

# Blue Jays fall to Cardinals in final game

By DICK BOYD

The Norton Community High School football team fell 20-13 to the two-time defending champion Conway Springs Cardinals in Conway Springs.

Conway Springs, who is ranked No. 1 in the state, has now won 39 straight football games. A year ago, the Cardinals came to Norton and left with a 34-27 victory.

Both teams played well but, in the end, Conway Springs was able to come out on top.

## First quarter

Norton senior kicker Charlie Foley kicked off to Conway Springs to start the game. The Blue Jays came charging downfield and senior end C.J. Thiele tackled junior Eric Matthews on the 15. Senior back Darrin Seiwert gained only one yard as senior defensive end Joel Griffiths tackled him.

Senior back Brent Linn tried the Norton line and Thiele tackled him after a four yard gain; however, on third down Seiwert ran into the Norton secondary and senior defensive back Bruce Rushton tackled him on the 30 after he'd earned a first down. Junior quarterback Matt Wykes tried a keeper but senior defensive back Jered Sloan and senior linebacker Tom Graham stopped him for no gain. The Cardinals went to the air and Wykes completed a pass to senior end Rodney Chitwood on the Norton 32 for another first down.

Seiwert ran to the 24 on first down, then broke several tackles as he powered into the end zone. Senior Jason Bengé kicked the extra point and Conway led 7-0 with 8:44 left in the first quarter.

The kickoff was short and senior Josh Green returned the ball to the 40. Senior quarterback Dan Roeder ran for six, then senior tailback Charlie Kohfeld bulled ahead for two. On third and two, a pass fell incomplete and Roeder went back in punt formation. A low snap from the center caused him to run the ball but he was downed short of the first down and Conway took over.

Illegal procedure cost the Cards five yards. Chitwood appeared to have another pass reception but Sloan jarred the ball out of his hands. Linn gained just two yards before Thiele tackled him.

Norton put on a good pass rush on third down and a Wykes pass fell incomplete. Conway quick kicked deep into Norton territory. Norton gained five yards on an offside penalty against Conway. Kohfeld drove for three yards, then senior fullback Jordon Haussermann ran up the middle for a first down on the 24. Roeder passed to Sloan for a first down on the 36. Roeder went back to pass again but was sacked on the 30. Junior running back Aaron Overlease made just two yards, another pass was incomplete and Roeder punted to the Conway Springs 13.

Matthews gained a yard before Roeder came up from his linebacker spot to get him. Wykes gained another yard before Thiele tackled him. A pass was incomplete and Conway punted. The ball rolled dead on the Norton 43.

Overlease ran for five but gained nothing on second down. Roeder passed to Sloan for a first down on the Conway 47. Overlease gained one yard and the quarter was over with Conway leading 7-0.

## Second quarter

Haussermann gained three yards, a pass was incomplete and Roeder punted. The ball rolled dead on the 3 yard line. Matthews was tackled by senior linebacker Bo Pfannenstiel and Griffiths for no gain. Seiwert gained seven yards, then got loose to the 37 for a first down before Graham and Pfannenstiel tackled him. Conway fumbled in the backfield but fell on the ball for a loss back to the 31.

Wykes completed a pass to senior back Travis Cook on the Norton 35 for another first down. Junior back Stewart Hoover gained seven yards to the 29, then Seiwert plowed to the 15 before Sloan tackled him. Bengé got a carry and gained nothing. Conway was penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. The Cardinals went to the air. After two incomplete passes, Wykes connected with senior end Chris Cox in the end zone for a touchdown. Bengé kicked the extra point and the Cards led 14-0 with 6:52 left.

The kickoff went into the end zone. Roeder ran a keeper for four yards, then passed to junior tight end Ryan Maddy for a first down on the 34. Roeder gained five yards on two carries, then passed to senior wide receiver Jered Sloan for a first down on the Conway 25 yard line. Roeder left the game for several plays with a minor injury and was replaced by junior quarterback Seth Mills. Mills gained nothing and Kohfeld lost five yards. Roeder returned. After an incomplete pass, he ran to the 18 but it was not enough for a first down. Conway took over with 3:03 left in the half.

