



Traditional powers lead all-area team again

By DAN O'NEARA
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STAFF WRITER

Two of Observerland's traditional powers in high school football re-emerged in 1993 following years as far as first-team, all-area selections.

Farmington Hills Harrison and Westland John Glenn had just three players between them on the last All-Observer team, but they did much better this year.

Harrison, the Western Lakes Activities Association and Class A state champion, has five players on the first team and WLA and Class AA runner-up, Glenn seven.

Redford Catholic didn't get a chance to defend its AA title but had another outstanding team and also was second overall first-team berth. Between the first and second rounds, 16 players from each of the three schools are honored.

The '93 all-area team includes three repeat selections — Bryan and Derek Besco of Glenview and Redford Thurston's Jeff Lance. CC running back Fred Taylor, Salem linebacker Rob Shepley and Glenview linebacker Jeremy Cosby were second-team picks a year ago.

Jack Reardon, who guided Livonia Stevenson to its best season (7-2) since 1987 with a team dominated by juniors, was named Observerland Coach Of The Year.

FIRST-TEAM OFFENSE

Doug Brzezinski, lineman, Redford CC: Brzezinski was a two-way starter on the last two seasons for the Shamrocks, who are 21-1 during that time. He opened holes on offense and helped plugged them as a defensive tackle, recording 39 tackles, including seven solos and three sacks. Brzezinski visited Notre Dame last weekend and has scheduled visits to Boston College, Michigan State, Vanderbilt and either Colorado or Northwestern, according to coach Tom Mach.

"Doug may be over all our best 48-minute linemen ever," Mach said. "He could dominate both sides of the ball: he has the size, speed and agility. One of his greatest assets besides his size and talent is his work ethic."

Tony McGill, lineman, Wayne: McGill was a two-way starter the last two years on the offense and, despite being on the smallish side, dominated most of his opponents. At linebacker and defensive end, McGill had 28 solo tackles, 44 assists, two fumble recoveries and two sacks.

"After the John Glenn game, one of the Glenn kids told me that's the best guard he's played against all year," coach Chuck Howton said. "Most of the better players I've had have been around 6-foot, 300, and he fits right in the line."

Matt Schwartz, lineman, Glenview: Schwartz was a two-year starter at offensive tackle and helped make the Rockets a fine offensive team with his blocking. He's an intelligent player with good work habits, according to Glenn coach Chuck Gordon.

"He played super well for us," Gordon said. "He was our most confident in us," Gordon said. "He was our most consistent blocker and had very good technique. He could have played anywhere on the line and done a good job."

Chris Pratt, lineman, Redford CC: The school has been so good in the line throughout his years at CC with a 4.0 grade point average. He received equally impressive marks from Mach after starting for the first time on the offensive line.

"He was a great surprise in that he progressed at a tremendous rate and gave us a great year," Mach said. "He was consistent and confident."

Mike Blint, lineman, Glenn: Blint started for three years at tight end and also played inside linebacker. He had 14 passes blocked, 154 yards and four touchdowns, and he also caught a pair of two-point passes. On defense, Blint had 33 solo tackles, 62 assists, two sacks and one interception.

"He had an outstanding senior year," Gordon said. "He got better and better each week of his career. He developed into a good blocker and has good hands as a receiver."

Scott Lord, tight end, N. Farmington: Lord recovered from a devastating knee injury in basketball last December to have an outstanding senior year in football. He caught 39 passes for 495 yards and five TDs. As an outside linebacker, he had 38 solo tackles, 47 assists and two sacks. He also forced six fumbled passes and knocked down six others.

Lord was a unanimous all-state as a punter. He averaged 44.58 yards for 36 punts, with his longest being a school-record 72 yards. He was 10-of-10 on extra points and kicked three of five field goals (longest 42 yards). Big Ten and Mid-American Conference schools are recruiting him.

"I hope he decides to play as a kicker, because that's his bread-and-butter," North coach Jim O'Leary said. "He's the best kicker I've ever had and one of the best players I've coached as far as versatility. You don't get kids like him often."

Bred Morgan, receiver, Stevenson: Morgan set a single-season record for receptions with 45 for 747 yards and 10 TDs. He also owns Stevenson career records for passes caught (71) and yards (1,145). Morgan intercepted three passes as a cornerback and also punted for the first time this year, averaging 33 yards per kick.

