

FOOTBALL

HARRISON STATS

Rushing: Jason Granger 106 carries, 704 yards, six TDs; Nick Williams 99-49-7, Kevin Bryant 30-153-2.

Passing: Joe Pesci 65 completions, 150 attempts, 1,142 yards, 12 TDs, six interceptions. Receiving: Nick Burgess 21 receptions, 408 yards, three TDs; Kevin Bryant 15-391-5; Jason Granger 15-195-3; Nick Williams 6-53-1.

Tackles: Linebacker Charles Bambenek 82, noseguard Marc Lesperance 66, halfback Nick Burgess 57 and Brock Gove 55, safety Kevin Bryant 45, halfback Brendan Cotter 42, linebacker Nick Williams 40.

■ Kevin Bryant has returned six kickoffs for 231 yards and a 38.9-yard average. He also leads the team with three interceptions and has blocked a half dozen kicks and/or punts.

NORTHVILLE STATS

Rushing: Axel Kersey 157 carries, 894 yards, five TDs; Bryan Kelley 23-17-11; Chuck Aplogan 48-228-11; Marc Golden 59-231-6; John Gatti 18-119-2.

Passing: Marc Golden 37 completions, 75 attempts, 610 yards, seven TDs, six interceptions. Receiving: Jason Holman 12 receptions, 194 yards, four TDs; Bryan Kelley 14-185-2; Justin Castano 5-143.

Tackles: Linebacker Bryan Kelley 87, and John Gatti 62, and Jason Holman 59, linebacker Derek White 47.

■ Marc Golden and Brian Jackson have three interceptions apiece. Both have returned one for a touchdown.

GAME NOTES

■ Northville is in the Class A playoffs for the third time in four years. The Mustangs reached the semifinals in 1990, defeating Wyandotte and Dearborn before losing to Farmington Hills. Northville lost to state runner-up Walled Lake Western in the first round last year.

■ The field of Class A playoff teams got an emotional lift when Birmingham Seaholm upset Brother Rice 14-13 in the first round. "Seaholm must be really tough," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "It goes to show you anything can happen in high school football."

■ "We're only concerned with playing Northville again, because we think they're one of the best teams in the tournament."

■ Hamson and Northville have never met in a playoff game but are no strangers in football. Both are longtime rivals in the Western Lakes Activities Association and Western Six Conference. Hamson won 21-6 in the regular season.

■ "It's hard playing the same team twice but we've done it a lot of times," Herrington said. "Since it's in the tournament, I think that's fine. I don't like it when the league sets it up to play the same team twice. Every game in the state tournament is a season unto itself, so it should be a lot of fun."

Hawks

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figure out which of the multi-weapons we want to concentrate on and hope the others don't hurt us.

"If you've watched Harrison over the years, it's always tailback oriented. But if you focus on the tailback, they run the fullback up the middle and you're in trouble."

The play of Williams, the Harrison fullback, was one key to the regular-season victory. He rushed for 75 yards in a game that didn't feature a lot of offense and the clinching touchdown.

Williams didn't play much against Brother Rice two weeks ago because of a nagging ankle injury, but he responded with 88 yards and two TDs when needed against Edsel Ford.

"Nick has to go this week. He was much improved, so he'll be back in there," Herrington said. Two-way tackle Evan Jefferson also will play after missing the last game.

"We feel we have to mix it up and try to get their defense a little off balance if we can."

Granger had 65 yards on 11 carries against Northville. A 62-yard TD run was nullified by a clipping penalty in the first half, and the Mustangs stopped him in the second.

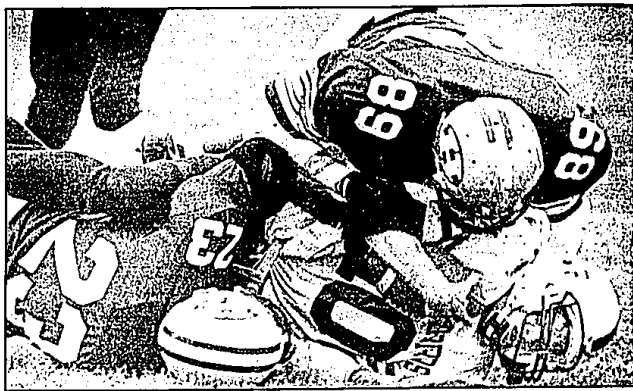
"That has to be our goal," Schumacher said. "But I don't know if we stopped him. That wasn't defense that called (the TD) back but a correct call by the official."

Harrison led 14-0 at halftime and was able to hold off the Mustangs by playing power football with the 230-pound Williams carrying the ball in the second half.

"(Harrison assistant Bob) Sutter does an outstanding job with the offensive line," Schumacher said. "I'm never surprised at what Harrison can do."

"John's philosophy has always been, if he's in trouble, he goes with the double tight ends and runs power at the tackles until something good happens. He's been doing it for 20 years, and he's good at it."

The Hawks made big plays or no plays against Northville, scoring twice in the first half on TD passes of 58 and 11 yards to tight end Burgess. It was actually a 14-6 game, but Harrison scored again



SHARON LEMKUN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Crunch time: Harrison defenders Dave Hensel (23) and Charles Bambenek (89) take down Edsel Ford quarterback Brian Stone in playoff action Saturday.

after the Mustangs failed to get a first down on their 21-yard line with 4:14 minutes left.

