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Falcons, Hawks pursue titles

By Dan O'Meara
Staff Writer

It's crunch time for Observerland football teams, and six games this week will impact or determine division championships as well as playoff chances.

The big ones Friday are the Farmington-Livonia Stevenson and Westland Glenn-Plymouth Salem games that will decide the Lakes Division title.

Here's the situation:

If Glenn wins, it will be a co-champ with the Farmington-Stevenson winner, but the key is who gets to represent the division in the Western Lakes Activities Association championship game.

If Stevenson and Glenn win, Stevenson goes to the final because it beat Glenn; if Glenn and Farmington win, Glenn gets the nod based on head-to-head competition.

If Salem beats Glenn, either Stevenson or Farmington will be the only 4-1 team and the outright champion.

On Saturday, the Farmington Harrison-Plymouth Canton game will decide the Western Division winner and the other WLAA finalist.

Wayne Memorial has an important Mega Conference-Red Division game Saturday when it plays host to unbeaten and No. 2-ranked (Class AA) Belleville.

On Sunday, the Catholic League takes its turn.

Redford Catholic Central tees it up against archrival Birmingham Brother Rice in the 50th anniversary of the Boys Bowl.

The tradition began with CC playing host to Boystown from Nebraska, but Rice has provided the opposition since 1966.

A pair of Class D powers, Redford St. Agatha and Center Line St. Clement, clash on the East Side in a key Catholic C-Section game Sunday, also.

In the prediction contest, Dan O'Meara maintains a slim lead after going 11-3 last week to put his overall record at 69-20. Brad Emons was 10-4 and is 66-23.

GRID PICKS

FRIDAY GAMES
(times 7:30 p.m. unless noted)

S'gate Anderson at Redford Union, 7: The Panthers (2-2/2-4) haven't won in a month, and the schedule continues to be against them. It was Dearborn and Monroe the last two weeks and now Mega White leader Southgate (5-0/5-1). RU quarterback Brian Berryman is also a fine pitcher and has committed to play baseball for the University of Michigan. **PICKS:** The Titans go on safari, capture a panther.

Liv. Churchill at W.L. Western: This will be Churchill's best chance for a win, but the Chargers (0-4/0-6) have scored only 23 points and continue to struggle to find their offense. Western's only win was over Franklin, which beat Churchill last week 29-9. The Warriors (1-3/1-5) have scored just 37 points and aren't that *much more* productive. **PICKS:** A Wild West showdown: Western outdraws Churchill.

Farmington at Liv. Stevenson: The Spartans (3-1/5-1) are in control of their own destiny. If they win, they play for the WLAA championship. The Falcons (3-1/5-1) need a helping hand, however. This should be a battle in the trenches. Both are solid running teams with strong offensive lines. Farmington tailback Jake Siskosky can break Chris Marting's single-season and career rushing records this week. He has 924 yards this year and 1,447 in the last two; Marting rushed for 989 in 1991 and 1,514 during his career. **PICKS:** Emons campaigns for Adler; O'Meara casts a vote for the Falcons.

Westland Glenn at Ply. Salem: The Rocks (2-2/3-3) have won their last two and appear to be coming on, but Salem has always had trouble with Glenn. The Rockets (3-1/3-3) saw their three-game win streak come to an end and are nursing some injuries after the loss to Stevenson. Glenn can still earn a berth in the championship game but needs help from Farmington. **PICKS:** Emons' crystal ball is a shiny Rock; O'Meara foresees a Glenn victory.

Garden City at Taylor Kennedy: The Cougars (2-2/2-4) snapped a three-game losing streak by beating Truman 33-12, but they will have more of a challenge from Kennedy (2-2/3-3) in this Mega White game. Truman, Dearborn and Southgate are common opponents; it looks like a tossup on paper. **PICKS:** The Eagles stay airborne.

