

Sports

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Hawks are state champions

Harrison hammers foe 44-9

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staff writer

To the very end, Farmington Harrison was still doing what it had done with ease all year — throw the football and pummel the opposition.

It was appropriate that, in the showcase event of the season Saturday night, the Hawks should win a state championship with the same tactics and efficiency that had taken them to the Class B final.

Harrison's fabulous passing combination of Mill Coleman to Bryan Wauldron dazzled the Silverdome crowd of 10,000-plus and spearheaded a 44-9 rout of St. Joseph.

Furthermore, a defense facing a huge offensive line muzzled the Bears' attack, and tailback Matt Conley offered an effective complement to the passing game with his running.

"We've won with defense when we were here before," said Harrison coach John Herrington, who guided the Hawks to their third state title in eight years, "and we did it with a combination today."

BUT THERE WAS no doubt Harrison's passing was the key, not after Coleman and Wauldron struck early for 71- and 72-yard scoring plays and had the Hawks in front all the way.

Not surprisingly with those kind of numbers, the all-starers subsequently set championship-game standards for passing and receiving.

Coleman, who connected on 75 percent of his passes (12-of-16), threw for a record 238 yards, and Wauldron, the tight end with flanker speed, caught five passes, including three for TDs, and a record 177 yards.

Ironically, both players broke the standards set by former Harrison players Ken Kish and John Miller in the Class A final of 1982, the school's last championship year.

Kish passed for 208 yards and Miller had 132 yards on five receptions



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

Mill Coleman scrambles for yardage while trying to elude St. Joseph's Tom Thorn in the Class B state championship game Saturday night. Harrison, making its second straight appearance in the final, gave Coleman good protection as he passed for a final-game record 238 yards and led the Hawks to a one-sided, 44-9 victory.

as the Hawks beat Dearborn Fordson 17-14 in double overtime six years ago.

"We wanted to approach this game like any other," Coleman said. "We wanted to stick with the basic plan."

COLEMAN, WHO DID the same thing against Northville during the

regular season and Clawson in the playoffs, threw the bomb to Wauldron on Harrison's first play from scrimmage, sending a shiver through the Bears and giving the Hawks a quick, 7-0 lead.

"Usually, we come out with these kind of plays and teams don't expect it right away," Coleman said. "We have such good receivers, and the

line has done a good job all year."

Wauldron, who intercepted St. Joseph quarterback Ebon Sanders in the top 4 Bears drive on the game's first series, got behind defenders Nick Wales and Ken Ruppel and used his speed to pull away.

"We get the defensive backs thinking they've got to stay back," said Herrington of his decision to throw

deep immediately. "It's a play where we can spread things out and see how they react to motion and play-action. So it's a good play to start with whether you hit it or not."

St. Joseph, however, made a game of it early, and the Hawks only led 14-9 at halftime.

The Bears moved the ball in the first half with Sanders — a dimin-

football

tive quarterback like Coleman but possessing the same quick feet and strong arm passing to his all-state tight end, Rob Fredrickson, and scrambling for yardage himself.

ST. JOSEPH COACH Ike Muhlenkamp said: "I told the referee before the game to 'Get ready to run, because this is a contest between two quarterbacks. We're here to have fun.'"

"I thought we'd loosen them up, so we could run. Otherwise, it was going to be a real head-knocker up front."

"I thought a couple passes on the first few drives would do it, but we just didn't expect (the lack of success running)."

While the Harrison offense was as prolific as usual, maintaining its average of 41 points per game, the defense won its battle with the St. Joseph offense, too.

The Hawks were tough against the run all year, allowing an average of just 55 yards, but the Bears entered the game with a rushing attack averaging 225.

Harrison limited St. Joseph to half of that (114), and third-string tailback Micah Burch ran for 32 yards of it on the last play of the game. St. Joseph's starting backs had just 31 yards combined, and tailback Scott Hurley, averaging 106 yards, was held to 19 on 10 carries.

"WE KNEW THEY could put points on the board, but I was concerned about their defense," Muhlenkamp said. "We just weren't able to run the ball and had to throw more than we wanted. They took us out of our game plan too much."

Finding success at stopping St. Joseph's ball-control ground game, the Hawks were surprised by Sanders' first-half passing.

He was 7-of-15 and passed for all of his 162 yards before halftime, including a 64-yard, first-down strike to Ruppel following Harrison's only punt.

"We bit on the option and let the guy go down the sideline on us," Herrington said.

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Quickness was key factor in Dome

THE CHEERS were subsiding in the Silverdome. The celebrants were already en route to victory parties flickering all over Farmington, like matches at a concert begging for an encore.

And why not an encore? Do you believe Farmington Harrison proved itself to have the best high school football team in the state Saturday?

The only thing the Hawks proved in their 44-9 rout of overmatched St. Joseph's was that no team in Class B was anywhere near their equal. It wasn't even close. In four playoff games leading to the B championship, Harrison outscored its opponents 153-16. That's an average score of 38-4.

So why quit now?

Anyone who watched the devastation in the 'Dome Saturday knows the margin of victory could have been wider. Heck, on his first two catches of the game, Bryan Wauldron had touchdowns covering 71 and 72 yards. In the opening quarter alone, he had two TDs on offense and an interception and fumble recovery on defense.

