

Sports

Brad Emons, Chris McCosky editors/591-2312

Monday, November 10, 1986 O&E

(F1B)

Hawks outlast pesky Riverview

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

All week long Riverview football coach Don Lesser downplayed his team's chances of beating Farmington Harrison in the first round of the Class B playoffs.

"Hey, we're just happy to be here," he said before the game Saturday.

By the end of the game, the Harrison people couldn't be blamed for saying: "Hey, Riverview, got the heck out of here."

Riverview pestered, badgered, vexed, cajoled and flat wore out Farmington Harrison. And lost, 21-14.

"You just can't drop as many passes as we dropped and expect to beat a team like Harrison," Lesser said. "They played an excellent football game."

Well, maybe not an excellent football game, but the Hawks did play well enough to win.

"THEY DROPPED some passes and fumbled the ball a couple of times and that was a big help to us," said Harrison coach John Herrington. "For a tournament game, we were not hitting as sharply as I thought we might. In fact, we really didn't start playing until it was 14-14. I was a little disappointed by that."

Riverview dominated statistically. The Pirates rushed for 112 yards (83 gained by Todd Jenkins) and passed for 148, for a total of 260. Quarterback Bob Guiney completed 12 of 24 passes, most were screens and short

patterns. Six of the 12 incompletions were dropped.

The Hawks managed 161 total yards: 89 rushing, 72 passing. "The screen passes didn't surprise us, we worked on stopping that all week," Herrington said. "We just didn't know how to cover them I guess. We thought we could cover the receivers and still put pressure on the quarterback. We weren't able to do either."

Harrison led 7-0 at halftime thanks to a pair of Riverview fumbles. The first fumble, recovered by Gary Schwed, stopped the Pirates at the Harrison 4 yard line. The second fumble, recovered by Phil Rider at the Riverview 30, led to Harrison's TD.

Scott Bissell (79 yards in 22 carries) scored the first of his three touchdowns, a 3-yard run to cap the drive.

That lead didn't last very long.

JIM COLEMAN took the second half kickoff 98 yards for the tying touchdown. The last time Harrison had a kick returned for a TD was back in 1981, in the Class B state playoffs against Marysville.

That play seemed to stun the Hawks. The very next time Riverview got its hands on the ball, it drove 92 yards in five plays to take a 14-7 lead. A 50-yard run by Jenkins set up Guiney's 41-yard TD pass to Coleman.

If Coleman's first TD stunned the Hawks, his second score woke them up.

The Hawks tied the game five plays after Riverview went ahead.

Bissell capped a 37-yard drive with another 3-yard plunge.

"I thought we showed a lot of character. We came roaring back down 14-7," Herrington said.

The game-tying TD was set up by a bold call from Harrison assistant coach Bob Sallow. Sallow called for a reverse on the kickoff return. Rick Witte fielded the kick. He started left, drew the coverage to the left, then handed the ball to Mark Schmidt who rambled 43 yards around the right side to the Riverview 37. Not only did the play set up the tying score, it also halted Riverview's momentum — which at that point was threatening to run Harrison off the field.

Ironically, Sallow was very ill and strongly considered missing the game.

ONCE EVEN, Harrison began to take command of the game.

"I think we let our emotions get up too much at the start of the game," said Bissell, the team's captain. "We were tentative. Instead of just playing our game, we were afraid about it too much. We were afraid to make mistakes. Once we got behind we realized that we had to start playing now or it'll all be over."

The Hawks took advantage of a short Riverview punt to score the game-winner. With time running out in the third quarter, the Hawks got the ball on the Riverview 41. Eight plays later, including two key pass completions by Mark Murray, Bissell scored from the 2. Mark Calvaruso kicked his third extra point of the day and Harrison celebrated.

Not so fast, said Riverview.

BISSELL AND Murray flubbed a handoff with 5:14 left in the game. Riverview's Bill Wolos fell on the loose ball at the Harrison 14.

