



(F10)

# Hawks-Seaholm: a surprise showdown

## Multi-faceted Hawks brace for title drive

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

**T**HE BIGGEST misconception about the 1984 Farmington Harrison football team is that, if you can stop John Miller, you can stop the Hawks.

There is good reason for the misconception. After all, Miller's accomplishments are phenomenal:

- He has gained more than 10,000 career yards in total offense, including kickoff and punt returns, receiving and rushing.
- He has rushed for 4,294 yards and 62 touchdowns in his career.
- He has caught 35 passes for 843 yards and six touchdowns.
- He has returned 26 punts for 400 yards and three more TDs.
- He has a career punting average better than 40 yards and he has amassed 1,140 yards in punts.
- He has scored 438 points for the Hawks.
- He has intercepted 19 passes and is the second leading tackler in Harrison history with 252 tackles.

MILLER CAME into his senior season with "All-American" posted like a bull's-eye on his jersey. Every team the Hawks faced geared its defense toward stopping Miller. Here's how he responded.

- He rushed for 1,321 yards in 194 carries and scored 24 TDs.
- He caught 14 passes for 369 yards and three TDs.
- He returned 10 punts for 307 yards and three TDs.

- He made 69 tackles and picked off four passes and punted for 41.6 yards a crack.

Awesome? Yes. But, don't make the same mistake about Harrison that nine badly defeated opponents made in 1984. Do not assume that Miller is all the Hawks have.

Harrison coach John Herrington, who has posted a 119-23-1 in his 22 years, has said this many times this season: "We would win without John Miller. I would hate like heck not to have him, but I think we would be a good team without him."

Oddly, the response has been, "Sure John, whatever you say." And teams continue to gear up for Miller — and get thrashed. Harrison's cumulative score in its nine games this season is 397-44. Twenty-one of those 44 points allowed were scored by one team,

Livonia Churchill.

LET'S MEET the other elements of Farmington Harrison.

Quarterback Vince Enright is a 6-foot-3, 185-pound major college prospect. Enright has completely rewritten the Hawks' record books for passing. Enright completed 82 of his 132 passes this season (61 percent) for 1,487 yards. He threw 16 touchdown passes. All of the above establishing records at Harrison.

Against Monroe last week, Enright completed 19 of 21 passes for 292 yards. The most completions and yardage earned in single game by a Hawk.

His favorite target is a Fred Blitnick-like receiver named Brian Smolinski. Smolinski, with fluid moves, an uncanny ability to get open and his stubborn refusal to drop footballs thrown in his vicinity, has become Harrison's most prolific pass catcher.

Only a junior, Smolinski caught 46 passes for 915 yards and nine touchdowns. He caught nine passes against Monroe for 180 yards — both single-game records.

Oh, by the way, if you're planning on double-teaming Smolinski, forget it. Enright doesn't mind a bit throwing the ball to tight end Brian Saputo or flanker Jeff Sholtz or Miller out of the backfield.

**THE HARRISON passing attack is as diverse as many college's.** The reason Herrington is able to pull it off at the high school level is because of his large and rugged offensive line — meet the Grubbers.

Dave Delekta (6-3, 210), George Sarcevic (6-4, 220), Mark Shapiro (5-11, 175), Ben Chen (5-11, 201) and Jason Talbert (5-9, 175) are well-versed in both pass protection and in blowing open holes for Miller.

The Harrison offense can beat you a lot of ways. But, so can the Hawks' defense. While the offense rolled up close to 4,000 yards this season (3,921 to be exact), the defense was allowing just 1,051. The Hawks posted four shutouts.

The Hawks are tough to run inside against because of the likes of Delekta, Ken Hixon and Chen. They are equally tough to run outside on because of aggressive linebackers like Hixon and Jeff Sholtz and cornerbacks like Sholtz, Miller and Smolinski.

But, the key to the success of Harrison



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

John Miller, as good as he is (and he's darn good), is not all Farmington Harrison has.

### Inside:

- WLA, Catholic League hoop tourneys, page 2C.
- CC is cross country king, page 4C.

