonathan Butler on the 8-yard-line! After Cody Sherlock carried the ball twice, Garrett Figgins picked up a first down on the 25. The Indians gained only 7 yards on the next three plays and punted to Norton. The ball rolled dead on the Blue Jay 32.

Norton was unable to move the ball and Terrell Lane punted. The ball rolled dead on the St. Francis 26. The Blue Jay defense gave up yards grudgingly but the Indians were able to pick up several first downs and move to the Norton 39 where the Blue Jays forced them to punt.

Broeckelman received the ball on the Norton 11. Lane made a nice run to the Norton 26 for a first down as the first quarter came to a close with the Jays on top 7-0.

Second quarter

Norton was unable to make another first down, however, and Lane punted to the St. Francis 32. The gang-tackling Norton defense held the Indians to a three-and-out and they punted to the Norton 20.

Lane gained 8 yards, then Jer-



Jeremy Sproul, senior running back for the Norton Blue Jay football team, pulled a tackler with him for extra yardage during the 48-16 win over St. Francis at Travis Field on Friday night. Jeremy rushed for a career-best 100 yards on 7 carries for a 14.3 yards per carry average.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

emy Sproul ran untouched 72 yards on a counter play to the end zone! Laughlin kicked the extra point and Norton led 14-0 with 7:23 left.

Laughlin kicked off and Ty Zwegardt was swarmed under at the 8-yard-line! On first down, Cody Sherlock lost 2 yards but on second down Garrett Figgins found a crease in the Norton defense, got in the open and ran untouched to the end zone. Zwegardt ran for two extra points, making the score 14-8 with 6:26 left.

Jacob Brooks returned the kickoff to the Norton 33. Shirk gained 5, Sproul got nothing, then ran over the left side 15 yards for a first down. Dreher caught a 6 yard pass, Lane picked up 1, Sproul broke two tackles for a first down on the 40. Shirk connected with Dreher for a 31 yard pass to the St. Francis 9-yard-line! Lane bulled up the middle for Norton's third touchdown of the night. Laughlin's extra point kick split the uprights, making it a 21-8 game with 2:37 left in the half.

Laughlin got another long kickoff and the St. Francis back was smothered on the 8-yard line! The Blue Jay defense also stuffed the Indians in three plays. On fourth and 1, however, St. Francis gambled instead of punting and Sherlock got a first down on their 36. After three more plays, they had a fourth and three and tried to make another first down but the Norton defenders stopped them and took over on the 45 with 12 seconds left in the half.

Norton ended the first half with another touchdown as the Jays ran the well known but little used hook and ladder play. Shirk got the ball from center Kaid McKenna, passed to Broeckelman and he pitched the ball to Lane, who ran untouched through the Indian defense for a touchdown! The extra point kick missed but Norton led 27-8 at intermission.

Third quarter

Fourth quarter

Norton kicked off the St. Francis to start the second half and the Indians drove downfield, determined to get another touchdown and cut down on the Norton advantage. They got a first down on the Norton 15 but the Blue Jay defense stiffened and allowed no yards in four downs and took possession of the pigskin!

It didn't take long for the high powered Norton offense to get untracked. Lane legged the ball around left end for 13 yards. Terrell picked up 40 more yards on a nice run to the St. Francis 32. Lane bulled over left tackle for 10 more yards, then took a pitch from Shirk, ran around right end, got a good block from Dillon McConney and ran untouched into the end zone!

Laughlin split the uprights again and Norton led 34-8 with 7:08 left in the third quarter.

Laughlin boomed the pigskin into the end zone and the Indians had no chance for a return. They set up shop on the 20-yard line. With the "Blue Swarm" hitting their runners with two and three tacklers, the Indians were unable to move, earning 6 yards in 3 downs. They punted and the ball rolled dead on the Norton 37.

Four plays later and Norton was in the end zone once again. Shirk went to the air and hit Broeckelman for 12 yards, then connected with Dreher for 47 yards to the 4-yard line. After Terrell was stopped for no gain, Sproul battled into the end zone. Laughlin's extra point kick extended the Norton lead to 41-8 with 3:45 left.

The Indians' Cody Killingsworth was tackled on the 5-yard line after Laughlin's kickoff. It was three-and-out for the visitors who punted to the Norton 47. Norton tried three long passes without success and punted to the St. Francis 8. After two plays, the third period expired with the Blue Jays holding a commanding 41-8 lead.

St. Francis was forced to punt again and Broeckelman returned the ball to the St. Francis 38. A blocking in the back penalty moved it back to the 48. Shirk ran a keeper to the 27. The Indian defense stiffened, however, and took over on their 20. St. Francis got one first down, then Norton stopped them on their 40 and took over the ball.

Sproul gained 7 yards on 2 plays, then Shirk ran the keeper for a first down. Sproul picked up 7 more yards but a holding penalty cost the Jays 10 yards. Shirk went to the air again and hit Trey Millan who carried the ball to the 14 for a 30-yard gain! Millan ran for 5 more yards, then Tye Nickell got the call and ran into the end zone for another Blue Jay touchdown! Laughlin split the uprights once again, making the score 48-8 with 4:39 left in the game.

After the kickoff, the Norton junior varsity was unable to stop the St. Francis varsity from scoring the Indians' second touchdown of the night. Ty Zwegardt tallied on a 25-yard run with 1:21 left and also ran for two extra points.

Time expired with the Blue Jay junior varsity running the ball.

The Blue Jays had earned a dominating 48-16 victory in honor of beloved teacher Nan Smith!

Next action

Norton will host Plainville in Mid-Continent League action this Friday evening with kickoff set for 7 p.m. at Travis Field.

It will also be Norton's Homecoming with royalty crowning prior to the kickoff.

Due to difficulties in scheduling, Norton has not played Plainville since the 2007 season.

The Cardinals are 0-2 but have played two outstanding teams. They lost 50-6 to Phillipsburg in the season opening game and were outscored 22-10 last Friday night by an excellent Ellis team, whom Norton defeated 13-0 in their opener.

The Cardinals return nearly every starter from last season, including juniors Andrew Casey and Jameson Klein, two of their top players who missed most of last season with injuries. Junior Kyle Becker returns after earning second team offense and honorable mention defense honors in the Mid-Continent League.

Casey missed half the season with a knee injury but still earned all-MCL honorable mention on offense. In the last two games against Trego and Smith Center, Casey picked up more than 200 all-purpose yards. Becker and Casey were two of seven sophomores that earned MCL honors.

"They'll run the ball a lot, they have a good-sized quarterback and they'll be fired up to play us," said coach Melvin.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	St. Francis	
12	First Downs	9
272	Yards Rushing	359
237	Yards Passing	0
509	Total Yards	359
7-13-0	Passes Compl.	0-1-0
0-1	Fumbles Lost	0-1
3-44	Punts	6-38.8
4-36	Penalties	2-10

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd



Although the Norton defense gave up more yardage than head coach Lucas Melvin wanted in the big win over St. Francis on Friday night, the Blue Jays gave ground grudgingly and most times had three and four players on an Indian running back. Above, this was a typical play where the St. Francis back was buried by Norton defenders. Norton players able to be identified in the picture are, from left, Tyler Lewis, No. 73; Rylee Stanley, No. 66; Tye Nickell, No. 5; Kaid McKenna, No. 52; Casey Temmel, No. 57.