On the very next play, Guiney hit Coleman with a 14-yard screen pass and it appeared that the Pirates had drawn even. Nope. Flag on the play. Clipping. Riverview, 15 yards. First- and 25 from the 28 instead of touchdown, tie game.

Two big plays by nose guard Marc Hunter put an end to that threat. And, with less than a minute left, Riverview's final offensive threat was stopped by a leaping interception by Chad Burgess.

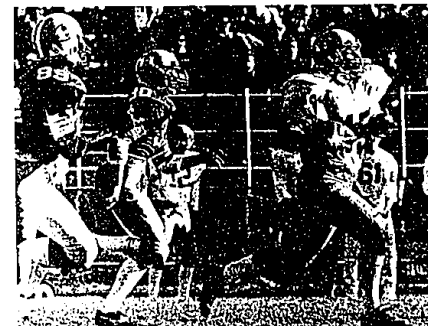
Herrington was much relieved with the victory, but added: "We better get a lot better before next week."

Next week, Harrison will meet a strong Detroit Northern team at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Westland John Glenn. Northern pounded Melvindale Friday night, 27-8.



Rocky Varscilli is stacked up by Riverview linemen Ralph Thomas and Jeff Lick during the Hawks' 21-14 win Saturday in the Class B state playoffs.

photos by RANDY DORST/staff photographer



Todd Jenkins is chased down by Harrison's Rick Witte and Chad Burgess, but not before a 50-yard gain.

Blazers sing Mercy in OT

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Emotions ran the gamut Thursday as Livonia Ladywood came away with a 48-44 overtime win over Catholic League girls basketball rival Farmington Hills Mercy in an A-B Division semifinal at Bishop Borgess High in Redford.

The victorious coach, Ed Kavanaugh, described the harrowing finish as "typical" between the two teams.

"We haven't gotten the consistency we wanted throughout the year, but I knew we were a better team than we've shown and tonight we wanted to prove it," said Kavanaugh, whose team earned a berth in the finals against Birmingham Marian, a 51-47 winner over Dearborn Divine Child in the nightcap of a double-header.

With something to prove, Ladywood overcame a series of peaks and valleys to win the third meeting between the two teams, who split during the regular season.

Leading by as many as 11 points in the first half, Mercy appeared to have the game well in hand before going totally numb in the third quarter, scoring only one point to Ladywood's 13.

THE MOMENTUM continued to swing Ladywood's way in the fourth quarter with the Blazers

taking a seven-point lead, only to have Mercy reverse itself down the stretch, capped by Margaret DeMattia's game-tying free throw with seven seconds left in regulation play to make it 40-40.

The three-minute overtime started with Monica Gall scoring her only two points of the game, followed by Katie McNulty's basket, two of her game-high 16 points on the night.

Meanwhile, Mercy missed the front ends of a pair of one-and-one free throw opportunities and committed a pair of costly turnovers.

Ladywood's Ann Marie Thomas then connected on two free throws with only 34 seconds left to secure the victory, Ladywood's 13th in 18 games.

"There was a drastic contrast between the first and the second half," said Kavanaugh. "At half-time I got them mad at me, but I can't tell you what I said."

MERCY'S DISASTEROUS third quarter was summed up succinctly by coach Larry Baker.

"There was no question that a consecutive string of fouls really took us out of the game and changed the momentum," he said. "It caused us to be far more tentative. The fouls took the monkey off their back, plus it stopped the clock and put the monkey back on us. It caused us to be far more tentative."

With DeMattia on the bench because of fouls

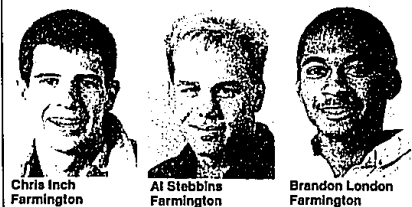
and Adrienne Clark limited in playing time because a sore ankle, only point-guard Yvette Malson could find the hoop with any regularity.

