**MONTAGUE TOPS THE NORSE 39-26**

Montague spoiled Homecoming for the Norsemen as they used a relentless ground attack to defeat the Norse 39-26. The loss by the Norse was their first in the West Michigan Conference in three years although their record in the newly formed Rivers Division remains spotless as the Wildcats are in the Lakes Division.

Penalties and failure to slow up the double wing offense by the Wildcats contributed to the Norse defeat. The first penalty cost the Norsemen six points as a 45-yard TD run by NM quarterback Bryce Colbert was denied due to a penalty. After the Norsemen then had to punt the ball, it took Montague just one play to show it was going to be a long night for the NM defense. On their first play from the line of scrimmage Devlin Dean raced 91 yards for the score and gave Montague a lead they would never relinquish.

Dean’s long gallop would be the first of nearly 500 yards the Wildcats would total during the game. The Montague trio of backs comprised of Dean, Cole Moss and Eli Peterson would each run for more than 100 yards in their balanced attack. Meanwhile, the Norse had to mostly go to their passing game to churn out yardage as the Montague defense limited Norse running backs to but 77 yards on the ground.

Bryce Colbert tossed for 285 yards, but he needed what may have been a school record 44 attempts to post that yardage. Ironically, Colbert’s lone TD pass on the evening came on his 44th and last throw in the game, a 10-yard completion to Becca Hoppa.

After Montague pulled in front 12-0 NM capped a long drive with a Colbert keeper to narrow the gap to 12-6. However, Montague, who never had to punt the entire game, took the ensuing kickoff and drove relentlessly down the field with Dean scoring his second TD to give the visitors a 19-6 lead at halftime.

The Cats then delivered the possible knockout blow to begin the second half when Cole Moss broke a pair of tackles and sprinted 54 yards to paydirt to extend their lead to 26-6. The Norse than showed some offensive spark as they scored just a little more than a minute later on a four-yard run from Hunter Wilder. NM fans suddenly had their hopes raised for a possible Norse comeback when Drew Gabriel scooped up a Wildcat fumble and raced 55 yards for a TD. For the third straight time, NM was unsuccessful with an extra point attempt but were down by only one score 26-18.

But it was not to be as the NM defense was not able to contain Montague’s rushing attack, and the Wildcats tallied a pair of TDs to pull away from the host Norsemen. A Colbert TD pass to Hoppa followed by a two-point conversion pass to Cullen Bartos made the final score 39-26.

NM did receive a consolation prize when word was received of a Hart win over Mason County Central that clinched the Rivers Division championship for the Norse, their third straight title in the newly formed West Michigan Conference.

**Stats: (Offense) NM vs Montague**

PASSING

Player Comp Pass INT Total TD Longest

Passes Attempts Yards Passes

#3 Bryce Colbert 23 44 1 285 1 35

#6 Cullen Bartos 1 1 4 0 4

Totals 24 45 1 289 1

RECEIVING

Player Total Total Longest Touchdowns

Catches Yards Catch

#1 Braylen Burrel 1 14 14

#2 Beckett Hoppa 6 137 34 1

#3 Bryce Colbert 1 4 4

#5 Hunter Wilder 4 23 13

#6 Cullen Bartos 8 77 25

#11Drew Gabriel 4 34 11

Totals 24 289 1

RUSHING

Player Total Total Longest Touchdowns

Carries Yards

# 3 Bryce Colbert 10 25 17 1

# 5 Hunter Wilder 7 36 13 1

# 6 Cullen Bartos 3 16 8

Totals 20 77 2

PUNT RETURNS

Player Return Total Longest Fair

Attempts Yards Return Catch

None

PUNTS

Player Total Total Longest AVG

Punts Yards

**NM Defensive Stats vs. Montague**

PLAYER Tackles Ast TFL PD H Sacks Int FC F Rec

#0 Jourdon Ealom-Yff 2

#2 Beckett Hoppa 4 1

#5 Hunter Wilder 1 1

#6 Cullen Bartos 9 1

#7 Carlton Williams 5

#11 Drew Gabriel 7 1 Fumble return for a TD 1

#14 Blake Martin 6 1

#20 Keefe Kersman 1 1 1

#52 Oliver Fricke 2 1

#54 Jace Thompson 1

#55 Clint Villapando 3

#65 Brennen Slayton 2 1

#79 Kael Gunby 3 1

#3 Bruce Colbert 3 117 49 39.0

SCORING

TDS Ex Pts Field Goals Points

# 2 Beckett Hoppa 1 6

#3 Bryce Colbert 1 6

#5 Hunter Wilder 1 6

# 6 Cullen Bartos 2 2

#11 Drew Gabriel 1 6

Totals 4 26