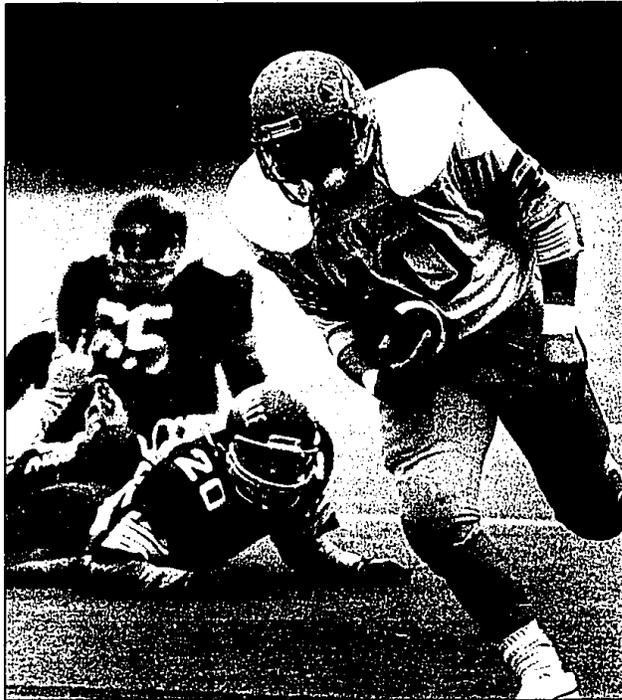




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(F1C)

Harrison earns return trip to Dome Hawks pound Avondale



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

Matt Conley tore through the Avondale defense for a season-high 120 yards and school-record six touchdowns as the Hawks powered

past the Rhinos and into the state final for the second straight year.

By Jim Toth
staff writer

They scored early and they scored often. They moved the ball with ease on the ground as well as through the air.

If it sounds like total domination it was on the part of the Farmington Hills Harrison football team Saturday in its Class B semifinal clash with Avondale.

Scoring touchdowns on their first five possessions of the first half, the unbeaten Hawks soared to a 35-0 halftime lead and coasted to a convincing 42-7 triumph over the Rhinos on a slippery turf at Flint's Atwood Stadium.

The victory puts the Hawks, now 12-0, into Saturday's Class B state championship game Saturday at the Silverdome.

"WE DON'T REALLY care who we play," answered Harrison coach John Herrington in anticipation of the title game. "We want to win this time. We were there last year and lost and we want it to be different this time."

If Saturday's performance was any indication, the Hawks are well on their way to capturing their third state championship this decade.

Spearheaded by a school-record, six-touchdown performance by junior Matt Conley, the Hawks outgained the Rhinos in total offense 328-203, including a 275-49 differential in the first half.

"They (Harrison) were too much for us," summed up Avondale coach Rick Brewer after the game. "They came out crisp and made some big plays."

"But I'm proud of our players, they played hard every down," continued Brewer, whose team finished with a 11-1 ledger overall. "We came up and they came to play — their plays just worked better than ours."

football

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THE HAWKS wasted little time getting on the scoreboard as they took the opening kickoff, and beat junior quarterback Millard Coleman, marched 59 yards in six plays for the game's first score. Conley rambled in from seven yards out to culminate the drive and junior Steve Hill booted the first of his six extra points for a 7-0 advantage.

Following a fumble recovery by senior Scott Nichols at the Avondale 49, Coleman directed his teammates back into the end zone four plays later. The key play was a 39-yard completion from Coleman to senior Brian Wauldron, setting up Conley's six-yard scamper.

The Rhinos managed only three yards on their next possession and were forced to punt the ball back to the Hawks.

This time Coleman used nine plays to direct the offense into the end zone. Pass completions of 19 and 10 yards were instrumental in giving the Hawks a first and goal at the Avondale seven. From there, Conley darted in for a touchdown and Hill kicked the PAT as the Hawks held a 21-0 lead after the opening quarter.

The barrage continued in the second quarter as Conley gained 43 of the 73 yards in the drive, including the final six for a commanding 28-0 advantage.

