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# Western six race open

By BRAD EMONS

Even before the first football is kicked off, the Western Six League is shaping up to be a dogfight.

The defending champion is Livonia Churchill. The Chargers are coming off an outstanding year as coach Ken Kaestner led his team to a 9-1 mark and a spot in the Class A playoffs.

But Churchill was rocked by graduation. Only two starters return — defensive end Rich Grodek and left-corner back Ron Schueneman.

That leaves the door open to Farmington Harrison, Northville, Plymouth Canton and Walled Lake Western. Waterford Mott appears to be destined for last place.

"We're rebuilding our whole offense," said Kaestner, "and everything is up for grabs."

"This is a very young team. But I like them. They're enthused and have a great attitude. We're going to have to scrap this year."

Bill Keller takes over the quarterback spot for Rick Coppola. Kaestner is high on Darrel Copley, a tackle, and Ken Block, a tailback.

Senior linebacker Steve Clemens anchors the defense.

"Harrison, Northville and Walled Lake Western will all have good teams," warns Kaestner.

Harrison coach John Herrington welcomes several key performers back from last year.

**QUARTERBACK** Bruce Morrison will lead the team. He will rely on the strong running of junior speedster Ken Kopko and senior Jim Miller.

The Hawks' line will be secure with senior John Tesner (6-3, 224-pounds) and senior Jamey May (5-10, 210-

pounds). Both are tackles. They will be supported by linebacker Dave Markovich and defensive back Jeff Hagan.

"This is a fairly young team," said Herrington, "but with the potential to be a good squad."

"We should be in the run for the Western Six championship," he said.

Herrington is 53-29-1 since coming to Harrison. In 1976, his team reached the state finals against Midland Dow before losing. The Hawks look to improve on last year's 5-4 mark.

Plymouth Canton coach Dave Schuele has a team small in size but returns his best line in three years.

"We will be small again but if we play well as a team, we'll be fun to watch," said Schuele.

The biggest players Schuele has to work with are senior Paul Mooney (6-0, 205) and junior Craig Kearns (6-1, 210).

Other senior standouts include John Tarr, Greg Mallare, Bob Hamblin, Steve Gray and Ted Toll to go along with juniors Cris Koch and Doug Ward.

Canton was 4-5 last season as the Chiefs lost close games to both Churchill and Harrison.

**NORTHVILLE** has some veterans returning after posting a 5-4 record a year ago. The Mustangs had one of the top defenses last year, allowing an average of 11 points per game. Their opponents posted a 45-36 mark.

Walled Lake Western was 4-5 last year but like Northville, is a team with a cast of returnees.

Waterford Mott will need to improve its offense in order to make waves in the Western Six. Waterford averaged just five points per game last year while going 0-5 in the league.



Harrison will miss last year's starting quarterback Drew Norton (13), but the Hawks are still expected to be in the thick of the Western-6 race. (Staff photo)