

Sports

Brad Emons, Dan O'Meara editors/591-2312



(F)1C

Monday, November 9, 1987 O&E

Jaguars find Hawks, Yaverski unstoppable

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Aaron Yaverski was the conductor, engineer and locomotive all rolled into one Saturday, and a reluctant Allen Park defense went along for a bumpy ride.

The big tailback ran through the Jaguars for 174 yards and three touchdowns as Farmington Harrison steamrolled host Allen Park 28-6 in the first round of the Class B state playoffs.

"The line was blocking real well, and we were just punching tickets all the way down the field," Yaverski said.

"I expected to receive a lot more hitting at the point of attack, but at the beginning of the game we were running right over them."

After the Hawks stopped Allen Park on three downs to start the game, Yaverski got the call on Harrison's first play and ripped off a 25-yard run. That seemed to set the tone for the afternoon, but the Hawks had to overcome some uncharacteristic mistakes before finishing off the Jaguars.

HARRISON, 9-1 overall, will play Monroe Catholic Central in the regional final at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Riverview High School. Allen Park suffered its only loss in a 9-1 season.

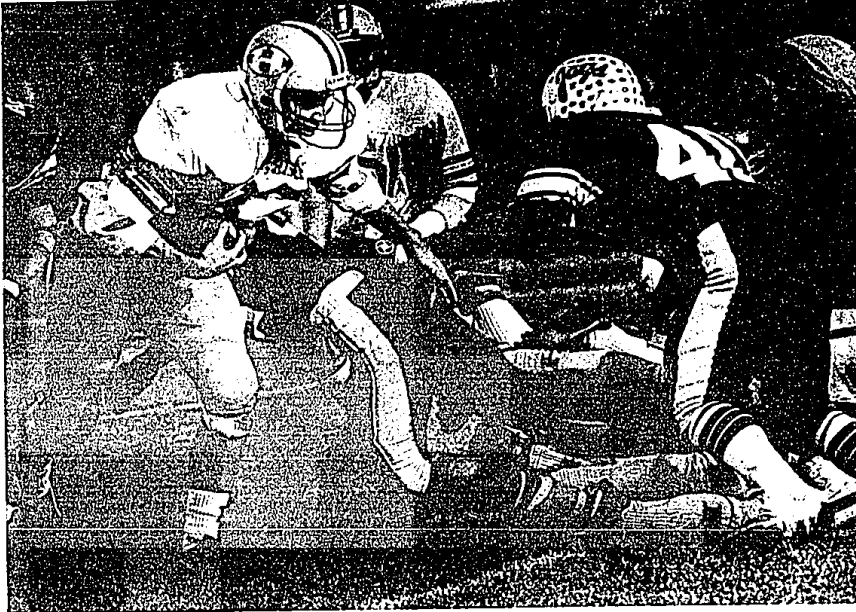
The Hawks had set a school record for fewest turnovers with seven in their previous nine games, but the Hawks committed five Saturday. The score might have been much worse since two turnovers canceled almost-certain touchdowns and Harrison had two second-half TDs called back because of penalties.

"It could have been, should have been, if we had executed better, but Allen Park hit hard and played well," Harrison coach John Herrington said.

"We were a little bit nervous and we had a few jitters. I'd say we were a little off our game. But not defensively, though."

No, the Hawks were their usual aggressive and opportunistic selves on defense.

HARRISON held the Jaguars to 65 yards net rushing and 185 in total offense, and Allen Park's only score came on an 88-yard kickoff return



THOMAS ANNETT/staff photographer

Aaron Yaverski dodges one tackler and lowers his shoulder in preparation for a collision with Allen Park's Mike Killburg (40) during Saturday's playoff game. Yaverski rushed for 174 yards

and three TDs on 38 carries as Harrison pounded the green-clad Jaguars 28-6.

by Ed Rankin. The Hawks also forced five Jaguar turnovers, three of which led to Harrison touchdowns. "Our defense has been outstanding all year," Herrington said. "The defense has only given up two rushing touchdowns all year, and we thought we could stop their running game."

Herrington would have a hard time convincing Allen Park coach

Ed Bellas the Hawks weren't up to par on offense, however. Quarterback Millard Coleman helped Harrison accumulate 238 yards rushing with 48 of his own, scored the other TD on a short run and passed for 114 yards.

"That is one fine football team that John Herrington has," Bellas said. "His defensive coordinator shut

down our offense, and John, with his offense, ran right through us."

"It was just brute force, and the blocking from that line was just tremendous."

"I'M SORRY we couldn't give Harrison a better game, but they have an excellent football team," he added.

