

Sports

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Bryan Wauldron tries to break a tackle and pick up additional yardage after making one of his three pass receptions. The senior tight end

was Harrison's leading receiver with 58 receiving yards.

JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Harrison gridders enjoy winning debut

By Marty Budner
staff writer

There are always high expectations surrounding the Harrison High School football program, considered by many as one of the state's best. Jason Lichtman made sure those expectations were met in Saturday's opening game against Southfield as Harrison cruised to a 25-12 triumph.

Let's set the scene. Visiting Southfield, which has a few high hopes of its own, stunned Hawk fans by taking a surprisingly quick 6-0 lead before the game was two minutes old.

However, on the ensuing kick off, Lichtman returned the ball a school record 95 yards to tie the score. Just like that, Southfield's momentum was gone and the game eventually eased back into Harrison's tempo as the 1988 edition of Hawk football unfolded triumphantly.

"We had a middle-wedge return set up. I went right up the middle and everything just opened up," said Lichtman, a 5-10 senior who also played a fine defensive game. "I wasn't sure I could outrun (Southfield's players). It was the first time I ever ran back a kick off for a touchdown. It was exciting."

The game began with a flurry, much to explosive Southfield's liking.

THE BLUE JAYS kicked off and Harrison took control of the ball at its own 28-yard line. On their first offensive play of the season, highly-touted junior quarterback Millard Coleman threw a sideline pass that was intercepted by Southfield's Chris Beatty.

Beatty returned the interception 27 yards to the Hawks 6-yard line. Southfield speedster Bobby Johnson scored two plays later for the quick 6-0 advantage.

The Blue Jays got the early break

football

they wanted. But with his exciting run back, Lichtman made certain Southfield's edge didn't last long.

"We thought we could move the ball on Southfield, but then they scored on us right away," said Harrison coach John Herrington. "With only three starters returning (on offense), the first thing you want to do is make sure the kids don't get down."

"I was surprised he (Lichtman) ran away from some of those Southfield players," he said. "I didn't know he was that fast. That run back got us right back into the game."

Lichtman's touchdown provided the Hawks with the spark they needed. They controlled most of the second quarter and took an 18-6 halftime lead. It could have been more.

Harrison marched inside Southfield's 10-yard line on all four of its possessions that quarter but settled for just 12 points as the Blue Jays defense hung tough.

JUNIOR STEVE HILL booted a pair of field goals, from 31 and 20 yards away, and Coleman tossed a 21-yard pass to senior Chad Burgess with 33 seconds left before halftime.

"I thought we fell asleep twice in the game," said Southfield coach Cal Fletcher. "One time was on that kick-off return and the other was when they scored right before halftime."

"Other than that, I thought it was a pretty good game," he said. "But they just dominated us at the line of scrimmage and that's where the game is still won or lost."

The second half was pretty uneventful.

Harrison scored on a short 3-yard run by senior Rob MacDonald, who got plenty of help on the touchdown from his offensive line. Hill kicked the extra point to make it a 25-6 game.

Southfield's offense only penetrated into Harrison territory once over the final two quarters. That occurred late in the fourth quarter against the Hawks second-string defense.

The Blue Jays' final touchdown came with 1:54 left in the game when defender Donald Blackmon intercepted back-up quarterback Craig Murray's pass and ran it back 77 yards.

"We knew Harrison was a good club. We thought we could play with them," said Fletcher. "They just came up with a few bigger plays than we did. I'm not happy that we lost, but I saw a few good things out there today."

Southfield gained only 160 total yards against the tough Harrison defense. Senior tailback Bobby Johnson rushed for 62 yards in 14 attempts. Senior quarterback Darzell led all receivers with three catches for 23 yards.

Coleman completed seven of 16 passes for 111 yards and was Harrison's leading rusher with 88 yards. MacDonald gained 73 yards on 14 carries. Senior Bryan Wauldron led all receivers with three catches for 56 yards.

On the downside for Harrison, starting tailback Matt Conley hurt his knee in the first half and did not play the rest of the game.

"We didn't control the ball the way we would have liked. We missed a few chances, especially there in the second quarter," said Herrington. "But this is a good team."

