

Hawks bowl over Barons in state playoff opener, 49-0

BY DAN O'MEARA
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Farmington Harrison kicked off another playoff season by overwhelming Bloomfield Hills Andover in a Division II football game Saturday, 49-0.

The heavily favored Hawks grabbed a 28-0 lead in the first quarter, scoring four touchdowns on just six plays, five of which they initiated.

Senior fullback Kent Taylor had a pair of 1-yard touchdown runs, and senior quarterback Lou Hadley passed for two touchdowns.

Senior tailback Kevin Woods, who carried the ball six times, rushed for all but one of his 107 yards in the first half and scored a touchdown. Senior Kris Wong kicked seven extra points.

"I thought we played very well," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "We scored 28 points in five plays, so we came out ready."

"We had been struggling the last two weeks against good defensive teams. It was good to see we got a little bit of a passing game going, and the tailbacks ran well."

"The competition we've been in the last four weeks of the season got us well prepared for the playoffs."

Starting in good field position at visiting Andover's 24- and 20-yard lines after a pair of short punts, Harrison (6-4) scored on its first two possessions.

After junior Chris Roberson dashed 23 yards on first down, Taylor went the final yard for the first TD. Hadley passed to junior Chris Doig for a TD on first down when the Hawks got the ball again.

Then, sophomore noseguard Marcus Mencotti blocked an Andover punt and recovered the ball in the end zone for the third Harrison TD.

The Barons (6-4) had some success moving the ball but gave it up on downs at the Harrison 47. Woods ran 13 yards on first down and the final 40 on the next play.

Andover put together a 10-play drive to the Harrison 5, but it failed to score when Mencotti and senior linebacker Ryan Lukas sacked senior quarterback Steve Kilpela on fourth-and-1.

"We put everything together today," Hadley said. "We showed a lot when we stuffed them on the 5. It was just great team play."

The Hawks led 35-0 at half-time following Taylor's second TD late in the second quarter. Harrison outgained Andover 182-67 in the first half.

"They were hitting the fullback up inside on us," Herrington said. "We didn't stop that real well and we fumbled the ball. Those are the only two things I'd point to as being bad in the game."

With the running clock in effect in the second half, Hadley passed 10 yards to senior Nick Hall for a third-quarter TD, and sophomore Jason Reed had a 40-yard run for the last TD early in the fourth quarter.

"Harrison is a great team," Andover coach Scott Sugg said, adding the Hawks have a deep, five-year record with two forfeit losses. "But you watch film and you know they're a good team."

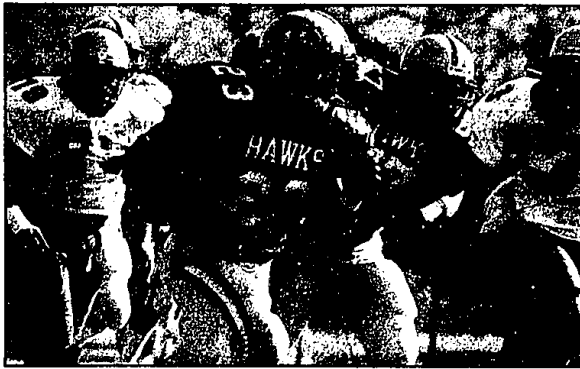
"They come off the ball; they block you and tackle. They play sound fundamental football. If you do that better than the other team, you're going to win."

Harrison finished with 321 total yards to Andover's 93. After Woods, Roberson carried the ball four times for 29 yards, Hadley was 4-of-5 passing for 62 yards. Senior Brian Nelson completed a 33-yard pass to sophomore Agim Shabaj on a fake punt, and Shabaj connected with junior Chris Skazalski for a 64-yard pass play.

"I thought we came out here and played well in our last game at Hawk Stadium," Taylor said. "We grinded it out and played good defense. We played good Hawk football."