THE FINAL score of the half came with 5:07 remaining when Conley plowed in from one yard out as the Hawks needed only :37 and four plays to move 41 yards. "Our kids came in confident,

loose and very relaxed," Herrington said. "They have just been tremendous. Nothing jars them."

With little doubt of which team would advance, the second half provided less excitement.

The Rhinos held the Hawks to one touchdown, that of course coming from Conley on a 7-yard run, but managed a score themselves.

Senior quarterback Jeff Kucemba, who had time but failed to solve the Hawks' defensive scheme, hooked up with sophomore Kevin Woodmore on a 24-yard scoring toss. Senior Tom Schott also had a hand in the scoring, tipping the ball in the air and into the grasp of Woodmore.

"WE THREW THE ball a little better in the second half, but the situations were a little different, too," Brewer said. "They (Harrison) are just a great team on both sides of the ball."

Conley, who shattered John Miller's mark of five touchdowns in one game, paced the rushing attack with 123 yards on 15 carries.

The Rhinos held the elusive Coleman in check on the ground with only 20 yards on seven carries, but were victimized by a passing attack that saw the 5-9, 165-pound signal-caller complete 8-14 attempts for 139 yards.

"Mill did a great job for us, but you also have to give a lot of credit to the offensive line," praised Herrington. "You won't find a better guard-tackle combination than Jeff Skinner and Dale Katz."

As potent as the Hawks were offensively, they were punishing defensively. With only three touchdowns allowed by the first unit all season, the Rhinos managed 174 yards passing, but only 29 rushing.

The one-two backfield combination of Dennis Long and Jervon Lang that combined for 2,648 yards coming into the game was held to 11 yards.

North aims for district championship

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington can settle another score with a Walled Lake girls basketball team Tuesday night when the Raiders attempt to win their first district championship.

In the final of the Walled Lake Central tournament at 7:30 p.m., North gets another shot at Walled Lake Western, which beat the Raiders in the Western Lakes Activities Association semifinals two weeks ago.

North, after taking its first win in four tries from Central last Thursday, advanced to the trophy game with a 48-31 victory Saturday night over West Bloomfield.

Western made it an all-WLAA final instead of an all-Farmington contest by turning back Mercy 38-31 later Saturday.

"Scrappy and scrappy — like I said at the beginning of the year," said North coach Greg Capling after his undersized but persistent squad turned in another solid game. "They have a lot of heart, and we'll need all of it against Western."

North, 14-8, played poorly in losing 44-24 to the Warriors, a team it beat 63-40 earlier,

North an early spark, and the Raiders did in the last meeting. But the Raiders are on a roll in the district.

"I've challenged them and they've responded," Capling said. "Whether we win or not, we got there and the kids have done everything I've asked of them. I can't ask them to play any harder."

CAPLING was concerned about West Bloomfield's aggressive defense, and sophomore guard Amira Danforth, who scored 19 points, caused some problems for North with her quick hands.

But the Raiders managed overcome the Lakers with an attacking style of their own combined with another good shooting and rebounding effort.

Eve Clear scored a game-high 22 points for North, and guards Kim Gurecki and Debbie Weintraub added eight and seven points, respectively.

"Clear shows a lot of poise for a sophomore," Capling said, "and Weintraub has really picked us up the last few games, shooting well and playing good defense."

The Raiders took command in the second quarter and cemented their position with a solid third period.

Clear had 12 first-half points, giving

basketball

the same as they did to WLC, fueling their momentum with a late surge and pulling away to a 20-11 halftime score.

Waki Seamon, a all, 5-foot-10 center, and forward Donna O'Brien continued to crash the boards in the third quarter. All five starters scored as North extended its lead to 38-20.

The last two weeks of practice we've really concentrated on boxing out," Capling said. "If we can control the boards, we'll be in good shape."

The Lakers, who finished at 13-8, didn't shoot well and didn't get many second chances.

They were 6-of-23 in the middle quarters and 15-of-46 for the game, and West Bloomfield was often reacting to what North did instead of dictating with its defense.