Please turn to Page 3

## Maples' hopes rest with stingy defense

By Marty Budner  
staff writer

**I**F SEAHOLM thought Southfield speedster Torin Dorn was a big pain in the hip pad, the Maples haven't seen him yet.

Wait until Saturday when they get a face-mask view of Farmington Harrison's All-State back John Miller.

While Dorn, who almost single-handedly knocked Seaholm from the undefeated ranks in the season's eighth game, was a major thorn, Miller is simply a killer.

Miller won't be Harrison's only lethal weapon when the two undefeated state football powers meet 1:30 p.m. at Southfield-Lathrup High School in a first-round Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) class A state playoff game.

Harrison has bonafide stars like quarterback Vince Enright and All-State candidate Brian Smolinski, plus a respected leader in coach John Herrington. Personnel like that is what makes Harrison an overwhelming favorite, not only to win Saturday's tilt, but to advance to the state championship game Nov. 24 at the Pontiac Silverdome.

And the Seaholm defense — the team's backbone all season — will have to be near perfect if the underdog Maples hope to advance. It is unquestionably Seaholm's severest test this season.

**THE HAWKS** scored more than 40 points in eight of their nine games, averaging a whopping 44.1 points per outing. Its closest game was a 31-3 shelling of Farmington in the Western Lakes Activities Association (WLA) championship game.

So it will be up to veteran seniors like Joe Holland and Rob Bosart to fire up the Seaholm defense, which limped through the final third of the season with nagging injuries to co-captain Dan Lukas and inside linebacker Marc Spencer.

Lukas didn't play the final four games while Spencer started the final four games against Southfield and Groves but never finished. Both are questionable for Saturday.

Despite the injuries, Seaholm is a pretty stingy group in its own right.

The Maples have allowed 51 points in nine games (5.66 average) and registered five shutouts.

WHAT: The Michigan High School Athletic Association Region II quarterfinal football game between Farmington Harrison (9-0) and Birmingham Seaholm (9-0).

WHERE: Southfield-Lathrup High School, on 12 Mile east of Groves.

AT STAKE: The winner will advance to the semifinal round of the state playoffs which will be played at Pontiac's Silverdome the following Saturday against either Dearborn Ford or Detroit Henry Ford.

THE RIVALRY: Harrison and Seaholm, two of the proudest and most successful football programs in the state, have never met on the gridiron.

### COMPOSITE COMPARISON

#### OFFENSE

Backfield: Edge to Harrison.  
Receivers: Edge to Harrison.  
Line: Edge to Harrison.

#### DEFENSE

Line: Edge to Seaholm.  
Linebackers: Edge to Seaholm.  
Secondary: Edge to Harrison.  
Special teams: Edge to Harrison.

PREDICTION: Marty Budner, Birmingham Sports Editor/Harrison by 10.  
PREDICTION: Chris McCosky, Farmington Sports Editor/Harrison by 21.

The most points they've allowed was 20 in the thrilling, one-point victory over Southfield. Troy scored 18 points, and the only other teams to score on Seaholm were Kimball and Berkley.

Holland (6-foot-3, 205 pounds) and Bosart (6-3, 240) are Seaholm's defensive cornerstones. Since their sophomore years, they've helped the Maples attain a record streak of 28 straight regular-season games without a loss. Both were chosen to Max Eminger's National High School Fifth Team All-American Football squad.

**TV DEALER** and Scott Tjaden or Tom Schreuer are the other members of the Maple defensive line. Scott Christie (6-2, 185) and Scott Mann (5-11, 205) are the linebackers, along with Spencer (6-5, 230) and Lukas (6-0, 250).

Seaholm's defensive secondary includes George Ziegler, Jeff Hepler — also the kicker — and Jim Woodruff.

"Sure we have to stop them. Our defense will be the key," said coach Chuck Skinner, whose team lost to Birmingham Brother Rice in the first round of last year's state tournament.

"But, the fact is, nobody has stopped

Please turn to Page 3

## Hawks in; justice is finally served

**F**OR THOSE of you who believe there isn't a higher authority standing guard over our lives, check this out:

- Dearborn Divine Child 14, Warren DeLaSalle 10.
- Ulica Ford 13, Sterling Heights Stevenson 7.

Yes, there is indeed a God, and he was wearing green and gold on Saturday.

