

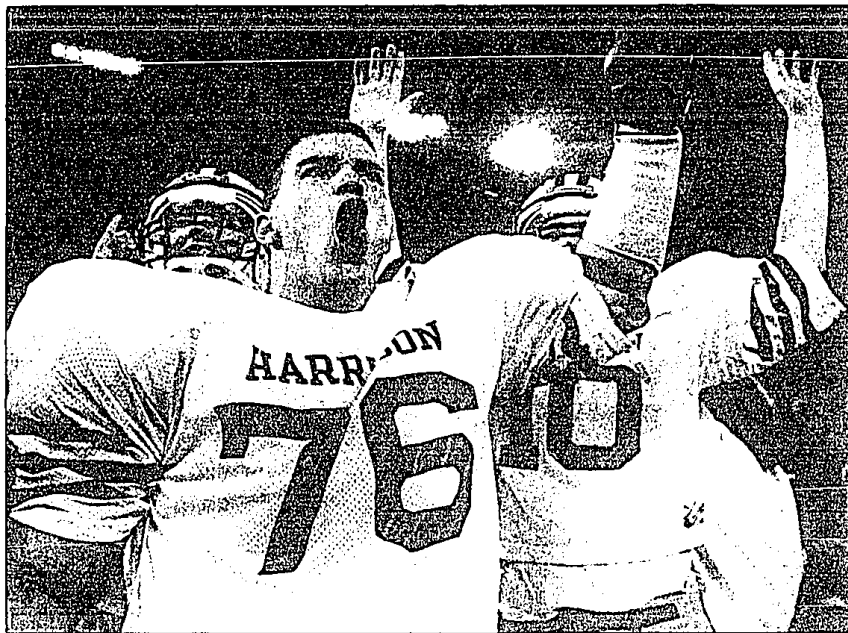
Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312



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Hawks end decade as state champs



RANDY BOST/Staff photographer

Harrison junior Todd Lytwynuk gets wrapped up in the emotion of the game Saturday night as the Hawks drive for the game-winning touchdown in the final two minutes of play. Harrison went 67 yards in 46 seconds and used five plays to move ahead

of DeWitt with 1:34 remaining and eventually win the Class B championship game 28-27. The Hawks finished the decade with four state titles.

'89 squad leaves behind win streak

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington Hills Harrison will remain a focal point in Michigan high school football despite the end of the Mill Coleman era.

Though the All-American quarterback and much of the talented group that surrounded him will graduate, the Hawks are certain to retain a share of the spotlight.

Besides being the defending Class B champion again, Harrison will begin a new season and enter a new decade with the state's longest winning streak — 26 consecutive games — next September.

That is the legacy of the Coleman years.

"Next year's team will be 0-0, and that's the way we'll look at it," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "There will be some mention of it by the press in the beginning, but next year's team hasn't won any games. The kids next year will try to make their own tradition."

COLEMAN, THE all-time leading passer in state history, and his teammates ended the 1980s in a blaze of glory Saturday, rallying from a 27-21 deficit with two minutes remaining to beat DeWitt 28-27 and win back-to-back Class B championships.

For the second year in a row, the Hawks were ranked No. 1 from start to finish and concluded with a 13-0 record. Harrison outscored its opponents 443-106 and was recognized as one of the state's top ballclubs regardless of class.

The Hawks were ranked No. 3 in

football

the Midwest and No. 7 nationally at season's end, but there were the inevitable — and perhaps unfair — comparisons to the 1988 team, which whipped everybody it played.

"We had more difficulty in the playoffs," Herrington said, "but that all depends on the weather and the opponents are all different."

"Maybe the main difference was that we didn't have the long-ball threat. (Former all-star) Bryan Wauldron made a lot of spectacular catches."

"The kids this year did what they had to do," he added. "They won all of their games, and you can't do any better than that."

A YEAR AGO, Herrington said Coleman might be the best high school quarterback ever to play in Michigan. The 5-foot-9, 165-pound Coleman having passed for a state-record 7,464 yards in his career. Herrington has a more definite opinion now.

"I think the facts will be back me up. He is the best in state history," he said.

"To lead a team to three state finals and win two, to have started more games in state history, I think you can make a valid point he is the best ever."

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Eagles in process of rebuilding team

By C.J. Rieck
staff writer

When a team loses three of its top four scorers from the previous season, the coach is faced with a distasteful task: rebuilding. They may dodge it with optimistic appraisals of their current talent, or even by renaming the process.

But none of that can make up for the experience the team must replace — and by season's end (if not before), the coach will admit it.

At St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake, Glen Donahue is faced with the same type of situation. Of the four double-figure scorers on last season's 16-17 team, three are gone. Also, two of the top three rebounders have departed.

Hardly an encouraging scenario. But anyone familiar with Donahue's coaching style, either in his two previous seasons at St. Mary's or in the 10 years he spent at Highland Park Community College, knows Donahue believes experience is obtainable only on court.

