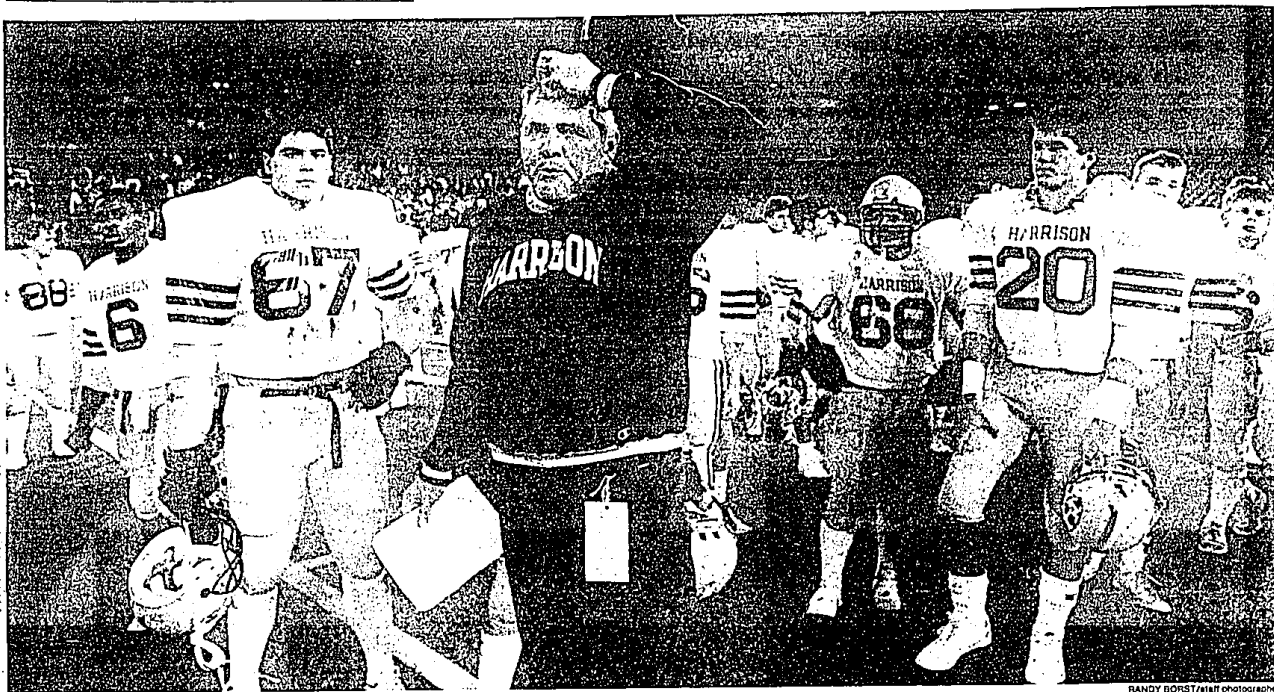




Coach John Herrington and the Hawks depart the sideline at the conclusion of the Class B championship game with Grand Rapids Catholic Central. The Hawks suffered a 19-7 defeat, but

nonetheless enhanced their football reputation by making their fourth appearance in a state final. Harrison has played in two Class A finals and two in Class B. Players in the foreground

include Millard Coleman (6), Jim Addis (67), John Kennedy (68) and Steve Hill (20).

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Hawks reflect on season

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"I feel the juniors we have coming back can step in and pick up where the seniors left off," Herrington said.

One of the seniors was Rick Witte, who stepped back from the spotlight after suffering a broken arm in the fourth game, but he was not forgotten. He dressed for all the playoff games and walked to midfield with fellow tri-captains Cox and Bonasso for the coin toss prior to each game.

But having to watch from the sideline was difficult. Witte began the year as the starting tailback and was off to a good start before being felled by the injury.

"It really tore the young man apart," Herrington said. "He played varsity as a sophomore and got beat up by the seniors, and he had a good junior year and was expecting a super senior year."

DESPITE THE lack of experienced players, Herrington was confident going into the season. After 17 years as Harrison's head coach and knowing the talent available, he knew what he could expect and saw possibilities.

"With the players we had coming back, we expected to have a good team," he said. "Once (quarterback) Mill (Coleman) came in and we saw what he could do, I thought we had a chance of going to the Silverdome."