And this could be another good year for Harrison football fans.

Raiders pounce on Lathrup miscues

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The storm clouds hanging over ahead never did break loose Saturday, but Southfield Lathrup's football team still had that rain-soaked feeling.

The Chargers saw their chances swept away by a flood of third-quarter turnovers and an opportunistic North Farmington ballclub in the non-league opener.

The host Raiders, led by tailback Joe Sturtz, scored on their first four possessions of the second half and buried Lathrup 36-11.

The 5-foot-10, 190-pound Sturtz enjoyed an outstanding senior debut as he scored four North touchdowns and rushed for 134 yards on 19 carries.

"We came into this game with a lot of confidence," said Sturtz, who spearheads what coach Jim O'Leary promised would be an improved ground game.

"I HAVE TO credit the offensive line. We came a long way over the summer, sweating and working hard together. We're looking forward to a great season."

Lathrup coach Darrell Harper, who saw

his team make three turnovers times in the third quarter, thinks the Raiders have a bright future, too.

But he was more concerned with what his team did to let the game — the Chargers were down 10-3 at halftime — get away from it. Two fumbles and an interception opened the door for North to quickly extend its lead to 30-3.

"We played a half," Harper said. "You can't do that. That's a good football team. I wouldn't be surprised if they go 5-1."

O'Leary certainly had to be pleased with what he saw. The Raiders, though they had only one lengthy TD drive, pitted up 281 rushing yards, and quarterback Mike Filipovich offered a nice complement as he was 6-of-11 passing for 105 yards.

"We didn't have a lot of breakdowns other than the turnovers (early in the game)," said O'Leary, recalling the Raiders had difficulty mounting an offense in 1987.

NORTH NEEDED some big defensive plays and some fourth-quarter points to escape with a 17-7 win over the Chargers a year ago.

"That's something we self-destructed on

football

last year," O'Leary said. "We failed to score 11 times inside the 10."

"Considering the way we won the game last year, this was a lot more fun."

In contrast to the way things turned out, it was North that had trouble in the early stages. Filipovich's first pass was intercepted, and a fumble, which gave the Chargers the ball at North's 30-yard line, led to Marty Giragosian's 33-yard field goal.

"We were a little tight in the first half, which surprised me a little because they're all upperclassmen," O'Leary said. "But they've been so anxious to get the season going."

"Even though we were down 3-0, I knew we could move the ball because they didn't stop us."

NORTH'S LONGEST drive of the day, from its own 25, resulted in Sturtz' first TD, a 2-yard plunge, on the first play of the sec-

ond quarter. Another drive stalled at Lathrup's 9, and Zaim Cumulaj booted a 25-yard field goal to make it 10-3.

Then disaster befell the Chargers as turnovers and North TDs rained down on them.

Lathrup fumbled away the second-half kickoff, Giragosian had a third-down pass picked off by sophomore Chris White and his third attempt to get something started was cut short by another fumble.

Sturtz capped the short drives of 34, 35 and 27 yards with the rest of his scoring runs.

Two were impressive efforts as he charged 18 yards up the middle, breaking three tackles along the way, and sprinted 17 yards around left end. The third, which came with 4½ minutes still to play in the third, was a 1-yard dive.

"If we don't fumble the kickoff and go down and score, it's 10-10," Harper said. "But, suddenly, it's 17-3 and that's a big difference. That turned the whole ball game around."

LATHRUP'S ONLY TD came on James Phillips' 23-yard run, and Giragosian passed to Rob Dohring for two. Filipovich capped

the scoring at 7:47 in the fourth with a 4-yard keeper.

Jerry Hakala was North's leading receiver with three catches for 75 yards. One set up the first TD, and the other two put the Raiders on the 2 when they had to settle for the field goal. White made two receptions for 34 yards.

"Hakala can block, too," said O'Leary of the 180-pound swingback. "He can knock you on your butt and still get out there and catch a pass. And we ran him 6-7 times, too, which is unusual."

Giragosian was 4-of-12 passing for 31 yards and had two interceptions. The Chargers had 148 yards rushing with Phillips gaining 63 on 11 carries.

