

Norton overpowers TMP on "Senior Night"

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It was "Senior Night" for Norton Community High School at Travis Field on Friday night and Norton's senior-dominated football team lived up to the school's grid history with Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays by soundly defeating the visiting Monarchs 63-14 in District play.

You see, neither the current players nor their parents or grandparents had ever lost a football game to TMP. The last victory by the Monarchs over Norton was in 1937!

This year's Blue Jays were not about to let this record be broken on their watch and it was pretty evident from the start that it would not be.

Thomas More Prep is primarily a spread-offense, passing team but the Monarchs were able to gain just 52 yards passing in the first half, the only half played by the Norton varsity. Their 18 first half rushing yards gave them a total of 70 yards of offense in the first half.

Meanwhile, Norton was rushing for 339 yards on the ground and 33 through the air for 372 yards of total offense.

The score was 55-0 at half-time and Norton head coach Lucas Melvin turned the second half play over to his junior varsity, who allowed two touchdowns but also scored one against the Monarch varsity who played the entire game.

The scoreboard clock was run continuously during the second half since Norton led by over 40 points.

Norton scored on every possession in the first half and did not punt in the contest.

Norton's senior tailback Terrell Lane scored from 80 yards out and senior running back Jeremy Sproul ran for two extra points to make it 8-0 with 9:55 left in the first quarter.

With 6:46 left, Lane sprinted 29 yards to paydirt and it was 14-0. Lane recovered a Monarch fumble and Norton drove down for another score. This time Lane ran 14 yards and senior Caleb Laughlin's kick made it 21-0 with 4:23.

The Blue Jays' fourth touchdown of the first quarter came with 2:29 showing when senior quarterback Spencer Shirk ran 32 yards to extend the lead to 27-0.

Lane ran 34 yards for a touchdown with 10:55 left in the half, making the score 33-0. Senior Ryan Blecha and sophomore Jacob Brooks blocked a Monarch punt and senior Rylee Stanley recovered on the 2-yard-line. Sproul bulled into the end zone and Laughlin split the uprights, making the score 40-0 with 7:21 left in the first half. Junior Trey Millan and Brooks blocked TMP's next punt attempt and Brooks scooped the ball up and ran into the end zone. Brooks caught a pass from Shirk for two extra points and Norton led 48-0 with 3:27 left.

Shirk intercepted a Monarch pass and Lane scampered 76 yards for a touchdown, Laughlin kicked the extra point and it was 55-0 with 38 seconds remaining in the first half.

The Norton junior varsity also

scored against the Thomas More prep varsity. They put another touchdown on the scoreboard with 9:30 left in the third quarter when junior quarterback Jordan Wahlmeier passed to Brooks and he made an over-the-head catch for a 48-yard score. Junior Tye Nickell ran for two extra points, stretching the Norton lead to 63-0.

TMP put together a nine-play drive to score with 2:18 left in the third period and the Monarchs scored after a Norton fumble in the fourth quarter to make the final 63-14.

Coach's comments

"We played very well on both offense and defense," said coach Melvin.

"Our offensive line was tremendous; everybody executed well.

"Defensively, we also played very well and were very aggressive.

"At half-time, we decided to play the junior varsity in the second half because we needed to keep our varsity injury free."

Seniors honored

Prior to the game, the Norton senior football players and their parents were introduced to the crowd. They are Terrell Lane, Spencer Shirk, Billy Broeckelman, Caleb Laughlin, Brett Terrell, Jeremy Sproul, Ryan Blecha, Kaid McKenna, Luke Ninemire, Landon Keiswetter, Rylee Stanley, Josh Asbury, Dakota Dreher and Justin Griffith.

Also introduced along with their parents were the senior tennis players and cross country runners.

The senior tennis players were Morgan Baumann, Kyra Fulton, Nikki McVey, Meaghan Peterson, Kaitlyn Ross, Katie Scott, Rachel Shepard, Kelsie Griffith and Ashley Millan.

Senior cross country runners are: Dustyna Sprigg, Kaylen Rossi, Troy Bainter, Kegan Vanover and Cole Archer.

