

Area teams at opposite ends of the spectrum

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

There's very little in-between in the way of Observant football teams through two weeks of the 1998 season.

It's either a feast or famine situation in most cases. Exactly seven teams are undefeated, and seven others have yet to win on the field (explanation upcoming). The remaining four are playing .500 ball.

Redford Township can be proud of its teams. The four Redford schools are 7-0. Thurston, Redford Union and St. Agatha are 2-0, and the No. 1 team in the state, Catholic Central, which was idle last week when Windsor Holy Name backed out, is 1-0.

The other undefeated teams are Farmington Harrison, the top-ranked team in Class A,

GRID PICKS

Westland John Glenn and Livonia Clarenceville.

Two teams who haven't won on the scoreboard (explanation very near now) will win this week when Plymouth Canton plays at Livonia Churchill and Farmington visits North Farmington.

Technically, North Farmington is no longer winless, however. Orchard Lake St. Mary's had to forfeit its first-week victory over the Raiders for using an ineligible player.

On the prognostication scoreboard, it's a tie ballgame. Yours truly gained a game in the standings and is now even with fellow sports editor Brad Emons. Both are 23-7.

FRIDAY GAMES

(all times 7 p.m. unless noted)

Belleville at Wayne: It doesn't get any easier for the Zebros (1-1), who lost at Fordson last week and now must face state-ranked Belleville (2-0) this week. At least Wayne is on home turf for this game. The Zebros gave the playoff-bound Tigers a good game last year, losing 17-0. PICKS: The victory ball rings for Belleville.

Garden City at Fordson: The Cougars (1-1) will try to blamish Fordson's perfect record in this Mega-Conference crossover. The Tractors (2-0) have outscored Detroit Kettering and Wayne, 33-0. Garden City pounded Grosse Pointe the first week but lost to Edsel Ford in its White Division opener. PICKS: The Tractors remain in high gear.

Ypsilanti at Redford Union: The Panthers (2-0) are surely making believers of Emons and O'Meara, even if they're slow to come around to their side. RU has proved both wrong with victories over Churchill and Woodhaven. The Pan-

thers rallied from a 22-15 deficit to beat Woodhaven, 43-21. Matt Rigley was 21-of-37 passing for 226 yards and three touchdowns. This will be Rigley's true test since Ypsilanti is the defending Mega Blue champion. The Braves (1-1) were trounced 41-0 by Cuyahoga Falls (Ohio) Jesuit but rebounded with a 38-0 shutout of Highland Park. PICKS: If RU can win this game, we'll really believe in the Panthers, but Ypsi rates the role of favorite.

W.L. Central at John Glenn: The Rockets (2-0) will be eager for some revenge this week. They've no doubt been reminded of last year's 27-21, upset loss to the Vikings in a game that decided the Lakes Division championship. Glenn is rolling again with wins over Cooley and Canton, but it's just the opposite for Central (0-2). The Vikings are way down compared to last year, losing backs Nathan Bruce to a knee injury and Nick Holt to Farmington Harrison. In one of the biggest surprises of the first week, Central lost to Millard and followed that with a 28-7 loss to Northville. PICKS: With a few steam-powered engines are no longer useful? The Rockets blow off some steam and the Vikings off the field.

Canton at Churchill: 7:30: Canton was winless last year, too, when it met Churchill in the seventh game. The Chiefs (0-2) proved yours truly wrong and beat the Chargers (0-2) for their only win, 20-12. With the Monroe and John Glenn games behind them, the Chiefs are pleased to be playing a team that isn't state-ranked. PICKS: We'll need the coinflips for this one but both agree it's Canton again.

Franklin at W.L. Western: 7:30: The state-ranked Warriors (2-0) are among the unbeaten teams, also, with one-sided wins over Lakeland and North Farmington. The Patriots (0-2) will have to contain Western running backs Dave Johnson and Eric Sage to have a chance. The backfield duo combined for 323 rushing yards and five touchdowns in a 49-14 defeat of North. PICKS: The Warriors march on.

Stevenson at Salem (CEP): 7:30: This is the only game on the schedule that doesn't involve either an undefeated or winless team. Stevenson rebounded

from a loss to Dearborn to beat Franklin, 21-7. Following its loss to Belleville, Salem did likewise in defeating Churchill, 33-7. Can the Spartans stop the wishbone attack and move the ball against a good Salem defense? PICKS: It might be only a slight edge, but it goes to the Rockets.

SATURDAY GAMES

(all times 1 p.m. unless noted)

Thurston at Woodhaven, noon: Woodhaven was picked to finish second in the Mega Blue behind Ypsilanti but is 0-2 with losses to Wyandotte and RU. Thurston (2-0) steps to the plate to see if it can keep two streaks going — its own and Woodhaven's. In the wake of RU's victory last week, the Eagles need a win to keep up with the Joneses. PICKS: You have to go with the unbeaten team in this one, O'Meara says, but Emons likes Woodhaven.

Farmington at N. Farmington: Yours truly was fooled on this game a year ago, too. Farmington was the pick, but North was the winner. The Raiders won 21-0 en route to a 6-3 finish. The schedule hasn't been kind to either team and both are 0-2. Orchard Lake St. Mary's, Walled Lake Western and Farmington Harrison are among the best in the state, and Farmington's game with Novi might have been different if not for a lot of mistakes. PICKS: It's another toss-up game. A gut feeling says it's North.

Northville at Farm. Harrison: Not only are the Hawks undefeated (2-0), but the No. 1 team in Class A has yet to surrender a point, having outscored Oxford and Farmington, 95-0. But the Hawks will be tested this week; at least it shapes up that way. Northville was expected to be improved, and early results indicate that is so. The Mustangs (1-1) played well in a 10-3 loss to state-ranked Brighton and last week whipped Walled Lake Central, 28-7. PICKS: With 250 career wins in the bank, the Hawks start to move coach John Herrington toward the 300 mark.