"We're better than we showed," Harper said. "We showed in spurts what we can do, but we only played a half."

Defensive back Bryant Windham, however, was a definite bright spot in the coach's estimation.

"He made every tackle in the second half, or so it seemed," Harper said. "Thank goodness he was there; they might have gotten two more (TDs). I think we found a player in Bryant Windham."

Lakers shut out Falcons

By Bill Parker
staff writer

It wasn't a very warm homecoming for Farmington graduate Rick Milhizer.

In his first game as head coach of the Farmington football program, Milhizer saw his troops "self-destruct" Saturday and drop the 1988 season opener to visiting West Bloomfield, 19-0.

"That's not what I expected," said Milhizer after the game. "Those were two equal teams. They just outperformed us. We self-destructed. We didn't give ourselves a chance to win it."

The Falcons hurt themselves on the first drive of the game, turning the ball over on a fumble at their own 41-yard-line.

The Lakers took full advantage of the opportunity six plays later when junior quarterback Tom Harden connected with junior tight end Matt Linnell on a 27-yard touch down pass. Farmington's Chris Adams blocked the extra point attempt holding the Lakers to a 6-0 lead.

EARLY IN the second quarter West Bloomfield cashed in another Falcon foul up when junior defensive tackle Bob Hack snatched an errant Farmington pass and sprinted 15 yards to pay dirt. The PAT was good as West Bloomfield padded the lead to 13-0.

Offensively the Falcons were stymied throughout the game. Farmington produced just 25 yards of total offense in the first half and they turned the ball over three times.

"It wasn't pretty. We're very fortunate to get out of this one like we did," said West Bloomfield coach Joe Brandell, who was making his debut as the Laker head coach. "The defense really showed a lot of character. (The defensive coaches) did a nice job. The kids were well prepared. Defense was our strong point today, that's why we won the game."

Running back Mike Lefebvre was also a strong point for the Lakers. The 5-11, 190-pound junior gained 153 yards on 23 carries and scored one touch down while carrying much of the offensive load.

"Lefebvre was strong today," Brandell said. "I was pleased with the way he ran the ball. But we have to add another dimension to our game plan. We can't rely on our tailback to win football games."

FARMINGTON PUT its only real drive together midway through the third quarter.

The Falcons marched 35 yards on 13 plays, but the drive stalled at the Laker 30 on an incomplete pass on fourth-and-nine.

On the day, Farmington recorded just three first downs and 64 yards of total offense.

The Lakers added some insurance in the fourth quarter.

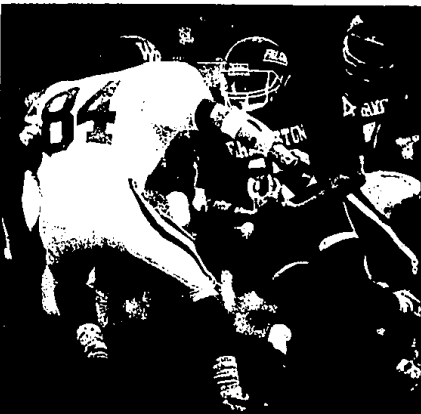
Starting at their own 20 with 10:28 remaining in the game, West Bloomfield marched 80 yards in 18 plays, and more important, ran 7:23 off the clock. Lefebvre, who carried eight times for 46 yards on the drive, capped the drive with a one-yard touchdown plunge.

Adams blocked his second extra point of the game on the ensuing PAT.

"For a first game with a new system, I'm cautiously pleased," Brandell said. "We were on schedule enough to win. We'll have to play better next week than we did this week if we want to survive. We play Rochester next week and they were the preseason pick (to win the league). Next week we'll see how much we grew up."

Milhizer had similar feelings about the needs of his team, which faces Farmington Harrison next week.

"The first game with a new system is always tough," Milhizer said. "We'll have to be improved next week. If we eliminate the mistakes and give ourselves a chance to win I think we'll be all right."



THOMAS ARNETT/staff photographer

Pet Bernhardt attempts to elude a West Bloomfield defender in the season opener, which saw the visiting Lakers win 19-0.