

Ready or not

North has huge date with Glenn

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

For years, the Westland John Glenn-North Farmington football game determined the Northwest Suburban League champion.

This year, it could easily determine the winner in the Western Lakes Lakes Division.

The showdown is Saturday at North, and it's the Observerland's Game of the Week.

Both teams won their league season opener last week — Glenn impressively over Farmington, North unconvincingly over Livonia Stevenson.

Raiders coach Jim O'Leary's team still seems to be reeling from its stunning 20-0 loss to Walled Lake Western two weeks ago.

Without back Marc Brown, the Raiders mustered just 52 total yards and one score against Stevenson.

THROUGHOUT THE RAIDERS' minislump, the defense has remained strong. That defense will face its toughest test of the season against Glenn's high-powered offense.

Against a good Farmington defense, Glenn rolled up 34 points (although mistakes by the Falcon offense contributed mightily to the Glenn cause). It was the ground game, Tony Boles (132 yards) and Paul Beasley (83), that did most of the damage. Glenn threw only four passes.

Glenn coach Chuck Gordon insists his team can blend both the run and pass in its attack. He may have to prove it Saturday. North is adept at stopping a one-dimensional offense.

Glenn didn't escape Farmington completely unscathed. Wide receiver Dave Byrd and 200-pound lineman Rick McCurdy were banged up and are questionable for Saturday.

Keys: For Glenn, it's quarterback Steve Irwin. If Gordon unleashes this young man's arm, and it's not too rusty from a lack of work, he could help open things up for Boles and company.

For North, it's mental preparation. The Raiders have been a rocky football team most of this year. It cost them one game and nearly another. North is talented. But it cannot just show up and

expect to win — they have to play. PICKS — Glenn stays atop the crest, says Brad Emons. North knows how to get the job done and this week they do it, says Chris McCosky.

FRIDAY GAMES

PLYMOUTH CANTON AT LIVONIA CHURCHILL (7:30 p.m.) — The woeful and the resurgent. Canton (0-3) has managed just 169 yards in total offense all season and has crossed the end zone only once. Churchill, a jubilant 3-0, has been characterized by a stingy defense and an offense that does just enough to get the job done. PICKS — Churchill struggles against a good Canton defense but wins.

LIVONIA STEVENSON AT PLYMOUTH SALEM (7:30 p.m.) — Look out for this one. On paper, Stevenson (1-2) looks to be the better team. But Salem coach Tom Mashner holds the magic touch over the Spartans. The Rocks have never lost a Western Lakes game to the Spartans. PICKS — The magic continues, the Rocks get victory No. 1 on the season.

FARMINGTON HARRISON AT NORTHVILLE (7:30 p.m.) — The biggest rivalry about Harrison's loss at Livonia Franklin Saturday is that the Hawks took the game too lightly. Nonetheless, The Hawks were ready to play. They simply were beaten up in the trenches, particularly on offense. That's not likely to happen this week. Northville (1-2) has no offense. PICKS — Harrison gets back to winning, both agree.

FARMINGTON AT W.L. CENTRAL (7:30 p.m.) — Farmington's three opponents (Southfield, Harrison and Glenn) have a combined record of 8-1, and Central is 3-0. Nice way to spend a victory season. PICKS — Central remains in the thick of the Lakes Division chase for one more week.

CLARENCEVILLE AT LUTHERAN WEST (7 p.m.) — Ralph Weddle's team picked up its first win of the season last week with an impressive 10-0 zipping of Hamtramck. Some of the early season injuries have healed and the Trojans are picking up momentum. PICKS — Lutheran West stays winless, both continue to agree. (This is scary)

GARDEN CITY AT BELLEVILLE (7:30 p.m.) — For one full half, Garden City (0-3) gave tough Bishop Gallagher all it wanted last week. The Cougars wilted in the second half but gained a moral victory.

Belleville is also winless. PICKS — McCosky and Emons say yee to Garden City.

WOODHAVEN AT REDFORD UNION (7:30 p.m.) — These two will be getting to know each other more and more as they will be in the new Northwest Suburban League next year. RU (2-1) has been a huge surprise in the area this year (one of the low pleasant surprises). It's been a struggle for Woodhaven (1-2). PICKS — You've gotta like RU.

SATURDAY GAMES

TAYLOR KENNEDY AT REDFORD THURSTON (1 p.m.) — "This is another toughie," said Thurston coach Ron Powell whose Eagles (1-2) are still in search of their first Tri-River League win. Kennedy (2-1) lost its first game of the season last week to league leader Southgate. PICKS — Emons smelt an upset, picks Thurston. McCosky disagrees.

WAYNE MEMORIAL AT DEARBORN FORDSON (1:30 p.m.) — Wayne (1-2) has let leads slip away in the second half the past two weeks. They may not have to worry about protecting a lead this week. PICKS — Fordson stays unbeaten.

W.L. WESTERN AT LIVONIA FRANKLIN (1 p.m.) — It's back to the home sod for Franklin (1-2) after spending a few weeks at Benley, and what a happy homecoming it should be — especially on the heels of the 3-7 triumph over Harrison, thanks to a stingy defense and Bob Solnikowski's field goal. But Western (2-1) should not be taken lightly. Ask North Farmington.

BISHOP BURGESS VS. CATHOLIC CENTRAL (1-2) is hurting and CC (3-0) is hurting its opposition. Much of the luster has been wiped from this Redford rivalry. PICKS — Shamrocks have the charm.

SUNDAY GAME

ST. AGATHA AT A.A. GABRIEL RICHARD (2 p.m.) — It's the season opener for the Catholic League C-Division. St. Agatha (1-2) goes to play the league favorite on the road. Who's dealing the cards? PICKS — Ann Arbor Richard remains undefeated.

McCosky (31-10) and Emons (26-15) posted identical 10-4 records last week.



North's tailback Marc Brown missed last week's game but is expected back in time for Saturday's

showdown with John Glenn. Both teams are undefeated in the Lakes Division.

OU kickers win

What started out so ominously ended joyously for Oakland University's men's soccer team, which ended a three-game winless streak with a 2-1 victory at Western Michigan University Saturday.

The win lifted the Pioneers to 2-2-1 for the season and kept their stranglehold as the state's best soccer team intact.

That position was in danger early in the game as OU stumbled in a manner similar to that of its previous three games: lots of shots but no goals. The Pioneers unleashed eight shots to one for WMU in the game's first 25 minutes but failed to score.

The Broncos then took control, outshooting OU 4-0 the final 20 minutes of the half. Their efforts paid off when Craig Tausk scored with just 48 seconds left in the half to put WMU ahead 1-0.

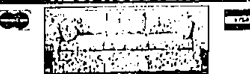
OU evened it 19 minutes into the second half when Marty Hagen, a junior forward from Troy, Ala., converted midfielder Mike Vigh's crossing pass from the left side.

The Pioneers dominated throughout the final 45 minutes and finished with a 2-8 shot advantage. The game-winning goal came courtesy of Gray Hälzel, who capped a superb performance at midfield by dribbling through the WMU defense and crossing the ball to Meally Freeman. Freeman scored with 10:40 left for the winning margin.

OU hosts Indiana-Purdue at Ft. Wayne at 2 p.m. Saturday.

than just the scores

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