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(F)10

Big, bad Bears stand in way of Hawks

Harrison seeks 3rd state crown

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The rallying cry for the Farmington Harrison football team this week is "Don't settle for second place."

The Hawks plan to take care of unfinished business, as they see it, when they return to the Pontiac Silverdome and the Class B championship game for the second year in a row Saturday.

What appears to be a classic matchup pits No. 1-rated Harrison, runner-up to Grand Rapids Catholic Central last year, against No. 2-ranked St. Joseph at 8 p.m.

"We know from having been there it's a big difference between being first and the runner-up," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "There's no comparison, and (his players) want to be state champions."

Should the Hawks attain that goal, it would be their third state title, having won back-to-back honors in 1981-82. St. Joseph made its fourth playoff appearance this year, but the Bears will make their first trip to the final.

BOTH TEAMS are 12-0, were champions of all-Class A leagues and, on paper at least, offer contrasting styles of play.

The high-scoring Hawks fit the role of a finesse team with quarterback Mill Coleman and his gifted receivers passing opponents silly. The Bears are big, physical and, in a manner befitting their nickname, have mauled opposing teams with a powerful rushing attack.

"For the most part, that's what we

"(The St. Joseph Bears) look like the Chicago Bears. I think they came across the lake and landed in St. Joe."

— John Herrington
Harrison football coach

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do," said St. Joseph Ike Muhlenkamp, adding its his biggest team in 21 years at the school. "Traditionally, we have some big ones but not as many."

St. Joseph's offensive line averages 222 pounds — a huge figure by high school standards — and the front seven on defense weigh in at 200 pounds per man.

"They look like the Chicago Bears," Herrington said. "I think they came across the lake and landed in St. Joe."

The Bears are led by tight end-linebacker Rob Fredrickson, who is being recruited by many of the Big Ten schools. Defensive tackle Bruce Modigell and linebacker Marty Bingham are the other tri-captains and team leaders, and the offensive line is anchored by Colin Cronin (6-7, 225) and Eric Robinson (6-2, 280).

"OBVIOUSLY, WE'LL have to rely on our quickness," Herrington said. "We've played big teams before. We just have to make sure they

don't dominate the line of scrimmage and control the football on us."

Herrington said the Bears are comparable to Southfield in terms of size and a little bigger than Westland John Glenn, which ran an offense similar to St. Joseph's.

"It's not how big they are, but how good they are," he added. "It's how much heart you have and how tough you can play every down, and these (Harrison) kids play well on every down."

The Bears have a couple of big backs to key their running game, too. Tailback Scott Hurley, the workhorse with 267 attempts, has rushed for 1,273 yards and 11 touchdowns, and fullback Todd Fechner has carried 129 times for 691 yards and 14 scores.

In St. Joseph's seminal victory over Frankmunth, Hurley had a school-record 37 carries and career-high 161 yards, improving on the 33 and 158 numbers he had the previous week against Battle Creek Harper Creek.

Aside from Jeff Skinner and Dale Katz, the Hawks give up a lot in size but have been effective on defense because of their overall quickness.

"WE HAVE TO be able to jam them at the point of attack and have our linebackers playing tough," Herrington said. "If Hurley bounces it out, we'll need good play from (defensive backs Rob) MacDonald and (Jason) Lichtenhan."

Both teams are led by quarterbacks who are nearly identical in size and style. But St. Joseph's Ebon

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Scott Nichols dives but can't reach a pass from Mill Coleman in Harrison's 42-7 drubbing of Avondale in the Class B semifinals.

FARMINGTON HARRISON		
25	Southfield	12
41	Farmington	0
35	Northville	14
38	Livonia Franklin	0
38	Walled Lake Western	0
62	Plymouth Canton	14
45	Livonia Churchill	0
45	Westland John Glenn	7
55	West Bloomfield	0
PLAYOFFS		
32	Clawson	0
35	Riverview	0
42	Auburn Hills Avondale	7
493	12-0-0	54
ST. JOSEPH		
13	Dowagiac	7
28	Kalamazoo Central	7
33	Niles	0
30	Benton Harbor	7
21	Battle Creek Central	14
49	Portage Northern	7
28	Kalamazoo Loy-Norris	6
21	Portage Central	14
46	South Haven	19
PLAYOFFS		
13	GR West Catholic	7
20	BC Harper Creek	14
318	Frankmunth	102
318	12-0-0	102



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Rob MacDonald looks for running room against Avondale. MacDonald is one of many seniors who have filled starting roles effectively this year.