WHILE OTHER coaches may limit themselves with eight or nine man rotations, Donahue shuttles 10 or 11 players into his lineup.

Such a strategy helps offset graduation losses, and it seems to have worked at St. Mary's, the Eagles have eyed the first-ever round-robin schedule in the NAIA's District 43 eagerly. They will have played nine games before the start of December.

St. Mary's was 5-3 in its first eight, a pretty good indication that the program is headed in the direction Donahue wants. It wasn't just a cupcake schedule, either. The Eagles have met Purdue-Columet, Wayne State and, last Saturday, they whipped Hillsdale 109-83.

"I think we have a real solid program now," said Donahue. "We're in a position where we don't have to recruit a lot of guys."

Even considering his player losses, Donahue thinks this squad could be better than last season's. "We thought we could be very good," he said. "We've got potential, which is one ingredient."

"But you've got to reach it. And I see us improve in practice every day."

The players bolstering Donahue's optimism are younger ones, guys like Raylon Croon, Joachim Jerichow, Marvin Morrison, Jeff Szczepanski and Arnold Wilson. All are freshmen, all have seen considerable playing time, and all but Szczepanski are averaging 6.6 points per game or better.

Indeed, even with so many new players to fit into the lineup — seven of the 13 on last season's roster are gone — Donahue still has 10 averaging 6.6 points or better.

THE LEADER is James Lakes, a 6-foot-4 senior forward who averaged 14.4 points (making 42.4 percent of his shots) and 4.4 rebounds last season. Lakes hasn't lost anything; he leads the Eagles in scoring at 14.6 and in rebounding at 7.8.

"Lakes has got to get his shots," said Donahue. "He's been a tower of strength on both ends of the floor for us. But we've got a little more help for him, with the young kids."

basketball

Indeed, there are only two seniors on the team this year, Lakes and 6-6 guard Terry Koerner, who is averaging 8.3 points a game.

"This is a team of the future, but we hope the future is now," said Donahue.

Newcomers like Croon, a 5-10 guard from Highland Park who's averaging 10.0 points a game; Jerichow, a 6-8 forward from Farum, Denmark (9.0 points, 5.8 rebounds); Wilson, a 6-4 forward also from Highland Park (7.3 points); and Morrison, a 6-8, 250-pound center from Detroit Benedictine (6.6 points) have shown considerable promise.

SO HAVE sophomores Garth Howard, a 6-1 guard from Oak Park (13.8 points); Kevin Nicfield, a 6-7 forward from Port Huron (8.8 points, 5.8 rebounds); and Jeff Suspek, a 6-1 guard from Dearborn Heights (7.8 points); and junior Denny Butcher, a guard from Millford (8.0 points).

It all adds up to some imposing sizes and numbers. But, even though Lakes, Butcher, Suspek, Howard and Nicfield saw plenty of action last season (all played in 31 or more games), experience remains a question mark.

Particularly considering the opposition in the district's new league-style format — starting with Siena Heights, 31-7 last season and a NAIA tournament quarterfinalist. The Saints have lost just one player from that team, a back-up point guard, Northwood, Aquinas and Spring Arbor also should be strong.

"I expect we will be inconsistent early on, and we have been," said Donahue. "Defense is our strength, but we aren't playing it as well as I'd like. If we play good defense, everything else will fall into place for us."

Donahue summed up simply: "Experience is the greatest teacher in the world. I think we'll be better in December than in November. Hopefully, by March that'll translate into a trip to Kansas City."

Which is the site of the NAIA tournament. But first, St. Mary's must clear a few formidable hurdles.

ST. MARY'S NOTES: In the win over Hillsdale, the Eagles struck quickly. They led 61-47 at halftime and were never in serious trouble in the second half. Leading scorers were Lakes with 20, Jerichow with 16, Howard with 12 and Nicfield with 10. Walter Huelz 22 led Hillsdale.

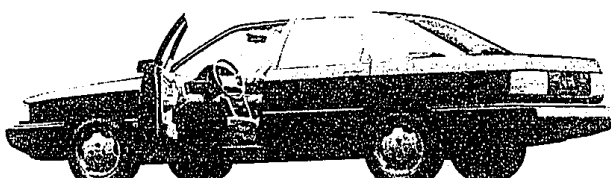
Two players figure to be redshirted this season by St. Mary's. One is James Gillespie, a 6-3 junior guard who played two years at Highland Park CC before enrolling at Wisconsin. Gillespie, an All-American candidate at WPCG, played 32 minutes for the Badgers last season and, if he played this season, wouldn't be eligible until January. The other redshirt is 6-8 freshman center Kevin Koscielski, from Oxford.

Jerichow ranks as a real recruiting find. Donahue coached several St. Mary's players at the Michigan AAU team in August of '88 on a nine-game trip through Denmark. That's where he spotted, and recruited, Jerichow, who is currently starting for the Eagles.

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