

Jays lose seesaw Regional battle with Beloit

By DICK BOYD

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Norton's 2010 high school football season came to a sad but successful end on Saturday evening with an exciting but disappointing 42-35 loss to Beloit in the Regional round of Class 3A playoffs in Beloit.

It was the Blue Jays' first loss of the season which ended for them with a 9-1 record. Beloit will move on with a 9-2 record.

Saturday's game in Beloit could have been won by either team with a play or two going differently. The two elevens traded leads throughout the contest but, unfortunately for Norton, the Trojans were leading when the final gun went off.

Norton had almost twice as many penalties as Beloit and several of them came at game-changing times.

Norton senior tailback Terrell Lane ended his successful high school career with 163 yards rushing and four touchdowns.

Lane's first score came on Norton's opening possession after forcing Beloit to punt the first time they had the ball. He ran 57 yards to paydirt, the extra point attempt was no good and Norton led 6-0 with 8:44 left in the first quarter.

Beloit answered with a 3 yard run by Lane Koster with 4:06 left.

Early in the second quarter, Beloit scored again on a 2-yard run by Luke Shamburg. Robert Ludwig ran for 2 extra points, making the score 14-6 with 8:46 left.

Norton answered with a drive that saw senior quarterback Spencer Shirk sneaking the final 1 yard. Lane scored 2 extra points and it was 14-all with 2:17 remaining in the first half.

Beloit scored with 9 seconds left in the half when Shamburg ran 2 yards. The extra points attempt was no good and Beloit led 20-14.

Norton took the second half opening kickoff and scored when Shirk passed to Lane for 28 yards. The extra point kick by Caleb Laughlin put Norton ahead 21-20 with 9:07 left in the third period. Beloit answered again. This time freshman quarterback Payton Vetter tallied from 5 yards out, Ludwig ran for 2 extra points and the Trojans were back on top 28-21 with 5:50 left.

Norton had a rare three-and-out after the kickoff but Lane punted to the Beloit 1-yard line. The Norton defense held until Ludwig got loose for a 90-yard touchdown run. The extra point try was no good but Beloit had extended their lead to 34-21 with 2:28 left in the third quarter.

The Blue Jays were not to be denied, however, and they drove down for another score. Lane ran the final 23 yards, Laughlin kicked the extra point and it was 34-28 with 1:22 left.

The fourth quarter started with Norton's gang-tackling defense limiting the Trojans to a three-and-out and the adrenalin starting to flow in the Norton players' blood. The Blue Jays moved downfield, Lane went into the end zone from 11 yards, Laughlin split the uprights and Norton was back on top 35-34 with 9:34 left.

A questionable pass interference call helped Beloit on their next possession and they scored again, this time on a 3-yard pass from Vetter to Shamburg. Vetter ran for 2 extra points, giving the home team a 42-35 lead with 2:23 left on the scoreboard clock.

The Blue Jays knew it was "do or die" and they frantically drove down the field, hoping to score a game winning touchdown. Junior wide receiver Dillon McConney helped with an over-the-head catch of a Shirk pass for a first down on the Beloit 30. The drive ended, however, when Casey Smith intercepted a Shirk pass in the end zone and Beloit ran out the clock for the victory.

Coach's comments

"We didn't make some plays when we could have and they made some that hurt," said Norton head coach Lucas Melvin. "They converted on some key fourth downs and scored before half with nine seconds left."

"Their line did a good job and got a good push on us.

"It's hard to believe that we had almost twice as many penalties. We haven't had many all season.

"We had a good season; it's too bad it had to end when we weren't ready. I thought we had a team that could go all the way but we didn't get the job done last night. They were a little better than us. Scott City and Wichita Collegiate both lost and not many people thought that would happen.

"I feel badly for our seniors who won't get to play again. They are a special group. They've had great careers with a lot of wins.

"Many thanks to everyone for their support. My assistant coaches do a tremendous job. We are very fortunate to have them.

"Thanks to the media for their coverage and to the parents, administration and fans.

"I hope our players have enjoyed themselves and are learning a lot about life. I hope they are learning to be a teammate to people and treat them right.

"It's hard when you put so much into a season and suddenly it's over. You have both losses and wins in life and you have to handle both and grow from both.

