

Football team honored at banquet

Blue Jays complete season with nine wins, one loss

By DICK BOYD

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The 2010 Norton Community High School football team was honored by parents and fans for their tremendous season during the annual banquet sponsored by the Blue Jay Booster Club in the high school cafeteria on Sunday, Dec. 19.

Under the guidance of fifth year head coach Lucas Melvin, the Blue Jays had nine victories and just one loss. They were Mid-Continent League champions, Class 3A District champions, Class 3A Bi-District champions and Class 3A Regional runner-up, ending their season just two games from the state championship contest.

Norton opened the season on Friday, Sept. 3 with a 13-0 shut-out victory over Ellis in a tough environment. The Blue Jays had 282 yards rushing and senior tailback Terrell Lane earned 193 of them on 22 carries for an 8.8 yard average.

Norton's first home game was on Friday, Sept. 10 against St. Francis and the Blue Jays had extra incentive when they dedicated the game to Nan Smith, beloved third grade teacher who had recently lost her long battle with cancer.

The Blue Jays won 48-16 and had a balanced offense with 272 rushing yards for a 7.6 yards per carry average and 237 passing yards for total offense of 509 yards. Senior running back Jeremy Sproul gained a career-best 100 yards on 7 carries for a 14.3 yard average.

Friday, Sept. 17 was Homecoming for Norton and the Blue Jays hosted Plainville. They displayed a balanced offense and gang tackling defense in winning 46-0 for their second shutout in three games. The junior varsity played most of the second half.

Norton traveled to Oberlin on Friday, Sept. 24 and recorded another shutout, this time by a 54-0 score. Norton had 388 yards of offense compared to Oberlin's 97 yards.

Lane had another big night rushing as he gained 165 yards on 14 carries for an average of 11.8 yards per carry. Coach Melvin praised both the offensive and defensive lines for their play.

Next on the schedule were the always tough Smith Center Redmen whom Norton had not beaten since 2003. Smith Center's 79 game winning streak ended in last year's state championship game. The Redmen had already had one loss this season by a 19-14 score to an outstanding Phillipsburg eleven but the Blue Jays knew they would be tough.

Norton was equal to the task and put together a dominating 41-20 victory!

Leading the way for the Norton offense again was Lane who ran for 276 yards on 15 carries for an average of 18.4 yards per carry!

"All our players wanted this game and we just went out and executed well," said a happy coach Melvin.

After finishing the regular season 5-0, Norton had a bye week before starting the three-game District. First opponent was 4-2 Goodland on Friday, Oct. 15 and the Blue Jays had to travel to play on the Cowboys' home field.

It was another successful trip with Norton fashioning an impressive 40-9 win. The Blue Jays' dominance was evidenced by the fact that the Norton varsity did not have to punt in the game!

Norton rolled up 380 yards on the ground, averaging 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.

The Blue Jays had 122 passing yards for 502 total yards of offense. Lane ran well again, picking up 173 yards on 15 carries for an average of 11.5 yards per carry.

Senior linebackers Kaid McKenna and Landon "Tug" Keiswetter continued to lead the defense in tackles.

On Friday, Oct. 22, Norton returned to Travis Field for "Senior Night" and another District

game with Thomas More-Prep of Hays.

Norton's senior dominated football team lived up to the school's grid history with TMP by soundly defeating the pass-oriented Monarchs 63-14.

The last victory by the Monarchs over Norton was in 1937!

The score was 55-0 by halftime and the junior varsity played the rest of the way. Norton gained 387 yards on the ground and 81 through the air for 468 total yards of offense. The Blue Jays averaged 12.5 yards per carry.

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

The District championship was on the line when Norton traveled to Phillipsburg on Thursday, Oct. 28.

Phillipsburg scored with 9:16 left in the game to cut what had originally been a 27-7 Norton lead to 27-22. Senior quarterback Spencer Shirk led his team to a final touchdown that earned a hard-fought 35-22 victory over their longtime rival for the District championship!

Shirk ended the game with 99 yards on 10 carries for a 9.9 yard average.

On Tuesday, Nov. 2, the Blue Jays entertained Cimarron and defeated the visiting Blue Jays 68-14 to win the Class 3A Bi-District championship!

Lane took advantage of gaping holes in the Cimarron line to rush for his career record of 320 yards and five touchdowns! Most of his yardage was in the first half.

Norton ended the game with 505 yards rushing, 74 passing for 579 total yards. Cimarron had minus one yard of offense at halftime before the Norton junior varsity took over.

Norton's 2010 season came to a sad but successful end on Saturday, Nov. 6 with an exciting but disappointing 42-35 loss to Beloit on the Trojans' home field in the Regional round of the Class 3A playoffs.

Norton ended the season 9-1 and Beloit moved on with a 9-2 record.

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

Norton led 35-34 with 9:34 left in the game. A questionable pass interference call helped Beloit score on their next possession and take a 42-35 lead with 2:23 left.

Norton frantically drove down field, hoping to score a game winning touchdown but the drive and season ended with an intercepted pass in the Trojan end zone!

Coach's comments

"We started the season with a trip to do something we had not done the past three seasons, beat Ellis, and we did," said coach Melvin in reviewing the season following the carry-in meal.

"Ellis was a better team than people realized this year and we were the only team all season to play them at full strength and shut them out.

"Next, St. Francis came to town and our offense had a good game as did our special teams.

"The next two teams we faced were Plainville and Oberlin and we shutout both teams while rolling up over 700 yards total in the two games.

"Next was another opportunity to beat a team we had not beaten for a long time when Smith Center came to town. Our offensive line dominated the Redmen for over 350 yards rushing and our defense put the clamps on the Smith Center rushing attack, forcing them to throw the ball. It was a great win!