At halftime, the senior members of the band and their parents were introduced. They are: Melinda Becker, drum major; Rachel Shepard, twirler; Bekah Streck, twirler; Morgan Baumann; Jordan Brown; Maia Carlson; Matthew Carlton; Randy Cochran; Caleb Goss; Kelsie Griffith; Epiphany Grubbs; Diedre Kramer; Josiah Laughlin; Zoey Meyers; David Mizell; Tanner Morel; Andrew Otter; Zachary Porter; Sharrelle Shinn; Dustyna Sprigg. Caleb Laughlin is also a member of the band but was playing football.

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; senior Brett Terrell, 160 pounds, fullback; senior Terrell Lane, 220 pounds, tailback.

Starting on defense for the Blue Jays were: Dakota Dreher and senior Jeremy Sproul, 205 pounds, ends; Luke Ninemire and Justin

Griffith, tackles; Landon Keiswetter, Kaid McKenna and Brett Terrell, linebackers; Tye Nickell, 150 pound junior; Spencer Shirk, Billy Broeckelman and Terrell Lane, defensive backs.

Statistics

Norton rushed for 387 yards and passed for 81 yards for 468 yards of offense. The Blue Jays averaged 12.5 yards per carry.

TMP had 31 yards rushing, 137 yards passing for 168 total yards of offense. They averaged 1.2 yards per carry.

Terrell Lane broke a lot of tackles in the game and ended with 247 yards rushing and five touchdowns! He averaged 35.3 yards per carry!

Other Norton backs and their yardage were: Spencer Shirk, 4 for 55; Trey Millan, 5 for 27; Brett Terrell, 3 for 24; Jeremy Sproul, 5 for 11; Tye Nickell, 2 for 4; Jacob Brooks, 1 for 6; Tanner Furbush, 3 for 7; Jordan Wahlmeier, 1 for 4.

Shirk completed 2 of 4 passes for 33 yards and Wahlmeier completed 1 for 48 yards.

Brooks caught 2 passes for 50 yards and 1 touchdown.

Millan had 1 kickoff return for 20 yards and Lane had one punt return for 6 yards.

Laughlin kicked off 10 times for a 44.7 yard average.

TMP junior quarterback Nick Hammeke entered the game as the all-time leading passer for the Monarchs with 1,468 total yards this season. He completed 14 of 31 passes for 137 yards. Sophomore Shane Zimmerman caught 5 passes for 68 yards.

Tackles

Landon "Tug" Keiswetter led Norton in tackles with 6 solos, 2 assists, 8 total; followed by Trey Millan, 6 solos, 1 assist, 7 total; Kaid McKenna, 6 solos, 1 assist, 7 total; Tye Nickell, 2 solos, 4 assists, 6 total; Justin Waggoner, 4 solos, 2 assists, 6 total; John Risewick, 2 solos, 3 assists, 5 total; Brett Terrell, 2 solos, 2 assists, 4 total; Justin Griffith, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Jared Bohl, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Eli Bozarth, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Billy Broeckelman, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Dakota Dreher, 1 solo, 2 assists, 3 total; Terrell Lane, 3 solos; Spencer Shirk, 3 assists; Jeremy Sproul, 3 solos; Jordan Wahlmeier, 3 assists; Jacob Brooks, 2 solos; Taylor Meder, 2 solos; Carson McKenna, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Luke Ninemire, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Josh Asbury, 1 solo; Ryan Blecha, 1 assist; Kurt Douglas, 1 assist; Lucas Engel, 1 assist; Tanner Furbush, 1 solo; Tyler Lewis, 1 solo; Isaac Schaefer, 1 solo; Rylee Stanley, 1 solo.

First quarter

Caleb Laughlin kicked off, the ball went out of bounds and to TMP on their 35. Running back Spencer Staab gained 1 yard but then gained 16 yards for a Monarch first down on the Norton 49 where Kaid McKenna made the tackle.

The next down, McKenna welcomed Staab to Travis Field with a big time tackle that made the ball squirt out of his hands! TMP recovered the ball for a 2 yard loss. A good Norton defensive rush caused quarterback Nick Hammeke to hurry his pass and it was incomplete. Hammeke tried to run and lost 2 yards.