SATURDAY GAMES
(times 1 p.m. unless noted)

Northville at Liv. Franklin: The Patriots (1¾/1-5) plan to honor the 1964 undefeated team coached by Bob Bentley. Such former standouts as Sam Antonarzo, Larry Vaughn, Roger Frayer and Bernie Carbo (Boston Red Sox) will be on hand and possibly inspire another Franklin victory. The Patriots hope to make it two straight, but Northville (3-1/3-3) is coming off a big win, too, after upending Plymouth Canton 14-9. **PICKS:** The Mustangs kick up their heels.

Ply. Canton at F.H. Harrison: Canton's loss to Northville reduced the appeal of this game, but it should still be the toughest Western Division game for the Hawks (4-0/5-1). Harrison is guaranteed a share of the title, but a loss this week would mean the Chiefs (3-1/3-3) go to the WLAA championship game. So it remains a winner-take-all situation. Injuries have hurt the Hawks, who are down to 26 players, but sophomore quarterback Kevin Bambenek has done well replacing injured senior Jake Lawson. Canton also has a new QB, Rob Johnson, who took over for senior Brett Elledge when the latter suffered a concussion last Friday. **PICKS:** Harrison is undisputed champ for the 12th time in 13 years.

W.L. Central at N. Farmington: Can the Raiders rebound? A week ago they were at their peak but went flat against Salem, allowing as many points (28) in that game as they did in the first five combined. North (1-3/3-3) must win to avoid tying Central for last place in the Lakes and keep alive its outside playoff chances. The Vikings (0-4/2-4) have lost four in a row. **PICKS:** North makes a comeback.

Belleville at Wayne Memorial: The No. 2-ranked Tigers (4-0/6-0) feature a potent offense led by junior back Ian Gold. Belleville averages 36 points a game, but just as impressive is the 31 total points the defense has allowed. This is the start of a rough three-game stretch for the Zebras (3-1/5-1), who play Dearborn Fordson and archrival Westland Glenn the last two weeks. Wayne can gain a share of the Mega Red title by beating the Tigers and hoping Belleville beats Monroe next week. The Zebras are scoring 31 points per game, but the defense is allowing an average of 20. **PICKS:** The Tigers prey on their host.

Taylor Center at Red. Thurston: The Eagles (3-2/3-3) are soaring. Thurston has won three of its last four and bounced back from the loss to Allen Park to whip Melvindale 24-7. Annapolis is the only team Center has beaten, and the Rams are tied for last in the Mega Blue. The Eagles can't afford to let down against the lesser teams in the division, however. **PICKS:** Thurston takes the bull, er, the Rams, by the horns.

Harper Wds. at Luth. Westland: Harper Woods (1½/1-5) ended a five-game losing streak with a 22-16 win over Lutheran West last week. The Warriors (1-4/2-4) are looking for their first win in three weeks. Lutheran Westland coach Dennis Tuomi is expected to return after missing two games because of eye surgery. **PICKS:** The Warriors go on the warpath.

Clarenceville at Luth. N'west: Clarenceville (4-1/4-2) puts its four-game winning streak on the line against a decent Rochester Hills Lutheran Northwest ballclub. Coach Chuck Donaldson has the Trojans playing well, allowing only 20 points in their last four games. Northwest (2-3/2-4) had a tough row to hoe in recent weeks and has lost three straight. **PICKS:** Five in a row for Clarenceville.

Aquinas at Bishop Borgess, 1:30 p.m. at Garden City Junior High: The winless Spartans (0-3/0-6) hope history repeats itself. They were in the same situation a year ago at this time and finished the season with three straight wins. This looks like their best chance to date. The Raiders (0-3/1-5) share last place with Borgess in the Tri-Sectional Division. Aquinas has lost five straight since beating lowly Lutheran West, 26-0. **PICKS:** Emons puts his faith in Aquinas; O'Meara believes in Borgess.