"That sounds cocky, but that's really the way I felt." The Hawks were the No. 2-rated team in Class B behind Dearborn Divine Child going into the season, he added.

If there was any doubt, the first game — a 38-6 rout of Southfield — was a foretelling of the kind of season the Hawks could expect.

"We felt Southfield had some great athletes, and I didn't know if we could win that game or not," Herrington said.

"THEY HAD some players (such as running back Bobby Johnson) I didn't know if we could stop. When we did and scored 38 points on their defense, I felt we were going to have a fine team."

Herrington and his coaching staff face another major task of reconstructing the offense and defense during the winter months. Included in that group of 21 seniors are eight offensive starters and nine defensive regulars.

But one encouraging point is the players responsible for Harrison's most effective weapon — the passing attack — will be back next year. Coleman has two more years ahead of him, and his top receivers, Chad Burgess and Bryan Wauldon, were juniors this fall.

"It makes for a nice winter," Herrington said, with a broad smile. "We've got to find some people to protect them, and I think we can build a strong running game around (sophomore tailback) Matt Conley, too."

"WE HAVE A lot of players ready to step in," he added. "Some could have played this year. We'll need to rebuild the line and defensive secondary."

Tackle Jeff Skinner and safety Burgess are the only defensive starters who will be back next season, which will be the 19th for Herrington, who has compiled a 140-39-1 record at Harrison, including a 79-10 mark in this decade.



Herrington consoles quarterback Millard Coleman at the conclusion of Saturday's game. Unlike the 21 seniors on the ballclub, Coleman, a

sophomore All-Stater, and the other underclassmen will have another chance next year.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The seniors formed the core of the '87 squad, but Coleman received much of the publicity due to the position he played and his sophomore status. But he was accepted immediately by the other players.

"He came here with a total team attitude," senior Wes Wood said. "With the way he played this year, he did his all for the team."

"Personally, he's very humble, and the kids really like him," Herrington said. "Because he's a sophomore, he still had to do a lot of the things sophomores do like carrying the equipment."

HERRINGTON FIRST saw Coleman perform while watching him on

video tape last spring. A month later Millard Coleman Sr. told Herrington the family would be moving into the Harrison district, and that made the veteran coach very happy.

Coleman ended up passing for 2,093 yards, giving him more than 3,500 in two years, including his freshman year at Albion High School. He completed 121 of 205 attempts, 17 for touchdowns, in his first season as a Hawk.

"The first day he practiced with us you could see the talent he had," Herrington said. "The other kids knew he could be a winner for us. There was never any animosity."

"I've been in it 26 years, and I've never seen a boy with his poise. He

sees the whole field, has a rifle arm and puts the ball right on the money."

Opposing coaches who saw their defenses picked apart by Coleman's passing and the Harrison aerial show also took note of Coleman's ability.

"He's the finest quarterback I've seen for a young man just 15 years old," Allen Park coach Ed Bellas said.

"What's unbelievable to me is that he's only a sophomore," Marysville coach Walt Braun said. "Harrison, with him at quarterback, will be tough the next two years."

"Maybe he'll transfer to Marysville."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Harrison's Bob Hird, Brian Soeder and Jim Fowles put pressure on Cougar quarterback Jim Passineault.



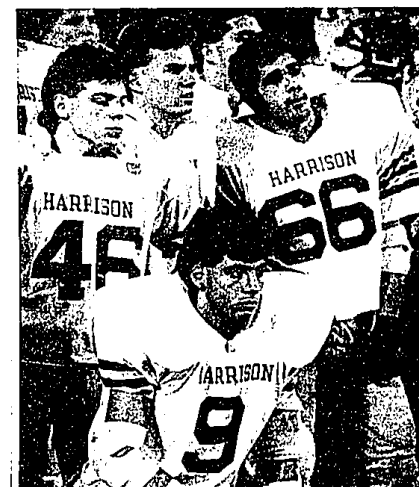
RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Senior linebacker Larry Turner looks exhausted after a hard-played game.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Emotions were difficult to suppress, as the reaction of Harrison's Chad Burgess indicates. The dream of a state championship went unfulfilled with the loss to GRCC.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A subdued group of Harrison players watch the action from the Pontiac Silverdome sideline. The Hawks made the playoffs for the sixth time in the last eight seasons.