The hard-nosed Norton defense continued to gang tackle opponents during the Blue Jays' 63-14 win over Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays on Friday night at Travis Field. Here, Norton players surrounding a Monarch and limiting his forward progress are, from left, Brett Terrell, No. 20; Landon Keiswetter, No. 62; Josh Asbury, No. 77; Kaid McKenna, No. 52; Justin Griffith, No. 79; Billy Broeckelman, No. 12 and Rylee Stanley, No. 66.

Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

TMP punted into the end zone and Norton got the ball on the 20. On first down, Terrell Lane got the ball, found a nice hole over the right side, got into the secondary and outran the Monarch defenders for an 80-yard touchdown! Jeremy Sproul ran for two extra points and it was 8-0 with 9:55 left.

Laughlin kicked off and Dylan Schumacher returned it to the 16. After an incomplete pass, Hammeke gained 4 yards. Next, he completed a pass but holding took the ball back to their 3-yard line. Hammeke completed a pass on the 10 where Keiswetter and Shirk made the tackle.

TMP punted and the Blue Jays had the ball on their 44. Shirk ran the option to the TMP 34, Sproul gained 4 and Lane ran over the left side of the line, broke outside and sprinted 29 yards for a touchdown. Laughlin's extra point kick missed but Norton led 14-0 with 6:46 left.

Schumacher returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 26. Nathan Zimmerman was stopped after 2 yards by Keiswetter and McKenna. Hammeke passed to Jacob Fouts and Luke Ninemire and Brett Terrell stopped him after 7 yards. Hammeke passed 16 yards to Shane Zimmerman but he fumbled and Lane recovered on the Norton 49.

Shirk passed to Terrell for a first down on the 20. Terrell ran to the 14. Lane ran the final 14 yards for another Blue Jay touchdown. After Laughlin's kick, Norton led 21-0 with 4:23 remaining.

Dylan Lang returned Laughlin's kickoff and Sproul made a good tackle on the 15. Lane tackled Nathan Zimmerman in the flat after a 2 yard pass. After an incomplete pass, Hammeke connected with Shane Zimmerman but holding brought the ball back to the 8-yard line. Hammeke hit Shane Zimmerman in the flat again but a whole host of Norton tacklers dropped him for no gain!

TMP punted and the ball was downed on the Monarch 32. Shirk ran the keeper, got a good block from Billy Broeckelman and was soon in the end zone. The extra point kick missed but Norton had extended their lead to 27-0 with 2:29 still left in the first quarter.

Lang returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 25 where Trey Millan and Lane Bigge tackled him. After a 5 yard loss, another pass was incomplete. After offsetting penalties, Sproul and Stanley put a strong rush on Hammeke and his pass was incomplete. TMP punted and Lane returned it 6 yards to mid-field. Sproul got a first down but Norton was penalized for holding. Sproul gained 4, Lane got 2 and Shirk was sacked as the first quarter came to a conclusion with Norton leading 27-0.

Second quarter

Norton almost punted for the only time in the game but TMP was offside and had an additional penalty for a personal foul. Norton got a first down on the TMP 33. Terrell ran for 8 yards but a holding penalty on Norton on the next play moved the ball back to the

35. Lane found a big hole in the middle of the Monarch line and ran for another touchdown. The extra point kick missed the mark and Norton led 33-0 with 10:55 left in the first half.

Lang returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 28. Staab was stopped by Griffith and Dreher for no gain, then Dreher, Sproul, Keiswetter and Griffith sacked Hammeke! TMP could not move on third down and punted out of bounds on the Norton 45.

On third down, Norton fumbled and TMP recovered on their 41. Hammeke crossed the 50 but two penalties brought the ball back to the 20-yard line. After two incomplete passes, TMP fumbled and recovered. They went into punt formation, Ryan Blecha and Brooks came charging in and blocked the punt! Rylee Stanley recovered the ball on the 2-yard line. Sproul bulled into the end zone, Laughlin split the uprights and it was 40-0 with 7:21 left in the half.

TMP fumbled but recovered the kickoff on their 15. Schumacher got nothing as a host of players hit him, then Staab got no gain as he ran into Blecha, Keiswetter and McKenna! Hammeke's pass over the middle to Nathan Zimmerman earned a rare first down for the Monarchs as Tye Nickell tackled him on the 36. Sproul sacked Hammeke back on the 20 and Keiswetter stopped Nathan Zimmerman for no gain. Broeckelman downed Schumacher for no gain and TMP went into punt formation.