The decisive point in the game came midway in the third quarter when Harrison noseguard Bob Hird caused a fumble that led to his team's third TD and a 22-6 lead.

Harrison's first two possessions of the second half were stopped by a fumble and an interception, giving the Jaguars the ball in Hawk territory each time. Furthermore, Coleman

had a 55-yard scoring run wiped out by a clipping penalty prior to the interception.

But, on first down for Allen Park, Hird got the ball back. Jaguar quarterback John Levertton cocked his arm pass, but the 5-foot-6, 155-pound Hird darted in, knocked the ball loose and recovered the fumble at the Hawk 44-yard line.

"That was a real key play by Hird," Herrington said. "That might have given them momentum (if Allen Park could have capitalized on the interception)."

HARRISON then had an 11-play drive that put the game out of reach. The Hawks had a 15-yard touchdown pass from Coleman to Chad Burgess nullified by an illegal motion penalty, but Harrison moved it in closer for Yaverski to power over from the 1 with :57 left in the quarter.

The Jaguars tried a trick pass play in the fourth quarter, but Brian Soeder's crumpling hit caused a fumble that led to another 11-play, grind-it-out drive and Yaverski's 3-yard scoring run with 2:14 remaining.

"He was a pretty dominant runner today," said Herrington of Yaverski, who also scored on a 4-yard run in the first half. "After we went to the power-I, we were able to blast it down the field."

The Hawks turned Chris Cox' fumble recovery into a 7-0 lead at 1:57 in the second period. Coleman passed 35 yards to Steve Bissell, and a face-mask penalty — Allen Park was plagued by first-half infractions — put the ball on the Jaguar 4 and set up Yaverski's first TD.

Jeff Skinner then sacked Levertton for a 7-yard loss and forced an Allen Park punt, and the Hawks had 50 yards to go for a 15-0 lead. Coleman dashed the final 5 yards, breaking his fall with his left hand and lunging over with the ball in his right hand, and then passed to Joe Lichtenberger for two points.

Rankin ran back the ensuing kick to keep it close at halftime, 15-6. But the Hawks were denied twice when Dave LaBrecque intercepted Coleman in the end zone and Yaverski had the ball knocked loose at the goal line.

Catholic Central stalls Tractors

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Redford Catholic Central continued its mastery over Dearborn Fordson in the state football playoffs, pounding out a 14-7 victory Saturday over the host Tractors before an overflow crowd.

It was the third meeting between the two schools. CC beat the Tractors in 1979 en route to the state Class A title and again in 1985.

Both teams lived up to the pre-game hype, each displaying hard-hitting defenses with run-oriented offenses.

But it will be CC (9-1) moving into the finals of Region IV to meet unbeaten Sterling Heights, a 37-6 winner in another pre-regional game Saturday over Detroit Public School League champion Chadsey High.

"It was the exactly the same type of game both of us expected," said CC coach Tom Mach. "Both teams were running up and down the field."

"I thought both teams played well. I'm just happy we won."

CC CONTROLLED things in the first half, outgaining the Tractors in total yardage, 124-27.

But the Shamrocks couldn't be comfortable despite a 7-0 lead at intermission.

CC's 200-pound junior fullback Lee Krueger, who led the Shamrocks with 76 yards rushing in 20 carries, scored the game's first touchdown on a 1-yard run with 11:10 left in the second quarter. (Petie Elezovic added the extra point.)

With 8:20 left in the half, CC's Chris Kovath intercepted Scott Szalkowski's pass at the Fordson 45.

And it appeared the Shamrocks were ready to increase their lead, marching down to the Tractors' 15. But the drive stalled when Fordson's Bill Lakin intercepted Scott Hauncher's pass at the goal line.

CC, however, stormed right back, moving down to the Fordson 6, but Elezovic's 23-yard field goal try sailed under the crossbar.

Afterward, Mach second-guessed himself for kicking instead of going for the first down on a fourth-and-1 play.

"We talked a lot about it," he said. "Normally I wouldn't make that call, but our field goal kicker has been consistent all year."

FORDSON COACH Charlie Justice, to say the least, was not at all pleased with his team's first-half performance. But he felt lucky to be only down seven at the half.

"Our kicking hurt us in the first half, giving them tremendous field position," he said. "We also had a couple of 15-yard penalties, which didn't help."

Fordson appeared to be a different team in the second half. The Tractors had the ball 10 of the 12 minutes in the third period.

The Tractors marched 58 yards in 13 plays on their first possession of the second half, but were stopped short of a first down on fourth-and-6 at the CC 21 when Szalkowski's pass eluded the finger tips of tight end Andy Zaitkevich.