Last season, a miracle knocked the Farmington Harrison football team out of the state playoffs. This year, a miracle has put them in.

The Hawks cried Friday night after their 49-6 victory in Monroe. They figured it was their last ballgame.

They knew what had to happen in order for them to get into the playoffs. They had been reading about it in the papers since about mid-season.

They knew that Birmingham Seaholm, DeLaSalle and Stevenson were ahead of them on the computer. They knew that two of those three had to lose. They knew by the fourth quarter Friday that Seaholm had won.

They knew they needed a miracle.

**ON SATURDAY**, many of the Hawk players lined the Farmington sidewalks. They were rooting for the Falcons to upset host North Farmington. It would give Harrison an extra 10 points.

Many of them asked me if I thought there was a chance.

"My heart says there is," I told them.

"But, my head says 'No way.'"

That's basically how most of them felt too. Not John Miller, however. Miller, the all-American football player and all-world person, is a thinking something different.

"I feel real bad for these guys," he said, pointing to teammates Vince Enright, Dave Delekta, Ken Hixon, Brian Smolinski, Mark Shapiro, Ben Chen and others.

"I've been there (to the state playoffs). I know what it feels like. It's the greatest feeling in the world to play there (at the Silverdome). These guys may never get to experience that."

Chris  
McCosky

Yet, one man never really gave up hope.

And his refusal to give up seemed to spur the team on. How difficult it must have been to prepare for the final two or three games of the season knowing that the season most likely would end with an anticlimax after nine games.

**BUT COACH** John Herrington is man of strong faith, as are coaches Bob Butler, Bob Sallow and Steve Dolloway. Together, they instilled a belief into the Hawks that everything would work out.

"Obviously, it would be a big disappointment if we didn't make it," Herrington said two weeks ago when it appeared obvious that Harrison was doomed. "We are not just a good team. We are a great team."

"But, I still feel we'll get in. We have the best team and somehow, something is going to happen to get us in. I really believe that."

John Herrington believes in miracles.

He no doubt remembered 1975. It was the first year of these state playoffs. Livonia Franklin, an outstanding team that year, was on the verge of missing the playoffs. They not only needed a Divine Child victory over Birmingham Brother Rice, which seemed unlikely, but they also needed all the teams on their schedule to win on that final week.

Franklin believed in miracles. DC won. All the teams that Franklin had played won. Franklin went on to win the state championship.

**YES, A CASE** could be made that a miracle happened Saturday. The odds against both DeLaSalle and Stevenson losing were, to say the least, all in.

But, another case could be made — a case for justice.

The state playoffs are supposed to pro-

duce the state's best football team. How could it if the state's consensus No. 1 team was not eligible to compete?

As it is, only one of the state's two top teams are there, Birmingham Brother Rice, even with its one loss, deserves to be in the playoffs.

"Yes, in a sense, justice was served," Herrington said. "We deserved to be there. But, I think that it is unjust that DeLaSalle, Stevenson and Brother Rice are out. They are among the top eight point getters in the state, and they deserve to be here."

Herrington has been a bundle of nerves this week. In a matter of hours, he went from planning a Monday morning inventory session to planning a Monday morning strategy session on how to beat Birmingham Seaholm.

He is uptight because his team is expected to win — now more than ever.

"**PEOPLE SEEM** to think we are going to have an easy time with Seaholm," Herrington said. "But, I know that's simply not true. They have a 36-game winning streak (not counting post-season play) going. Nobody seems to realize that. Seaholm is a tough team."

Still, the pressure Herrington is feeling now is bliss compared to the frustration he would have felt watching eight other teams play for the state Class A title.

The Hawks are 9-0. They have outscored their opponents 397-44. They have gained nearly 4,000 yards in total offense. They have allowed just over 1,000. They can beat you with the run, the pass, with defense and with special teams play.

If a team ever deserved a berth in the state tournament . . .

I have been following high school football in Michigan since 1973. I've been covering it professionally since 1980.

I have never seen a more diversely talented, more disciplined, better-coached football team than Farmington Harrison.

The Hawks could lose Saturday and my opinion of them wouldn't change a bit.

A miracle? Maybe. But to me, what happened Saturday was justice.

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