Millan and Brooks came roaring in and blocked the punt attempt, Brooks scooped up the ball and took it into the end zone for another Blue Jay touchdown! The extra point kick missed but TMP was penalized for roughing the kicker. Shirk passed to Brooks for 2 extra points and Norton was now leading 46-0 with 3:27 left in the first half.

Lang returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 31. Hammeke ran for 22 yards, ran a draw for another first down on the Norton 35, then ran a keeper to the Norton 20. That was the end of the offensive flurry, however, as a pass was incomplete, Griffiths met Staab as he received a handoff and Staab lost 3 yards! Millan deflected a pass and Shirk intercepted a pass on the Norton 7.

Lane ran to the 18, Shirk carried to the 24 and Lane found a hole up the middle of the TMP line and sprinted 76 yards to paydirt! The extra point kick by Laughlin was good and Norton led 55-0 with 38 seconds left in the first half.

Laughlin squib kicked the ball and TMP covered it on their 45. Schumacher got 2 yards before McKenna and Keiswetter dropped him and it was intermission time.

Second half

The Norton junior varsity got some good experience when they played the TMP varsity the entire second half.

The Monarchs kicked off to start play and Trey Millan made a good return to the Norton 44. With

Jordan Wahlmeier at quarterback, the Blue Jays moved across mid-field, then Wahlmeier passed to Brooks and he gathered the ball in with an over-the-head catch and streaked down the sidelines for a 48-yard Norton touchdown! Nickell ran for 2 extra points and it was 63-0 with 9:30 left in the third quarter.

After Laughlin's kickoff, TMP drove for their first touchdown. Hammeke passed to Shane Zimmerman for 18 yards, the extra points pass attempt was no good and it was 63-6 with 2:18 left in the third quarter.

Norton fumbled the ball away to TMP late in the third quarter and the Monarchs scored with 7:36 left in the game on a 15 yard pass from Hammeke to Nathan Zimmerman. Hammeke passed to Zimmerman for 2 extra points, making the final score 63-14.

Next action

Norton is now a perfect 7-0 for the season and the Blue Jays will play their third and final District game this Thursday in Phillipsburg with a 7 p.m. kickoff.

Phillipsburg also had a perfect record until last Friday when they lost 49-28 at Goodland. The Panthers have defeated some outstanding teams this season, including Smith Center, Ellis and Oakley.

"They always play good against us," said coach Melvin. "They'll be ready to play and we'll have to play our best game of the season to beat them."

"They have a lot of weapons. They have an outstanding quarterback and two good tailbacks and their offensive and defensive line is big and powerful."

"Phillipsburg has good players everywhere, including on special teams."

"They run an option-type offense that we have not seen this year."

Coach Melvin said that junior running back Trevor Smith is "really fast and dangerous."

The Panther quarterback is 6'2", 180 pound sophomore Sean Newlan.

Anchoring the line for Phillipsburg are senior Chris Hoferica, 6'1", 265 pounds; senior Cody Derr, 5'11", 250 pounds; senior Brad Eller, 6'2", 220 pounds and junior Wesley Eller, 6'2", 260 pounds.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton	Thomas More Prep
5	First Downs 11
387	Yards Rushing 31
81	Yards Passing 137
468	Total Yards 168
3-5-0	Passes Compl. 14-31-1
2-2	Fumbles Lost 1-5
0-0	Punts 7-21.3
7-78	Penalties 11-97



The Norton Blue Jays were anxious to get started in their District football game with Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays on Friday night at Travis Field and came charging out of the locker room ready to do battle with the visiting Monarchs. Leading the way with the Norton flag was Luke Ninemire. Among those following were: Taylor Meder, No. 16; Dakota Dreher, No. 81; Brett Terrell, No. 20; Toby Nickell, No. 15; Josh Asbury, No. 77; Justin Griffith, No. 79; Ryan Blecha, No. 51; Landon Keiswetter, No. 62 and Kaid McKenna, No. 52.

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