

Thursday, September 7, 1978

(F1C)

Harrison shoots for 3d-straight WSL title

By C.J. RISAK

The Farmington Harrison Hawks will be shooting for their third straight Western Six League football championship, and fourth in the last five seasons, when they open Saturday at home against non-league opponent Farmington.

But it may not be an easy task for Hawk coach John Herrington. A number of new faces appear throughout the lineup and a streak of preseason injuries have taken their toll.

There are some familiar names returning to the Harrison lineup, such as three senior co-captains: Jon Brancheau, 6-0, 185 pounds, who started at "monster back" on defense last year and flanker on offense; Mark Heppard, 6-1, 200 pounds, who was a standout at defensive tackle last season and will play offensive tackle this year as well; and Kurt Stevens, a 6-0, 200-pound linebacker and center.

However, besides flankerback Brancheau, the rest of the offense backfield is new and relatively inexperienced.

"Our offense is untried," Herrington stated. "We'll have to develop a passing attack. We have a new quarterback and new receivers, so it may take some time."

But things aren't all that bleak for

the defending Western Six League champs.

"Our offensive and defensive lines both look strong," Herrington claimed. "The offense always seems to take a little longer to develop. Hopefully, our defense will keep us in the game until our offense comes around."

The offensive line will consist of Heppard and Bob McFadden (6-0, 200) at tackles, with Craig Purcell (5-11, 180) and either Ted Timmis (5-11, 175) or John Curtis (5-10, 165) at the guards. Co-captain Stevens is the regular center, but that's where the injuries begin to take their toll.

Stevens hurt his knee and is now doubtful for the Farmington opener. Replacing him will be senior Steve Zeno.

"Injuries have really hurt us," Herrington lamented. "We have about seven kids out with one thing or another. It will bother us for the first few games."

The Hawks starting backfield will be Drew Norton (5-11, 165) at quarterback; Jim Miller (5-10, 160) at fullback; and either Dave Turnquist (6-2, 200) or Jeff Hagan (5-10, 140) at tailback. Norton was the backup quarterback last year and Miller was the backup fullback. Turnquist didn't play football last season, as he decided to concentrate on basketball instead. But he's back this year, and he will share

the tailback slot with junior Hagan.

Norton's receivers will be Brancheau, the flanker; either Mike Miller (6-1, 195) or Greg Moore (6-1, 165) as the tight end; and Mike Twigg (6-2, 160) and Dean Zuno (5-9, 145) sharing the split end position. The entire starting offensive team is seniors except for Hagan and Jim Miller.

On defense, Timmis will start at the noseguard spot, with McFadden and Heppard at the tackles; Mike Miller will play one defensive end position, with senior Rick Tobin (6-0, 180) at the other.

The linebacking corps, normally one of Harrison's strong points, have been decimated by injuries. Both starters, Stearns and senior Brian Beck (5-9, 150), are improbable for the opener. Junior Dave Markovich (6-0, 175) will probably fill in at one of the spots, but the other replacement is uncertain.

The secondary is a little more stable. Brancheau will be the monster, with Hagan at one defensive halfback and Jim Miller at the other. The starting safety will be junior Bruce Morrison (5-10, 160).

As they have been in the past, the Harrison team is not big. Only three of their starters are 200 pounds.

"We don't have a lot of real big kids," Herrington said. "But we do have some solid-sized high school kids — around 180 or so."

But size has never seemed to bother the Hawks in the past. Despite their lack of it, their teams are always a hard-hitting and enthusiastic group — and one that wins championships.

Depth will be neither a problem nor an asset for Harrison.

"We have a lot of people going both ways, but we have a few that can alternate, too. We want to platoon players more than in the past."

But the injury problem has made it difficult for Herrington to plan on much of anything. And the early season schedule does not favor Harrison.

After the opener against crosstown rival Farmington, the Hawks go against defending MSA co-champion Birmingham Groves and then take on league power Watford Mot.

"We have a real tough schedule," Herrington stated. "And our non-league schedule is really tough. Groves and North Farmington are going to be super this season, and Farmington and Plymouth Salem are both real good."

"In the league, I think it will be between four schools. Livonia Churchill has the most returning starters, but I think Mot and Northville will be in there. And, of course, so will we."

The Harrison football program does

have one new wrinkle this year—two new coaches for the junior varsity team.

"Jim Cody and John Witkowski will coach the J.V. teams this year," Herrington said. "In the past, we've had people coming and going. But I think they'll be here for a while because

there part of the school system. I think they will really help stabilize our system."

If that means the system has been unstable in the past, with four league titles in five years, it'll be interesting to see how far Harrison goes in the future.



Harrison coach John Herrington hopes to develop a good passing attack this year.

Major rules changes greet prep gridders

Youths with artificial limbs will no longer be barred from high school football competition, under one of the many new rules this season.

"An artificial leg, well-padded, is no more dangerous than a normal leg," explained Fred Sible, assistant director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

Another new rule gives a clearer definition of when a defensive player is on the line of scrimmage. A defensive player is deemed on the line of scrimmage if he is within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

"This helps with pass blocking," Sible said. "If a linebacker came in close and was standing, it was hard to distinguish if he was a lineman or off the line. Now a lineman can go block a linebacker on the line of scrimmage, instead of waiting for the rush. This prevents the offensive team from having an ineligible player move."

