

# Falcons in regional final game again

## Ramirez scores game-winner in Farmington soccer victory

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Grosse Pointe North was a much tougher foe to overcome this year, but Farmington was able to do just that on the soccer field again Tuesday night.

Senior Nick Ramirez' goal with 55 seconds remaining gave the Falcons a 3-2 win in a Division 2 regional tournament game at Royal Oak Dendore.

Farmington (15-3-2) will try for its second straight regional championship Friday when it faces Trenton in the final game at 7 p.m. Trenton was a 4-1 winner over Hamtramck Tuesday.

The Falcons, who breezed through the district with three consecutive 6-0 victories, also defeated the Norwemen last year in a regional game, 6-0.

"I think the boys thought it would be an easy game, like the last three," Farmington coach Luke Juncay said.

"This was a good game for us, because it tells us we're going to face good teams in the state tournament. There will be tough games and we have to work super hard to win those games."

The Falcons played a different game last year, he added. The difference was they were in control the whole time, but the Norwemen carried the play to them for much of the first half Tuesday.

"Our plan was to take it to them in the first minute and keep the pressure on them," Juncay said. "For the first 30 minutes, the ball was in our half, and we didn't get the chances we expected to get early in the game."

"They put a lot of pressure on us, and we didn't react well to that pressure. I thought we played way too much one-touch instead of controlling the ball, bringing it down and finding the open player."

North (14-4-2) scored first when Brad VanSickle's hard roller from 30 yards got inside the right corner of the Farmington net at 18:09 in the first half.

After Nate Meyer was tripped by the GPN goalie in front of the net, Ramirez tied the score with 8:52 remaining by converting the penalty kick. The keeper stopped the ball initially, but it rolled past him and just over the goal line.

The Falcons began to take control late in the half and would've had a halftime lead if not for a big play by GPN defender Rob Barlow.

Farmington's Matt Konopinski headed the ball over the keeper, but Barlow was standing on the goal line and his header prevented a goal from being scored.

The Falcons were on the offensive in the second half while the Norwemen appeared to fall back into a defensive mode.

Matt Okopya gave Farmington a 2-1 lead when his shot skipped under the reach of the GPN goalie at 34:56.

But North started to stir again late in the game. Besmir Bega lifted a high, arcing shot that hit the crossbar and bounced down into the Farmington net for a 2-2 score with 15 minutes to play.

"I didn't think (that goal) had much

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Star of the game: Farmington's Nick Ramirez scored two goals Tuesday, including the game-winner with 55 seconds remaining.

## Seeking answers to grid questions

Things I just don't understand no matter how hard I try...

■ Official A has the football. He tosses it to Official B, standing three yards from him. Official B then tosses the ball to Official C, standing three yards away from him. Official C then sets the ball on the ground and signals the clock to start. Why can't Official A just throw the ball to Official C? Bad arm? Incredibly lazy?

■ Why is Allen Park still complaining about having to move up to the Mega Rod in football after sharing the league title?

■ Why do bad things happen to good people? I mean Chelsea coach Brad Bush is a nice guy. What did he do to deserve Harrison in the second round of the playoffs?

■ I have a friend who used to coach a varsity sport at Monroe High School. And he told me that no matter how successful his program became, it wouldn't matter because football ruled the roost there. So how can a town like Monroe be so obsessed about football success, yet its main high school has never reached the state finals?

■ Why Burgess coach Werner Blakely used me as a motivational tool for Darryl Anglin by telling him I didn't think he was a good running back? (I never said any such thing.) Geez, at least Anglin didn't tell Blakely what I said about the Spartans having a successful year, despite the limitations of their coaching staff. Speaking of success: That was anyone making picks in the Observer not named Brad Emmons, C.J. Risak or Dan O'Meara last week. O'Meara and Risak went 5-1; Emmons, the regular season champ, was 4-2 and yours truly a perfect 6-0. And this week?

### FRIDAY GAMES

Walled Lake Western (8-2) at Canton (9-3), 7 p.m.; Canton won the first game, 18-0, so the Chiefs should win again, right? Not if they play the way they did against Novi last week, sliding past with a 9-7 win.

Yes, Western had two losses - one to Canton and one to some Green and Gold team in Farmington. Yeah, Canton should win. But there's this nagging little voice inside my head telling me "Don't be a Rhodes Scholar; show some guts and pick the upset." PICKS: Western - Beaudry; Canton - O'Meara, Risak, Emmons.

