

# Harrison has high grid hopes

By TOM BAER

Farmington Harrison's football team won't have Mike Bowden this season, and it probably won't win 10 consecutive games or finish up by challenging for the state Class A title in the Pontiac Silverdome like it did last year.

The 1976 season was a dream for coach John Herrington and his Harrison gridders. Led by Bowden, an explosive tailback who rushed for 1,736 yards, Harrison won all nine regular-season games and captured the Western Six League title.

Then the Hawks defeated Madison Heights Lamphere in the Class A semifinals before finally losing to Midland Dow, 36-27, in the state finals before 14,000 fans in the Silverdome.

But Bowden has graduated, and so have most of the Hawks' offensive backfield, including quarterback Dave Thorne, upback John Payne and swingback Chuck Roberts. So, things are likely to be a little different for Harrison this season, which begins Sept. 10 with a non-league contest at district-rival Farmington High.

"It's going to be a fun season, though," Herrington said. "We have some different kids now, and we're going to have to do some different things. But we'll do whatever we have to do to move the ball."

"I suppose there's a little pressure on us now because of last season, but you have to keep things in perspective. Our goal has always been to win the league—that's always been our goal, and it's still No. 1 now."

**ACTUALLY, WHAT** Harrison does have going for it—seven experienced returnees from last year—could make it the team to beat again in the WSL.

Herrington is enthusiastic about the talents of one returnee, end Brad Bache, a 6-foot-3, 180-pound senior. Bache capped an excellent '76 season by catching two touchdown passes in the Class A final.

"We know Brad will be an excellent receiver," Herrington said. "He's rugged and fast."

Replacing Thorne at QB will be difficult, but Herrington is counting on senior Brett Homovec, a 190-pounder who also handles the team's place kicking duties.

"Brett has an excellent arm, probably the best we've ever had," the coach said. "He needs some work right now, but he's coming along just fine. He's a four-point student and a real intelligent kid."

A passing attack could be the key to Harrison's offensive success this season. Herrington is confident that the air game will be there.

"We think we can develop a good passing attack," he said. "I know what kind of receivers we have, and I know how Homovec can throw the ball."

Some other key Harrison returnees are light end Bert Barsch (6-2, 190 pounds), guard and linebacker Pete Lambert (5-10, 190), tackle Matt McCarthy (5-10, 180), tailback and linebacker (6-1, 190) and defensive half-back Tom Reynolds (5-6, 140). All are seniors.

**REYNOLDS, WHO** is the Western Six sprint champ, distinguished himself by running back a kickoff for a thrilling touchdown to help Harrison defeat Plymouth Salem last season.

Harrison's second outing this season will be a Sept. 17 home game against non-league Birmingham Groves.

Harrison opens its WSL season at home on Sept. 24 against Walled Lake Western. Livonia Churchill looks like the team to beat in the six-team WSL this season, according to Herrington and some other league coaches.

"Livonia Churchill looks very strong," Herrington said. "They have the most returnees. From there on out, it looks like a real rat race. Everybody else looks about equal."

Harrison's last two games of the season should be interesting ones. The Hawks play at North Farmington on Oct. 29 and at Plymouth Salem on Nov. 4. North Farmington is much improved over last year, and Salem has been a powerhouse in Class A in recent years.

Unlike many high school football teams, Harrison's gridders don't attend a special pre-season training camp.

"We have our own camp at school," Herrington said. "I like the kids to use our facilities. I like them to sleep in their own beds and eat their own food."

Harrison assistant coaches are Bob Sutter (line) and Bob Sallow (end and linebacker). Harrison's reserve team is coached by Bill Taylor and Bill Blackmer (Fred's older brother and a former Hawk standout).



Harrison's Brett Homovec could help the Hawks develop a passing attack. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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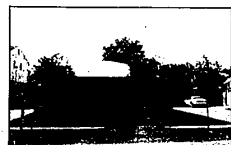
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