

Norton gridders impressive in District win over Goodland

By DICK BOYD

nortontelegram@nwkans.com

Coach Lucas Melvin's unbeaten Norton Community High School varsity football team started District play with an impressive 40-9 win over Goodland on Friday night in Goodland.

The Blue Jays' dominance was evidenced by the fact that the Norton varsity did not have to punt in the game! Undoubtedly, the Norton score would have been higher had they also not missed two field goal attempts and had a potential touchdown pass not been intercepted in the end zone.

The Norton defense bent but did not break. Goodland's lone touchdown came after a Norton fumble deep in their territory and a 3-yard touchdown run by the Cowboys.

There was little doubt of the outcome after Norton scored on all three possessions of the first quarter and a fourth less than a minute into the second period.

Norton received the opening kickoff and moved downfield to score. Senior quarterback Spencer Shirk passed 17 yards to senior tight end Dakota Dreher for the touchdown and senior kicker Caleb Laughlin added the extra point to make it 7-0 with 8:17 left.

On Goodland's first possession, defensive back Shirk intercepted a Reed Bellamy pass on the Norton 28 and returned it 15 yards to the 43. After a 43-yard gain by senior tailback Terrell Lane, Shirk scored on a 19-yard run to make it 13-0 with 6:19 left.

A nine-play Norton drive produced the Blue Jays' third touchdown. Runs by Lane and senior running back Jeremy Sproul got the ball to the 2 yard line and Sproul ran for the third touchdown. A run for two points was short but the Jays led 19-0 with 1:07 left in the quarter.

As the quarter ended, senior defensive back Billy Broeckelman intercepted another Bellamy pass on the Goodland 48. Four plays into the second quarter, Shirk passed to junior wide receiver Dillon McConney. He made a great over-the-head catch for a 32-yard Blue Jay touchdown! The extra point by senior kicker Caleb Laughlin made it 26-0 with 11:02 left in the half.

Goodland scored their only touchdown when Norton fumbled the ball away on their 24 and a pass interference call put the ball on the Blue Jay 3-yard line. Running back Nathan Deeds scored and the extra attempt was no good, making the score 26-6 with 1:29 left. Norton still had time to drive for another score but a Laughlin field goal attempt missed the mark.

Norton kicked off to Goodland to start the second half, forced the Cowboys to punt and Lane returned the ball 48 yards for another Blue Jay touchdown!

Laughlin's extra point made it 33-6 with less than two minutes gone in the second half.

Norton missed another field goal opportunity on their next possession but Sproul's 47-yard run set up a 15-yard touchdown by Lane and Laughlin's extra point extended the score to 40-6 with 2:11 left in the third quarter.

Another possible Norton touchdown was prevented by Goodland when they intercepted a Shirk pass in the end zone in the fourth quarter. Goodland was able to kick a field goal with 2:48 left in the game to make the final 40-9.

Coach's comments

"Their spread offense is tough to defend but we did well against it," said coach Melvin. "Everybody on defense played well. They ran to the ball and tackled well. We kept them from making any big offensive plays."

"Our offensive line also did a great job. We had a lot of different backs who contributed to our running game. Spencer Shirk also made good decisions passing, completing over 50 percent

again.

"Overall, we were really focused. I'm proud of our players; they fought hard the entire game!"

Starting lineup

Coach Melvin started the following players on offense: 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; senior Justin Griffith, 190 pounds, right tackle; junior Dillon McConney, 150 pounds, wide receiver; senior Billy Broeckelman, 170 pounds, wide receiver; senior Dakota Dreher, 170 pounds, tight end; senior Spencer Shirk, 180 pounds, quarterback; junior Trey Millan, 160 pounds, fullback; senior Terrell Lane, 220 pounds, tailback.

Starting on defense for the Blue Jays were: senior Rylee Stanley, 155 pounds and senior Jeremy Sproul, 205 pounds, ends; Luke Ninemire and Justin Griffith, tackles; Landon Keiswetter and Kaid McKenna, linebackers; Terrell Lane and Brett Terrell, 160 pound senior, cornerbacks; Spencer Shirk and Billy Broeckelman, defensive backs; Tye Nickell, 150 pound junior, safety.

Statistics

Norton rolled up 380 yards on the ground and averaged 8.4 yards per carry. The "Blue Swarm" defense limited the Cowboys to 56 yards rushing and an average of 1.8 yards per carry.

Norton also had 122 yards passing for 502 total yards of offense. Goodland had 163 yards passing for 219 total yards of offense.

Terrell Lane had another good rushing game as he gained 173 yards on 15 carries for an average of 11.5 yards per carry! Jeremy Sproul also had a good running game, picking up 97 yards on 9 carries for a 10.7 yard average!

Brett Terrell had 5 carries for 43 yards and an 8.6 yard average.

Other Norton backs and their yardage were: Spencer Shirk, 13 for 59; Tye Nickell, 2 for 4; Tanner Furbush, 1 for 2.

