'94 season ready for kickoff

By DAN O'MEARA
Staff Writer

A year has passed and it's time for the rematch.

That means the start of another high school season and duel between Observer sports editors Brad Emons and Dan O'Meara.

Emons, the defending champion, and O'Meare will duke it out over the next nine weeks to determine the 1994 winner of the annual grid predictions contest.

Emons has had a year to celebrate after leading from wire-to-wire. He finished with a 103-27 record as opposed to 94-36 for his colleague.

But will the king continue his reign for an unprecedented two years in a row or be dethroned?

The opposition seems to recall O'Meara winning four consecutive years (and five of the last seven) prior to last year's reversal.

So, without further delay, let's get started on picking this year's winners:

GRID PICKS

FRIDAY GAMES
(all times 7:30 unless noted)

Liv. Churchill at Dearborn, 4: The Chargers begin the '94 season with a clean slate after ending a 34-game losing streak in the eighth week a year ago. But the word on Dearborn is the Pioneers, who won 10-0 last year, should be good and a tough opener for Churchill (1-8). **PICK:** The Pioneers prevail.

Farmington at Waterford Mott, 7: The Falcons have a new opening-game opponent in the Corsairs (3-6), who return six starters on offense and three on defense. Mott is led by junior quarterback Jeremy Koger (6-3, 180). Both teams are said to have strong offensive lines, so this one will certainly be decided in the trenches. The Corsairs return Paul McNamara (6-0, 250), Alan Goodrich (5-0, 275), Mike Primeau (6-3, 290) and Matt Snyder (6-0, 240) up front. **PICKS:** The Falcons get airborne early.

Liv. Franklin at S.H. Stevenson: Franklin (1-8) came dern close to beating the Titans last year, losing 21-12, but their seasons went in opposite directions after that. Stevenson went to the AA semifinals and is supposed to be strong again. Senior Darryl Daoust takes over at quarterback after playing just defense. The Titans (10-2) have a good line spearheaded by tackle Dave Sucura (6-4, 255) and guard Paul Perring (6-0, 225). Gary Grochowski (6-2, 24) and Ryan Dunlap (5-11, 246) anchor the defense. **PICKS:** The Titans grind out a victory.

Redford Union at Liv. Stevenson: Stevenson (7-2) is loaded with big, tough linemen who many believe will take the Spartans a long way this year and give opponents some long nights. Stevenson should have a solid running game with the return of backs Scott Goldman, Gade Clark and Chris Mullett and state wrestling champ Craig Martin moving to fullback. RU comes off a 1-8 season. **PICKS:** The Spartans roll again.

Westland Glenn at Howell: Howell returns only three starters from a AA playoff team that was 7-3, but the Highlanders are expected to field another good team. Howell has reloaded and will start a senior at 20 of 22 positions. The holdovers are tackle Joe Adam (6-4, 260), fullback Tom Dell (6-1, 213) and guard Kevin Matie (6-0, 220). Glenn (11-2) also was rocked hard by graduation after reaching the AA championship game, but the Rockets are never short of players (53). **PICKS:** O'Meara thinks the home field will make the difference for Howell. Emons says the Rockets are out of this world.

Adrian at Wayne Memorial: The Maples (7-3) rolled over the visiting Zebras 23-7 last year and later made the AA playoffs, getting crushed by John Glenn. Wayne QB Lorenzo Guess (6-3, 175) is a sophomore but started all of last season. The Zebras (4-5) have good skill players, including fullback Corey McClelland (6-0, 230) and tailback Starr Stavenson (5-9, 185), and a host of big linemen. **PICKS:** Wayne gets started on a good year.

Monroe at Pty. Canton: The Chiefs (5-4) will try to reverse a disturbing trend, which had them losing late in each game, in the last two season openers. Monroe (4-5) scored on the last play of the game to win 14-13 in '92, and it won 12-6 in overtime last year. Canton has a veteran QB in senior Brett Elledge, and Lenny Gardner returns at tailback. **PICKS:** Monroe eeks out another win.