Monroe (7-3) at Westland John Glenn (8-2), 7 p.m. So I'm reading a report on the Monroe-Ann Arbor Huron game. After the winner stopped whining on how poor little Huron didn't win the game, he mentioned that "Monroe will play Westland" this week in the playoffs.

Geez, if that's the case, I'm taking Westland. There's more people in Westland than there are in Monroe and if two cities are going to play, I want the one with more people. And if it comes down to teams, I definitely want the one with DeAnthony Grubbs and Brian Cechewicz. PICKS: Western - Beaudry, O'Meara, Risak, Emmons.

Country Day (8-4) at Clarensville (10-0), 7:30 p.m. Hey, Greg! Your team was undefeated in the regular season. It tub-thumped just about every opponent it faced this season. You got into the playoffs and only win by 117! What happened? And guess what, you pom-pom holding, red-and-white facemasked Trojan fans? This Country Day team could be the one that derails the Trojans. No way, you say. If Cville's defense plays the game it did last week, yeah, way. But Country Day lost four games, you say. Yeah, and three of them were to Harrison, Orchard Lake St. Mary's and Catholic Central. I think the winner goes to the state finals. And I think that team is... PICKS: Country Day - Beaudry, Emmons; Clarensville - Beaudry, Risak.

### SATURDAY GAMES

(All games start at 1 p.m.) North Adams-Jerome (9-3) at Bishop Burgess (9-3): Here's what you need to know about North Adams-Jerome. Only the other team in its league had a winning record and one of those schools was in Ohio. And one of the Rams' wins came against the Indiana School for the Deaf.

Here's what you need to know about the Spartans. They didn't play Indiana School for the Deaf. PICKS: Burgess - Beaudry, Risak; North Adams - Emmons, O'Meara.

Redford CC (7-3) vs. Det. King (8-2) at Det. Mumford: Don't play that lovely game of Cody beat King. CC beat Cody so CC should beat King. This time, it won't work that way.

King runs too many different formations, throws too many different darts and too many different everything to be overlooked. This is not to say CC won't win. Actually, the Shamrocks will win if they play their same halfhearted offense. And they will get spanked if they turn the ball over three times inside the opponents 10, as it did against CC. Here's banking on the ball-control. PICKS: CC - Beaudry, O'Meara, CC King - Risak.

Chelsea (10-0) at Harrison (10-0): Bush was lamening the other day. "You know, I think if we were in Division 2, we'd win the state title." He's right, the Bulldogs probably would.

But Chelsea is in Division 3, along with Harrison and Saginaw, for that matter. And, as much as I like Brad Bush, I have the distinct feeling that in the second half, the best highlight will be watching O'Meara point and say, "Look, there's Jeff Daniels!" PICKS: Harrison - Beaudry, O'Meara, Risak, Emmons.

# Hawks meet Bulldogs in playoff rematch



Key player: Terrill Mayberry stars at wide receiver and defensive back for Harrison.

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To say the least, the Chelsea-High School football team is hoping to make a better showing this year.

The Bulldogs return to Farmington Harrison's Buller Field for another Division 3 playoff game Saturday. Kickoff for the Region 3-District 1 championship event is 1 p.m.

The teams met a year ago with a regional title at stake, and Harrison saddled Chelsea with a 6-0 defeat despite the fact both teams were unbeaten and featured high-scoring offenses.

Both are 10-0 this year; however, the nationally-ranked Hawks, who average nearly 60 points a game instead of 43, appear to be heavy favorites again.

"They're every bit as good," Bulldogs coach Brad Bush said of the Hawks. "There's no one in the state that's on their level. But in the same regard, you have to play the game. You never know what can happen."

Bush said his team was too tight and even awestruck entering last year's game, referring to the impression made by the sight of Harrison's many state championship banners. He believes the Bulldogs are better prepared this year for having had that experience.

"I don't know if it will show up on the scoreboard, I but do think our kids will compete better," Bush said.

"Last year I don't think our kids quite understood how good Harrison is, but I think they're also excited to earn their respect. That might not be a win, but they want to go in and compete."

Harrison, which owns a 32-game

## FOOTBALL

### HARRISON (10-0)

Harrison 55, Oxford 14.  
Harrison 56, Plymouth Salem 13.  
Harrison 44, Walled Lake Western 0.  
Harrison 45, Plymouth Canton 35.  
Harrison 33, Livonia Churchill 0.  
Harrison 51, Northville 20.  
Harrison 54, Livonia Franklin 7.  
Harrison 48, Westland John Glenn 7.  
Harrison 42, Country Day 0.  
Harrison 49, Fowlerville 7.  
Harrison 48, opponents 103.