"I praise God for this community and the support and type of people we have in it.

"My desire is that, somehow, God is glorified through what we've done working with these young men."

Coach Melvin's assistant coaches this season were: Todd Fulton, Tony Fiscus, David Stover and Jeremy Hawks.

Fourteen seniors

The seniors who completed their high school football careers at Norton on Saturday evening are: Terrell Lane, Spencer Shirk, Billy Broeckelman, Caleb Laughlin, Brett Terrell, Jeremy Sproul, Ryan Blecha, Kaid McKenna, Luke Ninemire, Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, Rylee Stanley, Josh Asbury, Dakota Dreher and Justin Griffith.

David Cressler was a senior manager for the team.

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: senior Jeremy Sproul, 205 pounds, senior Rylee Stanley, 155 pounds, ends; Justin Griffith, senior Josh Asbury, 220 pounds, Luke Ninemire, tackles; Landon Keiswetter, Kaid McKenna, Brett Terrell, linebackers; Spencer Shirk, Billy Broeckelman, Terrell Lane, defensive backs.

Statistics

In addition to Terrell Lane's 163 yards on 19 carries for an average of 8.6 yards per carry, other Norton ball carriers were: Spencer Shirk, 10 for 19; Brett Terrell, 3 for 9; Jeremy Sproul, 9 for 28.

Spencer Shirk completed 7 of 13 passes for 173 yards. His receivers were: Jacob Brooks, 1 for 9; Terrell Lane, 2 for 54; Billy Broeckelman, 1 for 38; Dakota Dreher, 1 for 45; Dillon McConney, 1 for 27.

Making kickoff returns for Norton were Carson McKenna, 1 for 16; Jacob Brooks, 2 for 42; Tye Nickell, 1 for 8; Trey Millan, 1 for 11.

Leading rushers for Beloit were: Lane Koster, 20 for 151; Robert Ludwig, 16 for 157 and Luke Shamburg, 19 for 90.

Tackles

Landon "Tug" Keiswetter was all over the field on defense and closed out his high school career with 19 solo tackles, 8 assists for 27 total stops! Right behind him was senior Kaid McKenna with 11 solos, 3 assists, 14 total. Recording the third highest number of tackles was senior Spencer Shirk with 9 solos, 4 assists, 13

total.

They were followed by Terrell Lane, 5 solos, 4 assists, 9 total; Billy Broeckelman, 6 solos; Luke Ninemire, 2 solos, 4 assists, 6 total; Trey Millan, 3 solos, 2 assists, 5 total; Rylee Stanley, 2 solos, 3 assists, 5 total; Josh Asbury, 1 solo, 3 assists, 4 total; Justin Griffith, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Tye Nickell, 3 solos, 1 assist, 4 total; Jeremy Sproul, 2 solos, 1 assist, 3 total; Eli Bozarth, 2 assists; Taylor Meder, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Alex Riggins, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Brett Terrell, 1 solo, 1 assist, 2 total; Ryan Blecha, 1 solo; Jacob Brooks, 1 assist; Dakota Dreher, 1 assist; Caleb Laughlin, 1 solo; Justin Waggoner, 1 solo.

First quarter

Caleb Laughlin kicked off for Norton and Lane Koster returned the ball to the 18 where Eli Bozarth and others tackled him. Quarterback Payton Vetter got 3 yards and Kaid McKenna tackled him. Koster got a first down on the 28 before Jeremy Sproul tackled him. Vetter got 7 and Stanley tackled. Koster ran for 5 and Sproul made the stop. Justin Griffith tackled a Beloit runner for no gain and the Trojans punted.

The ball was downed on the Norton 26. Terrell Lane ran for 4, then got 1. Shirk went back to pass but ran for a first down on the Norton 43. Lane got the scoring fireworks started by running 57 yards for the Blue Jays' first touchdown. Laughlin's extra point attempt was unsuccessful and Norton led 6-0 with 8:44 left.