Pty. Salem at Belleville: Belleville is considered one of the top 25 teams in the state, but the Rocks (5-4) heard the same thing last year before handing the Tigers a 16-7 defeat. Belleville has a lot of players back from a 7-2 team that just missed the AA playoffs. Senior two-way back Chris Cannon and twins Jason (tackle) and Jeremy Gold (halfback) are the top players. **PICK:** Belleville gets even.

Garden City at Crestwood: Both teams in this Mega Conference crossover were 4-5 last year. The Chargers started six sophomores a year ago and are said to be much improved with the added experience. The top player is tailback Mike Kaczmarzyk (5-10, 160), whom coach Floyd Carter compares with former Crestwood star Chuck Reynolds. The top defenders is linebacker Mazen Saab (6-1, 216). **PICKS:** Crestwood cages the Cougars.

St. Agatha at Clarenceville: The Aggies (4-5) anticipate a better year with the return of some key players. Tailback Bill Matti rushed for nearly 1,000 yards last year and should gain a lot of yards again with fullback Kajuan Davis (6-2, 235) blocking for him. Junior QB Mike Wilson is rapidly developing into an outstanding player. The Trojans (4-5) are trying to establish consistency on offense. **PICKS:** St. Agatha's prayers are answered.

SATURDAY GAMES
(all times 1 p.m. unless noted)

W. Bloomfield at N. Farmington: West Bloomfield (6-3) was hit hard by graduation but has speed and talent at the skill positions with Lorenzo Ferguson and transfers Mike Hicks, Todd Mathies and Kyle Albertie. The Raiders don't have to play Pontiac Northern any more, for starters. They should have a solid running game with Russell Hayes, Nigel Whitt and Jeff Kong if they can get the necessary blocking from a small and inexperienced line. **PICKS:** O'Meara gives the edge to the Lakers, but Emons favors the Raiders.

Country Day at Red. Thurston: Country Day was 9-3 and advanced to the Class B semifinals last year, and the outlook is for the Yellowjackets to have the same kind of success this year. DCD is led by senior two-way back Gerald Conoway, who rushed for 1,200 yards, and quarterback Matt Kives, who passed for 14 touchdowns and 1,500 yards. The Eagles (7-2) return second-team, all-area linebacker Brian Sirlani. **PICKS:** It's no day in the country for the Eagles.

St. Alphonsus at Luth. Westland: The Arrows (6-3) are led by junior tailback Gino Williams, who rushed for 2,600 yards the last two years. Other key players are end/back Asa Young and two-way back Shawn Dorsey. The Warriors hope a good start in '94 will generate the momentum needed to improve a 3-6 record. **PICKS:** The Arrows have poison tips.

Bishop Borgess at Tiffin (Ohio) Calvert: Calvert, a small coed Catholic school with 91 boys in three grades, handed the Spartans a 21-6 defeat last year. Calvert lost its last six games and finished 3-7. Tony Ewald takes over at QB for Axel Risner (5-11, 165), who moves to tailback this year. Borgess (3-6) has a couple of prospects in senior tight end Torrey Thomas and junior QB Richard Paige. **PICKS:** Borgess comes back a winner.

Redford CC vs. London (Ontario) CC, 4 p.m. at Silverdome: Canadian teams have never offered much competition for the Shamrocks, but that could change Saturday. London CC won five straight city championships (1988-92) and was the top high school team in Canada two years ago. The Crusaders were 7-2 last year and had their 31-game league winning streak broken by London Laurier. The Shamrocks aren't supposed to be as powerful as last year, but it would be a mistake to think CC is headed for a down year. **PICKS:** The Shamrocks have a lucky four-leaf clover.

Harrison vs. Brother Rice, 7 p.m. at Silverdome: What a topper for the first weekend of high school football — a rematch of the '93 regular-season finale won by Rice, 35-0. History says the first team to score wins since the loser never has. Harrison won the first meeting 32-0 in the '91 opener (also in the Dome). A loss won't doom the loser, however. Rice was still the Class A runner-up in '91, and the Hawks rebounded to win the Class A title in '93. The focus has been on Harrison's returning talent, but the Warriors have outstanding players in QB Derek Canine (6-1, 205), center Sean Regan (6-2, 270) and linebacker Walter Jenkins (6-3, 220). **PICKS:** Don't expect another blowout (either way) this time. Both like Harrison this year.