Two other rule changes will bring the prep rules closer to those employed by professional teams.

IF A DEFENSEMAN is blocked into

a kicker, there will be no roughing-the-kicker penalty. Previously, officials seldom called roughing when an offensive player knocked a defender into the kicker, even though that was the rule.

Another professional-type rule is that now there will be an automatic first down for roughing the kicker.

"What was happening," Sible said, "is that teams would go all out to block a kick on a fourth down and 20 situation. They had nothing to lose if they hit the kicker because it was a 15-yard penalty and the other team would not get a first down."

Following are some of the other rule changes for the 1978 high school season:

• If there is a foul by the offense on the last timed down of the half, or if the game ends in a tie, the penalty will be assessed on the opening of the second half or overtime period.

• A quarter will be extended by an untimed down if a foul by a kicking team occurs on the last timed down of that period. "Many teams were putting 12 or 13 guys on their offensive teams, not giving the defense a chance

to run the ball back," Sible said. "The ball will remain in play following a field goal or extra point attempt if it is touched in the end zone by a defensive player."

• A free kick will be allowed if at least five receivers are not within five yards of the free kick line. Once an official marks the ball ready for play there must be five players within five yards of the ball. The kickoff is from the 40-yard line. The five players must be lined up between the 45 and 50 yard lines.

• The invalid fair catch signal is removed from the list of personal fouls. "There used to be a 15-yard penalty for this infraction," Sible said. "There will now be a five yard penalty. The rules committee thought 15 yards was too severe. It really isn't a personal foul anyway."

The Michigan High School Athletic Association also lists points of emphasis for officials and coaches. Points of emphasis are parts of the game which are problems nationwide.

This year's points of emphasis are: crack-back blocks, blocking below the waist and using substitutes to deceive.

Western hopefuls

Southfield's representatives on Western Michigan University's 1978 football team are Frank Mays (27), Les Garrett (48) and student assistant coach Gary Getsoff (far right). With the trio is assistant coach Billy Harris, a former standout split end at the Uni-

versity of Michigan. Mays, a sophomore safety, attended Southfield-Lathrup High. Garrett, a linebacker, was an All-State football and baseball selection last season at Birmingham Groves. Getsoff, a junior, also attended Groves.

Area puckster gains spot on U.S. national squad

Steve Murphy, a 17-year-old Redford resident, will be spending Christmas away from home this year, but that won't bother him a bit.

In fact, he's as pleased as can be that he'll be a member of the United States Junior National Hockey Team competing at the World Tournament near Stockholm, Sweden.

Murphy, a right wing and a center who has played organized hockey since he was 6, was one of 11 players selected for Team USA following a nine-day tryout session last month in Colorado Springs.

"Thirty-five players from around the country—all recommended by regional panels of coaches—attended the camp at the United States Olympic Training Center."

"We skated two times a day," said Murphy. "In the morning, we went over the plays we would use, power plays, penalty killing and checking."

"In the afternoon, we would scrimmage for an hour and a half. We would also have a one-hour meeting in the afternoon and a one-hour meeting in the evening."

All of Murphy's expenses at the tryout camp and all of the expenses connected with the tournament are paid by the Olympic Training Center, said Murphy.

Murphy, who has played one age division above the normal development of pattern most of his hockey career, said he was confident of his abilities going into the camp, but knew competition would be tough.

"I wasn't counting on it too much," Murphy said, but then added that he figured his chances were good considering his experience.

"It's kind of hard to explain," he continued. "I just went out and gave it my best shot. If I was picked, I was, and if not, it wasn't the end of the world."

Murphy, at 17, is one of the youngest players among the first group to be selected and the only player from Michigan. Most are 18-19 years of age. Twenty is the maximum to be eligible.

Nine more players will be selected to round out the squad prior to the week before Christmas. At that time, the squad will meet in Minnesota for a week of intense practice before departing for Stockholm.

Murphy's introduction to and development in the sport of hockey is reminiscent of those of the better French-Canadian players.

Murphy said his father took him to skate at Lola Valley Park almost every day when he came home from kindergarten.

He first played competitively with the Farmington Flyers in the Mite Division, then advanced to the Squirt Division one year early.

The following season, Murphy played with the Little Caesar's travel squirt team and from that time on, has always played in more competitive travel leagues.

Murphy moved on to the Pee Wee Division, again one year early, and subsequently saw service with Sloss in the Bantam Division. Adray in the Midget Division and with Paddock Pool last year in the Great Lakes Junior A League.

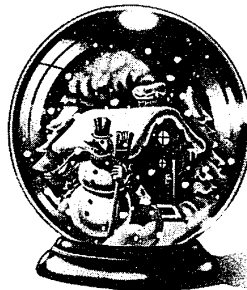
Bill Hailer, Murphy's coach at Paddock, nominated him for the national team because the forward last season scored 39 goals and assisted on 46 others.

Murphy said he plans to play for Paddock again this year except for the time he will be involved in the World Tournament.

Luckily, the Redford Thurston senior will not miss much school during the trip due to the holiday break.

Team USA will meet Czechoslovakia Dec. 26 in its first game of the tourney, Murphy said, and will do battle with the Soviet Union the following day.

"We stand a chance if we can get our hockey more advanced," said Murphy. "They (the Czechs and Soviets) are not so much better than us but are so prepared. In the army, they play together all the time."



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