

Sports

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Coleman and Co. saw Lumberjacks

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Coach John Herrington wondered aloud last year if Mill Coleman might not be the best quarterback to ever play Michigan high school football. The Farmington Hills Harrison coach realized it was a strong statement and reconsidered upon further questioning. But after Friday night Herrington might have to reconsider again.

Coleman certainly gave a strong argument for his greatness in leading the defending Class B champion Hawks to an impressive 34-18 victory over host Saginaw Arthur Hill in the season opener.

The 5-foot-9, 165-pounder accounted for 331 yards in total offense, running for one touchdown of 44 yards and throwing for three others. And he did that against a perennial Class A powerhouse.

"Put it this way," Herrington said, "he's the best I've been around."

"I'VE SEEN them all — Rick Lench, Andre Rison," Arthur Hill athletic director Dan McShannock told Coleman afterward, "and you're right there." Coleman not only passed and ran through the Lumberjack offense, but he also played the whole game at safety, making a couple TD-saving tackles, and did the punting, too.

"And I got run over a couple times, too," Coleman said. "I played defense as a freshman, so it's nothing new. I just hadn't played it in a while." Arthur Hill battered the Harrison defense with a powerful rushing attack led by all-star Shonte Peoples, but the combination of Coleman's sprintout passes and end-around runs were too much for even a team with Arthur Hill's reputation to handle.

"The little guy is awfully good" was frequently heard in the Memorial Stadium press box as Coleman hit on 15 of 19 passes for 212 yards and rushed 12 times for 119 yards.

"We couldn't contain him; that's the bottom line," Lumberjack coach Jim

Eurick said. "We got him a couple times, but he always came back with the big play. He's the best quarterback we've ever played against. He was able to do everything."

COLEMAN GAVE the Arthur Hill defense a look at what it was up against when he dashed 44 yards for the game's first score midway in the first period. Half of Coleman's runs were called plays, and half were the result of his own improvisation.

"We had to run him more because they were dropping on the sprintout pass," Herrington said. "We tried the pitch with the tailback, but they were on that pretty good."

"So we ran Mill to the outside. That puts the defense in a bind because they don't know if they should come up or drop back."

Coleman also gave a masterful performance at getting rid of the ball under pressure from the Lumberjacks. His completion percentage attests to that.

THE QUESTION of new receivers was apparently answered, too. Coleman had plenty of capable targets. Seven players caught at least one pass, and the leader was fullback Joe George, who had five receptions for 64 yards.

George, the recipient of Coleman's many swing passes, also caught one of the TD passes, the others going to Jon Schaeffer and Mike Saputo.

"Early in the game they were coming so hard on the back side I just had to get rid of the ball," Coleman said. "This is one of the toughest games I've ever played in."

THE GAME WAS an offensive show from the start as the Lumberjacks traded TDs with Harrison and the teams combined for 26 points in the first 12½ minutes the Hawks holding a 14-12 edge.

Harrison was never behind but clinging to a 21-18 lead after Arthur Hill scored on its first possession of the second half. The difference to that point

was the Lumberjacks couldn't make an extra point, failing twice on pass plays and one kick.

Harrison, proving once again to be the opportunistic team, converted back-to-back turnovers during a decisive, 10-minute span midway in the second half. That was the eventual difference.

IT TOOK THE Hawks only two plays to score (27-18) following Gary Devine's fumble recovery at the Lumberjack 19. Coleman making a great fake by keeping the ball on his right hip, threw 16 yards to Mike Saputo, who had two catches for 54 yards.

Coleman's final TD loss went to George, who got most of the 20, tough yards on his own, managing to stay in bounds. Coleman completed four passes in the drive as Harrison marched 88 yards after Matt Sperry recovered James Nelson's fumble at the Hawk 12.

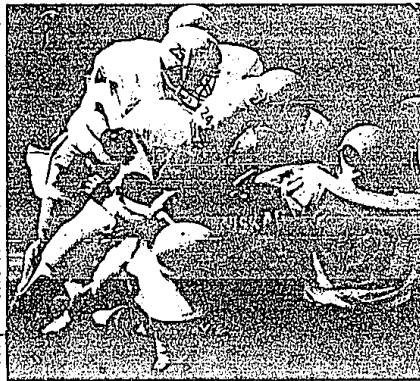
Coleman also threw 2 yards to Schaeffer, and tailback Matt Conley ran 3 yards for Harrison's other first-half TDs.

But the Lumberjacks had big-play capability, too. After the Hawks' first score, Arthur Hill was in the end zone two plays later, Brian Pruitt going 81 yards with a screen pass from Matt Ruhlig, who was 10-of-17 for 148 yards.