THE WEEK AHEAD

PREP FOOTBALL
Friday, Sept. 2
Liv. Churchill at Dearborn, 4 p.m.
Farmington at Waterford Mott, 7 p.m.
Liv. Franklin at S.H. Stevenson, 7:30 p.m.
Redford Union at Liv. Stevenson, 7:30 p.m.
Westland Glenn at Howell, 7:30 p.m.
Adrian at Wayne Memorial, 7:30 p.m.
Monroe at Pty. Canton, 7:30 p.m.
Pty. Salem at Belleville, 7:30 p.m.
Garden City at D.H. Crestwood, 7:30 p.m.
St. Agatha at Clarenceville, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 3
W. Bloomfield at N. Farmington, 1 p.m.
Country Day at Red. Thurston, 1 p.m.
St. Alphonsus at Luth. Westland, 1 p.m.
Bishop Borgess at Tiffin Calvert, 1 p.m.
(Kickoff Classic at Perrysburg, Ohio)
Redford CC vs. London (Ont.) CC, 4 p.m.
F.H. Harrison vs. Birm. Bro. Rice, 7 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL
Thursday, Sept. 1
R.O. Shrine Tournament, 5:30 & 7 p.m.
Dtn. Fordson at Liv. Ladywood, 7 p.m.
Southfield at Liv. Franklin, 7 p.m.
Liv. Stevenson at S'field-Lathrup, 7 p.m.
Westland Glenn at Troy High, 7 p.m.
Birm. Marian at Pty. Canton, 7 p.m.
F.H. Harrison at Wat. Kettering, 7 p.m.
Huron Valley at A.P. Inter-City, 7 p.m.
Farm. Mercy at W.L. Central, 7 p.m.
Farmington at Troy Athens, 7:30 p.m.
Pty. Christian at Whitmore Lake, TBA.

BOYS SOCCER
Thursday, Sept. 1
Warren Beth. at Huron Valley, 4:30 p.m.
Pty. Christian vs. Oakland Christian at Hines Park (Haggerty Field), 4:30 p.m.
R.O. Shrine at Luth. Westland, 5 p.m.
A.A. Huron at Liv. Stevenson, 7 p.m.

MEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER
Friday, Sept. 2
Madonna at Aquinas College, 2:30 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 3
Madonna at Olivet College, 3:30 p.m.
Schoolcraft at Monroe CC (N.Y.). TBA.
Sunday, Sept. 4
Schoolcraft at Monroe CC (N.Y.). TBA.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER
Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 3-4
Schoolcraft at Monroe CC (N.Y.). TBA.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL
Friday-Saturday, Sept. 2-3
Madonna at Mesa St. (Colo) Inv., TBA.
TBA — times to be announced.

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FOOTBALL

The following is the Observerland's list of top 25 football players. The top 10 are listed in order, followed by the next 15, in alphabetical order.

1. Kevin Bryant, senior wide receiver/defensive back, Farmington Hills Harrison: Bryant (6-0, 170) is a game-breaker in many ways. He led the Hawks with 25 catches for 553 yards and eight TDs. He also averaged 33½ yards on kick returns and 13 more on punt returns and is always around the ball in the Harrison secondary on defense.

"Kevin had outstanding double sessions," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "He catches the ball better and runs excellent routes. He looks very good on defense, too. He breaks well to the football, and he hits. He's a definite big-time prospect."

2. Nick Williams, fullback/linebacker, Harrison: The 6-2, 248-pounder punished Harrison's playoff opponents, gaining half of his 850 yards in the post-season to lead the Hawks to the Class A championship. They also need a good effort from him at inside linebacker.

"We expect Nick to be a force on offense," Herrington said. "He's going to have to play more two ways, so we'll have to find a place to rest him."

3. John Spolsky, junior fullback/linebacker, Redford Catholic Central: Spolsky, who can bench press 400 pounds, is the Shamrocks' best player on offense and defense. He had impressive numbers for a sophomore and should easily double those totals this year. The 5-11, 220-pounder goes 100 percent whether he's carrying the ball or going after it.

"Spolsky ran and blocked like a sophomore last year; he was a little hesitant and made sophomore mistakes," CC coach Tom Mach said. "He's like a seasoned veteran this year and came in with real good confidence."

