

SPORTS



Close game — but Rice wins again



Birmingham Brother Rice and Farmington Hills Harrison continued their '80s rivalry Saturday, and the Warriors extended their winning streak to three straight years with a 16-14 victory.

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Senior Dave Sofran made his debut as a varsity quarterback and his presence known Saturday night in the Silverdome. The former wide receiver passed for one touchdown and ran for another in leading Birmingham Brother Rice to a hard-fought 16-14 victory over Farmington Hills Harrison. He completed four of nine passes for 84 yards, and he also rushed 12 times for 65. That was in addition to returning kicks and playing defense. "He's a great athlete," said Rice coach Al Fracassa of the 6-foot-10, 170-pound Sofran, who was Derek Canine's backup last year but never played QB in a game. "He does the job all the time."

late in the game. He finished with 101 yards on 21 carries.

A turning point was an interception by Rice's Kris Sava at his own 4-yard-line early in the fourth quarter with the score tied 7-7. The Warriors went 96 yards in eight plays, with Marshall fueling the drive. To that point, he had 35 yards on 14 carries but added 64 on eight.

"It seemed he had 11 Harrison boys on him all the time," Fracassa said. "He just kept sticking it in there and showed his true colors in the last few minutes."

Harrison's defense was probably looking for Marshall again when Sofran slipped around end on a bootleg for a 25-yard TD and 14-7 lead. "They were going down in there and (the interception) picked us up," Fracassa said. "In the last few minutes, our kids came to life."

"We didn't run anything fancy; that's probably why we moved the ball." A Harrison mistake was the difference. A high snap sailed over punter Kyle Vessell's head, and the ball rolled to the end zone for a safety. Rice seemed to have the victory clinched with a 16-7 lead and the ball with 4:43 to play.

But Harrison's Jason Granger (158 yards/22 carries) grabbed a Rice fumble and dashed 62 yards across field and up the sideline for a TD. Kyle Vessell's PAT made it 16-14, and now the Hawks had the ball and hope after recovering their onside kick at the Rice 45.

On fourth-and-6 at the 39, Granger was stopped for no gain with 1:36 remaining. Rice ran out the clock. "We were either going to throw or go to Granger again," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "But the offensive play worked so well we decided to try it again — and they stuffed it. We probably should have thrown it."

street and later 42 yards to David Matthews for the TD.

Granger's 61-yard run on Harrison's first play of the third period led to a 1-yard TD by Nick Shaich and 7-7 tie with Vessell's PAT. Granger had 113 yards in the second half, and the Hawks were moving again when Sava intercepted.

"I was in my sleep for the last three weeks," Fracassa said. "He's a very, very dangerous runner."

"We tried to run a little more off-tackle, because they contained the wide game pretty well," Herrington said. "We needed to be more effective in the passing game and just didn't hook up on a few."

"This was tough, because I thought we had taken momentum away from them and had an excellent chance win. So it's a real tough loss."

Harrison quarterback Kevin Bannock was 2-of-3 passing for 47 yards. He was sacked twice, but a young line did a good job protecting him for the most part.

The Warriors had a 170-164 edge in rushing yards and outgained the Hawks 254-211 overall.

Raiders win '95 debut

Two second-half goals gave Ron Meteyer his first win as North Farmington boys soccer coach Wednesday, 2-0 over visiting Redford Union. The RU defense proved tougher than originally thought as the teams battled to a scoreless draw in the first half, according to Meteyer. "People were telling me I didn't have to worry about RU, but they have an extremely strong defensive team," he said. "They will frustrate a lot of teams; they certainly frustrated us."

The Raiders opened the scoring eight minutes into the second half when senior forward Chris Kemp scored on a penalty kick. North survived RU pressure late in the game and sealed the win when two freshmen hooked up with 1:20 remaining. Justin Street sent the ball on net, and Craig Hearn blasted the deflection into the RU net. Senior goalkeeper Joe Berger stopped all four shots to earn the shutout. North had seven shots on net. "We played a good defensive game, and I'm very pleased with our first effort of the season," Meteyer said.

Bandits best in division

The Farmington Bandits under-11 boys soccer team won its four-team division in the Dearborn Invitational Aug. 26-27 before being eliminated in the semifinals. The first-year select team tied the Northville Thunder 1-1 and defeated the Canton Sambas and Dearborn Heights Cyclones, both by 3-1 scores. The Bandits lost 1-0 to the Northville Sting in the next round. Team members are Mike Buchwald, Matt Cave, Marshall Clayton, Stephen Depton, David Grant, Matt Holland, Samir Kharabi, Jon Moll, Andrew Martin, J.P. Parker, Tom Peszek, Tom Phillips, Joe Russo, Kyle Sloan, David Stahl, Noah Stern and Eric White. The Bandits are coached by Mark Phillips and Jim Moll.

