

Sports

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BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Jaguars have Miller to challenge Hawks

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

John Miller is one of the all-time great players in the storied history of Farmington Hills Harrison football.

And now another Miller with the same ability and big-time potential will play Saturday at Huller Field. But this one has no intention of furthering the Hawk tradition.

Ryan Miller, whom his coach compares to the former Harrison star, instead will lead his Allen Park team against the Hawks in a Class BB regional championship game at 1:30 p.m.

Both teams bring 10-0 records into their third playoff meeting in five seasons. Harrison won in 1987 and 1989, but the Jaguars hope this is the year they finally beat the Hawks.

Allen Park coach Ed Bellas believes he has his best team and his best player in Miller, who is being recruited by the major collegiate powers. He is the younger brother of former all-state quarterback Gordie Miller, who played against Harrison two years ago and is now at Eastern Michigan.

"GORDIE SAID: 'Coach, if you think I'm good, my brother is going to be even better,'" Bellas said. "He reminds me of John Miller from Harrison. He's the best I've ever had."

The 6-foot-3, 298-pound Miller, has accumulated 1,571 yards in total offense. He has rushed for 1,027 and caught 15 passes for another 292, and he has scored 19 touchdowns, including six by pass.

Miller also stars at inside linebacker and leads Allen Park with 117 tackles. The three-year starter

football

HARRISON		
32	Brother Rice	0
21	Plymouth Salem	12
37	Walled Lake Western	6
48	Plymouth Canton	0
49	Livonia Churchill	0
38	Northville	7
44	Livonia Franklin	7
20	North Farmington	14
33	Toledo Catholic	7
49	Drbn. Hts. Crestwood	8
371	10-0-0	61
ALLEN PARK		
34	Grosse Ile	3
52	Taylor Center	24
62	Drbn. Hts. Annapolis	6
28	Melvindale	21
39	Drbn. Hts. Crestwood	16
35	Taylor Kennedy	0
60	Taylor Truman	6
28	Redford Thurston	8
31	Riverview	6
27	Warren Mott	7
396	10-0-0	97

has four sacks and five interceptions, too.

"He's a big, powerful kid," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "They put him in a lot of different places in the backfield, so we have to be aware of where he is. He's an excellent pass catcher, too."

The Hawks faced a fine back in Chuck Reynolds of Dearborn Heights Crestwood last week, but he got most of his 126 yards after the game was out of reach for the Chargers.

"Reynolds was a speed back; Miller is more of a power runner," Herrington said.

BUT HARRISON can't afford to key solely on Miller as it did four years ago when the Jaguars were led by halfback John Jaskowski and later Gordie Miller, according to Bellas.

The main differences between those Allen Park teams and this one is the offensive and defensive lines are better and the offense is not as one-dimensional, Bellas said.

"Now we have four, (Herrington) and (defensive coordinator) Bob Sutter focus on the best player. If they focus on any one, they're going to have a problem because we have (Chris) Prisky, Miller, (Jim) Balog and (Jon) Gamble."

Prisky (5-11, 150) is the quarterback and as big a threat as Miller, according to Bellas. He has completed 60 percent of his passes for 739 yards and 15 touchdowns. The senior and two-year regular also has rushed for 12 touchdowns and has a total offense of 1,347 yards.

"I have two impact players," Bellas said. "If Ryan Miller was not on the team, Chris Prisky would be an all-state player."

Sutter likens Prisky to Northville quarterback Ryan Huzjak as a runner. "He doesn't throw quite as well, but he is an adequate passer," he said. Prisky reminds Herrington of former Plymouth Canton star Karl Wukle, who was not an outstanding passer or runner but did both well enough that defenses rarely contained him.

THE HARRISON defense must
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Roy Granger hopes to break loose for a touchdown or two Saturday when the Hawks play

Allen Park in the second round of the state playoffs at Harrison.

Ford coach worries about CC, Yoakam

By Steve Kowalski
staff writer

When Detroit Henry Ford football coach Mike Marshall studies films of Redford Catholic Central, one guy seems to play the starring role more often than not.

"I was looking at the film and they had all sorts of guys open and still went to No. 84 (wide receiver Frank Yoakam). That's telling you something," said Marshall, the first-year coach. "It looks like they go to him every time they need a play."

CC has a fine supporting cast but there's

no doubt Yoakam, a senior with 995 all-purpose yards and seven touchdowns, has been CC's go-to guy. Henry Ford will focus on stopping Yoakam when the two teams meet in a second-round Class AA playoff game at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Livonia Clarenceville.

Henry Ford, winner of six straight, beat Dearborn Fordson, 27-17, in a first-round playoff and is 8-2 overall. CC, 9-1 overall, beat Pontiac Central, 37-15, in its first-round matchup.

THE SHAMROCKS don't throw much but Yoakam is quarterback Chris Barbara's favorite target, catching nine passes for 286 yards (31.8 average) and one touchdown.

Yoakam said he runs a 4.4 40-yard dash and it showed two weeks ago when he caught a screen pass and outraced two speedy Detroit St. Martin DePorces players for a 53-yard touchdown.

