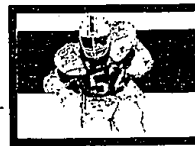


Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editors/591-2312

Thursday, November 13, 1986 O&E



(F1D)

Detroit muscle a true challenge to Hawks' mettle

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Farmington Harrison's task this Saturday in the Class B regional finals is simple: knock down a mainstay, hulk a raging river and freeze a bird in flight.

OK, so we've exaggerated a little. But consider what Harrison is up against as it prepares to battle the Detroit Northern football team at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Westland John Glenn.

• The mountain. Northern's offensive and defensive line averages nearly 240 pounds. The three players that make up the right side of the line weigh 270, 250 and 245. The line is anchored by all-PSL star Yancy Adolphus, who is 6-2, 250 and bench presses 350 pounds. Harrison's largest lineman weighs 190. In pads.

• The raging river. Northern running back Arthur Mitchell. He has gained 842 yards this season in just 142 carries. He has accumulated more than 8,500 yards in his career. He is fast and powerful. He rages on defense, too. He made 72 solo tackles this season.

• The bird in flight. This is Northern's passing game. Marco Honey is the quarterback with a surprisingly strong and accurate arm. Alvin Buckley and Darius Morris are the fleet-footed receivers.

AS IF ALL that talent weren't enough, Northern is well coached and plays a very disciplined game.

"We try to be disciplined in everything we do," said Northern coach John Dean, probably the most respected coach in the PSL. "Maybe we are a little too disciplined sometimes. But we believe in people being where they are supposed to be and playing football the way it was meant to be played. We don't do any wildcatting. We just play football."

About his team's size advantage coming into Saturday's game, Dean said: "Yes, they probably won't be as big as we are. But in my league, you can't beat anybody with little folks. We go up against kids 5-6, 230 — all the time."

FACT SHEET
WHAT: Class B regional championship football game.
WHO: Farmington Harrison (9-1) vs. Detroit Northern (6-2).
WHERE: 1:30 p.m. Saturday.
WHERE: Westland John Glenn, on Marquette between Wayne and Newburgh roads.
HOW MUCH: \$2.
WHAT ELSE: Winner advances to the Class B semifinal round at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21, at First Alwood Stadium against either Marysville or Okemos.

Said Harrison coach John Herrington: "There isn't much you can do to overcome the size disadvantage. The problem is, they will line up real tight, almost foot to foot, and it's hard to shoot through. We've never scrimmaged 1-10 in the full. They were just as big and we had some success, but this is a whole lot different. We will try to use our quickness as much as possible. We will try to control the line of scrimmage, not get blown off, so that our linebackers can have a chance to get at the backs."

DON'T GET the idea that Northern expects to walk all over the Hawks. Dean has a deep respect for Harrison and Herrington.

"They are tough," he said after watching the Hawks play Riverview last Saturday. "I thought they came off the ball well, they can run that power-I well when they have to, they throw the ball very well and their linebackers are tough. And I liked the character they showed once they got behind. They didn't panic, they just went to work."

And don't get the idea that Harrison will be intimidated by Northern. "Oh, no. Our kids believe they can win and we believe we can win," Herrington said. "We will have to play a lot better than we did against Riverview, though. We really blistered our kids for what we thought was less than a total effort in last week's game. And we just told them, 'Hey, unless you want to be playing basketball on Monday you better get it together right now.'"



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Scott Blasell was a workhorse on offense for Harrison last Saturday. His main objective may be on defense this week against a strong Detroit Northern team.

Surprisingly, Dean expects a defensive struggle on Saturday.

"They have a good defense and we like to think we do also," he said. "Offensively, we just have to take advantage of what happens — 99 percent of the time these games are decided on who takes the best care of the football."

John Dean summed up Saturday's game well when he said: "I would really like it to be a great football game. The hardest thing when you have two excellent teams like Harrison and Northern is that one has to lose this early in the tournament. It almost seems like this game should be played in the semifinals or finals."

C.J.
Risak

Lessons in sports, lessons through life

IT ISN'T FAIR.

Life, I mean. Which is why sport is the perfect teacher for the young. The best team doesn't always win, the game isn't always decided in the playing arena, and outstanding effort isn't always enough for the scoreboard.

High school athletes, take note: Your parents know this. So do your coaches. They know what's at stake at state tournament time. It's no secret. They'd like to make you understand the savage consequences of history.

Ten years from now, when you run into an old chum and high school memories start flowing, then you'll understand. Your buddy will remember you lost in the state playoffs. He won't remember why. You will. Like it was yesterday.