4. Brent Washington, senior tailback, Westland John Glenn: A starter last year at defensive back, the 5-foot, 170-pound Washington will make an impact in 1994 at tailback. He's the Rockets' best athlete and can be an effective receiver with extraordinary leaping ability.

"He's a tremendous competitor and has a great attitude," Glenn coach Chuck Gordon said. "I think he'll have a good season. He has excellent work habits."

5. Lorenzo Guess, sophomore quarterback, Wayne Memorial: The 6-3, 175-pound athlete extraordinaire started every game as a freshman on the varsity, throwing 11 TD passes. He also was a standout in the secondary, but coach Chuck Howton will use him mostly on offense in '94.

"Lorenzo will be much improved," Howton said. "He'll be a really good quarterback this year, next year and hopefully the following year. He's a real leader, it doesn't matter what sport. He did the same thing in basketball."

6. Torrey Thomas, tight end/linebacker, Redford Bishop Borgess: Thom as, a 6-foot, 195-pound senior, has 4.6 speed in the 40-yard dash. He was third on Borgess last year in tackles at defensive end. His future in college could be at strong safety, but Borgess coach Craig James is playing him at outside linebacker because "We need to get him where he'll punish people. Torrey is legitimate."

7. Jason Granger, junior tailback, Farmington Hills Harrison: Granger, brother of former Harrison star Roy Granger, is the fastest player the Hawks have ever had, according to Herrington. The 5-8, 148-pounder was second on the team last year in rushing with 815 yards and six TDs.

"He has outstanding moves and he's strong-er this year," Herrington said. "If you keep giving him the ball, he's going to make something happen."

8. Jake Slakosky, junior tailback/strong safety, Farmington: Slakosky became the full-time tailback midway through his sophomore season and finished with 533 yards and a 4.8 average per carry. A slashing runner, Slakosky also will line up in the secondary at strong safety after spending last fall at outside linebacker.

"He's our best-conditioned athlete," said second-year coach Laurl Niskanen, a former assistant coach in the Canadian Football League. "He has a great work ethic. He comes to practice and works hard whether he's on offense or defense."

9. Steve Shaieb, senior guard, Farmington Harrison: Shaieb (5-10, 197) begins his third year as an offensive line starter for the Hawks. He earned all-league honors on offense last year and will start at nose-guard on defense. Shaieb exemplifies the kind of steady high school player who has been the backbone of Harrison's success over the years.

"Shaieb is our strongest lineman, and we look to him for leadership," Herrington said.

10. Bill Matti, senior tailback, Redford St. Agatha: Matti rushed for 937 yards and 18 TDs as a junior. Coach Gary Tuz calls him the best high school back he's coached with the exception of Wayne State star Joe Gough, who played for Tuz at Walled Lake Central before transferring to Orchard Lake St. Mary's.

The next 15 players:

Rich Bellomy, senior linemen/linebacker, Garden City: The 6-1, 210-pound senior was a second-team All-Observer pick a year ago.

David Erickson, senior tight end/linebacker, Livonia Franklin: Erickson (6-3, 220) missed most of last season with a knee injury, but coach Rick Lee said he has a lot of ability. He's a good blocker and has good hands as a receiver.

Scott Goldman, senior running back, Stevenson: One of several running backs in the Stevenson stable, Goldman combines power and guts to get the job done for the Spartans.

Scott Gurka, senior defensive end, Farmington Harrison: Had it not been for two serious knee injuries, Gurka (6-1, 205) would have been one of Observerland's top college prospects. Gurka, who received another season of eligibility this semester, is still expected to play Division I-AA ball this year.

Ryan Lewis, senior fullback/linebacker, Farmington: The 5-11, 204-pound senior helps open holes for tailback Slakosky but also has the speed to find his own daylight.

Mike Liskow, senior center, Redford CC: The 6-foot, 210-pounder took over as a starter midway through the '93 season. His blocking keys the CC rushing attack.

Mike Marsh, senior lineman, Plymouth Canton: The 6-2, 260-pounder plays guard on offense and has the speed to play linebacker on defense. A possible Division I player.