"We made a good first step today. We have to take each game one at a time and play each one like it's our last."

Sophomore fullback Scott Stokes gained 57 yards on 14 carries for Andover. David Polen added 18 on five. Steve Kilpela was 3-of-7 passing for 21 yards. "We've been moving in a positive direction every year," Sugg said. "Obviously, we still have a lot of work to do. We have to continue to make progress and get better each year."



Touchdown-bound: Senior Kevin Woods rushed for most of his 107 yards and a touchdown in the first half Saturday in Harrison's 49-0 victory.

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have allowed more than twice as many on defense.

St. Clair plays a 4-3 defense and is led by ends Jurysta and senior Scott Ingram (6-4, 240) and senior middle linebacker Brandon Rosow (5-11, 192).

"We have two very good tailbacks, so we think we can run a combination of power and finesse against them," Herrington said. "We have more speed and we hope to use that to our advantage."

The Saints shut down Warren Fitzgerald's 240-pound tailback DeJuan Garland and shut out the Spartans in Week 8. Garland had 250 yards last year against St. Clair, but the Saints held him to 70 this year, Fox said.

"We'll try to slow (the Hawks) down when we're on defense," Fox said. "They're pretty fast explosive offensively, and they move the ball well."

"We'll try to hold them to a couple scores or less. We're going to try to run the ball, throw some play-action passes and see if we can't get it done offensively."

THE RECORDS

HARRISON (6-4)
Oxford 17, Harrison 14, OT
Harrison 35, W.L. Central 12
Harrison 56, Liv. Church Hill 6
Harrison 38, Northville 7
Harrison 42, Liv. Franklin 0
W.L. Western 21, Harrison 12
Harrison 35, Ply. Canton 0
Harrison 10, Liv. Stevenson 0
Harrison 17, Country Day 13
Harrison 49, Andover 0
Harrison 308, opponents 76

ST. CLAIR (7-3)
St. Clair 24, Clintondale 21
St. Clair 28, Woods-Tower 0
St. Clair 42, Mount Clemens 21
Marine City 30, St. Clair 7
St. Clair 46, S.C.S. Lakeview 6
Marysville 14, St. Clair 13
Country Day 48, St. Clair 23
St. Clair 33, Fitzgerald 0
St. Clair 40, South Lake 12
St. Clair 23, Avondale 7
St. Clair 279, opponents 159

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COACHING FACTS: St. Clair coach Pete Fox is the brother of Pat Fox, who recently resigned as coach at Ann Arbor Pioneer. Fox is in his second year at St. Clair. The Saints were 5-4 last year.

STRONG FINISH: After losing back-to-back games to Marysville and Country Day, St. Clair had to win its last two regular-season games to make the playoffs.

"Warren Fitzgerald was predicted to finish high in the league (Macomb Area Conference Gold Division), and (St. Clair Coach) South Lake was having a good season, too," Fox said.

The Saints rallied from a 7-0 deficit against Auburn Hills Avondale last week to win their first-ever playoff game, 23-7.

"The key was defense; we shut them

FOOTBALL

down after their first drive," Fox said. "Their first drive used up most of the first quarter, and they scored right off the bat."

"After that we moved the ball fairly well. We might have punted once the whole game or not at all."

FUN TIME FOR HAWKS: Few schools in the state have a playoff tradition like Harrison, and Herrington still enjoys the experience every year.

"It's so much fun and it's a great opportunity to bring young kids up and see what you have for the future. It's exciting," he said.

"We know there are a lot of good teams out there, but we're going to try to make some noise. We want to be the 5-4 team that does something."

The Hawks hope to make the most of their second chance after getting into the playoffs as a wild-card team.

"Obviously, it was a big relief getting in," Hadley said. "It's a whole new season; we're starting over now."

"I think teams are still going to look at us as a team to beat. We're still an 8-2 football team. Some teams might look down at us, because we have four losses. But we know we only have two."

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