

It was the Mid-Continent League's day

Norton wins 4A title by blanking Aquinas

By TIM HOSTETTER
Sports Writer

LAWRENCE — A 15-degree temperature chilled to below zero by a biting north wind.

A frozen field afflicting pain with every fall.

A true test of grit for a state football championship game.

Norton and Shawnee Aquinas were given that test Saturday in the Class 4A state championship game here at Memorial Stadium.

The frigid weather conditions didn't favor the offense, but Norton didn't seem to realize that.

Looking like the same top-ranked team that rolled to 12 straight wins, the determined Blue Jays piled up 317 total yards and held Aquinas to just 98 in claiming a 14-0 victory.

The win gave Norton its first football state title and a 13-0 record.

Much can be said about Norton's offense. It scored two first-half touchdowns, then used ball-control offense to eat away much of the second-half clock.

But it was the Blue Jays' defense which again proved overpowering in posting its eighth shutout of the season.

"The defense was super again," said Norton head coach Neil Melillo, who completed his fourth season at Norton. "We made some mistakes on offense, but our defense again let us overcome our mistakes."

Norton didn't allow a rushing touchdown all season but was sorely tested during a key point of Saturday's game.

Trailing 14-0, the Bluestreaks, who finished 11-2, recovered a fumbled punt by Norton's Paul Wendel at the Blue Jays' 25-yard line midway through the third quarter.

Aquinas worked its way to a first and goal situation at the 2. But Steve Davila — a 1,300-yard rusher this year — was dropped for a five-yard

SHAWNEE-AQUINAS VS. NORTON GAME IN STATS			
	S-A	NHS	
First downs	6	17	
Rushes-yards	26-87	50-278	
Passing yards	11	39	
Comp.-Att.-Int	5-14-0-11	3-9-0-39	
Fumbles-lost	3-2	6-3	
Penalties-yards	1-5	6-55	
Punts-avg	4-31.3	4-15.2	

Individual Statistics			
RUSHING — Aquinas: Davila 15-56, Garbee 6-19, Compton 4-8, Lackner 1-4, Norton: Jimenez 17-109, Farber 13-69, Hand 12-63, Wendel 8-37.			
PASSING — Aquinas: Compton 3-9-0 (minus 4), Muehlberger 2-5-0-15, Norton: Hand 3-9-0-39.			
RECEIVING — Aquinas: Garbee 2-7, Walberg 1-10, Davila 2 (minus 6), Norton: Kason 2-19, Griffey 1-20.			
PUNTING — Aquinas: Kaminski 4-31.3, Norton: Hand 4-15.2.			

Scoring Summary			
Aquinas	0	0	0-0
Norton	6	8	0-14
N — Hand 6 yd. run (kick failed)			
N — Farber 13 yd. run (Kason pass from Hand)			

loss. Fullback Sean Garbee managed three yards to the 5 and quarterback Mark Compton threw incomplete to Steve Scheffler.

On fourth down, Compton tried to sneak his way to paydirt but was stopped at the 1. Aquinas would run only nine plays in the last quarter and a half.

"That was a big series in the game," Melillo said, "but our defense has done that all season. Stopping them inside the five really took the fight out of them."

Aquinas head coach Gennaro Mirocke made no excuses afterward.

"We had our opportunities," said Mirocke, who completed his 35th year at Aquinas. "We just couldn't get anything going offensively. You can't blame the weather because both teams had to play in it. You have to give Norton a lot of credit."

Norton scored its first TD with 6:10 left in the first quarter when quarterback J.D. Hand scored on a 6-yard run.

Hand, who played in Norton's 13-6

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Norton quarterback J.D. Hand (11) heads upfield while carrying Shawnee-Aquinas' Joe Boone for the ride.

Craig Chandler

Plainville dominates Wellsville in 3A

By BRAD CATT
Assistant Sports Editor

MANHATTAN — The wild locker room celebration was winding to a halt. The frozen toes were beginning to thaw.

But while his teammates and coaches talked about the 14-0 victory over Wellsville in Saturday's Class 3A state championship game, Plainville quarterback Grady Gaschler couldn't help but recall the hot, dog-days of late August and early September.

"That's when we came together. Nobody expected us to have much ... we'd lost all our hosses from last year," Gaschler said. "But we worked hard, everybody came together and we did it."

"We did it today just like we have all year. It wasn't any individual, it was a team effort."