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ALL-AREA FOOTBALL

FIRST-TEAM OFFENSE

OL — Doug Brzezinski, 6-5, 275, senior	Catholic Central
OL — Tony McGill, 6-1, 195, senior	Wayne Memorial
OL — Matt Schwartz, 6-0, 240, senior	Westland John Glenn
OL — Chris Pratt, 6-3, 230, senior	Catholic Central
OL — Mike Blint, 6-3, 210, senior	Westland John Glenn
TE — Scott Lord, 6-4, 220, senior	North Farmington
WR — Brad Morgan, 6-2, 170, senior	Livonia Stevenson
WR — Ryan Ostach, 6-3, 200, senior	Plymouth Canton
WR — Nick Burgess, 6-3, 187, senior	Farmington Harrison
QB — Kevin Szczembarski, 6-1, 172, senior	Livonia Stevenson
QB — Joe Pesci, 6-2, 175, senior	Farmington Harrison
RB — Freddie Taylor, 5-9, 170, senior	Catholic Central
SP — Matt Howton, 5-9, 150, senior	Westland John Glenn

FIRST-TEAM DEFENSE

DL — Nick Kallas, 6-5, 242, senior	Catholic Central
DL — Bryan Besco, 6-1, 195, senior	Westland John Glenn
DL — Brock Gove, 6-2, 190, senior	Farmington Harrison
DL — Jason Fuller, 6-0, 215, senior	Westland John Glenn
LB — Joe Pongracz, 6-2, 205, senior	Catholic Central
LB — Derek Besco, 6-1, 195, senior	Westland John Glenn
LB — Tate Dobbs, 5-10, 205, senior	Catholic Central
LB — Jason Fuller, 6-0, 195, senior	Westland John Glenn
LB — Charles Bambenek, 6-1, 180, senior	Farmington Harrison
LB — Rob Shepley, 6-1, 230, junior	Plymouth Salem
LB — Kevin Bryant, 6-0, 170, junior	Farmington Harrison
LB — Jeff Lance, 5-10, 185, senior	Redford Thurston
DB — Dave Morelli, 6-1, 175, senior	Catholic Central

SECOND-TEAM OFFENSE

OL — Steve Hurst, 6-0, 200, senior	Plymouth Salem
OL — Geoff Miodowski, 6-5, 250, senior	Westland John Glenn
OL — Steve Shalek, 5-9, 185, junior	Farmington Harrison
OL — Jacob Rabinovich, 6-2, 250, senior	Wayne Memorial
TE — Jason Overton, 6-5, 210, senior	Wayne Memorial
WR — Mark Katj, 5-11, 175, senior	Livonia Clarenceville
WR — Stan Lewis, 6-2, 172, senior	Farmington
WR — Tim Morris, 6-2, 180, senior	Plymouth Canton
QB — Lorenzo Scola, 6-2, 170, freshman	Wayne Memorial
QB — Nick Williams, 6-2, 230, junior	Farmington Harrison
RB — Tariq Horne, 5-11, 180, senior	Westland John Glenn
RB — Jason Granger, 6-5, 135, sophomore	Farmington Harrison
RB — Jesse Shokarian, 6-0, 194, senior	Livonia Franklin

SECOND-TEAM DEFENSE

DL — Marc Lesperance, 6-5, 160, junior	Farmington Harrison
DL — Nick Belovay, 5-8, 185, junior	Garden City
DL — John Miodowski, 6-1, 190, senior	Plymouth Canton
DL — Doran Bishop, 5-10, 200, senior	Bishop Borgosa
LB — Ryan McGillich, 5-11, 190, senior	North Farmington
LB — Jay Perko, 6-0, 176, senior	Plymouth Salem
LB — Brian Smith, 5-9, 165, junior	Redford Thurston
LB — Nick McLaren, 5-11, 180, junior	Livonia Stevenson
LB — Joe Walsh, 5-11, 200, senior	Catholic Central
LB — Scott Goldman, 5-8, 190, junior	Livonia Stevenson
WR — Tim Morris, 6-2, 173, senior	Redford Thurston
DB — Jeff Lachapelle, 6-1, 198, senior	Catholic Central
DB — Mike Bjerke, 5-10, 180, senior	Redford Union