RUHLIG ALSO passed 16 yards to Peoples in the first half, but it was Arthur Hill's running game that had the Hawks on their heels much of the time. The 6-2, 204-pound Peoples, who scored in the third quarter on a 6-yard run that cut the Harrison margin to 21-18, rushed for 171 yards, and Nelson added 83.

"We tackled poorly, but Peoples had something to do with that," Herrington said. "Our defense is 10 new guys, and they got a lesson they'll remember."

"I just hope we don't play too many teams as good as Arthur Hill. We moved the ball on offense, but we either made a lot of mistakes on defense or weren't physical enough to stop their running backs."



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Adam Niskar draws a crowd of North Farmington tacklers, including Lucien Van Cleave (25), Rob Zeno (85), Dave Rankin (84), John Low (24) and Ty Richardson (80).

N. Farmington routs Chargers

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

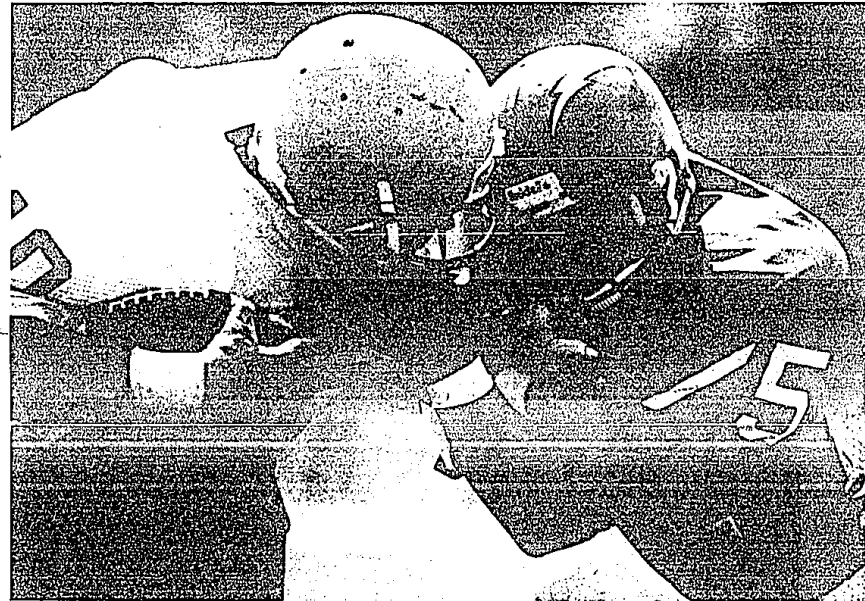
Defense is never a major concern at North Farmington, and it was obvious why Saturday as the Raiders dominated host Southfield-Lathrup 35-7 in the season opener.

North appears to have another fine defensive unit, but coach Jim O'Leary also liked what he saw offensively.

That was the question as the Raiders entered the game with their No. 3 tailback, Brad Hirschman, in the starting backfield. Bart Sinnals, who tore knee cartilage in the preseason scrimmage and could be lost for the season, and back-up Matt Mumment were both injured.

North charged on its first three possessions against the young, inexperienced Chargers and led 19-0 at halftime. Furthermore, the Raiders took advantage of field position and scored all four TDs after getting the ball in Lathrup territory.

"We were relatively sure we would be a good defensive team," O'Leary said, "but we didn't know how we'd be on offense."



It was a day of frustration Saturday for an inexperienced Southfield-Lathrup football team as this play indicates. The Chargers were penalized after Amonra Wilds grabbed Jerry Dolak's face

"WE WANTED to know if we had any consistency. We wanted to move the ball on the ground and run a controlled passing game, and we wanted the offensive line to get some confidence."

Brian Gonterman was North's leading rusher with 75 yards, but 68 came on a long run late in the game. Otherwise, Hirschman was the leader with 53 yards on 12 carries. Fullback Jerry Dolak added 40 yards, and Lucien Van Cleave, who scored both second-half TDs on runs of 10 and 7 yards, added 32.

In his first game as a varsity quarterback, Jon Kraus ran for one TD of 2 yards and passed 6 yards to Chris White for another. He was 6-of-9 with one interception and 46 yards.

WHITE CAUGHT four passes for 22 yards in the first half before twisting an ankle and sitting out the second half as a precautionary move.

mask in the second quarter. That gave North a first down at the Lathrup 18 and led to a Mike Cowen field goal. The Raiders romped to an eventual 35-7 victory.

NORTH HAD TO go just 39 and 44 yards for its first two TDs. Mike Cowen booted a 35-yard field goal after another drive stalled.