Craig Martin, senior fullback, Livonia Stevenson: The 5-foot, 220-pound senior moves from offensive line to fullback, where he's have a couple extra yards to gain momentum and hit people. He's also the 189-pound state wrestling champ.

Nick McClarse, senior tight end/defensive end, Stevenson: The 5-10, 197-pound senior will miss quarterback Kevin Szczembara, who graduated, but he'll still be a steady target for the Spartans. He was Stevenson's second-leading receiver in '93.

Corey McClelland, senior fullback, Wayne Memorial: The 5-foot, 230-pounder hits the line strong whether he's lining up at fullback or as a tackle on defense.

Chris Mullett, senior slotback, Stevenson: The Spartans won't have last year's deep threat Brad Morgan, who graduated, so the play of the 5-9, 170-pound Mullett will be of even more importance in a short-yardage passing attack.

Richard Paige, junior quarterback, Bishop Borgess: Borgess coach Craig James predicts Paige (6-0, 185) will be a sure-fire blue-chip player next season. James already is comparing Paige to former Farmington Hills Harrison quarterback and current Michigan State wide receiver Mill Coleman.

Jason Pawlowski, senior tight end/linebacker, North Farmington: Blocking is his forte, but the 6-3, 210-pound Pawlowski should catch a lot more passes as the Raiders' starting tight end. Last year, he was backup to All-Observer first-team player Scott Lord.

TENNIS

BLOOMFIELD HILLS ANDOVER 7
NORTH FARMINGTON 1
Tuesday at North Farmington

No. 1 singles: Hannah Kwon (BHA) def. Allison Walkon, 6-3, 6-3.

No. 2: Sarah Sohn (BHA) def. Lauren Jones, 6-4, 6-3.

No. 3: Hannah Fishman (BHA) def. Amy Marks, 6-1, 6-0.

No. 4: Sarah Hand (NF) def. Jessica Tucker, 6-7, 7-6, 7-5.

No. 1 doubles: Melanie Tilchen-Alison Lynch (BHA) def. Stephanie Paruch-Erica Brown, 1-6, 6-3, 6-1.

No. 2: Kristine Herb-Ilyssa Kahn (BHA) def. Renee Ouellette-Jenny Yen, 6-0, 6-2.

No. 3: Deanna Lakas-Jordan Whokur (BHA) def. Elyse Lakritz-Rachel Wool, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2.

No. 4: Amy Hushotz-Doris Payer (BHA) def. Lisa Anastasio-Esther Kim, 3-6, 7-6, 6-2.

NORTH FARMINGTON 4
BIRMINGHAM GROVES 4
Monday at Groves

No. 1 singles: Allison Walkon (NF) def. Amy Huszczo, 6-7, 6-2, 6-4.

No. 2: Lauren Jones (NF) def. Amy Lauhoff, 6-2, 6-1.

No. 3: Erika Stone (BG) def. Amy Marks, 6-4, 6-0.

No. 4: Rachel Seligson (BG) def. Sarah Hand, 6-1, 6-3.

No. 1 doubles: Stephanie Paruch-Erica Brown (NF) def. Kristine Nickles-Sarah Snyder, 7-6 (10-8), 6-2.

No. 2: Jennifer Yen-Renee Ouellette (NF) def. Andrea Brenton-Mindy Goldstein, 6-1, 6-2.

No. 3: Liz Letscher-Julie Salick (BG) def. Elyse Lakritz-Rachel Wool, 7-6 (7-5), 6-3.

No. 4: Kathryn Demmler-Chris Brown (BG) def. Danita Wiseman-Stephanie Pugh, 6-3, 6-2.

North's next match: at Plymouth Canton Sept. 12.

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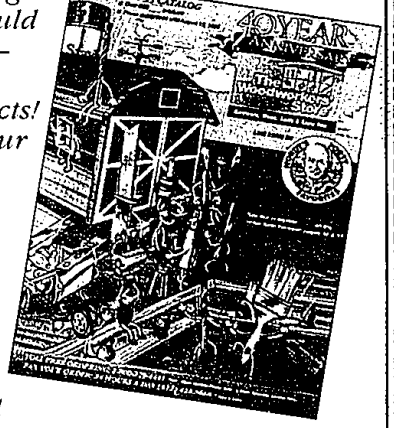

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