Laughlin kicked off into the end zone and Beloit got the ball on their 20. Josh Asbury tackled Koster after 3, Robert Ludwig got 4 and Luke Shamburg got a first down on the 32. Shamburg ran to the Norton 48. Koster gained 8 around right end and Shamburg got a first down on the Norton 32 before Luke Ninemire tackled him. Griffith and Keiswetter stopped Ludwig after 1 but Shamburg ran around left end to the 25. Norton lost 5 for being offside. Koster tried a sweep and Ryan Blecha and company stopped him cold. Shamburg got nothing as Millan made the tackle. Ludwig pushed the pile of tacklers for a first down on the Norton 3. Koster scored from there. Vetter ran for 2 but slipped down short and it was 6-all with 4:06 left.

A short kickoff was picked up by Tye Nickell and returned to the Norton 36. Lane gained 12. Brett Terrell made 1, Lane got a good gain and a personal foul against Beloit moved the ball to the Trojan 30. Norton lost 5 on offside and 5 on a Sproul run. After an incomplete pass, Shirk completed a pass to Jacob Brooks on the 30. Shirk completed another pass to Dakota Dreher on the Beloit 16 but officials ruled that Norton had an ineligible receiver downfield. The ball was brought back to the Beloit 35. Lane punted and the ball rolled dead on the Beloit 9-yard line. Keiswetter tackled Shamburg after 4 yards and the quarter expired with the score deadlocked at 6-all.

Second quarter

Shamburg ran to the 18, then to the 23 for a first down. Shamburg got 4 before Shirk and Stanley made the stop. Koster got loose to the Norton 30, then ran up the middle and Shirk tackled him on the 15. Ludwig plunged to the 10; a personal foul on Norton moved the ball to the 5. Shamburg gained 1 before Dreher made the tackle. Koster ran to the 2 where Sproul made the tackle. Shamburg ran around left end for a touchdown. Ludwig ran up the middle for 2 extra points and it was 14-6 with 8:46 left.

The kickoff on the ground was picked up by Millan on the Norton 23. Lane gained 7, Norton lost 5 for illegal procedure, Shirk passed to Lane to the 33. Lane lost 1 but Shirk sneaked for a first down on the 35. Sproul got loose for a good gain but holding on Norton brought the ball back to the 22. Lane ran up the middle to the 33. Norton lost 5 for delay of game. Shirk passed to Broeckelman and he handed off to Terrell for a few more yards to the Beloit 25. Shirk got nothing, Lane gained 8 to the 17. Shirk sneaked for a first down on the 14. Sproul gained just 1 but, the next down, he ran into a number of defenders and just



Norton senior linebacker Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, No. 62, who had a career high 27 tackles in Saturday's Regional football loss to Beloit, focuses on the Trojans' Luke Shamburg, No. 33, for yet another possible tackle. Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

kept churning with his legs until Beloit finally got him stopped at the 6 inch line! Shirk sneaked for the touchdown. Lane ran around right end for 2 extra points and it was 14-all with 2:17 left in the first half.

Koster returned Laughlin's kickoff to the Beloit 31 where Carson McKenna and Taylor Meder made the tackle; Vetter ran a keeper for a first down on the Norton 35. Shamburg got a first down on the Norton 25, then Kaid McKenna and Keiswetter stopped Ludwig after 4. Vetter completed a pass to the 19. Shamburg was stopped by Keiswetter for no gain. Vetter passed to Ludwig on the Norton 9. Beloit lost 5 for illegal motion. The next down, Beloit was whistled for holding and the ball went back to the 23. Vetter passed to Shamburg and Broeckelman tackled him on the 5. Ludwig ran to the 2 and Shamburg scored with 9 seconds left. Lane intercepted an attempted pass for 2 extra points and it was 20-14 Beloit.

Third quarter

Beloit kicked off and Brooks returned the ball to the Norton 40. Lane got 5 and a face mask penalty moved the ball to the 50. Terrell gained 0, Shirk ran to the Beloit 43; Lane got a first down on the 37. A pass was incomplete; Shirk ran a keeper and slipped down on the 40. A pass was good to Brooks then a defensive holding penalty on Beloit moved the ball to the 27 for a first down. Sproul got nothing, then Shirk passed to Lane. He dodged several would-be tacklers and sprinted into the end zone. Laughlin's kick split the uprights and Norton held a 21-20 lead with 9:07 remaining.