Clarenceville at Lith. Westland: Is it too early to start thinking about a possible playoff berth for Clarenceville (2-0)? Probably, since both games are ahead against the Metro Conference powers,

but this looks like another game the Trojans should win. They've beaten Cranbrook and Cabrit while Lutheran Westland (0-2) has struggled in losses to Lutheran Northwest and Lutheran East. PICKS: They'll be clapping for Clarenceville again.

Redford CC vs. Redford Rice, 3 p.m. at Blim. Grove: Kickoff is not 2 p.m. Sunday at Winder Stadium anymore. For the first time in years, these two rivals won't meet in the annual Boys Bowl, but that doesn't mean the interest and the football competition won't be just as keen as in the past. The question is will a week off hurt CC more than a tough physical game at Toledo St. John did Rice? The Shamrocks (1-0) received good news this week when they learned all-state linebacker Casey Rogowski (knee) will be able to play again by early October. This game could have a bearing on the playoffs for CC, because it will play one less game after being idle last week, and for Rice, because it's Class AA now and has trouble beating CC, which won 14-12 last year. The Warriors (2-0) have wins over East Kentwood and St. John. PICKS: CC is No. 1 overall in Michigan and ranked nationally by USA Today for a good reason. The Shamrocks are a cut above the competition. O'Meara says. Emons goes out on a limb and takes Rice.

Bishop Borgess vs. R.O. Shrine, 7 p.m. at Garden City Jr. High: If you think the Spartans (2-0) are catching a break in the schedule, hold on a minute after losing to Divine Child and Catholic League C-section favorite Bishop Gallagher. Borgess faces undefeated Shrine (2-0), also of the C-section. The Knights have victories over Memphis, 45-6, and Detroit Benedictine, 27-0. PICKS: The sun shines on coach John Goddard.

St. Agatha vs. Taylor Light & Life, 7:30 p.m. at RU's Kraft Field: The Aggies (2-0) are looking pretty tough after outscoring their first two opponents, Cassinville-Fort Sanilac and Hamtramck St. Florian, 57-6. Light and Life (1-1), a member of the Catholic League D-section along with St. Agatha, whipped Detroit Urban Lutheran, 32-0, but is coming off a 40-0 loss to St. Alphonsus. PICKS: The Aggies keep the win streak going.

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drives, and all seven started from the Farmington side of the field. The Falcons scored mid-field three times, advancing as far as the Harrison 45 twice, once by penalty.

Still, it wasn't a perfect day for the Hawks, either.

Harrison failed to convert a pair of two-point conversion attempts and was penalized 15 yards on the second-half kickoff for using illegal equipment. A halftime check by the officials determined a player's cleats were too long.

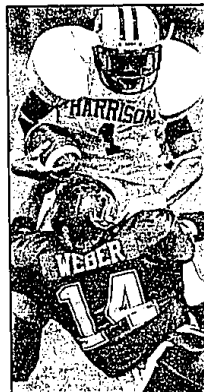
"I didn't think we played well overall in the first half," Herrington said. "We made crucial mistakes and didn't pass protect like we should have. Even though we got a lead, we didn't play with a lot of enthusiasm. In the second half, I thought we came out and played like we should."

Falcon passed 16 yards to Bryant and 12 to Hoad for a 12-0 lead. Following an interception by Blake Boesky, Blake had a 2-yard scoring run.

Harrison had another drive stall at the Farmington 15 and missed a field-goal attempt before Davis caught a 13-yard TD pass for a 26-0 halftime lead.

The Hawks scored the first three times they had the ball in the third quarter. Davis carried 34 yards out of the backfield, Bryant faked two defenders and tripped the sideline for a 31-yard TD and Turney dashed 24 yards for the last score.

"I'm real pleased with this team," Herrington said, adding



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMMON

Leading receiver: Ricky Bryant, who caught six passes, two for Harrison touchdowns, tries to elude a tackle by Farmington defender Grant Weber.

the Harrison defense played well. "The Hawks" work hard and I know they're going to come to play every week. We just started out a little slow this week."

Bryant caught six passes for 98 yards, Davis four for 69. Blake rushed six times for 48

yards and Matt Reed six for 40. The Hawks had 194 of their 359 total yards through the air.

The Falcons rushed for 100 yards but had a net total of 54. Scott Kneller completed one of three passes for 18 yards. Wingback Grant Weber was Farmington's leading rusher with 45 yards on eight carries and took over at quarterback in the third quarter, connecting on one of six pass attempts.

"The Hawks" came after (Kneller), Bechtel said. "Their noseguard (Bryan McGhee) is one heck of a player. He sets up everything in their defense and he's outstanding. They let the three down guys dominate the line, and everyone else stands in there and reads the play."

Bechtel remains optimistic about his team but said the coaches and players have to do a better job. He added the Falcons need injured juniors Todd Anthony (wide receiver) and Justin Milus (tight end) to get healthy.

"I believe we're going to be an outstanding defensive team," he said. "I'm not saying we're going to shut down (Harrison), but we can make it a little tougher for them. It's just going to take us a while."

"The Falcons" want to be successful and we keep telling them they will be successful, but at some point you have to take responsibility for yourself.

"Despite all of that, I'm proud of our coaches and kids. We're going to keep getting better, and you're going to see good things from our kids."



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Jacqueline Maznić, 3½ years old, of Lake Orion wanted to know:

Do you have fun even though you're getting hit?

Herman Moore: "No, that's why I switched a long time ago from defense to offense!"

You are limited to one question for each postcard; please do not send duplicates. We'll collect postcards throughout the entire football season.

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