Seiwert gained three yards before senior tackle Kai Mann tackled him. Conway fumbled but recovered on the 25. Wykes went to the air, his pass was tipped and Overlease intercepted on the 35. After an incomplete pass, Roeder ran to the 26, then sneaked for a first down on the 25 with 1:15 left in the first half. Roeder connected with Rushton in the end zone for Norton's first touchdown. Foley's extra point kick attempt was blocked and Conway led 14-6. It was only the second missed extra point kick by Foley this season.

Matthews returned the kickoff and Pfannenstiel and senior guard Brian Luft tackled him on the 25. Seiwert gained four yards before Maddy tackled him. The next down, Conway fumbled and senior defensive back Kevin Lentz recovered on the 35 with 23 seconds left. Roeder tried to pass for another Blue Jay touchdown but four attempts were incomplete as time ran out in the first half with Conway leading 14-6.

## Third quarter

Roeder returned the kickoff to the 33. Haussermann plowed ahead for two. After an incomplete pass, Roeder gained nothing. Roeder punted and the ball rolled dead on the Conway 24. Seiwert gained six yards before senior tackle Sean Lauer tackled him. Graham dropped Wykes for no gain but Seiwert came to the rescue once again for the Cards as he got loose to the Norton 26 where Sloan made the tackle. Seiwert gained six more yards, then lost one yard as Lauer burst through the line to drop him. Seiwert ran to the 11 for a first down before Overlease could tackle him. Linn gained two yards as junior linebacker Kyle Kats came up to make the tackle. Seiwert ran to the 6 and then to the 3. On fourth down, the Blue Jay defense held as Lauer and Thiele tackled Seiwert for no gain.

Roeder sneaked for three yards. After an incomplete pass, Roeder connected with Rushton on the 14. Roeder sneaked to the 15 for a first down. Kohfeld ran for two yards. After an incomplete pass, Roeder hit Rushton on the 20 but it wasn't enough for a first down. He punted but the ball went out of bounds on the Norton 37.

Seiwert ran for three yards before Griffiths and Pfannenstiel tackled him. Seiwert gained two more as Graham and Pfannenstiel made the stop. Wykes passed to Cox and Kats and Sloan tackled him on the 14. Seiwert ran to the 7, then Wykes ran a keeper for an apparent touchdown but holding on the Cards nullified the play and moved the ball back to the 17. Sloan broke up one passing at-



Putting pressure on Cardinal quarterback Matt Wykes (above) are, (from left) senior C.J. Thiele, defensive end; senior Sean Lauer, defensive tackle and senior Joel Griffiths, defensive end. Thiele was second leading tackler for Norton with nine and Lauer tied for third high with eight. In the background is senior linebacker Dan Roeder (No. 14). Norton's senior quarterback Dan Roeder (below) received an escort from junior tackle Michael Sprigg for a big gain. Roeder was the leading rusher for the Blue Jays, averaging nearly five yards per carry. In the background is senior guard Brian Luft (No. 78).

tempt but Wykes went back to the air and completed a touchdown pass to senior end Chad Orton. Sloan blocked the extra point kick attempt and it was 20-6 with 10 seconds left.

Roeder returned the kickoff to the 24. With Lauer leading the way, Kohfeld ran for a first down on the 34 as the quarter ended with Conway on top 20-6.

**Fourth quarter**  
Haussermann plunged for three yards, a pass was incomplete, then Roeder connected with Maddy for a first down on the Norton 47. Roeder then passed to Rushton on the Conway 46. Roeder ran a keeper for a first down on the 40, then legged the pigskin to the 30 for another first down. After two incomplete passes, Roeder ran to the 23. On fourth and three, a pass fell incomplete and Conway took over. Seiwert gained just two yards before junior Blake Hillebrand and Griffiths combined for the tackle. Bengé found running room for a first down on the Conway 41 before Overlease tackled him. Seiwert gained three more yards. A fumble in the backfield was recovered by the Cards for a two yard loss by Wykes ran a keeper to the 50. On fourth and one, Seiwert ran to the Norton 47 for a first down. Wykes picked up three yards on a keeper before Maddy tackled him. Seiwert ran to the 25 for a first down, then gained four more yards before Lauer and Hillebrand made the tackle. Bengé tried the Norton line but lost two yards when Kats and Griffiths combined for the tackle. Wykes went to the air. Overlease stepped in front of his intended receiver, caught the ball and sprinted down the Conway sideline for a touchdown. Foley kicked the extra point, making the score 20-13 with 2:40 left in the game.