SUNDAY GAMES

Redford CC vs. Brother Rice, 2 p.m. at Wisner Stadium: For the first time in this decade, the Warriors (2-0/5-1) look like clear favorites in the annual Boys Bowl game. But no one should count out the Shamrocks (1-1/4-2), who have beaten Rice four straight times. The series is tied 14-14, but CC has won eight of the last nine games. The Shamrocks will do well against Rice's rushing attack, but the outcome will depend on whether they can defend the pass. CC needs a win to stay in playoff contention. **PICKS:** Rice is back on top.

St. Agatha at St. Clement, 2:30: The No. 10 (Class D) Aggies (2-1/5-1) faced Mike Boyd and his Waterford Lakes team last week; now they get Boyd's future son-in-law, Chris Bell, and his unbeaten Crusaders (3-0/6-0). St. Agatha can create a three-way tie in the Catholic C-Section with Lakes, which beat the Aggies 7-0 and lost to the Crusaders 25-7, and No. 3 (Class D) St. Clement. **PICKS:** St. Clement can't be beat.

Boys Bowl now half-century old

By Steve Kowalski
Staff Writer

No matter how old it gets, it will always be called the Boys Bowl.

One of the granddaddies of high school football games in Michigan turns 50 on Sunday when Redford Catholic Central and Birmingham Brother Rice meet in the annual game before an expected crowd of 8,000 at Pontiac's Wisner Stadium.

Tailgaters arrive before noon and kickoff is 2 p.m. for the game which has all the tradition and atmosphere of a small college football battle.

CC has played in each Boys Bowl, dating back to 1944.

CC's first opponent, and one of the reasons the game got its name, was Boys Town, which would travel from Omaha, Neb. for the battle. CC and Boys Town played 14 games between 1944-58 (with the exception of 1946 when no game was played), with Boys Town winning nine.

The games were played at Briggs Stadium (now Tiger Stadium) in front of crowds of more than 40,000. CC alumni director the Rev. Richard Elmer was a student at CC when the first Boys Bowl was played.

Boys Town must not have been expecting a big crowd.

"CC offered to share the gate or give Boys Town a flat rate (the first game)," recalls Elmer. "Boys Town didn't know how big the gate would be and settled for a flat rate, which was $7,500. From then on, they wanted to share the gate."

In 1952, Detroit mayor Albert Cobo officially named the game the Boys Bowl.

University of Detroit-Jesuit, Notre Dame and Detroit Cathedral were Boys Bowl opponents from 1959 through 1965 before the CC-Rice rivalry began in 1966.

The CC-Rice series is even, 14-14, but it's been one-sided recently, with CC winning eight of the last nine meetings.

Ron Williams, who now has nine grandchildren, played in one of the first Boys Bowls as a linebacker and center for CC in 1949.

Not only were the players treated to playing in Briggs Stadium, they played under the lights, which was unheard of.

"It was quite a thrill, but most of the best memories were just the excitement of playing in Briggs because Boys Town handled us pretty well," Williams remembers. "Boys Town was like a trained army."

Players didn't have face masks then.

"You could see a lot better," joked Williams, who has been married 39 years to wife Mary Ann, and is in sales. "When it got rough, fingers and elbows certainly were weapons."

Some of the most memorable Boys Bowls were played in the late 70s and early 80s when Rice won several close games against CC.

Rice quarterback Dave Yarema played in his first Boys Bowl at age 14 in 1978. Yarema, who later starred at Michigan State University, remembers Rice winning 20-14 in 1980 when Warriors' star defensive back Brad Cochran returned a kickoff for a touchdown in the second half.

"Aaron Roberts was the last guy Brad had to beat. Brad put a move on Aaron right in front of the Rice bench and Aaron just melted in his tracks," said Yarema, a manufacturing sales representative for Yarema Die & Engineering in Troy.

Jim Ryan, a 1981 CC graduate, has played and coached in the Boys Bowl. A starting linebacker, Ryan was called on to be the Shamrocks' long snapper in the 1979 game when starting center Mike Baucus went down with an injury.

