

Football from page 1C

"Great players make great plays. It was the same when we had (Nick) Williams and (Kevin) Bryant last year," Herrington said. "Jason got beat twice (playing the secondary), but he came through when we needed him."

Stevenson put three TDs on the board in the second half.

The Spartans, behind the passing of senior quarterback Dean Bacheller (9-of-16 for 171 yards) began their comeback with a pair of third-period TDs.

Junior tailback Gale Clark (17 of 54 yards) capped an 11-play, 80-yard drive with 3-yard TD run with 6:59 left in the quarter. Tight end Rob Dole's 33-yard catch from Bacheller set up the score. (The Spartans missed the point-after attempt.)

Wins from page 1C

"We thought they would double team Rich wherever he went. So we sent Rich in motion and pitched it the other way to Lessway, and there was nobody there."

The 6-2, 225-pound Lessway returned an interception 63 yards to finish the scoring. He also had nine tackles on defense, one less than teammate Eric Pierce.

Lessway, who had 22 carries, has gained 847 yards (for an average of 7.1) and eight TDs this season.

Wilson also had two receptions for 26 yards and two returns for 61. He set up the TD with a 42-yard run during a three-play, 55-yard drive.

"He gets overlooked in this league because there are so many good backs," Naumchiff said, "but he has a heart as big as this field."

The Raiders had a 424-213 edge in rushing yards and a 505-248 overall yardage advantage.

Norb's Brad Rivers completed five of nine passes for 79 yards. Beal caught three passes for 55, and Jeff Fraser added 51 rushing yards on six carries.

"Rich is one of the finest kids I've coached because he's so unselfish," O'Leary said. "It's been a frustrating year because we lose, but these are great kids who work with."

Churchill, linebacker George Shanlikian had 15 first hits and 22 total tackles. Nathan Jerome completed three of 13 passes for 35 yards.

At Farmington 17, Franklin 12: Senior Jake Siskosky contributed to the victory in more ways than one.

Besides running for a pair of 1-yard touchdowns, he helped inspire the Falcons when he addressed the team last week.

"Jake spoke up one day after practice and said he'd like to speak to the team," Farmington coach Leoni Niekman said.

"He said he wanted to win the last two games. He said, 'Let's get it together on Saturday, so we can win the first one. I'm tired of losing games.'"

"We'll give him the credit for that."

The win was Farmington's first in three weeks and gave the Falcons a 3-5 overall record. Franklin is 2-4.

Jon Hood's extra-point kick gave Farmington a 7-0 lead in the first quarter, but the Patriots answered with Steve Ashby's 70-yard kickoff return. Franklin missed the PAT, however.

Hood kicked a 35-yard field goal in the third quarter and another PAT after Siskosky's second TD in the fourth period.

Aaron Phillips had a 13-yard reception on fourth down to keep the winning drive going.

The Falcons stopped Franklin but failed to get a first down and had to give the ball back.

The Patriots drove for another score in the final minute as David McMullen passed 16 yards to Paul Terak.

Farmington recovered Franklin's onside kickoff and ran out the clock.

"Amazingly, we were able to control the football," Niekman said, adding Jason Carviani did well replacing injured tackle Mike Foreman against a big Franklin defensive line.

"I think we won it up front. It was a combination of minding it up, running and throwing the ball, and we kept them off balance."

Siskosky had 143 of Farmington's 182 rushing yards on 25 carries, pushing his season total to 1,147. The Falcons ran 68 plays. Quarterback Tim Strick was eight of 18 for 64 yards.

"I think we're a good football team," Niekman said. "The thing is you only get one chance when you line up against teams in your league, and you have to execute. Our league is balanced, and you gotta get ready to play."

After a short Harrison punt, Stevenson took just six plays to score again, this time Bacheller hooking up with split end Jeff Backus on a 32-yard scoring play at the 2:55 mark.

Backus, who led all receivers with 129 yards in receptions, couldn't hold on to the two-pointer, but the senior caught a 53-yard bomb from Bacheller with 9:57 to go in the final quarter to give the Spartans a stunning 18-17 advantage.

"I asked the rhetorical question to our kids at halftime, 'Were we getting our butts kicked?' and nobody felt they were," Gabel said. "There was no panic at halftime, but we were disappointed to be down 17-0."

"We talked about adjustments, the normal things. I thought our defense was very good the first half, and it was some of the best hitting I've seen from our team all year."

Herrington could feel the momentum shift to start the third.

"They moved the ball on the ground to set up their passing," he said. "They did a lot of play-action when we were in our 6-2 (alignment) coming up to jam. And then they started to beat our best corner men. Bacheller is very good. He hurt us last year, and he did again this year."

Of the Hawks, who beat Stevenson in last year's championship

game 21-20, looked as if they would blow out the Spartans during the first half.

