



Norton senior Jered Sloan (No. 2) was the leading pass receiver for the Blue Jays this season but he was also one of the "biggest hitters" from his defensive secondary position. During Norton's 48-6 Homecoming win over Stockton, Sloan came up and hit Tiger running back Cody Dix hard for no gain. If Sloan had not tackled Dix, senior linebacker Bo Pfannenstiel (No. 44) most certainly would have made the stop. Pfannenstiel was the leading tackler for the Blue Jays this season with 102 total tackles. Senior defensive back Bruce Rushton (No. 10), who was second leading pass receiver for Norton this season, was also ready to make the tackle.

— Photo by Larry Boyd

Blue Jay football team ends year 11-1

By DICK BOYD

With 18 seniors providing leadership, Coach Bruce Graber's 2003 Norton Community High School football team compiled an outstanding 11-1 record for the second straight year.

The Blue Jays were ranked No. 2 in the state in Class 3A when they played No. 1 state ranked and two-time defending state champion Conway Springs on Saturday in Conway Springs.

For the second straight year, Conway handed Norton their only loss. Last year, the score was 34-27 and this year it was 20-13. Norton had a chance to win both contests until the final tick of the scoreboard clock.

"It's been a great run; our seniors have gone 30-4 the last three years," Coach Graber told the Blue Jay Booster Club during Wednesday's meeting. "We have great players, assistant coaches, administration and community support."

Although he was disappointed that Norton did not beat Conway Springs, he said it was a great football game. "We didn't play as well as we'd have liked but we played hard," he said. "We fought to the bitter end."

"They are a very good football team and it will take an awfully good team to beat them. The players on both sides showed a lot of class, helping each other up and playing with respect for each other."

In the 12 games this season, Norton outscored opponents 408 to 88 which is an average of 34 to 7.3. The Blue Jays rushed for 2,835 yards and passed for 1,403 yards for total offense of 4,238 yards. This is an average of 236.3 rushing yards, 116.9 passing yards and 353.2 total yards of offense per contest.

Norton held opponents to 1,268 yards rushing, 705 yards passing and 1,973 total yards. This is an average of 105.7 rushing yards, 58.8 passing yards and 164.4 total yards of offense.

Norton averaged 17.5 first downs per contest while limiting opponents to 7.8 first downs.

The Blue Jays lost only 17 fumbles in the 12 games for less than two per game and punted only 28 times which was just over twice per contest.

"I don't like to compare teams but this year's team gave up fewer points than last year's and the offenses were much the same," said Coach Graber.

Leading the offense this year was senior quarterback Dan Roeder. He carried the ball 145 times for 960 yards and a 6.6 yards per carry average and completed 81 of 180 passes for 1,365 yards and a 16.9 yards per pass completed. He returned eight kickoffs for 160 yards and two punts for 26 yards for total offensive production of 2,511 yards. Roeder ran for 13 touchdowns and passed for 16 touchdowns for a total of 29.

Second leading rusher for Norton was senior tailback Charlie Kohfeld who rushed for 904 yards on 166 carries for a 5.4 yards per carry average. He ran for nine touchdowns.

Senior fullback Jordon Haussermann rushed for 414 yards on 70 carries for a 5.9 yards per carry average. He scored four touchdowns.

Junior tailback Aaron Overlease ran the ball 50 times for 321 yards and a 6.4 yards per carry average and scored four touchdowns.

Leading pass receiver was senior wide receiver Jered Sloan with 30 catches for 558 yards and an 18.6 yards per catch average. He caught seven touchdown passes.

Second leading receiver was senior wide receiver Bruce Rushton who caught 24 passes for 337 yards and a 28.1 yards per catch average. He caught three touchdown passes.

Senior kicker Charlie Foley was second highest scorer for the season, behind Roeder's 78 points for his 13 rushing touchdowns. Foley scored 72 points on 54 of 56 extra point kicks for 96.4 percent accuracy and 6 of 8 field goals for 75 percent. Foley's longest field goal was a 44-yarder which is believed to be the longest in NCHS history.

Foley kicked off 74 times and averaged 49 yards per kickoff.

Leading tackler this season was senior linebacker Bo Pfannenstiel with 57 solos, 45 assists for 102 total tackles. He was followed by senior defensive end C.J. Thiele, 47 solos, 25 assists, 72 total; senior defensive tackle Sean Lauer, 45 solos, 26 assists, 71 total; senior linebacker Tom Graham, 31 solos, 21 assists, 52 total; senior linebacker Dan Roeder, 34 solos, 15 assists, 49 total; senior defensive tackle Kai Mann, 34 solos, 13 assists, 47 total; junior defensive lineman Blake Hillebrand, 20 solos, 21 assists, 41 total; senior defensive back Kevin Lentz, 28 solos, 8 assists, 36 total; senior defensive back Jered Sloan, 23 solos, 10 assists, 33 total; junior linebacker Kyle Kats, 20 solos, 12 assists, 32 total; senior linebacker Josh Green, 13 solos, 17 assists, 30 total; senior defensive end Joel Griffiths, 16 solos, 14 assists, 30 total.

Roeder led the team with four pass interceptions. Sloan and Rushton had three each, Haussermann and Overlease had two each and Pfannenstiel and Thiele each had one.

Assistant coaches this season were Kevin Jilka, Todd Fulton, Lucas Melvin and Jason Jones.

The leading tacklers for the game with Conway Springs were unintentionally omitted from that story. They are printed here.

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.

Eighth-grade girls win in final quarter

If you left early, you missed a fantastic finish as the eighth grade Lady Jays defeated Plainville 37-23 on Nov. 14.

"In a very lackluster performance for the first 3 1/2 quarters, Norton changed defenses and the Cardinals did not respond," said Coach Chuck Zimmerman. "We came from 4 points behind to take the lead by 4, only to allow Plainville to tie the score, sending us into overtime with a 23-all score."

"Then, the Ladies started playing the real Blue Jays style of ball and showed how we should have been playing the whole game. Our defense created havoc, bringing us back into regulation, and we scored 14 unanswered points in the extra period to win, 37-23."

Megan Kats led scoring with 14 points, followed by Haley Jones with 10, Lacy Ellis with 6, and Jessica Strickland with 4.

Defense was definitely the key in this game as Norton helped Plainville create 59 turnovers, of which 35 were steals on the Jays'

part. Steal leaders were Courtney Cox with 10 and Strickland with 7, followed by Courtney LeClair with 5.

Deflects were made by Jones, Ellis, and Kats, all of whom had 4.

"Rebounding is still a problem for this group as we were out-rebounded," said the coach. "If this continues, it will come back to haunt us in future games. Our leading rebounder was Strickland as she grabbed 8."

"When the defense is doing its job of creating turnovers, then the offense becomes easy as all we have to do is find the open player on the break. We did this in the last six minutes as the team had 17 assists with Kats finding 10 teammates open for baskets and Strickland finding 5."

Next action

The Norton Junior High School basketball teams will travel to Osborne on Friday, where they will play Alton-Osborne beginning at 4 p.m.

Former Norton wrestler places for Fort Hays

J.B. Harding, 141 pound sophomore from Norton, placed fourth for Fort Hays State University in the 20-under division in the Wyoming Cowboy Open wrestling tournament on Saturday in Laramie, Wyo.

Winning a championship in the

20-under division in the season opener was Tiger heavyweight Andrew Ubben, a sophomore from Phillipsburg, who was an All-American a year ago.

The Tigers will be in action again this weekend in the University of Nebraska-Omaha Open.

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