

Peyton Paxton joins game as one of 'the boys' on team

This will be the final play of the game. The Holton freshmen lead the Jeff West freshmen 28-25; Holton has the ball and is ready to wrap up the game. Holton lines up in their traditional wishbone formation. The ball is handed off to #8 Peyton Paxton. A wish that he has waited on for the last four years is finally coming true.

Peyton has developed autism and a seizure disorder. He had a vagal nerve stimulator put into him to help with his seizure disorder while he was just in kindergarten.

Peyton has always thought he was just one of the guys, so he assumed that he would be able to participate in football. His parents, Kevin and Jennifer Paxton, wanted him to be apart of something, but they weren't sure if it was possible.

"Kevin and I talked with Mark Wilson, who was then the middle school athletic director," Jennifer said. "All we had to do was share with him our idea of Peyton participating and he was all for it."

The 2010 football season began, and Peyton Paxton had on the white practice jersey that is given to 7th graders, just like every kid.

"Yes, Peyton has special needs that required some modifications for him to participate," Jennifer said. "The players and coaches found a way to make it happen and seemed to take such pride in doing that."

In the middle of that 7th grade season, the coaches came up with an idea. If the score was out of reach, then Peyton would go on the field and become the kicker for the remaining kickoffs.

"The idea of Peyton kicking off was initiated by Jennifer and by his teammates," Peyton's middle school coach Kurt Haussler said. "His mom informed me before we began practices that he loves to kick the football, so we initiated the idea of Peyton kicking off during his 7th grade season."

So, Peyton spent his 7th and 8th grade seasons as a specialized kicker. His teammates would perform a wall around him to make sure that no injury would occur.

As Peyton's freshmen school year was about to begin, the question was if he would play football at the high school level as well.

"Kevin and I weren't nervous about him playing high school football," Jennifer said. "We were excited for him and we knew his teammates would protect him."

Peyton would continue his kicking duties throughout the beginning of this freshmen football season and has been treated as another one of the guys by his teammates and coaches.

"Coach Barta and the entire coaching staff has been phenomenal," Jennifer said. "They have developed a relationship with him and the team has embraced Peyton."

But, it has come to an end, as he was facing surgery on October 8th to replace that vagal nerve stimulator that was put in him during his kindergarten year. His final game would be on October 4th, against Jeff West.

With the game in hand, the Wildcats had the ball and were running out the clock. The plan by Coach Mark Middlemist was to have Peyton be in on the last play and have Justin Rieschick, the quarterback, would take a knee. The Jeff West coach, Jake Farrant, realized what was going on and sprinted across the field. He asked coach Middlemist how it would reflect upon the child's heart if he could score a touchdown. It was then decided by both teams that Peyton would be allowed to score a touchdown on his final play of his season.

"I thought it was great that all of the players were running to the end zone together," Jennifer said. "The best part was seeing both teams come together at the end of the hard fought game."

Coach Farrant then gave the game ball to Peyton, which was signed by his Holton teammates. At the pregame spaghetti the night after, the Holton players gave Peyton a well-deserved ovation.

"I know this event brought tears to my eyes as it still does," freshmen Coach Chad Thompson said in an e-mail released to all the teachers at Holton High School. "The smile that was on Peyton's face was priceless."

This isn't about just this one moment though. It is about the lessons that all of the players and coaches that have played with Peyton have learned throughout the years.

"I think that his teammates have learned acceptance and tolerance and are learning about the culture of disabilities," Jennifer said. "They have developed an awareness and it is something they are growing up with."

At Holton, no one associates Peyton has being different than any other student at Holton High School.

"To them, I think he is simply, Peyton," Jennifer said.

One thing is for sure, Peyton Paxton will always be remembered as a kid that never gives up or has anyone stop achieving his dreams. His teammates, or his "boys" will always respect him and just remember him as another teammate.

When asked about his favorite thing about playing football in high school, his response was simply, "the locker room, my pads, Coach Barta, and the boys."