But Tractors got the ball back in three plays and scored with 11 seconds left in the quarter, a 14-yard TD pass from Szalkowski to Ron Rahal.

Sam Salame added the extra point and it was a brand new ballgame, 7-14.

"It was the lengths of those drives which surprised me, but not the way they moved the ball," said Mach. "We had missed a couple of opportunities in the first half, but once they started driving I told our team we had to get the ball back and drive it ourselves."

THE WINNING POINTS came as a result of a turnover.

CC back-up quarterback Dave Hallway, inserted into the game to throw a halfback pass, was

intercepted at the Fordson 20.

But on the very next play the Tractors' Fouda "Walker" Zaban coughed up the ball on his own 14, as Erik Knuth, CC's outstanding nose guard, made the crucial recovery with 9:10 left in the game.

And the Shamrocks wasted little time in scoring as Krueger carried it four straight times, capped by his 1-yard TD plunge with 7:11 left. Elezovic added the kick to make it 14-7.

Fordson got the ball back two more times, but the Tractors were stopped by the stubborn CC defense.

Zaban, Fordson's leading ground gainer all season, was held to 35 yards in 23 carries. The Shamrocks, in fact, allowed only 132 total yards while gaining 176 themselves.

"We played only one good quarter and they played three good ones and one poor one — CC deserved to win," said Justice, whose team finished with a 9-1 record. "We just didn't block. They (CC) aligned in some different formations and we couldn't seem to find the right man to block. Their No. 88 (Knuth) hurt us a lot, and with the fumbles, you can't beat anybody playing like that."

"BUT CC IS AN outstanding team and it will be interesting to see how far they go."

Knuth, a 6-foot-2, 230-pound senior, again was the catalyst for CC's sterling defense.

"He's a great one . . . he goes both ways and when we need a great play, he gives it to us," said Mach.

Another player who helped key the win was Hauncher, the Shamrocks' rangy quarterback.

Although he was intercepted twice and completed only one pass, the 6-6 junior seems to have gained confidence during the latter stage of the season.



STEVE FECHT/staff photographer

Catholic Central's Lou Yeager (left) looks to the bench while celebrating a first-quarter score of Fordson quarterback Scott Szalkowski during Saturday's regional football game.

It's over! Harrison girls halt losing streak

The monkey is finally off their collective backs.

No, that sounds too simple. It doesn't accurately reflect the strain and burden the Farmington Harrison Hawks girls basketball team has endured.

Better make that the weight of the world, instead.

"You got that right," said Hawks coach Jim Neve after the Hawks ended the state's longest losing streak one game shy of the century mark Saturday.

"I've never seen 10 girls cry as hard as they did; they were so happy. It was unbelievable. I can't explain it."

THE HAWKS, who were 0-17 this season,

had not won a game in four years and were winless in their last 99 outings, put an end to the dreaded streak with a 34-31 victory over Livonia Churchill in the Western Lakes playoffs at Plymouth Salem.

"They lost for so long," Neve said, "but they took it like professionals when they won."

"They hugged each other and shook hands with the other team. They didn't embarrass anybody, or make the other team look bad, by whooping it up."

Neve said each of his players rose earlier Saturday morning to attend a 7:15 a.m. team

basketball

breakfast. It was to be a time of preparation for their 10 a.m. game as well, and Neve said he could tell his team was eager to play.

"They played their hearts out," he said. "They did the whole thing. I just sat there and called a few timeouts."

"THEY WANTED IT so bad they could

taste it. They came out on the floor and said 'We feel confident.'"

"I'm just so happy for the girls," he added. "I can't express to you what was there (emotionally) on the sideline when they won."

The Hawks led 12-11 at halftime, extended that to 25-19 after three quarters and were in front by nine points with two minutes remaining.

But then Churchill's Dawn Gabriele hit a three-point shot, "and I said, oh, boy, here it goes," Neve said. "But we got it up court and just stalled the time out."

Lesley Devine sank three three-point field goals herself and led the Hawks with 11 points, and Karen Najarian scored 10.

LaNell Shoemaker had 15 rebounds and Darcy Pimzl 10.

GABRIELE had seven points and Gretchen Lloyd 10 caroms for the Chargers, who had beaten Harrison 27-25 on Oct. 27.

"There was never a time when one girl turned against another (during the losing streak)," Neve said. "If one was down, someone patting her on the back."

"I look upon each one of those girls as though they're mine," he added. "I say to their parents 'I know they're your daughters, but I think of them as my daughters, too.'"

— Dan O'Meara