Shirk completed 7 of 13 passes for 122 yards and 2 touchdowns. Receivers were: Dakota Dreher, 3 for 52, 1 touchdown; Billy Broeckelman, 2 for 29; Dillon McConney, 1 for 31, 1 touchdown; Jacob Brooks, 1 for 9.

Lane had 3 punt returns for 70 yards and 2 kickoff returns for 48 yards. Trey Millan had 1 kickoff return for 10 yards.

Laughlin kicked off 7 times for a 52.9 yard average.

No Goodland back had more than 24 yards rushing, which was picked up by quarterback Reed Bellamy. The 163 yards passing by Bellamy brings his total passing yardage for the season to 1,073 yards.

Tackles

Linebackers Landon Keiswetter and Kaid McKenna were leading tacklers for Norton. Keiswetter had 9 solos, 5 assists for 14 total and McKenna had 8 solos, 5 assists for 13 total. They were followed by Trey Millan, 2 solos, 4 assists, 6 total; Tye Nickell, 6 solos; Jacob Brooks, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Dakota Dreher, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Terrell Lane, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Luke Ninemire, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Josh Asbury, 3 assists; Billy Broeckelman, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Spencer Shirk, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Rylee Stanley, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Brett Terrell, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Ryan Blecha, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Justin Griffith, 2 solos; Caleb Laughlin, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Carson McKenna, 2 solos; Jeremy Sproul, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Lane Bigge, 1 solo; Robert Blecha, 1 solo.

First quarter

Goodland squib kicked and Trey Millan returned the ball 10 yards to the Norton 42. Lane gained 1, then 23 yards. After an incomplete pass, Shirk ran for 4, Lane gained 2, Goodland was offsidess and lost



Senior running back Jeremy Sproul was one of a "stable of stallions" who galloped for 380 yards on the ground when Norton defeated Goodland 40-9 on Friday night. Sproul, who is shown here shedding a Cowboy tackler, gained 97 yards on 9 carries for an average of a first down every time he touched the ball!

-Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

5, Lane gained 2, Sproul gained 4 and Shirk passed 17 yards to Dreher for a touchdown. Laughlin kicked the extra point and it was 7-0 with 8:17 left.

Laughlin really put his foot in the pigskin on the kickoff and the ball carried 59 yards! Chris Bustillos returned it to the 18. Kelly Pearson lost 1, then Bellamy threw a flat pass to Pearson for a 26 yard gain. The next play, Shirk intercepted a Bellamy pass on the Norton 28 and returned it 15 yards to the 43.

After Shirk gained nothing, Lane took off on a 43 yard jaunt, then Shirk found running room for a 19-yard touchdown. The extra point kick missed and it was 13-0 with 6:19 left.

Pearson returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 38. Bellamy ran for a first down at mid-field. A pass was incomplete, Goodland was penalized 10 yards for holding. A false start cost them 5 more. Bellamy completed a 7-yard pass, Riley Oharah lost 2 yards after running into a Keiswetter, Ninemire, McKenna stone wall!

After a short gain on a flat pass to Pearson, Goodland punted to the Norton. 32. Sproul gained 9, Shirk sneaked for a first down on the 44, Sproul gained 7 more and Shirk sneaked for another first down. Lane gained 4, then broke two tackles for a first down on the Goodland 30. Terrell gained 19 to the 11. A false start cost Norton 5 but Terrell ran to the 2 and Sproul ran into the end zone for a touchdown. A run for two points was no good but Norton led 19-0 with 1:07 left.

After Laughlin's kickoff, a third down pass by Bellamy was complete but to the wrong jersey for the Cowboys. Broeckelman was the receiver and the Jays had the ball on the Goodland 48 as time ran out in the first quarter with the score 19-0.

Second quarter

Shirk went to the air and hit Dreher for a 15 yard gain. Lane gained 1, Shirk ran for 4, then passed to McConney, who made an over-the-head catch with a defender on him for a 32-yard touchdown! Laughlin split the up-rights and it was 26-0 with 11:02 left in the half.

Bustillos made a long return of Laughlin's kickoff but a block-in-the-back penalty brought the ball

from there and a pass for two extra points was no good, thanks to a great rush from McKenna. With 1:29 left in the half, the score was 26-6 in favor of Norton.

Lane got a good return of the kickoff to the Goodland 45. Sproul gained 8, Shirk was sacked, then passed to Broeckelman for a 19 yard gain. A Shirk to Brooks pass carried to the 17. After an incomplete pass, Lane ran to the 10. After another incomplete pass, a Laughlin field goal try missed the mark and Norton led 26-6 at halftime.

Third quarter

Norton kicked off and Pearson returned the ball to the 19. Bellamy tried the keeper but McKenna stopped him for no gain. On second down, Bellamy was run out of the pocket and picked up on third down and the Cowboys punted.

Lane grabbed the ball and set sail down the Goodland sidelines for a 48-yard touchdown! Laughlin kicked the extra point and the Jays had extended their lead to 33-6 with 10:06 still left in the quarter.

