

# THE INDEX-JOURNAL

Sports

## Norman Becoming a Weapon for Vikes

By KEVIN FIORENZO/Index-Journal sports writer

Published: Wednesday, October 22, 2008 12:35 AM EDT



Emerald's Jared Norman lines up at a receiver slot Oct. 3 against Pendleton. (Staff photo by R. Shawn Lewis)

Senior running back Dee Parks has been the backbone of the Emerald High School football team's offense, but the Vikings have hardly been a one-man show thanks to the emergence of threats such as Greenwood transfer Jared Norman. Norman, who was a backup quarterback for the Eagles, has proven to be an effective option in Emerald's running game to complement Parks.

The senior had rushing touchdowns in each of the Vikings' past two games, blowout victories against Crescent and Liberty, and he amassed 95 rushing yards in those games. With his speed, Norman has been an asset at receiver when Parks is in the backfield. "Jared's been a big key to our success the last couple games as far as playing running back and we've also spread him out some," Emerald coach Mike Clowney said. "He's been able to take a lot of pressure off of Dee. "Speed-wise, Jared's probably a little bit faster than Dee, so he kind of catches the corners a lot of the times a little bit quicker."

Playing behind USC commitment Jay Spearman at Greenwood last year, Norman had an opportunity to develop, but at the end of the school year, he decided to make the change to Emerald. "It's been a good experience to play for the Emerald Vikings and coach Clowney, he's a good coach," Norman said. "Coach Dula's a good coach too, but

I'm enjoying it more over here, though. "This is just my home right here."

Norman has been used primarily on first-down plays when the Vikings want to utilize the speed sweep, which worked most effectively in the second half of Emerald's 36-0 win over Crescent. On first-and-10 from Crescent's 25-yard line, Norman took the ball and following some good blocking, dashed down the right side for a touchdown that put the Vikings ahead 22-0. "The speed sweep, they try to get me out on the corners and everything so that we can put my speed against their speed," Clowney said. "Dee had a very big block and so did the wide receivers, Reggie (Haskins) and Antonio (Gray), but it always starts with the offensive line, though."

Clowney thinks that play was a good example of the strong movement Norman has on the field. "People up front, even Dee, did a good job of blocking for him on that play, but at the same time, Jared does a good job of getting vertical," Clowney said. "A lot of times on his runs you'll see him go vertical-sideways, vertical-sideways. It makes it kind of a little staircase going on the field. "We've been fortunate to have him."

Even while Parks has gotten the majority of carries for the Vikings, Norman hasn't minded helping create holes for his teammate. "I enjoy going out there, playing and blocking, and Dee's a good athlete," Norman said. "I don't have a problem blocking for a good athlete. "He blocks for me, so

you know, I scratch his back, he'll scratch mine."

A shy and soft-spoken teenager off the field, Clowney was concerned Norman would have a difficult transition coming from Greenwood, but he has fit in well.

"When he first came over here, I worried about him a lot because any time a guy comes in as a transfer, he doesn't know a whole lot of people, so you kind of worry about him being disassociated from the team," Clowney said. "But I think he's done a good job as far as getting into a groove and being involved with us."

Norman credits his teammates with making the move to Emerald easier. "It was kind of hard transitioning to a new school because you don't really know nobody," Norman said. "Making new friends, that wasn't a problem because the football players, they're good guys. They kind of helped me, finding my classes and everything."