Ryan was snapping when the Shamrocks won the game 10-7 in double overtime.

"We called it the 'dream kick,' because after the game our kicker 'Deke' (Richard) Micunek told (radio sportscaster) Ron Cameron after the game that he dreamed the night before of kicking the winning field goal," said Ryan, who is running for a seat in the House of Representatives in the 16th district.

Ryan said one of his best memories as an assistant coach from '89 through '93 was when the Shamrocks called for a draw play on fourth down and long in the 1990 game. Fullback Jon Barbara got the ball and scored to give CC a 21-0 halftime lead.

"Twenty-one to zero at halftime in the Boys Bowl is huge," Ryan said.

Shamrocks rebound with 30-0 victory

Redford Catholic Central's football team ended a rare two-game losing streak Saturday with a 30-0 victory against Harper Woods Notre Dame.

The Shamrocks are 4-2 overall and 1-1 in the Catholic League Central Division heading into the Boys Bowl Game against Birmingham Brother Rice 2 p.m. Sunday at Pontiac Wisner Stadium.

CC gained 325 total yards and held Notre Dame to 49, 34 on the ground.

CC quarterback Greg Call completed six of eight passes for 86 yards and two touchdowns.

The Shamrocks took a 28-0 halftime lead and finished the scoring in the third quarter when linesman Brad Reinke tackled an ND player in the end zone. Reinke had two sacks and finished with 11 tackles.

FOOTBALL

The safety came after CC punter Ron Bialobrzeski had a 32-yard punt that landed on the ND 1. Bialobrzeski is averaging 41.7 yards per punt and 56.8 yards per kickoff.

CC started the scoring with 8:40 remaining in the first quarter as Ken Marsac returned a punt 60 yards for a score. Ron Bialobrzeski's first of four extra points made the score 7-0.

The Shamrocks got possession again at ND's 21 following an Irish punt of only 13 yards. Call found Reinke in the end zone for a 6-yard score with 4:23 left in the first quarter.

The Shamrocks added a 10-play, 62-yard scoring drive in the second quarter. Craig Wasen's 9-yard run finished the drive with 8:25 remaining for a 21-0 lead.

Following another short ND punt, CC ended the first-half scoring with a 37-yard TD pass from Call to Jim Ademy.

Junior fullback John Spolsky led the Shamrocks with 71 yards on 11 carries. Wasen had 60 yards on 13 carries.

Judah May and Rudy Kelly-Powell had one interception each.

■ **RICE 36, U-D 0:** Brian Marshall scored the first three touchdowns on short runs Saturday as Birmingham Brother Rice KO'd U-D Jesuit in a Catholic League game.

The win boosted the Warriors to 5-1 overall and 2-0 in the Central Division. U-D slipped to 2-4 and 0-2.

Robert Harvey added a 1-yard scoring run and Derek Conlon (12-of-17 for 152 yards) hooked up with David Sedran on a 38-yard touchdown pass. Sedran finished with eight receptions for 100 yards. Owen Townsend kicked all five extra points.

The Warriors accumulated 362 yards of total offense compared to just 132 for the Cubs.

Brother Rice meets Redford Catholic Central Sunday at Pontiac Wisner Stadium in the annual Boys Bowl. CC has won five of the last 10, including a 17-7 decision last year.

■ **ST. MARY'S 41, FOLEY 0:** The unbeaten Eaglets earned their second Catholic AA Bracket victory Saturday over visiting Madison Heights Bishop Foley.

Senior quarterback Diallo Johnson passed for a pair of touchdowns — an 18-yard strike to Darryl Adams and a 32-yard score to David Bowens, who scored again when he returned a fumble 77 yards.

The Eaglets also had short scoring runs from Jesse Cadwell, Marty Malatin and Everett Morris.

St. Mary's defense, led by Mark Sanders and Joe Gough with five tackles each, limited Foley to just two first downs.