Foley's onside kick bounced close to several Norton players but none could make the recovery and the Cards got the ball on the 35. Seiwert got another big run to the Norton 25. He gained three more yards before Lauer and Mann tackled him. Next, Seiwert ran to the 18 where junior tackle Michael Sprigg made the tackle. Seiwert ran to the 11 for another first down and Conway ran out the clock.

Senior linebacker Bo Pfannenstiel was the leader in tackles once again. He had eight solos, two assists for 10 total tackles. He was followed by C.J. Thiele, seven solos, two assists; Jered Sloan, seven solos, one assist; Sean Lauer, five solos, three assists; Tom Graham, four solos, three assists; Aaron Overlease, four solos; Dan Roeder, three solos, one assist; Kyle Kats, two solos, two assists; Bruce Rushton, Kai Mann, three solos each; Ryan Maddy, two solos, one assist; Michael Sprigg, one solo, two assists; Joel Griffiths, three assists; Blake Hillebrand, two solos; Josh Green, one assist.

Roeder was the leading rusher for Norton with 56 yards on 12 carries. He also completed 9 of 28

passes for 116 yards. Other rushers for Norton were Kohfeld, 5 carries for 6 yards; Haussermann, 4 for 15 yards; Overlease, 4 for 6 yards; Seth Mills, 1 for 0.

Sloan was the leading pass receiver with 3 catches for 60 yards, followed by Rushton, 4 for 44 and Maddy, 2 for 22.

Roeder had 2 kickoff returns for 31 yards and Green had 1 for 7 yards.

Foley had three kickoffs for a 44 yard average.

"We played hard and gave a great effort," said Coach Graber. "We didn't play as well as we can but they get credit for that. They dominated the line on both sides of the ball. They were bigger and stronger and they are well



coached. "They overpowered us inside most of the day. They did a great job of blocking us and we couldn't make plays on Seiwert. We did a lot of things right defensively but were still getting blocked. They hurt us in the passing game. We had people on their receivers but just got beat. "Offensively, we couldn't run on them and we had too many passes dropped. "We needed something big to happen and it didn't until late in the game when Overlease intercepted the pass for a touchdown. He had a great game with two interceptions. Sloan also played well. He had a ton of tackles and some good pass receptions. Our defensive ends Thiele and Griffiths played well, too. "There were a lot of pluses about the game other than the final score. It was a great high school experience. It was a beautiful day, great crowds on both sides, very few penalties, well officiated and both teams played with good sportsmanship. "I have a tremendous amount of respect for Coach Mark Bliss and his players. They deserved to win. They lost four Division I players off last year's team and are still playing well. Someone will have to play awfully well to beat them. They can hurt you in so many ways. It's hard to get to the top and harder to stay there. "I'm really proud of our players. They had a great year. I hope they can put this last one behind them. A lot of teams would love to say they were 11-1. Our seniors were 31-4 in the last three years and that's tough to beat. And, they were all contributors to our team. "We had 12-15 e-mails from former players and I read them to our players. I wanted our players to understand that playing for Norton stays with you. These former players are still part of the family and they wanted these players to win as much as they wanted to win when they were playing. "We are losing a lot of good players but our cupboard isn't bare. We have a lot of good young players. Our junior varsity was undefeated. Our younger players hopefully understand that they must make the commitment to work year around to make themselves bigger, stronger and faster so that they will have the same opportunities as this year's team." This year's senior members of the Norton football team were Jered Sloan, Jared Foley, Charlie Foley, Kevin Lentz, Bruce Rushton, Dan Roeder, Josh Green, Brandon Otter, Jordon Haussermann, Charlie Kohfeld, Bo Pfannenstiel, Tom Graham, Mark Smith Maybon, Kai Mann, C.J. Thiele, Joel Griffiths, Sean Lauer and Brian Luft.

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