HONORABLE MENTION

Stenerson: Craig Martin, Chris Mudgett, Tony Janowski, Eric Hine, Joe Brocki, Franklin Dennis Haddock, Ron Trisa, Bob Sakab, John Worden, Greg Mager, Charles Matti, Mike Sisk, Jim Stipanovich, Ricky McGary, George Stanek, John Glenn: Tony Tabone, Tom Davis, Dave Irvine, Brian Morrison, Jim Tennant, Jack Henry, Steve Herve, Wayne: Gerald Adams, Luther, Westland: Troy Smith, Steve Farn, Jason Baxton, Jeff Lettner, Clarenceville: Luke Luca, Mark Anzick, Jesse Lynn, Ray Kasti, Garden City: Jimmy Allen, Scott MacIntyre, Serg Popescu, Matt Wilson: Catholic Central: Adam Borchert, Barry Penick, Jim Fink, Joe McGinnis, Brian Karpis, Redford Union: Jason Geddis, Brian Connolly, Patrick Chum, Les Hunter, Centerville: Al Erickson, Tony DeCarlo, Scott Valmont, Chris Mauer, Eric Arnold, Sam Stafford, Salami Paul Tobben, Jeremy Lane, Steve Schumacher, Andy Coubi, Scott, Ryan, Dan Lee, Brian Shaw, Marcus Evans, Redford Union: Kevin Smith, Jeff Kung, John Fawcett, Ben Sommer, Mike Ponsness: Farmington: Curt Kelsa, Dan Bokac, Mike Tokar, Corey Noble, Harrison: Matt Zimmern, Brandon Cotter, Gary Lesperance, Tim Bares, Chad Cuzickay, Dave Henkel.

had trouble throwing a spiral, but he developed into an excellent passer.

Freddie Taylor, back, Redford CC: A second-team All-Observer choice a year ago, Taylor continued to impress in '93 with 951 yards on 126 carries for a 7.6 average. He scored 11 touchdowns rushing and also caught five passes for 54 yards.

His statistics would have been even better, but Mach chose to go with other runners during the second half of some games when the Shamrocks enjoyed big leads. Mach said Taylor is the best CC back since the late Aaron Roberts.

"Freddie has all the qualities of a great back. He has great speed, runs the hole well and is very explosive," Mach said. "I think he can play Division I if he wants to give him the opportunity."

Matt Howton, specialist, Glenn: Howton wore a lot of different hats for the Rockets. He played tailback, wide receiver and free safety, and he also returned kicks and punts.

broken collarbone, returned five punts for a 49½-yard average and four TDs, and he averaged 23-plus yards and scored a touchdown on six kick returns. He had 38 first hits, 29 assists and an interception on defense. Howton also averaged 8.3 yards rushing and ran for one TD.

"Matt has outstanding speed and is a very exciting player," Gordon said. "He has one speed; that's 100 miles per hour all the time. He played the pass well and was excellent on run support."

FIRST-TEAM DEFENSE

Nick Kallas, lineman, Redford CC: Kallas made quite a contribution to the CC program despite not coming out until his sophomore year. He injured an ankle early in the season but was a force on defense, making 36 tackles, including seven solos and three sacks.

"Nick has great movement and is a great athlete who works real hard," Mach said. Since he didn't play as a freshman, "he's one year away from being a great one."

Brock Gove, lineman, Harrison: Gove excelled at defensive end and was a key player during the playoffs, especially in the regional final at Northville. He was third on the team with 71 tackles. Gove also played fullback in the power-I and was a blocker for Nick Williams. He made five of nine field goals — his longest was 42 yards — and 31 of 34 extra points.

"He might be the most improved player in the area," Harrington said. "He was one of the most dedicated players we had. He took his kicking very seriously and came to be an outstanding defensive end."

Jason Fuller, lineman, Glenn: Fuller is a corner linebacker, moving to a down position for the benefit of the team this year. He had 29 first hits, 46 assists, three sacks and 14 quarterback hurries. He batted 28 passes 390 yards and has a 4.0 grade point.

"He was one of the key reasons for the success of our team," Gordon said. "Moving from noseguard really made him a defensive solid, and he made the move with a great attitude. His selfishness in doing that really inspired the team."

Bryan Besco, lineman, Redford CC: Besco was an incredible pass rusher, sacking quarterbacks 12 times and forcing them to hurry a pass 26 times. He also had 47 solo tackles, 35 assists, three fumble recoveries, a tackle for a safety and an interception.

As an offensive end, he caught 16 passes for 318 yards and four TDs. He also rushed for one TD.

