

Former Groves star adjusts to losing season

By KEITH HANSEN

What a difference one year makes. At this time last November, Bill Eberhart was savoring the taste of having played on an undefeated high

school football team.

Eberhart was a vital cog in the Birmingham Groves grid machine. As the workhorse of the Falcons' offensive backfield, his 15 touchdowns and 1,090 yards rushing earned him — among his

many laurels — a spot on the Detroit News All-State team and a scholarship to Hillsdale College.

But that was last year.

PRESENTLY, EBERHART is reflecting on a football season that was quite different from any he has ever experienced.

"I've always played on winners," said the Birmingham native. "It was a difficult adjustment for me to play on a loser. It was tough getting used to the whole atmosphere of losing."

The 57, 175-pound Eberhart has just weathered his first campaign as a member of the Hillsdale College football team. The Chargers, an entry in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, finished the season with a dismal 3-8 record.

Although he is understandably disappointed with the team's performance, he does not have much reason to fault

his own — but he does.

"I'M NOT REAL pleased with my performance," remarked the freshman tailback about his debut in college varsity football. He led the Chargers this past season in rushing with well over 400 yards and placed second in receiving and scoring.

Eberhart's tone, however, is more stoic than full of despair, and the exuberance quickly returns to his voice when he thinks beyond the win-loss column.

"I met a lot of great guys," he said, "so even though we lost, we had fun."

And he does not consider the season as a total failure. In fact, he treats it as a necessary step toward his and the team's future successes.

It was a great learning experience — and I've got a lot to learn — but we'll benefit from this year and our mistakes," he said. "We're a young team

with plenty of talent. We were starting seven freshmen at the end of the season and the nucleus of next year's club will be juniors and sophomores."

Eberhart, who started for most of the season, found there were many other adjustments to make in college football besides the emotional ones.

"I found the biggest difference from high school ball was the speed of the game," said Eberhart. "Things happen so much quicker. When a hole is opened, it doesn't stay open long."

"Also, there are no set holes — we run to daylight. I have the greatest difficulty with picking the holes, but I enjoy this system more. I'll run better with more experience. I'll know what to do in certain situations right away."

EBERHART'S ROLE in the Charger offense differs a bit from the one he had in high school.

"Here (Hillsdale), we basically run

out of the 'I'. We used it in high school, but I ran out of the spread, pro set usually. In passing situations I used to be flanked, but now I set in the backfield."

He says the formation has given him greater blocking responsibilities, and has made him an outlet-type of receiver because the two wide receivers and the tight end are the main targets on every pass.

Eberhart also finds there is a big difference between high school and college training philosophies.

"THERE WAS MORE emphasis on physical fitness before," he said. "Now, I'm expected to be in pretty good shape when I show up."

"There's more of a competitive air in college practices and there's more concentration on group drills for timing, ball exchanges and for working on the specific plays to be used in the upcoming game."

All-area boys' team

(Continued from page 4B)

Class B state meet, but first in almost all the other major invitational.

Cummins placed first in the Oakland County meet, first in a Class B regional, first in the Metro Conference meet, and first in the Royal Oak Shrine, Millford Lakeland and Henry Ford Community College Invitational.

He finished first in all but two of his dual meets and was second in the prestigious Holly Invitational.

GEOFF SMITH, junior, Birmingham Groves. Only a junior, Geoff was the envy of all coaches in the MSA, winning the league meet with his best time of the season at 15:08. The 16-year-old placed third in the Kimball Regional, fourth in the SMA-MSA league dual meet and was the 10th best Class A runner with a 15:23 clocking at Howell. Smith will be the heart and soul of coach Jim Crosby's squad next season.

DOUG LAMBERT, senior, Bloomfield Hills Lahser. The mainstay of the highly-successful Knights, Lambert placed 12th in the state meet with a 15:25 clocking to lead Lahser's balanced attack. His best time of the season was 15:21 at the MSA meet, which earned a third-place finish. Coach Don Rolston's top runner, Lambert also placed 12th in the Kimball regional and 12th in the Oakland County meet. His regional time was 15:40.

TIM SULLIVAN, junior, Birmingham Brother Rice. The Warriors' tri-captain, Sullivan was the top runner on coach Bob Stark's squad this season. Despite a disappointing state-meet finish, which saw him run after a week-long illness, Sullivan will be the nucleus of the Warriors next season. He was

the Catholic League runner-up, first at the Millford Lakeland Invitational, fifth in the Oakland County meet and 14th in the Kimball Regional. His best time was 15:25, good for a seventh-place finish at the Shrine Invitational.

JOHN YUCHAS, senior, Southfield High. Yuchas placed 10th in the Kimball Regional with a 15:38.5 clocking — his best time of the season. He was 14th in the Oakland County meet and sixth in the SMA-MSA event. He placed only seventh in the Southeastern Michigan Association (SMA) league meet. Yuchas, the Jays' top runner all year, placed 66th in the state meet.

JOHN MURPHY, senior, Farmington High. The top runner on coach Gerald Young's squad, Murphy is a two-time Inter-Lakes League champion. He placed 14th in the state meet at Howell with a 15:23 clocking — his best performance of the year. Murphy was unbeaten in all but one dual meet, placed eighth in the Oakland County meet and second at the Redford Union Invitational.

DON ROLSTON, coach-of-the-year, Bloomfield Hills Lahser. After 19 years of coaching track and cross country, 13 of those at Lahser, Rolston enjoys the title of O&E coach-of-the-year in boys' cross country. Also one of three coaches nominated for All-State honors, Rolston saw his squad peak at the right time of the season, leading his club to a third-place finish in the state meet.

Rolston's team also had a perfect 10-0 MSA dual meet record, tying for league honors with Groves. His team placed second at the Brother Rice Invitational, second in the Oakland County meet, second at the Oxford Invitational and second in the Kimball Regional.

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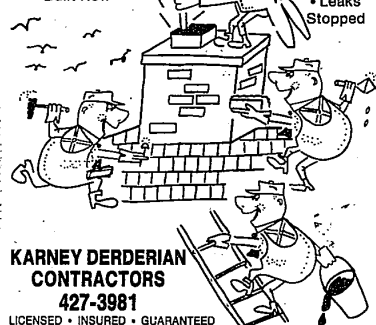
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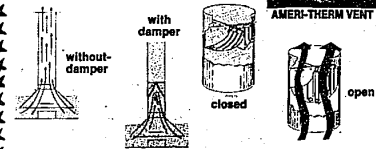
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