The senior standout had things going pretty much her way in the first half, scoring 16 points. But in the second half, she was held to three and got little help elsewhere except from DeMattia, a 5-foot-10 senior forward who finished strong with 11.

"I FELT WE were in a situation for a long time where Yvette was our only scorer," said Baker, whose team fell to 13-5 overall. "I remember two shots (during the third quarter) where we had layups and misses. All we needed was one and it could have relaxed and reminded us how we were running our offense."

McNulty, a 6-2 junior, was a tower of strength on the boards, but the Blazers also got a strong contribution from Nancy Wagner, who tallied eight points off the bench. Point guard Nicole Ewald also chipped in, canning a pair of outside jumpers to loosen Mercy's zone in the third period.

"I'm pleased with the job we did defensively," said Baker. "But the foul situation gave them the opportunity to get a foot back in the game. And once that happened I saw our confidence change and I think we lost our poise a little bit."



Falcons set pace for All-Area team

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

FIGURE 28 TEAMS, with seven runners per team, vying for top honors at the Class A state cross country finals and it suddenly becomes clear just how close Farmington's contingent came to a championship.

Repetition one or two spots, and the Falcons might have won. It could have gotten them the needed seven points to overtake winner Swartz Creek.

And yet, such what-if demean an outstanding season. Farmington, for the second straight season, won both the boys and girls titles in the Western Lakes Activities Association. Chris Inch, Farmington's best male runner, was fourth at state. Four of the seven members on the boys team ran personal best times at state.

FARMINGTON'S GIRLS placed sixth in the state team standings, with all seven runners posting personal best times.

But just as the state final and the seven points that separated the Fal-

cross country

cons from a title cast an unwarranted shadow on their season, what Farmington accomplished forces some solid individual performances into the background.

In the girls Class A individual race, Livonia Churchill's Karen Kantor placed fifth. In the boys Class A individual race, Dan Liedel of Westland John Glenn was 13th; Matt Smith of Redford Bishop Borgess was 17th; Bill Atwell of Plymouth Salem was 22nd, and Derrick Allen of Wayne Memorial was 23rd. In the Class B girls individual race, Livonia Ladywood's Janine Kloc finished ninth.

So there were all sorts of fine individual performances turned in on the season's final day — which is why the Observer takes this time to honor

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The Farmington Public School District can boast of a proud and successful athletic program. Unless we're talking about girls basketball.

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boards well and took better care of the basketball in the second half," said first-year North coach Greg Capling. "We really got down to business in the second half and played solid defense."

Suzi Butcher scored 15 points to pace the Raiders. She also grabbed 11 rebounds. Jenny Basford added 10 points.

For Farmington, Stacy Swanderski scored 11 and Carrie Hale 10. Linda Hacker added nine points and seven rebounds.

"North was getting a lot of second, third, fourth and even fifth shots," said Falcons coach Diann Fair. "We just didn't rebound at all. We only had six kids and I think they just pooped out at the end. We pressed, pretty successfully, in the first half. But it may have taken too much out of them. We did a good job, though. The girls really played hard."

North (8-11) will host Livonia Churchill Thursday, while Farmington (1-18) will host Harrison.

W.L. WESTERN 68, HARRISON 14: The losing streak, that royal pain in the Hawks' craw, has reached 79.

Trivia question: When was the last time Harrison won and whom did they beat? Answer to come.

Without the services of six players (out sick), the Hawks didn't stand much of chance Thursday against an 11-7 Waller Lake Western team.

Maryann Cundy led the Hawks with six points. Trivia answer: The last time Harrison won a game was in the first round of the district tournament, 1992. The Hawks, led by Alice Short and Sue Ferguson, beat Redford Union. Seventy-nine losses later, the Hawks again meet RU — Tuesday at Harrison.