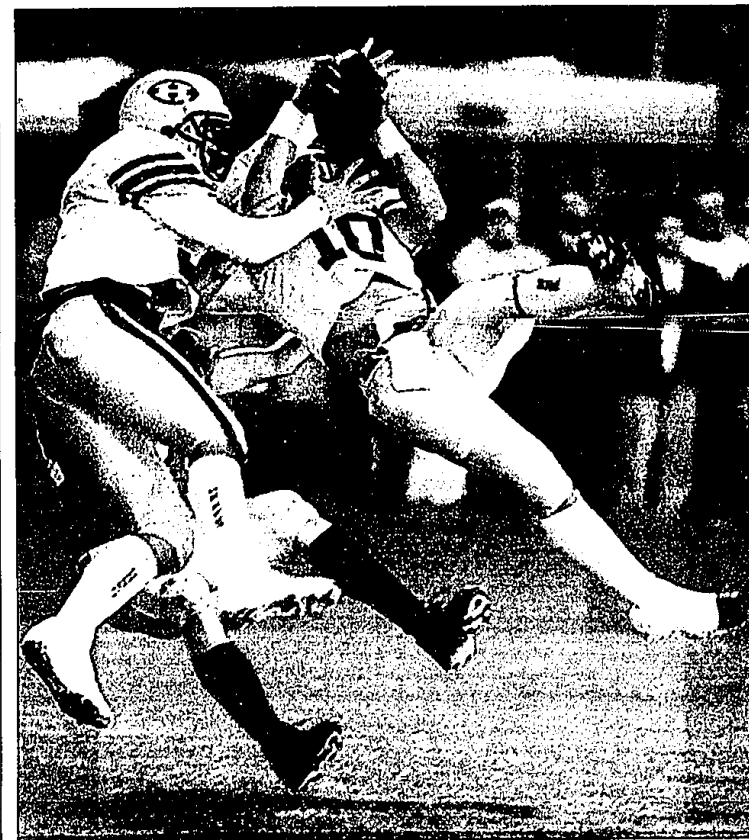


SPORTS & RECREATION

Hawks win showdown with Chiefs



Big play: Harrison's Agim Shabaj intercepts a Canton pass in the Harrison end zone Friday. The pass theft prevented the Chiefs from taking a two-touchdown lead early in the Western Lakes game.

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Harrison's lightning-strike offense met Plymouth Canton's thunderous, pound-it-out ground attack Friday night in a Western Lakes Activities Association football game that lived up to its lofty pre-game hype. When the storm cleared, Harrison had earned a 45-34 victory, but Canton earned a great deal of respect — both from its opponents and the near-capacity crowd at the Centennial Park field.

"Canton is a very good football team," Harrison coach John Harrington said. "I saw it coming a couple of years ago, and they've gotten better every year. They keep coming at you. I can't remember the last time we gave up 34 points to a team."

FOOTBALL

"We made some big plays on offense and our defense rose to the occasion when it had to tonight. Our skilled position players all played well."

The biggest play of the night unfolded with five seconds left in the first quarter and Canton leading, 7-0. Facing a fourth-and-13 from its own 17, Harrison lined up in punt formation.

However, instead of kicking the ball away, punter Drew Stanton — who doubles as the Harrison quarterback — hit a wide-open Agim Shabaj with a pass near mid-field. The speedy senior wideout caught the ball and outraced four defenders to the end zone, tying the score at 7-7.

"It wasn't a play we called in the huddle," Harrington said. "But if Drew sees no one is lining up on Agim, he has the option to throw the ball to him. He made a nice pass and Agim did the rest."

"There were some lights out on that side of the field, so I don't think they saw Agim over there," Stanton said. "He gave me a signal; he got open, and I got him the ball."

The win improved Harrison to 4-0 and 3-0 in the Western Lakes Activities Association while Canton dropped to 3-1 and 2-1 in the WLAA.

Chiefs coach Tim Baechler said his team displayed a split personality.

"In the first half, I asked myself, 'Where did my football team go?'" he said. "We made so many dumb mistakes. But in the second half, I've never

Please see FOOTBALL, B2

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Field hockey victory

A solid team effort, led by Molly O'Malley, was just what Farmington Hills Mercy needed to get by Bloomfield Hills Academy of the Sacred Heart in field hockey.

Mercy, with O'Malley scoring twice and getting one assist, defeated Sacred Heart Thursday night in Bloomfield Hills, 4-0.

Justine Hughes and Erin Gruley also scored for the Marlins, who have a 3-2 record after outshooting their opposition, 12-5.

"Erin's goal was a good indication of the way we played," Mercy coach Kim Norton said. "We passed patiently the whole game."

"The goal came from the right side, went in the circle and Erin scored. Teresa Lawrence passed it to Molly O'Malley and she passed to Erin."

"We had really good team play the whole game."

O'Malley scored the first and last goals. Also getting assists were Angie Trudeau and Jackie Shinney. Stephanie Yuhaz was in goal for the Marlins.

Hockey programs open

Suburban Hockey is still accepting registrations for its Breakfast Club and Prime Time Program — a pair of weekly skills and conditioning sessions for adult hockey players of all ability levels.

There will be two 10-week sessions (October-December and January-March) of the Breakfast Club at four locations in the metro-Detroit area, including Novi Ice Arena and Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills.

Suburban Hockey also is offering an Advanced Program at Suburban Training Center on Thursday mornings and a Prime Time Program at STC on Tuesday evenings.

For more information on any Suburban Hockey program, call (248) 478-1600 or visit www.suburbanhockey.com on the internet.