Pearson returned Laughlin's kickoff to the Norton 49 where Laughlin made the tackle! Oharah gained just 3 yards before Keiswetter, McKenna and Brooks made the stop. Bellamy gained nothing, a pass was incomplete and Goodland punted once again. The ball rolled dead on the Norton 20. Lane promptly gained a first down on the 35, gained 4 more yards, then got loose for 38 more yards to the Goodland 25.

Norton was penalized 10 yards for holding, Lane gained 4, Sproul ran for 7. On fourth down, Shirk passed to Broeckelman and he made a diving catch on the 14 for a first down by inches!

Norton fumbled but recovered, Sproul gained 6, a pass was incomplete in the end zone and a Laughlin field goal try was not successful. Goodland took over on their 20. After a 5 yard pass to Wilkens, Griffith and McKenna tackled Bellamy after 3 yards. A pass was incomplete and Goodland punted again.

Lane returned the ball 13 yards to the Norton 37. Sproul got the call and rambled through the Cowboy defense, finally being tackled on the Goodland 15 after a 48 yard run! Lane found a big hole over the left side of the line and ran through it for another Blue Jay touchdown. Laughlin's extra point kick made it 40-6 with 2:11 left in the quarter.

After Laughlin's kickoff, Bustillos made 4 yards on 2 carries, Bellamy ran a keeper for a first down on the 35. A pass to Helton was good for a first down on the

Goodland 46. Bustillos met a host of Norton tacklers for no gain as the third quarter ended with the score 40-6.

Fourth quarter

After two incomplete passes, Goodland punted. Lane returned it to the Norton 29. Terrell gained 8 yards on 2 carries and Lane gained 1. Shirk got a first down on the Goodland 27. Shirk then passed to Dreher for 20 yards to the 7. Terrell ran for 2 yards, Shirk gained 1 on 2 carries and Goodland intercepted a pass in the end zone.

A flat pass to Bustillos gained nothing, Broeckelman broke up a pass. A pass to Helton was good for a first down on the Goodland 40. Austin Avelar got nothing, then Bellamy connected with Wilkens for a first down on the Norton 30. Bellamy then passed to Helton on the 24. After an incomplete pass, Bellamy ran for 3. Norton was offsidess, giving Goodland a first down on the 16. After an incomplete pass, Helton lost a yard, then Avelar kicked a 35-yard field goal to cut the Norton lead to 40-9 with 2:48 left in the game.

The Norton reserves finished the game. They were unable to move against the Goodland varsity and tried to punt but a bad center snap caused a short punt. Goodland tried another field goal as the gun sounded but it was no good and the visiting Blue Jays had a 40-9 victory!

Next action

Norton will host Thomas More Prep-Marian from Hays in their next District game this Friday at Travis Field in Norton.

Kickoff will be at 7 p.m.

TMP has a 2-5 record. They opened the season with a win over Ellinwood, lost to Russell, defeated Larned, lost to La Crosse, lost to Hoisington, lost to Cimarron and lost last Friday night to Phillipsburg in their first District contest.




The Monarchs are running a spread option offense with three or four wide receivers. They are primarily a passing team as evidenced by the fact their junior quarterback Nick Hammeke had passed for 1,225 yards prior to the Phillipsburg game and four of his receivers were in the top 14 in the Salina Journal area.

"Their offense is similar to Goodland's and is also very tough to defend," said coach Melvin.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton		Goodland
17	First Downs	14
380	Yards Rushing	56
122	Yards Passing	163
502	Total Yards	219
7-13-1	Passes Compl.	16-35-2
1-2	Fumbles Lost	0-1
1(-18)	Punts	5-32.8
8-52	Penalties	5-41

Youth Basketball Tournaments

-  7 Tournaments open to 3rd-8th grade boys and girls teams.
-  3 Game Guarantee. Experienced officials. Multiple brackets per grade.
-  More than 600 teams in events in Kearney, Cairo, Ravenna, Broken Bow, Ogallala & Lexington.



Registration Info:
MisterBasketball.com
Doug Koster (308) 237-4012

High School Sports This Week



FOOTBALL:
Norton Blue Jays vs. Thomas More Prep-Marian 7 p.m. Friday in Norton
Northern Valley Huskies vs. Western Plains 7 p.m. Friday in Ransom
Logan Trojans vs. Natoma 7 p.m. Friday in Natoma

VOLLEYBALL:
Norton Lady Jays V, JV vs. Goodland, Ulysses. 5 p.m. Today in Goodland
Norton Lady Jays in Sub-State Tournament Saturday in Smith Center
Northern Valley Lady Huskies vs. Palco, Victoria. 4 p.m. Today in Almena
Northern Valley Lady Huskies in Sub-State Tournament Saturday in Grainfield
Logan Lady Trojans vs. Western Plains, St. John 4 p.m. Today in Ransom
Logan Lady Trojans in Sub-State Tournament Saturday in Grainfield

CROSS COUNTRY:
Norton Cross Country in Class 3A Regional Meet 3 p.m. Saturday in Larned
Northern Valley Cross Country in Class 1A Regional Meet 2:30 p.m. Saturday in Marysville

**Proudly supporting
all of the Norton Blue Jay
Athletic Programs**