Sciuna gets EMU post

Former Livonia Bentley girls and Redford Catholic Central High boys soccer coach Paul Sciuna was named last week as interim coach for Eastern Michigan University's women's soccer program. Eastern Michigan is playing its inaugural varsity women's soccer season. Sciuna replaces Chris Cortez, who resigned to take a full-time teaching position with the Utica School District. Sciuna, a club coach for many years with the Livonia Family Y Little Caesars Premier League teams, is a partner in Total Soccer, Inc.

Fantasy Baseball Camp

A number of former Detroit Tigers baseball players will be the featured instructors at a fantasy camp slated for later this month. The Majors is a camp directed by former Detroit Tigers pitcher Mickey Lolicch and scheduled for Sept. 29, 30 and Oct. 1. The other ex-Tigers on Lolicch's staff include Willie Horton, Jim Northrup, Jason Thompson and trainer Lefty Wilson.

Chargers search for field

The Oakland County Chargers semiprofessional football club is looking for a home field for its remaining four Mid-West Football League home games due to a scheduling conflict. Although the Chargers are a non-profit organization, they will pay any negotiated rental cost and associated fees. The team will also share gate and concession receipts with any associated fundraising or booster group if so desired. The only requirement is that the field must be of regulation size and have regulation goal posts. Amenities such as a scoreboard, lights, a press box and spectator seating are desirable but not necessary. Interested parties should contact Chargers president Darryl Henry at (313) 633-8340 or general manager Charlie Westcott at (810) 644-1062.

Spielman Hotline

Detroit Lions All-Pro linebacker Chris Spielman has joined with Glee Comm of Royal Oak to create the Chris Spielman Hotline. Throughout the NFL football season and within six hours after every Lions game, Spielman will update a recorded message that fans can access 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the continental United States by calling 1-800-322-0050. The call costs \$1.99 per minute and charges will appear on callers' regular phone bills. In accordance with carrier regulations, callers must be 18 or older or have parental permission to call. During his recorded message, Spielman will talk about his teammates, opponents, statistics and anything else he wants to share with his fans. The hotline started Sunday, Sept. 3.

Falcons fall 28-13 in opener

BY DAN O'MEARA  
STAFF WRITER

Instead of toasting a new football season with a sweet victory, Farmington High experienced a bitter defeat Saturday. It seemed whatever could go wrong did as Waterford Mott stunned the host Falcons 28-13 in the season opener.

Five turnovers (including four lost fumbles), costly penalties, a blocked punt and the big play contributed to Farmington's downfall.

"We made enough mistakes for two seasons," Falcons coach Lauri Niiskanen said. "We're a helluva lot better football team than what you saw out there today. But we can't make mistakes!"

The Falcons began its third season under Niiskanen with high expectations, and everything was going well at the start. The Falcons drove 70 yards with the opening kickoff to take a 7-0 lead.

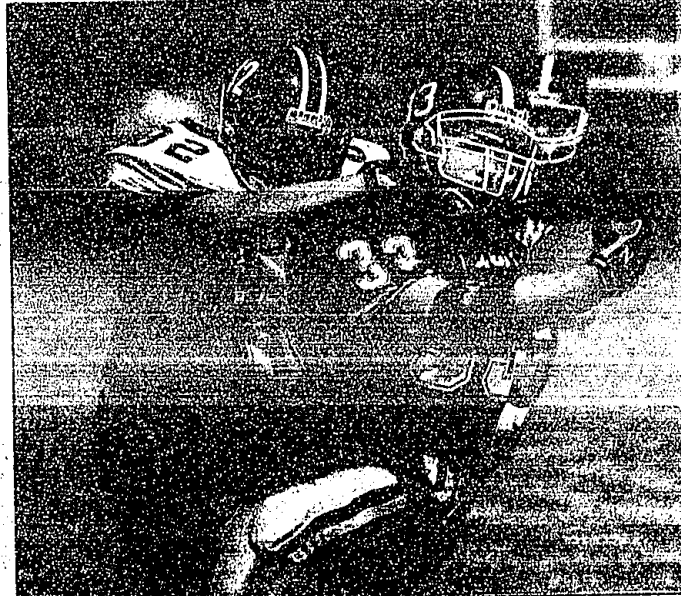
Luke Siskosky had nearly half (61) of his 124 rushing yards on that first possession, carrying the ball on 10 of 12 plays and scoring on a 1-yard run.

A pivotal moment came at the start of the second quarter. The Falcons had the ball fourth-and-seven at the Mott 27. But a motion penalty pushed them back, and a pass fell incomplete.