"He's one of the best players I've had the privilege to coach," Gordon said. "He works hard to see just how good he can really become. He was a guy we could always rely on."

Joe Pongracz, lineman, Redford CC: Pongracz was around the football most of the time, recording 41 tackles, with three sacks and six solos. He had one fumble recovery.

"Joe did a great job as a first-year starter," Mach said. "He's a tremendous hitter and has great toughness. He made his mark in many games with hard hits."

Derek Besco, linebacker, Glenn: Besco made 46 solo tackles and had 41 assists, and he also had two sacks, 16 hurries and two fumble recoveries. He received the big-hit-of-the-week award five times.

He also led the team in scoring with 74 points. Besco was an offensive end and moved to tailback for several games at midseason. He caught 24 passes for 350 yards and six TDs, and he rushed 74 times for 543 yards and six TDs.

"He was a real team player," Gordon said. "He would do whatever we needed. When to do and did it well. He's also one of the best players I've had the pleasure to coach."

Tate Dobbs, linebacker, Redford CC: Dobbs was a defensive end and had the duty to beat opponents to 21 points in nine

games. Dobbs had 78 tackles, including 15 solos. He made all the defensive adjustments for the Shamrocks.

"Tate was the heart and soul of our defense, a coach on the field," Mach said. "He's been in the thick of things, near the ball the last two years."

Charles Bambenek, linebacker, Harrison: Bambenek isn't a big player but used his intelligence (3.75 grade point) to put himself in position to make a lot of tackles. His play during the post-season was a big reason the Hawks won the Class A title. Bambenek led the team with 87 first hits and 112 total tackles.

"He came on late in the season to be an outstanding linebacker," Harrington said. "He just played great against faster. Against a big test like that, he was a real key to stopping their power attack."

Jeremy Cosby, linebacker, Glenn: Cosby was a two-year starter at linebacker, a fierce competitor and a student of the game, according to Gordon. He was the leading tackler with 123 (62 solos and 61 assists), had three sacks and three hurries and returned an interception for a TD.

Costly also rushed 52 times for 306 yards and six TDs. He returned six kickoffs for an average of 30 yards, including a school-record 85-yarder for a TD. He scored 50 points.

"He's perhaps the best linebacker we've had at John Glenn," Gordon said. "You never want to lose a player to injury, but this is a guy we could not afford to lose. He was part of the foundation of this team."

Rob Shepley, linebacker, Salem: Shepley is the only player during coach Tom Mosheimer's 35 years in the profession who started and lettered for four years. He played fullback, wingback, noseguard and middle linebacker. Shepley, who missed some games due to injury, had 41 tackles and two sacks, and he batted the ball 140 times for 577 yards and seven TDs.

"He's one of the best linebackers I've had," Mosheimer said. "Whenever we needed him is where he played. He was a four-year starter; that speaks for itself. We've had a big hole in our program without him."

Kevin Bryant, back, Harrison: Bryant was Mr. Versatile for the Hawks. He started the season at tailback but moving to wide receiver where he had 25 catches for 553 yards and eight TDs. Bryant had 51 tackles, three interceptions and two fumble recoveries (one for a TD), and he also blocked a half dozen punts or kicks. He averaged 33½ yards on eight kickoff returns and 13 on seven punt returns. He rushed for 17 TDs.

"He has great skills and is a major college prospect," Harrington said. "He improved his tackling and catching skills this year. He can do it."

Jeff Lance, back, Thurston: A repeat player on the All-Observer first team, Lance was a force whether he was trying to catch a pass or knock one down. As a three-year varsity player, Lance caught 62 career passes for 1,467 yards and 17 TDs. He had 14 career interceptions, returning two for TDs. Lance had 28 catches in 537 yards and 11 TDs, eight by reception, five by punt return.

"In three years, Jeff never missed a practice, and one of the things he improved on this year was really becoming a hitter," coach Bob Snell said. "Football is a team sport, but whenever a big play was needed he was in a position to make it."

Dave Morelli, back, Redford CC: A two-year starter at cornerback, Morelli covered all the top receiving threats the Shamrocks faced. Morelli had eight career interceptions, two this season. He had 38 tackles (13 solos) and also played wide receiver.

"He has a nose for the ball and great ability to get to the ball in the air," Mach said. "We put him on the toughest receivers and he handled himself against anybody."