He also has lined up in CC's backfield, gaining 235 yards rushing on 25 carries and four TDs. Yoakam has returned 10 kickoffs for 252 yards and a TD and has 12 punt returns for 132 yards and a TD.

The other offensive weapon Marshall frets about is senior tailback Jeff Tibaldi,

who leads the Shamrocks with 1,005 yards on 193 carries and eight TDs. Senior fullback Dan Gusoff had his best game of the season against Pontiac Central, gaining 141 yards and scoring three TDs.

"I know they've got No. 84 and No. 20 (Tibaldi) looks like he runs pretty hard; they're the two guys we need to neutralize," Marshall said.

MARSHALL, WHO played defensive back at Michigan State from 1976 to 1980, said Ford turned around its season after falling to 2-2 overall with consecutive losses to Bir-

mingham Brother Rice (25-6) and Detroit Mumford (12-6).

CC beat Mumford and Brother Rice by a combined score of 58-7 but coach Tom Mach knows Ford is improved and may have the best backfield he's seen.

Leading the attack is senior quarterback Orlando Fortunato, a converted wide receiver. Fortunato made the Public School League first team after completing 75-120 passes for 1,300 yards and 12 TDs and rushing for 701 yards and seven TDs.

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Mercy wants title back; North prepares defense

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Farmington Hills Mercy coach Terri Eudy-Teeters is confident the Marlins will regain the Catholic League swim championship Sunday.

Mercy had its string of 23 consecutive titles snapped by Birmingham Marian last year but hopes to begin a new streak Sunday at Oakland University.

The swimming preliminaries start at 9 a.m., the diving at noon and the finals at 2 p.m.

"I scored the meet and, without diving, we're 57 points ahead," Eudy-Teeters said. "You can never underestimate the opposition, but we are a championship meet team. Our girls know what's important."

"I have a real good feeling about it. If we put a challenge in front of them, they have the confidence and they have the hard work behind them."

EUDY-TEETERS didn't stack her lineup to ensure a victory last year, using every swimmer on the team and putting state-meet qualifiers in off events. She will do so again this year.

"It's the Catholic League strategy, to be honest," she said. "Everyone swims and everyone wins."

Her reason for structuring the lineup that way also is due to the state meet being just five days later. That makes it difficult for swimmers to recover in time to swim their best, especially if they swim their best events twice with little rest.

Eudy-Teeters will make some exceptions for some of her top seniors, however. Katie Knipper will swim the breaststroke and Mandy Speer the backstroke.

swimming

"We have seniors who have put in their dues, and we'll give them a shot at going out as Catholic League champions," Eudy-Teeters said. "We try to let them swim in the event they consider their best because they've earned it."

Mercy, co-champion of the Oakland County meet, has the top-seeded swimmer or relay team in every event but the 100-yard freestyle.

ANDREA HOEFLEIN — "one of the most talented sophomores in the state," according to Eudy-Teeters — also will swim her regular events, the 200 and 500 freestyles.

"Because she's a distance kid, she can do that and come back," Eudy-Teeters said. "And she was sick last week and needs to get back on track in her events. Basically, she has had a break."

The Marlins will put their best medley relay in the water, too. Jenny McCombs, Knipper, Speer and Erika Smith will try to break the league record of 1:49.87.

McCombs is top seeded in the IM and butterfly and Smith the 50 freestyle. Amy Dombrowski was undefeated in league duals and is the favorite to win the diving competition, according to Eudy-Teeters.

North Farmington has won two straight Western Lakes Activities Association girls championships and three of the last four, but other league powers hope to dethrone the Raiders this year. The WLAA finals are 6 p.m. Friday at Plymouth Salem.

"A realistic goal for us is to finish

in the top six," North coach Patrick Duthie said. "Girls will certainly be favored ahead of us."

"THE KIDS HAVE done a real fine job at North Farmington, but we had some unfortunate things happen and we're a little short right now."

Seven individuals either did not return from last season or left the team during the season. Plus, North no longer has either All-America Kerry Doran, who won the IM and butterfly last year, or backstroke champ Julianne Markey.

The Raiders do have senior Karrie Kranz, the reigning champ in the 100 and 200 freestyles. She will have competition from Livonia Churchill's Tara Dithhoff and Livonia Stevenson's Jamie Anderson in the 200 and Churchill's Ellen Lessig in the 100.

"We hope to get a few more qualified for state and to do as well as we can," Duthie said. "The atmosphere is the same as it has been in the past. We realize we're not in the championship picture, but our attitude is real good. The kids are still excited about the meet and they should be."

Divers from the three Farmington schools should do well, according to Duthie. Harrison's Elaine Trager, North's Mandy Terrell and Elyse Turner and Farmington's Nicole Gerwatowski have the potential to score well in the WLAA. The top Harrison swimmers are Stacy Krause, Dana Dizon and Lisa Schaner. Farmington's best are Jill Hawkins and Becky Weary.

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