On first down for the Cornairs, J.J. Rowland sprinted 74 yards on a draw to score a touchdown.

Instead of a possible two-touchdown lead for Farmington, the game was tied 7-7, and it went downhill for the Falcons from there. "When they scored, it kinda woke us up, and we knew we had to come out and play," Rowland said, adding the Cornairs didn't hit being called penalties in another paper. "We set ourselves up for (the draw) and they bit."

With the exception of Rowland's long run, the Cornairs had minus-11



Falcons workhorse: Mott's Jason Cody tries to stop Jake Siskosky, who rushed 32 times for 124 yards and scored two touchdowns in a losing for Farmington.

yards in first-half total offense, but they still managed 31 second-quarter points.

The irony was Farmington outgained Mott 200-150 overall and had an 18-6 advantage in first downs.

"You can't take anything away from them," Niiskanen said. "As long as we keep scoring, they won't win the game."

Farmington escaped damage after fumbling the kickoff and roughing the Mott field-goal kicker, when Corey Fernandez interrupted a pass.

But the Falcons had to re-punt from their end zone because of a penalty. Ricky Zieseman blocked it, and Jack Page returned it for a Mott TD and 13-7 lead.

It was Farmington's turn to catch a break when Siskosky escaped the Mott fumble and dashed 43 yards for a score. The Cornairs blocked the PAT, and the game was tied at 13.

But that was brief as Rowland returned the ensuing kick 82 yards for a TD. Jeremy Koger passed to Greg McPherson for two points, and Mott led 21-13 at halftime.

"We're ahead with all the kicking drama then when we first started, and you'd think it was just the opposite," Niiskanen said.

"We've been here two years. No body has blocked a punt on us; no body has run a kickoff back on us."

Work on those things." Farmington was on the Mott 15 with 4:45 minutes remaining, but the drive ended with another fumble.

Any hopes the Falcons had of getting the ball back faded when Koger ran 53 yards on a quarterback keeper to the Farmington 30. That led to an insurance TD by Ben Roberby with a minute left.

Farmington's Nick Latra added 39 yards on eight rushing attempts and caught six passes for 57 yards. Siskosky carried 32 times.

"We relaxed it and moved on to the next one," Niiskanen said. "That's behind us. We'll make the corrections off the tape and go."

Raiders have more with Lessway, 20-7

BY BILL PARKER  
STAFF WRITER

John Lessway wasn't expected to start at tailback this year for the North Farmington football team. But when starter Chad Feldman suffered a broken leg in North's pre-season scrimmage, Lessway was moved from fullback to tailback. The hard-running senior made the most of his first opportunity to start at tailback, rambing for 121 yards and a touchdown Friday at West Bloomfield while leading the Raiders to a 20-7 victory in the season opener for both teams. "It's the last time I played tailback was the second game of my freshmen season," said the 225-pound senior. "I had to step it up and play my hardest. The team was pumped. I was pumped. We were ready to play football tonight. The line worked hard all week in practice and they did an excellent job blocking. There were some amazing holes out there."

FOOTBALL

Lessway and the offense was building a 12-0 lead. If there was any doubt remaining as to who was in control entering the second half, the Raiders erased it on the opening drive of the half. North marched 80 yards in 13 plays, ran 11:47 off the clock, and made it 20-0 when Lessway scored from 1 yard out. "At halftime we said 12-0 wasn't a big enough lead," explained North coach Jim O'Leary. "We wanted to come right out and score and take away their steam." The Raiders churned up 172 yards rushing on the night. Senior running back Sam Salfutidine also had turned in a strong performance, rushing for 60 yards on nine carries and scoring first-half touchdowns on runs of 19 and 4 yards. Senior quarterback Ered Rivers passed for 100 yards, completing 6-of-14 attempts. Senior wide receiver had two receptions for 35 yards and Lessway caught a pair of passes for 18 yards.

"It's always good to get off to a good start and give the kids some confidence," added O'Leary. "We played well, but we have a lot of work to do before we play Farmington Harrison next week. "I thought West Bloomfield played hard; they just couldn't get anything going." The Raiders didn't score until the 6:38 mark of the fourth quarter. Senior quarterback Justin Schultz, who started the second half in place of sophomore Blair Gottlieb, tossed a 7-yard scoring strike to senior tight end Tim Donke and Todd Baruso called the extra-point. Schultz completed four passes for 59 yards on the drive. An interference call against North on a pass to Donke set up the TD with a first-and-goal situation at the 7. "I hope tonight was a wake-up call for the kids," said West Bloomfield first-year coach Dan Shreveberry. "You have to give the credit to North Farm-"