The victory gave the Cardinals their second state football title in six years. In 1980, Larry Friend's Cards defeated Silver Lake in the 3A championship game, 36-28.

"They're both nice, but this one was more of a surprise because we were so young," Friend said.

But it was the Cards' young offensive line (two juniors and two sophomores start) that helped pave the way to this victory.

"We felt we controlled the line of scrimmage pretty well," Friend said.

Plainville's win was impressive enough. The Cards outgained Wellsville, 236-97 in total yards.

But despite having great field position all day, the Cards had a dickens of a time sticking the ball in the end zone.

The only touchdown Plainville would need was set up midway through the first quarter when Curt Patrick recovered a Wellsville fumble at the Eagles' 25-yard line.

Four plays later, facing fourth down at the 18, Gaschler swept right end on a 46-power keeper. He was never touched as he followed a block from end Dave Malin, then tight-roped the right sideline for the final 10 yards to the end zone.

"The (defensive) end sucked in and then there was nobody there," Gaschler said.

The Cards started four more possessions in Wellsville territory in the first half. But Plainville had turnover problems of its own and was unable to add to its 6-0 advantage.

Because of the slick field, Friend abandoned Plainville's option attack at halftime.

"We like to run the option but we couldn't get wide," he said. "So we



Plainville quarterback Grady Gaschler scrambles for yardage against Wellsville.

WELLSVILLE VS. PLAINVILLE GAME IN STATS			
	WHS	PHS	
First downs	8	10	
Rushes-yards	32-3	54-236	
Passing yards	94	0	
Comp.-Att.-Int	8-24-1	0-3-1	
Fumbles-lost	8-4	6-2	
Penalties-yards	3-25	3-33	
Punts-avg	6-20.8	1-26.0	

Individual Statistics			
RUSHING — Wellsville: Gretencord 13-minus 52; R.Todd 8-9; Allred 7-43; Wilhite 1-2; Horne 3-1; Plainville: Gaschler 13-38; Patrick 10-32; Kennedy 18-132; Hemphill 9-25; Cellmer 0-7; Losey 1-minus 1; Russell 3-3.			
PASSING — Wellsville: Gretencord 8-24-1-94; Gaschler 0-3-1-0.			
RECEIVING — Wellsville: Bouse 2-29; Horne 1-19; Rogers 3-14; Wilhite 2-25; Allred 0-7.			
PUNTING — Wellsville: Gretencord 6-20.8, Plainville: Gaschler 1-26.			

Scoring Summary			
Wellsville	0	0	0-0
Plainville	6	6	2-14
P — Gaschler 18 yd. run (run failed).			
P — Kennedy 44 yd. run (pass failed).			
P — Hemphill tackled Gretencord for safety.			

decided to just run right at them."

It worked. Plainville's young line began dominating the line of scrimmage, opening big holes for tailback Gerald Kennedy.

And Plainville got the insurance touchdown Friend wanted at the 6:35 mark of the third quarter when Kennedy bolted through a huge hole up the middle and scampered 44 yards to paydirt.

"Our spinner plays really worked well in the second half," Friend said.

"The run by Kennedy was 42-spinner. That was a key play. I felt an

insurance touchdown was so important. It gave us a little breathing room."

Wellsville, which had upset three state-ranked teams — Rossville, Nemaha Valley and Sedan — didn't quit.

But the Eagles never did have decent field position. They started 11 of their 13 possessions inside their own 20.

"It came down to one important thing — we couldn't get good field position," said Eagle coach Jim Wright. "And we couldn't get field position because we couldn't establish the run. They completely shut us down."

The stats showed Wellsville had only three net yards on 32 rushing attempts.

"We couldn't get the run to go and it wasn't too good of a day to pass," Wright said.

But the bad weather wasn't Wellsville's only problem. Plainville's Kevin Wright and Ty Lemon spent most of the afternoon in Wellington's backfield.

"Our defense has been pretty consistent all year long," Friend said. "But anytime you hold a team to under a hundred yards in a state

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Victoria slides by Centralia in 2-1A

By STEPHEN WHITE
Sports Writer

MANHATTAN — The pressure was on when unheralded Victoria took the field against Centralia for the Class 2A prep football state championship game Saturday at cold, snowy, icy and sparsely-populated KSU Stadium.

Norton and Plainville had already won in Class 4A and 3A championship games earlier in the day, which meant all that stood between the Mid-Continent League and an unprecedented three-class sweep was Centralia.