Harrison took the opening kickoff 71 yards in seven plays, scoring on Kevin Bambenek's 32-yard pass to a wide-open tight end Marcus Carter.

The Hawks' Nick Shaleh then recovered a Stevenson fumble on the ensuing kickoff. Harrison marched to the Stevenson 7-yard line, but Backus intercepted Bambenek in the end zone.

Pinned in by poor field position, Stevenson stared another Harrison scoring opportunity in the face when the Hawks drove to the 3. But the Hawks coughed up the ball on a fumble to end the first quarter. (Stevenson's Ryan Culloy recovered.)

Harrison, however, got the ball back at the Stevenson 30 on the second series of the second period.

And this time, the Hawks cashed in when Bambenek, who kept Stevenson off-balance with relentless action, scored on a 5-yard run.

"Kevin has a lot of experience after starting for us all last year (as a sophomore) and he'll make the plays when he has to," Herrington said. "He runs pretty well for a skinny basketball player."

Harrison's strong leg, Kyle Vessell, then became a weapon.

He attempted a 50-yard field goal with 2:57 left in the half. The

ball had plenty of distance, but it sailed just wide.

But after Adam Smerecki picked off a Stevenson pass, Vessell made his second try count with a 50-yarder. The boot just cleared the crossbar, giving the Hawks a 17-point advantage with 69 seconds remaining until intermission.

"Our special teams had a bad week last week (versus Walled Lake Western)," Herrington said. "The wind became a factor whether it was for or against you."

Gabel said special teams also played a key part in the outcome. "They have a great, great kicker," he said of Vessell. "The one he missed was more spectacular than the one he made."

The win improves Harrison's record to 7-1 overall and puts the Hawks in solid position to make the state playoffs once again in Class A-Region III.

Stevenson, meanwhile, drops to 6-2, but the Spartans are still very much alive in Class AA-Region III.

"We'll wait and see what happens after the season," Gabel said. "We have to beat (Livonia) Churchill first. The playoffs are really a distant goal."

Harrison, despite all its post-season success under Herrington (223-51-1 career mark), already achieved one of its 1995 aims.

"Our No. 1 goal every year is to win the league," he said.

Granger makes comeback

BY DAN O'MEARA STAFF WRITER

After having his body and pride hurt Friday night, Jason Granger struck a blow for himself and his football team.

The 160-pound senior scored the last 14 points of the game to rally Farmington Hills Harrison for a 31-18 win over host Livonia Stevenson.

The victory gave the Hawks their third straight Western Lakes Activities Association championship and 11th overall.

After the Spartans had scored 18 unanswered second-half points to erase a 17-0 halftime deficit, Granger returned the kickoff 87 yards to put Harrison back in the lead.

"They had the momentum, and my brothers told me I had to do something to take it away from them," Granger said.

"As long as they were stopping me, they were getting excited and coming up with big plays. I had to do something to calm them down."

Stevenson squibbed its kickoffs all evening in an attempt to keep the ball away from Granger.

But this particular kick went down the middle of the field and had enough end-over-end momentum to reach Granger at his 13-yard line.

"I felt I could bust one if they kicked it to me," Granger said. "My brothers told me to hit the hole fast and go to the outside — and it worked."

Granger suffered a mouth injury in the first quarter as a result of what he believed was a late hit. He was struck under the chin, pushing a tooth through his lower lip.

In the second half, Granger was burned twice on deep pass plays. The first set up Stevenson's first touchdown, and the second was a 53-yarder to Jeff Backus that made the score 17-12.

"No. 17 (Backus) — he's just flat-out good," Granger said. "I never had a receiver do that on me until this game. I was on him; he's just good."

"I didn't think (Stevenson) quarterback Dean Bacheller would throw it that far. He has a good arm, but I thought it was short. When I looked up, (Backus) was in the end zone with the ball."

After his kickoff return, Granger had a long run to set up a rushing TD and two-point conversion — both by him — that made the score 31-18.

Most people figured Granger would be the difference in the game, and before it was over that proved to be the case.

Granger's own offensive talents enabled him to recover his pride, and the outcome helped lessen the pain of his injury.

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger

Granger



We Helped Push This 74-Year-Old Man Into The Pool.

Aquatic exercise classes for people with arthritis are just some of the more than 130 programs the United Way supports. Programs that are working to help people in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties. So, please, give generously. Because when you support the United Way, you help not only the elderly but also the sick, the homeless, and countless others in need.



Touch a life. The United Way.

United Way Torch Drive 1212 Griswold Detroit, MI 48226 313-226-9200

MOCS HO. 2123-1095



General Motors.

Is sponsoring this message in the interest of the Greater Detroit community. United Way Torch Drive contributions are not used to pay for this ad.

Have you seen Street Scene?

It's hot! It's cool! Check it out. Every Thursday.