The Raiders also sacked Ghosh for a safety once in each half, and Van Cleave capped short drives of 38 and 22 yards in the second half.

North rolled up 314 yards in total offense, 243 on the ground, and 13 first downs. The Chargers managed 97 yards — more than half passing as Ghosh was 5-of-15 for 57 yards and one interception — and three first downs.

Falls had three catches for 52 yards. Ray Moreland was the top rubber with eight carries for 53 yards.

"WE DIDN'T have any problem getting the kids up for the first game," O'Leary said. "We're both 0-0, and you don't know what you've got until you play."

Lakers flatten Falcons

Unexpected may be the best way to describe Rick Milhizer's feelings toward his Farmington football team's performance in its season-opener at West Bloomfield Friday.

"It just didn't seem to be the same team as the one at the Novi scrimmage," said Milhizer after his Falcons absorbed a 40-3 thrashing. "We didn't play the same brand of football."

The only points Farmington could muster came on a short, third-quarter Eric Meyer field goal after the Falcons recovered a fumble at the West Bloomfield 5-yard line.

Dave Winay was one of the few Falcon bright spots. "He played great," said Milhizer of Winay, who gained 95 yards on 15 carries. "He ran the ball hard. He definitely stood out."

The tone of the game was set early for Farmington. On its first punt, the ball sailed over Meyer's head and through the end zone for a safety. A first-quarter Jeff Jenkins interception also stopped a Falcon drive.

The Lakers got strong running from Jenkins (eight attempts, 98 yards, two touchdowns) and Mike Lefebvre (13 rushes, 83 yards, one TD). Quarterback Tom Harden completed four-of-eight passes for 40 yards and another score.

Farmington quarterback Chris Schmid completed just three-of-eight tosses for 36 yards, suffered two interceptions and lost two fumbles. The Falcons had five turnovers in the game.

RU 16, STEVENSON 12: Redford Union jumped out a 16-0 lead against Livonia Stevenson and then held on for dear life, defeating the visiting Spartans 16-12 Friday in the season opener for both squads.

The Panthers opened the scoring in the second quarter on a 27-yard field goal by Andy Kaczor.

RU increased its lead in the quarter when Ernie Gentry scrambled 23 yards for a touchdown and Brian Theis added the extra point. The score was set up when Dave Sterlitz recovered a fumble on the Stevenson 34-yard line.

The Panthers further padded their lead in the third quarter. Quarterback Theis ran 54 yards for a touchdown that gave RU a commanding 14-0 lead. However, the try for the two-point conversion failed.

The Spartans finally got on the scoreboard early in the fourth period on a one-yard run by senior Rob Petree. The score was set up by a 27-yard pass play from quarterback Brian Piergentilli to Dave Born. The Spartans went for two after the touchdown and failed, necessitating two more scores to catch the Panthers.

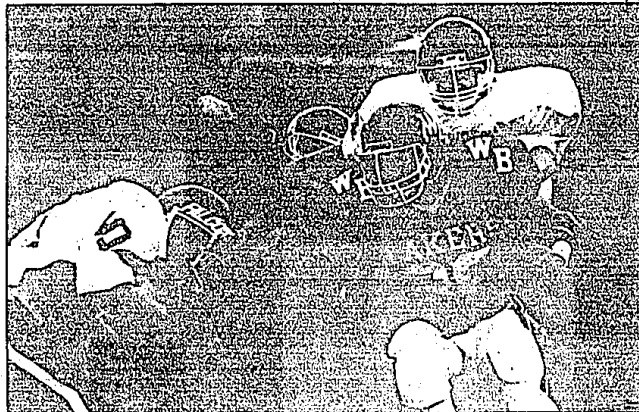
Stevenson added one score with 5:04 to play when Piergentilli hit Born with a 25-yard pass in the end zone to close the score to 16-10. Again, the try for two failed.

RU recovered an attempted onside kick after the score and then proceeded to run out the clock. The Panthers held the ball for 11 plays and ended the game on the Stevenson 4-yard line.

RU dominated the game statistically, rushing for 247 yards and throwing for 15. Sophomore running Don Carney led the ground game, rushing for 53 yards on 22 carries.

Stevenson rushed for 108 yards and Piergentilli was 4-7 passing for 68 yards.

RU ran 67 plays, as opposed to 31 for the Spartans.



RANDY DONST/staff photographer

Dave Winay of Farmington (left) and Steve Walter (background) converge on West Bloomfield ball carrier Greg Ramfos Friday during the

Lakers' 40-3 non-conference win over the visiting Falcons. The game was the season opener for both teams.