Laughlin's kickoff was returned by Koster; Carson McKenna made the tackle on the 25. Norton lost 15 for illegal participation. Koster got loose up the middle for a first down on the Norton 23. Koster got 4 more yards and Ludwig ran to the Norton 13. Shamburg got to the 8 before Ninemire made the stop. Koster plunged to the 5 and Keiswetter made the tackle. Vetter ran for a touchdown. Ludwig ran for 2 extra points and Beloit had regained the lead at 28-21 with 5:50 left.

Brooks returned the kickoff to the Norton 40. Lane got 1, then 4 and a pass was incomplete. Lane punted for the second time in the game. Brooks got downfield fast and downed the ball on the Beloit 1-yard line! Shamburg gained 1 before Stanley tackled him. Ludwig got to the 10 and Stanley tackled Koster 6 inches short of a first down. Instead of punting, Beloit ran Ludwig up the middle and he broke into the open. Ludwig ran 90 yards for a touchdown. A pass for 2 was batted down but Beloit had extended their lead to 34-21 with 2:28 left.

Nickell fielded the kickoff on

the ground and returned it to the Norton 43. Sproul ran 12 yards to the Beloit 45 for a first down. Shirk passed to Lane to the 28. Shirk ran to the 23. Lane ran over right tackle and into the end zone. Laughlin's kick narrowed the Beloit lead to 34-28 with 1:22 left.

Koster returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 18 where Justin Waggoner made the tackle. Koster got 1 before Griffith tackled him. Koster ran again; Keiswetter stopped him for no gain. A host of Norton defenders stopped Ludwig after 3 yards and Beloit punted as the quarter ended with Beloit leading 34-28.

Fourth quarter

Lane returned the punt but an illegal block-in-the-back brought the ball back to the Norton 40. Sproul gained 1, then Shirk hit a wide open Dakota Dreher for a first down on the Beloit 14. Sproul gained 2 and Shirk 1. On third down, Lane swept around right end for a touchdown. Laughlin's extra point kick put Norton back on top at 35-34 with 9:34 left.

Casey Smith returned Laughlin's kickoff to the 25. Keiswetter tackled Vetter for no gain. Shamburg gained 5. Vetter got 2 before Keiswetter made the stop. Vetter passed on fourth down; the ball was high and both the intended receiver and a Norton defender jumped for it at what appeared to be the same time. Norton was penalized for pass interference and the ball was moved to the Beloit 48 instead of Norton taking over possession. This was a very critical penalty since the Trojans proceeded to march for a go-ahead touchdown.

A pass to Slade Krone put the ball on the Norton 45. Koster got

a first down on the 34. Keiswetter stopped Koster for no gain; Ludwig plunged for 3 and Keiswetter dropped Koster on the 30. On fourth down, Austin Budke caught a pass over the middle for a first down on the Norton 21. Ludwig made 3 before Keiswetter tackled him, then Shamburg ran to the 12. Koster got a first down on the 10 as a host of Norton defenders tackled him. Koster got 5 more but Keiswetter threw Ludwig for a 2 yard loss. Shamburg ran to the 3 and Vetter passed to him for the go-ahead touchdown. Vetter ran for 2 extra points and Beloit had regained the lead for good with a score of 42-35 with 2:23 left.

Trey Millan returned the kickoff to the Norton 40. Sproul got nothing, then ran for 7. Lane got 1, then 6 for a first down on the Beloit 46. Shirk was sacked on the Norton 44 with 1:05 left in the game. A pass was incomplete, then Shirk connected with Dillon McConney. He made an over-the-head catch and carried the ball to the Beloit 30. Lane gained 2, Beloit lost 5 for offside, then Norton lost 5 for offside.

With 25 seconds on the clock, Shirk passed into the end zone for Broeckelman but Casey Smith stepped in front of him and intercepted the pass to end the game and the season for Norton with a 42-35 Beloit victory.

GAME STATISTICS

Norton		Beloit
15	First Downs	20
222	Yards Rushing	443
73	Yards Passing	46
395	Total Yards	489
7-13-1	Passes Compl.	6-8-1
0-0	Fumbles Lost	0-0
2-40	Punts	2-41
11-91	Penalties	6-49

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