Centralia put up a game battle, but Victoria was up to the task.

Victoria, as it did a week ago in sub-state, made a second-quarter touchdown and two-point conversion run hold up for an 8-6 victory despite yielding twice as much yardage as the Knights mustered.

"I feel great. I'm happy for the kids," said Victorious (cq) coach Doug Moeckel, whose squad managed only two wins in six MCL games this season. "It's a great league. It spoke for itself today."

Perhaps the greatest testament to the toughness Victoria acquired from its murderous MCL schedule was offered by the Knights in the fourth quarter, when they stared tragedy in the face, swallowed hard and refused to accept the fact that they were supposed to lose this game.

Not only did Centralia outgain Victoria 232 yards to 109, the Panthers had two chances to take the lead and, in fact, appeared to have Victoria right where they wanted the Knights in the final three minutes.

But the same fate which led to Victoria's second-quarter touchdown, a fumbled punt, severed the Panthers' jugular with 1:09 left.

Victoria senior Terry Braun recovered both of Rocky Argo's fumbled punts.

The first fumble set up Victoria at Centralia's 29-yard line. Sophomore running back Dale VonFeldt, who rushed for 82 yards on 19 carries, moved the Knights to the 9 on two carries. And senior quarterback Kurt Dinkel swept around right end for the final nine yards, tip-toeing to stay inbounds as he crossed the goal-line, which was still visible in the first half.

Victoria had two other scoring opportunities before halftime, but one drive stalled at the Panther 22



Victoria's Kurt Dinkel (10) scoots around end for the Knights' first touchdown.

Craig Chandler

CENTRALIA VS. VICTORIA GAME IN STATS			
	CHS	VHS	
First downs	13	8	
Rushes-yards	52-170	39-97	
Passing yards	62	12	
Comp.-Att.-Int	3-9-1	1-3-1	
Fumbles-lost	6-4	1-0	
Punts-avg	4-31.0	6-24.2	
Penalties-yards	6-55	3-20	

Individual Statistics			
RUSHING — Centralia: Alberson 28-102, Argo 15-56, Glatczak 9-7, Cross 2-5, Victoria: VonFeldt 19-82, Berens 6-8, K. Dinkel 14-7.			
PASSING — Centralia: Glatczak 3-8-1-62, Victoria: K.Dinkel 1-3-1-12.			
RECEIVING — Centralia: Griffiths 2-43, Vermeilson 1-19, Victoria: Kiser 1-12.			
PUNTING — Centralia: Glatczak 4-31.0, Victoria: Berens 2-30.0, VonFeldt 4-21.3.			

Scoring Summary			
Centralia	0	0	6-6
Victoria	0	8	0-8
V — K.Dinkel 9 yd. run (VanFeldt run)			
C — Vermeilson 19 yd. pass from Glatczak (run failed)			

and one drive halted when Bob Cross intercepted a pass in the end zone.

"All the field position we had in the first half was reversed in the second half, but we had some tremendous defensive plays and they got some key penalties called against them," Moeckel said. "The fumbles were the key to the game."

The Knights fumbled just once — and recovered it themselves — while Centralia fumbled five times, losing four.

But the Panthers had their chances.

With tailback Mitch Berens (one of Victoria's two all-MCL players) sidelined with a hip contusion early in the second quarter, Vic-

torial floundered in the second half.

Centralia seized the decline in Victoria's momentum in the fourth quarter and marched 53 yards in 15 plays, scoring on a 19-yard pass from Larry Glatczak to Jeff Vermeilson. The TD strike came on fourth-and-11 and was the Panthers' third fourth-down conversion of the drive.

The Panthers started their next drive at Victoria 40 with 4:28 to play. Wasting no time, Glatczak went to the air again and connected with his favorite receiver, Shawn Griffiths, at the Victoria 23-yard line. But an illegal procedure penalty nullified the play and Centralia ended up punting with 3:19 left.

Glatczak's punt was a beauty, though, covering 48 yards before rolling dead at the 4. A penalty backed the Knights to the two, and three quarterback keepers left Victoria at its 1.

Centralia, after twice almost tying the game with a safety, tried to set up a punt return as Victoria stayed back to prevent what would have been an instantaneously lethal block. But Argo dropped the punt, picked it up, then dropped it again as Braun came sliding in head-first to make the game-saving recovery at the Knights' own 30.

"It's that old coaching cliché,

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