Clinton aids grid win

Senior split end Joe Clinton of Farmington Hills had a team-high three receptions for 69 yards in Ohio Wesleyan University's 34-16 football win over Olivet College Sept. 8.

Clinton played high school football at the University of Detroit-Jesuit. Ohio Wesleyan took a 1-0 record into a Saturday game at Waynesburg.

OCC volleyball defeat

The Oakland Community College women's volleyball team lost to Delta College Tuesday, 36-38, 30-25, 30-19, 27-30, 16-8.

The loss drops Oakland CC to 0-5 in the MCCA Eastern Conference and 3-12 overall. Delta improved to 2-0 in the conference and 5-4 overall.

The Lady Raiders were led by Autumn Bugg with 21 kills and three service aces. Kari Bingham had 20 kills while Courtney Davison had eight kills and 49 set assists.

OCC is in action again Tuesday when it travels to Schoolcraft College to play the Ocelots at 5 p.m.

Salem bests Harrison

A trio of Plymouth Salem golfers bettered 40 Wednesday to lead the Rocks to a 150-156 victory over Farmington Harrison in a Western Lakes Activities Association dual meet.

Medalist honors went to the Rocks' Jon Gordon with a 35. Other scorers for Salem (1-1) were Bobby Jones (37), Andy Thackaberry (38) and Dave Wallen (40).

Best among the Hawks (1-2) was Junichi Miura with a 37. Other Harrison scorers were Jon Graves (39), Chris Fitzgerald (40) and John Kluka (41). Non-scorers for Harrison were Dave Koch (42) and Danny Doig (44).

NAHL cancels games

The North American Hockey League announced Thursday that all games scheduled for this weekend, including Sunday's match between the Compuware Ambassadors and Danville Wings at Compuware Arena, have been postponed. The game will be rescheduled at a later date.

Anyone with tickets for that game may use them next Saturday or Sunday when the Ambassadors host the Texas Tornados. For more information, call the Compuware Sports Arena at (734) 453-8400.

Falcons half way to being repeat champs

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER
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SOCCER

Farmington High took a big step toward defending its city championship in boys soccer Thursday.

The Falcons scored a goal in each half, played solid defense and walked away with a 2-0 victory over cross-town rival North Farmington.

The game was played at Farmington, but North was the home team. The game was postponed from Tuesday out of respect for the Americans who died in the terrorist acts in New York and Virginia, and the North stadium facility

was the site for a JV football game Thursday.

"When we play North, it's always a big game for us, and I know the boys are always ready to play North," Farmington coach Luke Juncaj said.

He added teams are sometimes "too ready" for big, intra-city games such as this one, but the Falcons played under control.

"Tonight we played with a lot of composure," Juncaj said. "After the first 10

minutes, we settled down, got the ball to the flanks, changed the point of attack very well and just played with a lot of control."

Farmington's Matt Konopinski scored a goal early in the game, but it was disallowed and the Falcons had to wait a while longer.

"I think the linesman called him off-sides, but Matt dribbled through three defenders and couldn't have been off-sides," Juncaj said.

Konopinski was not to be denied and scored the first goal in the 25th minute off a throw-in by Nick Ramirez. He hit Konopinski six yards in front of the

goal, and Konopinski punched a header into the net.

The score remained 1-0 through half-time despite Farmington's control of the action.

"We had the edge for all 80 minutes, especially the last 16 minutes of the first half," Juncaj said. "We had them in their box most of the time. We had several good scoring chances; we just couldn't get the second goal."

The Falcons began the second half the way they ended the first by keeping the pressure on the Raiders, according

Please see FHS, B6

Hawks defeat Panthers, own 2-game win streak

Farmington Harrison earned its second straight victory in boys soccer Friday by defeating Redford Union in a non-league contest, 6-1.

The Hawks (2-3-1) built a 4-0 half-time lead with two goals by Alfred Gjekaj and one apiece from Chris Kollias and Marjel Tani.

Gjekaj's first was a hard shot to the near post that made it under the crossbar after he beat a defender one-on-one at 35:50.

Fatos Gjekaj assisted on the Kollias goal with 16:20 remaining in the half. Gjekaj intercepted an RU pass four minutes later and fired a hard shot from the left side for his second goal.

Tani scored 9:18 before halftime after taking a pass from Noah Bander.

"We played quite well, very disciplined and structured," Harrison coach Tim Russell said. "We had great passing from the back through the midfield."

"Our mids were overlapping and filling space very well. It was hard for them to defend us, because we were sending a lot of people."

Eric Whist's goal from Bander made it 5-0 midway in the second half. Tani got his second goal with a header and Bander his third assist to complete the Harrison scoring.

SOCCER

The Panthers avoided a shutout with a goal by Tony Carignan with 12 minutes left.

The goal resulted from a Harrison defensive breakdown, according to Russell, when a defender called "for a sub" when he should have been marking up."

Tani has scored five goals in the last two games and is quickly maturing as a player, he added.

"Marjel is probably our most vocal leader on the field, and he also leads with his play," Russell said.

"Our defense was great again today. It helped build the offense by sending the ball forward. (RU) couldn't get anything going."

Dustin Babler played the first half in goal for the Hawks and Chris Diehl the second half.

HARRISON 4, JOHN GLENN 0: Tani recorded a hat trick Wednesday, and Chris Kollias completed the scoring with an assist by Moon Lee. Tani's goals were made possible by assists from Chris Fink, Emery Erikson, and Brett Laird.

Please see HAWKS, B6



Take-charge guy: Alfred Gjekaj splits a pair of Redford Union defenders to get to the ball Friday. He scored two Harrison goals.