That's a season's worth of highlights for most players.

SO LET'S see who's really best. One more game. Harrison against Class A champion Traverse City.

Does Hawk coach John Herrington think his team could handle the big school champs? "I think we could this year," Herrington assessed. "But we only have 800 kids in our school (Traverse City has 2,300). We only had 18 players on our junior varsity."

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And how did they do? "They were undefeated," said Herrington. In fact, Harrison's freshmen team was also unbeaten. Harrison doesn't have a lot of kids, and those it has aren't very big. But they win, year in and year out.

Why? A very good reason is what proved to be the winning edge in both the A and B games Saturday: quickness instead of size.

Redford Catholic Central, which lost to Traverse City 24-14, put an offensive line on the field that outweighed the Trojan defensive front five by an average of more than 40 pounds per man (211 to 169). And yet Traverse City limited CC to 81 yards rushing (8.5 per carry).

"DEFENSIVELY, THEY played us real well," said Shamrock coach Tom Mach. "They were quick, fast. We couldn't block them. They had a real quick front three. All of our traps were negated by their front three."

CC quarterback Scott Haunacher's perspective: "It seemed on running plays, I'd hand off the ball and (defenders) would slip off their blocks and make the play."

Trojan coach Jim Ooley summed up his defensive team's winning the war in the trenches in three words: "Quickness and strength."

Herrington was less eloquent, but just as accurate, in his summation of his defensive team's dominance. "Quickness," was his explanation.

Harrison's defensive front was outweighed by an average of 222-193 — nearly 30 pounds a man.

"For our defensive people, that's what we look for — quickness," said Herrington. "And this is a talented group of players."

THAT'S TRUE. It's also true that both Harrison and Traverse City are extremely well coached by men with plenty of experience. Herrington is North Farmington's junior varsity coach for nine years (Farmington athletic director Ron Holland was the varsity coach) before arriving at Harrison 19 years ago. Ooley has coached at Traverse City for 35 years.

So what do we have? Two unbeaten teams that rely more on quickness and coaching than brute power. We also have two teams searching for opponents. Ooley has a hole in his non-league schedule next year, and he issued this challenge: "We'll play anyone, anytime, anywhere."

Herrington, too, has scheduling troubles. Class A schools were soundly thumped this season by the Class B Hawks, and West Bloomfield and Southfield want no more of it. That means he'll have to fill two spots in his schedule.

So how about it? How about an '89 Kickoff Classic between the state's top two teams? Seems like a match made in heaven. It'd be better to play it next week instead of next fall, of course, but better late than never.



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

Bryan Wauldron caught five passes for a championship-game record 177 yards. Three catches went for touchdowns, including the above play.

Marlins take 22nd straight league crown

Farmington Hills Mercy won its 22nd consecutive Catholic League swimming and diving championship on Sunday, Nov. 20, at Oakland Community College.

Team depth tipped the scales in favor of the Marlins, who prevailed over Royal Oak Shrine, which stayed close for a while but eventually faded. Mercy scored 378 points to Shrine's 240. Birmingham Marian was third with 230.

The Marlins dedicated their performance to the memory of former longtime Mercy coach and teacher Deloris Yager, who died Thursday, Nov. 17. She led the Marlins to their first league title and, with her 1978 team, the initial high school girls state championship.

Karen Neyer, who captured two events — the 50- and 100-yard freestyles — and anchored the winning medley relay team, led Mercy to league honors once again.

She was timed at 25.87 in the 50 free and 57.19

swimming

in the 100. The relay unit, which included Katie Westhoff, Katie Knipper and Liz DeMattia, posted a 1:56.08 time.

DeMattia, A JUNIOR, won the butterfly championship for the third straight year in 1:02.89, and Knipper, a freshman, captured the breaststroke in 1:51.84.

Mercy's last victory occurred in the freestyle relay in which Polly Tenuta, Michelle McCaffrey, Mary Quinn and Becky Wiquist won with a time of 3:51.80.

Westhoff, despite swimming her season-best time of 1:01.71, was touched out in the backstroke by Shrine's Audrey Janelle, who won that

event in 1:03.57 and also the individual medley in 2:20.24.

Harper Woods Regina's Ann Louise Francis was another double winner, taking the 200 and 500 freestyles in 2:00.19 and 5:13.27, respectively. The diving title went to Bridget Bailey of Marian with 308.64 points.

Other top-six finishers for Mercy were Cindy Grush, 200 and 500 free; Anne Lang, breast; Jennie Olmstead, 100 free; DeMattia, IM, Quinn, 50 and 100 free; Westhoff, butterfly; Wiquist, 200 and 500 free; McCaffrey, 200 and 500 free; Tenuta, 200 and 500 free; Joan Hollman, breast; Jenny Nelson, 50 and 100 free; Liz Myers, back and Knipper, IM.

The state championship meet is next for the Marlins, who will be well represented. Both relay teams qualified as did Grush, DeMattia, Neyer, Westhoff, Wiquist, Tenuta and Knipper in individual events.