"I was worried about a week off but these young men handled it well and really got prepared for Goodland. We came out and controlled the game against a good team. Our defense once again played great while our offense moved the ball up and down the field.

"TMP came to town and it was



Norton senior center Kaid McKenna, No. 52, cleared the way for the Blue Jays' senior tailback Terrell Lane, No. 1, to sprint for a big gain when he put a Beloit defender down on the turf with a terrific block during the two teams' Regional contest in Beloit on Saturday, Nov. 6.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

the first time we had played them since 2005. They have a new coach, new offense and new found confidence. They really thought they could play with us but we proved them wrong. Our defense punished them and our offense was unstoppable, gashing them for more than 450 yards in the game and 55 points in the first half!

"The District championship and playoffs were on the line in our eighth and final regular season game versus Phillipsburg, who had started 6-0. We started the game well, taking a 27-7 lead into halftime.

"The Panthers came clawing back, making it 27-22 early in the fourth quarter before we put them away for good and capped it with an interception to end their last drive. The win gave us an undefeated MCL championship and District 15 championship. What a great way to do it by beating Phillipsburg at their house!

"We had the opportunity to host the first round of playoffs against the Cimarron Blue Jays. They came to town with a big line and big backs but our defense shut them down and our offense exploded for 546 yards rushing. It was a dominating performance as we won 68-14.

"At Beloit in the Regional playoff, we didn't make some plays that we had made throughout the year. We also didn't get any breaks. They did play flawless and we did not. It was a very tough loss, especially because I know how much we wanted to continue playing.

"We scored 443 points this year (44.3 per game) and gave up 137 (13.7 per game). We finished the season 9-1, were undefeated MCL champions, District champions, Bi-District champions and finished the season as the No. 5 ranked team in the state.

"It was a tremendous season for us!"

The junior varsity players were not forgotten. Coach Melvin said they finished 6-1 and could easily have been 7-0. "They lost to Hays High in a game we were leading by two touchdowns," he said. "They improved throughout the season. Several of them played varsity on special teams. Our junior varsity players have a lot of potential."

Coach Melvin introduced the team and made comments to the large crowd about each player as he called them forward.

The 14 senior members of this year's team were: Terrell Lane, tailback, defensive back; Spencer Shirk, quarterback, defensive back; Billy Broeckelman, wide receiver, defensive back; Caleb Laughlin, kicker; Brett Terrell, running back, linebacker; Jeremy Sproul, running back, defensive end; Ryan Blecha, offensive tackle, defensive end; Kaid McKenna, center, linebacker; Luke Ninemire, offensive guard, defensive tackle; Landon "Tug" Keiswetter, offensive guard, linebacker; Rylee Stanley, offensive lineman, defensive end; Josh Asbury, offensive lineman, defensive lineman; Da-

kota Dreher, tight end, defensive end; Justin Griffith, offensive tackle, defensive tackle.

"Something that was interesting and sad at the same time was the number of brothers that were finishing their time in our football program," said coach Melvin.

"Rylee is the last in a line of Stanley brothers to go through the Blue Jay Football Family, as are Billy Broeckelman, Dakota Dreher, Luke Ninemire and Spencer Shirk. It is special having coached so many brothers and getting to know their families.

"This senior class was 34-11 through their high school career. They were 20-3 at home and undefeated at home their freshmen and senior years. They won three District championships, four Bi-Districts, 1 Regional and 1 Sectional championship. They

finished this year as undefeated MCL champions as well! Obviously, these young men accomplished much.

"Congratulations on a terrific season and career!!

Thanks, supporters

For all of their support during the season, coach Melvin thanked his wife and family, all the players, assistant coaches Todd Fulton, David Stover, Tony Fiscus and Jeremy Hawks; managers David Cressler, Dustan Daniels, Anthony Wentz; filmers Alec Melvin, Kamilla Jones; school faculty and administration; the cheerleaders; the grounds keepers and chain gang; Rick Green, statistics; Dorla Jones, coordinating; NCHS marching band; Blue Jay Booster Club; field painters Lamont Shirk, Jerry Darling, Terry Laughlin, Dan Lauer, Brian McKenna,

Shane Miller and others who helped paint the Blue Jay on the field; the parents and families of the players; news media, Dick Boyd of the Norton Telegram and the KQNK Radio Station and the entire community for contributing to the successful season.

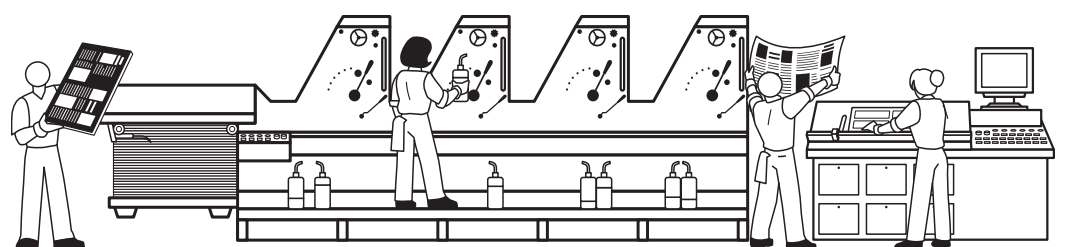
State of the program

"I think you can see why we were so successful this season," said coach Melvin. "Our offensive line was very experienced and very good. All five starting linemen started for at least two years and worked hard in the weight room and other sports to make themselves better.

"They could have been good at other positions but were great at blocking and making us the team we were. Hopefully, many of the young linemen will see that and be

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