History can bend somewhat to the will of memory, but facts cannot be changed. Who won and who lost are facts. Why a team lost is an excuse, and — no matter how accurate — excuses become more feeble with age.

Parents and coaches want you to understand this so you won't have any excuses. Excuses lead to regret. So concentrate on the immediate task, don't allow outside pressures to interfere, give an honest all-out effort, and then, whatever story the scoreboard tells, you'll know you've succeeded.

No regrets.

IT ISN'T FAIR.

Life's breaks can be devastating. Ask John Gelmis, the star forward for Schoolcraft College's soccer team. He was one of the state's top high school players at Livonia Stevenson. He knew the power of defeat; in his senior season at Stevenson, he was hurt in the Class A final against Troy Athens. Athens won.

Gelmis saw a good SC season suffer defeat in the NJCAA Inter-re-

gional finals last year. Like many of his teammates, that's why he returned to SC for a second season. He thirsted for revenge.

Now that thirst will go unquenched. In a conference playoff match last Saturday, Gelmis burst through the Macomb CC defense on a breakthrough. He had to be stopped. He was — with a vicious slide tackle that ended his season.

On Sunday, Gelmis underwent surgery. His right ankle was broken in two places. A metal plate was inserted with screws to aid the healing. He'll spend eight weeks on crutches. The plate will remain a minimum of four months.

"It will be hard to replace Johnny," was SC coach Van Dimitriou's reaction. And yet, it may be harder for Gelmis to replace what might have been his.

When a star player goes down, the team suffers. SC's chance to win this weekend in the Inter-regional have decreased sharply. But what about the star?

For his part, Gelmis is handling his first major sports injury well. "I just can't worry about it," he said of the season that ended — for him — in one cheap tackle. "It's over. I just have to go on from here."

There's more, though. Gelmis was hoping to land a scholarship to a four-year college. Soccer scholarships are rare. A good performance in the NJCAA tournament would have showcased his talents.

"Now, I won't get any exposure to go anywhere else," he admitted. Such a serious injury further blinds his chances.

And yet, Gelmis is determined to play soccer again, probably at Michigan State. "I'd just want to play to see if I could," he said.

Ironically, his injury might never have happened were it not for an

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Schwedt: Hawks' hit man

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Farmington Harrison's "Fordson kid" knows all about pressure. He has faced it, responded to it, thrived on it all season.

The Fordson kid is the young man Harrison coach John Herrington relies on to make his defense work. The Fordson kid is the young man who will have his hands full trying to stop a powerful Detroit Northern offense in the Class B regional football championship Saturday at Westland John Glenn.

"Gary Schwedt has been playing great football for us, especially the last three or four weeks," Herrington said of his Fordson kid. "He will be crucial for us Saturday. With Northern's big offensive line, we don't expect our down linemen to make many stops. It's going to be up to the linebackers to step up and make the plays."

Herrington says that confidently; he has placed that burden on his linebackers all season and Schwedt and Jack Funkhouser have responded like champions.

Schwedt, a 6-0, 190-pound senior, has earned the reputation as Harrison's big-play man on the defense. For example, he came up with the key fumble recovery against Riverview last week stopping the Pirates four yards shy of a TD.

"WE CALL him our Fordson kid," Herrington said. "He hits like a Deaeron Fordson-style player. Hard."

Schwedt is anxiously looking forward to Saturday's challenge. "I think the whole team is a little psyched after our poor game last week," he said. "I think we kind of let down a little. We should have played a lot better."

He is also aware of the difficulty of his task Saturday. "They have a lot of big guys. We have to use our quickness," Schwedt said. "My job is to get by their big guys and stuff Mitchell." Arthur Mitchell is Northern's all-PSL running back.

IT'S BEEN somewhat of an odd



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Gary Schwedt is called Harrison's "Fordson kid" because of his penchant for making jarring tackles.

season for the Harrison defense. It gave up 23 points in its season opener to West Bloomfield, then closed the doors on its opponents the rest of the way.

"The biggest change was our attitude," Schwedt said. "Coach talked to us a lot about being tenacious. And that's the way we started playing. That first game, I think we were just wide-eyed. We went in there thinking we would win just because we were Harrison. We found out it

doesn't work that way." Schwedt will have an extra motivating factor working for him Saturday. Although he's had offers from several small colleges, he may not continue playing football after high school.

"The most important thing is to get a good education," he said. Since he may not play ball in college, he will be doing his darndest to extend his high school career on Saturday.

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