By Zach Porter, Sports Editor



KICKOFF TIME

Peyton Paxton, 9, kicks the ball off in a freshmen game earlier this season. Paxton has kicked off during his middle school years and into his high school years. Justin Rieschick, 9, who helps Peyton kick, says that he really enjoys Peyton out for the team.

Photo by Kallie Stallbaumer



Photo By Nicole Darveaux

GET PUMPED: Keri Tanking, 12, is helping her teammates get pumped up before their pink-out volleyball game. The team shows their support for breast cancer awareness month by wearing their pink jerseys for one game.

Cats change from blue and white, to positively pink for a game

October isn't just considered as the month for Halloween any more. October is now related to Breast Cancer Awareness month (BCAM). The purpose for BCAM is to raise funds for the American Cancer Society and spread awareness to local people. This year Holton High School organized their annual Pink Out even to support this cause. Girls walking around HHS have been seen with brightly colored pink strips in their hair.

"I got my pink strip to support breast cancer for the pink out game," Mallory Fate, 10, said. Fate got her pink strip done at New York Hair Affair because they donate \$10 of the \$15 cost to breast cancer funds.

Coach Janelle Noel, the new volleyball coach this year, was very supportive about Pink Out.

"I support the pink out because I think it is a great cause that the volleyball team can organize and get the community involved with as well. We all know someone that has been

affected by cancer," Noel said.

In the past years Royal Valley has participated in Pink Out with us. This time Royal Valley was absent.

"Royal Valley didn't participate because we usually play them at the beginning of October and this year it was the beginning of September. We just didn't have enough time to organize it all and our Holton team decided to continue to do it and just picked a later date that worked," Noel said.

Instead of the usual volleyball uniform players played in pink uniforms to support Pink Out even more.

"It shows how much we support [the fight against] breast cancer, or any type of cancer, I think it's a really good thing we do as a school," player Hannah Deegan, 10, said.

by Rachel Bryant, news editor

Wildcats take the field... from a different perspective



GO TEAM, GO!

Rachel Bryant, 11, hikes the ball to Cassidy Merriman, 11, during the powderpuff game. As the game turned out, the seniors took home the victory. "I had a good time during the game, and maybe next year we will take home the victory," Merriman said.

Photo By Cassie Holt

During the week of homecoming the Junior and Senior boys setup a football game in which girls play and the guys coach/cheerlead. The appropriate term for this is called "Powderpuff." The very first powderpuff game was played back in October of 1945. During this time women used powderpuffs to apply talc to their faces. So when you refer to the term powderpuff your saying they're girls.

The junior and senior classes did many fun things before the game, which was Wednesday, October 3rd. One of the things both classes did was create scouting reports for the game as would Coach Barta do for the football team. "If I could do something different as a coach next year I definitely would have scheduled practices, so it would have been more organized," said, Ryan Haefke, 12. Unlike the seniors the junior coaches scheduled a practice before the game to make a couple plays for the girls to use. "Something I learned about football was that you have to trust your teammates during the game," said, Hannah Coverdale, 12. "Trust is huge part in the game of football, if there is no trust out on the field nothing works," said, Brenden Hampton, 11.

For the seniors it was their last powderpuff game in which some will have memories forever. But for the juniors it was their first powderpuff game, some might have had a blast and some might of thought otherwise. "I had a blast playing in my first powderpuff game, being with all my friends is what made it so much fun! I hope its as much fun next year as it was this year!" said, Mikayla Booth, 11.

The game was held at the baseball field, which the city helped offer to use. The city also provided wooden benches for a bench, and even painted lines to use for a field. There was also lights in use and plenty of room for spectators to watch the game, a major upgrade from last year.

"I think the city did a great job," Emily Montgomery, 12, said. "Last year, the lights were a big problem, but it was handled very well this year."

The Seniors won the game in their second and final PowerPuff game.

"It was a great experience and I had a blast," Montgomery said.

By Kenton Tegethoff, news editor

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