Success the norm for Hawks

AS ANYONE WHO knows high school football in Michigan to name the state's top programs, and they'll undoubtedly list Farmington Harrison as having one of them.

The Hawks are perennially among the top-rated teams, and that hasn't changed whether they were in Class B or Class A.

There are a lot of reasons for Harrison's continued success, a primary one being continuity in the coaching staff.

Not only has John Herrington (152-40-1) been head coach throughout the school's 19-year history, but assistants Bob Sutter and Bob Sallow have been with him all the way, too.

But, first and foremost, it takes players, and the Hawks also seem to have them. One group leaves, another steps forward and the rate of success remains constant.

"Sometimes I wonder, 'How are we ever going to build an offensive line? We just don't have the players,'" Herrington said. "Then they turn into seniors and play with that Hawk pride."

"IT'S HAPPENED so many times I'm not amazed anymore, but I always wonder."

Harrison's success is due in part to the fact Herrington and his coaches never stop working, planning from one year to the next. That has re-



Dan O'Meara

sulted in a program that combines a few exceptional athletes with a lot of good ones, mixes in a long-established tradition for winning and keeps producing champions.

This year's club is a classic example. Harrison lost 21 seniors and starters at 17 positions to graduation from its 1987 team that was 11-1 and runner-up in Class B. Yet the Hawks are back in the state championship game, boasting a 12-0 record and starting 12 seniors at 18 positions.

Many of the juniors who were spectators in last year's 19-7 loss to Grand Rapids Catholic Central will be in the front line of action at 8 p.m. Saturday in the Pontiac Silverdome when Harrison plays St. Joseph.

When the Hawks won their first state championship in 1981, they had only one junior, Dave Blackmer, in the starting lineup. And, with only one starter returning in 1982, Harrison won again despite moving up to Class A, to boot.

"WE ALWAYS prefer to go with seniors," Herrington said. "If the seniors are really good, the juniors get to play against them every day in practice."

"These kids who will be playing in the Silverdome played against a great team every day last year. Plus, when we're winning, the juniors get a lot of playing time, and we expect them to come back strong next year."

Observer photographer Randy Borst snapped a photo of Harrison reserves on the sideline during the '87 final — their faces reflecting the immensity of that defeat — and this writer has occasionally recalled that frozen image during the course of the '88 season.

Jason Buchanan and Joe Hannawa were in that photo. They were in the background as far as playing time last year, but it became their time to contribute as seniors this fall. Buchanan and Hannawa play alongside each other on the defensive line, and they have played admirably for a unit that has stopped 12 straight opponents.

Harrison returned excellent skill players in quarterback Mill Coleman and receivers Chad Burgess and Bryan Wauldron, plus a rugged, veteran lineman in Jeff Skinner. Herrington and his staff molded another quality group of "program

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Hall leads Western cagers past North in tourney finale



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Donna O'Brien passes underneath Western's Arpil Blanton to a teammate waiting in the paint.

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

If it wasn't tossing in layups, Michelle Hall might be hawking peas in TV commercials.

The 6-foot-3 Walled Lake Western center towered above everybody on North Farmington, tossing in a game-high 35 points in the Warriors' 58-41 win over the Raiders Tuesday in a girls basketball district final at Walled Lake Central High School.

Walled Lake Western (13-9) moves on to regional play Tuesday against the winner of the Birmingham Seaholm district winner. North Farmington (14-9), well, there is always next season.

Really, the Raiders should hang their heads. Not because they played poorly, but to rest their necks after craning them all night to watch after Hall.

By the end of the first half, the senior center all ready had 17 points. She hit Walled Lake Western's first basket of the game and was on a tear from there.

In two regular season games, North Farmington had fairly good success at containing Hall. This

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