"They made two big plays against us in the first half, and those are things we have to stop," Schumacher said.

"Statistically, it's turning out to be the best (Northville) defense. But Harrison is a very efficient offensive team, and things can happen the other way around. Hopefully, we'll continue what we've been doing."

Running game solid
The Harrison defense will have to contend with a strong Northville running game that operates behind a good offensive line led by guard White and senior tackle Fred Swarthout (6-0, 240).

Senior tailback Axel Kersey is the leading rusher, but fullback Bryan Kelley has carried the ball a lot, too. The Mustangs aren't known as a passing team, and quarterback Marc Golden is as much a running threat as he is a passer.

"We're better on defense, the quarterback play has improved and we've got a pretty good running game going now," said Schumacher of his team's improvement since the first game.

"I'd like to see us throw more than we have. Harrison is an aw-

ful good team; we might have to throw more. If we can go a whole game and run it up and down the field, we will. But, if we have to throw, we'll throw it."

Harrison held Northville to 188 total yards and 126 rushing, but Kersey managed to gain 92 yards on 22 carries.

The smaller Hawks were able to put a good rush on Golden, who completed five of 14 passes for 62 yards, and Harrison's quickness on the defensive line is a big concern to Schumacher.

"We did a pretty good job on execution, but we're not paying much attention to the first game," Herrington said. "This is the playoffs and it's a whole new season."

Defense needs tune-up
Harrison hopes to tighten its defense, which has allowed 58 points and 769 yards in its last two games. Following a great effort against Westland John Glenn to win the WLA championship, the Hawks have let their defense slip.

Injuries have caused Harrison to play different people up front. Williams should be back at inside linebacker along with Charles Bambenek, which would allow Harrison to move Ed Kennedy back to defensive end.

"At times we didn't get the linebackers active enough and into the action," Herrington said. "They've been too tentative and have to come out ripping this week."

"We're hoping our defense can reach the level it did against Glenn. We have to play with a lot of emotion and get to the football."

Junior Marc Lesperance is the smallest player on the Harrison defense, but Schumacher noticed him. His play exemplified the problems Harrison's quickness caused the Mustangs.

"That guy is a tough nut," he said. "He gives you fits at nose-guard. If he put him outside, he can come hard with the rush. He's a major concern in terms of the line blocking assignments."

"We may not move them much, but we want to occupy them so they can't (avoid blocks). We've been working all week on moving our feet."

The kicking game could be pivotal in a low-scoring, defensive game, Schumacher said. Northville's Mike Hirvela has made three of five field goals, and Brock Gove has kicked three for the Hawks — his longest from 44 yards. Gove also has made 24 of 26 extra points.

Bulldogs favor run game

BY BRAD EMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Westland John Glenn will have change gears dramatically this week in preparation for its football playoff game with Brighton on Saturday.

Out is the wide-open offensive attack of Adrian, a 31-0 loser last week to the Rockets, and in is the ball-control, power-football scheme of Brighton.

Both teams sport 9-1 records heading into Saturday's 1:30 p.m. kickoff at Glenn.

"Brighton is a very good football team, they've won nine straight," Glenn coach Chuck Gordon said. "They have a big, powerful back in Clint Copenhaver. They're a power team offensively. Defensively they'll give you a lot of looks."

Copenhaver won't be hard to miss when he's on the field.

The 6-foot-4, 218-pound senior halfback is a Big 10 prospect, rated among the top 25 players in the state (Detroit Free Press preseason). He also excels as a linebacker.

In 1993, Copenhaver has amassed a total of 1,190 yards. He is complemented in the backfield by 5-11, 215-pound senior John Blinke, who has nearly 600 yards on the ground.

"We have two big backs," Brighton coach Bill Murray said. "To say we're a ball-control, possession-type team is a good statement."

"Clint is a big kid, with good feet. He can be very physical, but also he can be a finesse runner."

"He's certainly one of the top linebackers around. He's talented, but he's also a selfish, humble individual. Success hasn't gone to his head."

Senior quarterback Mike Martin is a scrambler, who can also

PREVIEW

throw (700 yards). His two favorite targets are Judd Ayers, a 6-3, 220-pound senior tight end, and Jim Ettig, a split end.

Kicker Dave Goodell, a senior, gives Brighton a weapon in the kicking game. He has made 62 of 65 extra points (two blocked) and is 12 of 16 career-wise in field goals. His longest field goal this season is 43 yards.

The Bulldogs have won nine straight since losing their season opener to Class BB playoff qualifier Bay City John Glenn, 20-14.

Brighton, making its fifth consecutive playoff appearance, survived a tough test last week in the first round from Kensington Valley for Howell. The Bulldogs won 10-6 despite giving up 350 yards in total offense and 20 first downs.

"We have to play our games relying in field position," said Murray, now in his seventh season as head coach. "We have to shorten field. We have to play defense to get by on offense."

Murray, whose previous coaching stints include stops at Jackson Lumen Christi, Rawlins, Wyoming, and Southgate Aquinas, was highly impressed with Glenn's showing last Saturday against Adrian.

"Their skill players are excellent," Murray said. "They also have an outstanding defense. They're quick and aggressive to the ball."

"We're going to have to control it offensively and stay away from turnovers and penalties. John Glenn is not the kind of team you want to dig a hole against. They scored 31 points against a good Adrian football team. They just took them apart."

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