### CHELSEA (10-0)

Chelsea 35, Fowlerville 13.  
Chelsea 22, Adrian 15.  
Chelsea 35, Dexter 7.  
Chelsea 24, Saline 0.  
Chelsea 56, Ypsilanti Lincoln 28.  
Chelsea 59, Swartz Creek 40.  
Chelsea 12, Tecumseh 6.  
Chelsea 21, Ann Arbor Huron 14.  
Chelsea 44, Milan 20.  
Chelsea 30, Tecumseh 7.  
Chelsea 33, opponents 250.

winning streak and is favored to repeat as Division 3 champion, had a bit of a wake-up call in the first half of its 49-7, first-round victory over Fowlerville last week.

"(The Hawks) were playing hard but just not getting anything done," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "Fowlerville had a good game plan and was able to shut down our receivers, and our backs were slipping down on the wet surface."

"I think it was a wake-up call, that

we had better start the game off right and play well."

If the Hawks, who seemed to coast through the regular season, needed a little post-season scare to get their attention, the Gladiators provided it.

"The score was 7-0 Fowlerville with five minutes to go in the first half," Herrington said. "That should be enough to motivate them to come out and play. The kids know what's at stake, so I don't think there will be any letdown."

The Bulldogs are a little different: offensively without quarterback Chris Brigham (Saginaw Valley) and all-state receiver Tony Scheffer (Western Michigan).

"Last year we were more high-powered in terms of throwing the football," Bush said, adding Brigham passed for 2,000 yards. "This year we have a more balanced attack in terms of running and throwing."

"In the same regard, we play a senior offensive line with three returning starters. I think we're better up front but probably not as skilled in the passing game."

Chelsea alternates two quarterbacks this year - senior Zack Miller (5-9, 170) and junior Jake Freeman (5-11, 185).

"I really don't like playing that way, but both have brought different things to the table," Bush said. "Freeman played most of the game last week, but other times Zack has played the whole game."

"It's a matter of what the game calls for. When you're winning, you don't want to change what you're doing. Jake is the more athletic kid, but Zack is the

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# North, Farmington girls qualify for state

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Two teams and nine other individuals from Farmington schools qualified to compete in the boys and girls cross country championships Saturday at Michigan International Speedway.

The North Farmington and Farmington girls will be there for the team competition after placing second and third, respectively, in the Division 1 regional Saturday at Royal Oak Kimball.

North was the runner-up to Troy, 39-79, and earned its first trip to state. As of this year, the top three teams in each regional qualify instead of two, and the third spot went to Farmington, which beat Farmington Hills Mercy by nine points, 92-101.

"This was one of our goals that we set back in June," North coach Bill Pinnell said. "The girls knew what they had to do, and they rose to the challenge. We're really excited about finishing second there. We looked at the results of all the meets, and we knew we'd be right up there in the fight."

## CROSS COUNTRY

It was only the second time all season the Raiders had their original seven varsity runners healthy and able to compete as a group.

Senior Kelly Kuo suffered a stress fracture early in the season, and her first meet back was the last for junior Susan Barrows, who developed a stress fracture in a foot, until Saturday.

Furthermore, North managed to overcome a bout with respiratory illness that affected four girls, all of whom fought through it to run Saturday.

"Barrows is probably the key reason we're going to state," Pinnell said, "because she did run. Otherwise, we would have been on the bubble."

"The course conditions were not conducive to her injury, because the course was not solid and there was loose footing; so her foot was moving around, and I'm sure she was in a lot of pain."

Pinnell added the course was in bad condition from the rain that fell last week, especially by the time the Division 1 girls ran.

"It had all day long, but we were the fourth race of the day," he said. "The girls knew positions were important and times were not going to be a factor."

"I was very pleased with our performance, especially with the type of day we had."

North senior Nicole Moundros was third overall (22:02), Kuo 14th (22:41), sophomore Katie Milan 16th (22:47), Barrows 23rd (23:07) and junior Amy Miller 27th (23:23). Seniors Kristen Stambouljan and Anne Lieberman were 40th (24:30) and 46th (24:48), respectively.

"(Moundros) ran a very strong race; she ran with a lot of confidence," Pinnell said. "She looked strong out there; we needed that kind of performance from Nicole to do well, and she gave that to us."

"We're going to have to call on her again, because where we finish is going to depend on how many we get in the top 100, which will be difficult because there are a lot of good runners in the field."

"Kelly is getting stronger with each race. Katie, Milan has continued to improve throughout the season."

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