"I don't think our defense was a problem," West Bloomfield coach Ronna Greenberg said. "We were giving them second and third shots."

"In the first quarter, we probably spent

five minutes on defense. We didn't score when we had to.

"I credit them. They outlasted us, beat us to the boards and deserved to win. That's the bottom line."

MERCY ALSO fell victim to poor shooting. The Marlins wanted to press the taller, slower Warriors, but they didn't have enough opportunities to do so.

"If you don't score, you can't get into your full-court game where you want to take advantage of them," Mercy coach Larry Baker said after watching his team go 11-of-48 from the floor.

"If you don't score, you don't get the dead ball. Without the score, you can't set up the trap."

Baker was still pleased with his team's defensive effort, which kept the Marlins close until late in the game.

After falling behind at the start of the second period, Mercy stayed within nine points — a margin small enough that a team could make up the difference with a surge.

But, despite the 29-22 score at the end of the third, the teams seemed miles apart given Mercy's inability to score.

Joanne Stephens was 6-of-8 shooting free throws and the only Marlin in double figures

with 12 points. Pam Thompson added seven and Jenny Clinton six.

Western, 12-9, went ahead in the second quarter when Michelle Hall, a 6-foot-3 center, started throwing in turnaround jumpers and scored seven of her game-high 18 points.

"She's a phenomenal athlete," Baker said. "By virtue of not being able to stay in the full-court game as much as we would have liked, she got to set up down on the block."

While the Marlins missed 12 straight shots and were 1-of-16 from the floor in the finale, Western pulled ahead 38-24 when Hall scored seven of her team's nine unanswered points.

Mercy free throws and Thompson's triple closed the gap in the final minutes.

The defeat marked the first time since 1979 the Marlins, 9-13, will not have won a district title.

"We put a high premium on this team winning a district, because we felt it was capable," Baker said. "I don't think it will mar the Mercy tradition, because I'm confident we'll turn out dominating teams in the future."

"We had a never-say-die team this year, but we were never able to dominate anybody this year."

N'ville takes crown from N. Farmington

By C.J. Rieck
staff writer

There were no disappointments that was the nice thing about the Western Lakes Activities Association girls swimming championships Friday at Plymouth Salem.

At least lots of the coaches felt that way. And their teams didn't even win.

In fact, the meet that was billed as the tightest in league history ended in a blowout. Northville simply grabbed the title with outstanding swims in Wednesday's preliminaries, building a huge cushion that no other team could challenge.

The Mustangs won with 322 points. Plymouth Canton held off Livonia Churchill to claim second with 180 points. Churchill placed third with 167 and defending champion North Farmington was fourth with 147.

Farmington was fifth (139), fol-

swimming

lowed by Plymouth Salem (121), Livonia Stearns (90), Westland John Glenn (48), Farmington Harrison (25), Walled Lake Central (14), Walled Lake Western (eight) and Livonia Franklin (two).

"NORTHVILLE SHOULD win it by about 60 points," said Canton coach Hooker Wellman — before the diving, the fifth of the meet's 11 events. "They gambled in a couple of places and everything came through for them. They've got a really strong team."

The Mustangs' success was hardly unexpected. Wellman said he wasn't surprised. Neither was North's Pat Duhle.

"I would have said a year ago

Northville was the team to beat," he said. "They were good then and had just about everyone coming back. I just thought it would be Northville all the way."

But just because the Mustangs won handily doesn't mean the chasers were disappointed. "I don't know of anyone who wasn't pleased with their swims," said Salem's Chuck Olson.

There were some good swimmers, certainly, but it wasn't up to past WLAA meet standards. For one thing, not a single meet record was broken.

But state qualifying standards were bettered by at least three competitors in all 10 swimming events. In the 300-yard medley relay, all six teams qualified for the Class A swim finals.

AUDRA MARTIN was again the meet's outstanding individual.

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JOHN STORFORD/staff photographer

Kerry Doran watches the scoreboard for her time after completing a race. Doran was second in two events and was on the winning free-

style relay team, helping the Raiders take third place.