

SPORTS

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1985

Hawks revisit South Lyon's Jungle



DAN O'MEARA

2 teams on season-long course for grid rematch

Jim Horton had the most interesting analogy for Farmington Hills Harrison's first playoff assignment, I thought.

According to Horton, who does the videotaping for the Harrison football games, it's like this: "If you want to run with the big dogs, you have to get off the front porch."

With that said, the Hawks hit the road Saturday and head west to South Lyon and The Jungle. The Class A Region III tournament gets serious right away as Harrison must face the No. 1-ranked Lions in the first round.

"They're rated the best team, and we're going to have to play them sometime," Harrison coach John Herrington said, elaborating on the Horton perspective. "So we might as well start with the best and see what we can do."

Now that the playoffs are finally here, let's get right to it. At this point, the regular season was one big preliminary.

Since both had the potential and expectation of being in the playoffs, the first nine games were steps to ensure being here — practicing, playing, polishing and preparing for this.

A year-long wait for rematch

The Harrison folks tell me their South Lyon friends have been talking about this game for a long time and eagerly awaiting a rematch ever since the Hawks won 25-20 a year ago.

That's all right, nothing wrong with that. As a reporter and fan of the game, I've been thinking about the possibility and looking forward to it since August.

But none of that mattered until a week ago when the final playoff point calculations affixed a calendar date. Now everyone is talking about it. If there is a disconnecting aspect to this, it's the opinion I think some hold that South Lyon was perhaps cheated and the Harrison victory tainted by a clipping penalty against the Lions.

Greg McGuire ran 67 yards for a touchdown that would have given South Lyon a 10-7 halftime lead with the extra point. The penalty, which occurred behind the point of advance, nullified the score.

But I can tell you it's still a penalty regardless of where it happens on the field.

I also can empathize with the South Lyon player who made the clip.

That's from personal experience because (pause for effect) yours truly did the exact same thing once upon a time in a high school game.

A teammate was running for an obvious touchdown when a guy on the other team cut in front of me and — BINGO!

He went down and so did the yellow flag. No touchdown. Ooops!

Fortunately for me, it wasn't a playoff game, and we were already winning by a couple touchdowns.

But, likewise, I thought I had the right angle. The clip didn't affect the play, but it was still a penalty.

In a game that went back and forth like the one last year and totaled 64 points, either side could reason this or that. If not for two Harrison turnovers and the South Lyon interception that resulted, the score might not have been as close.

But I have the impression the residual effect of the penalty and two-point difference has made the rematch into a grudge match.

That's fine, too, as long as both sides maintain an atmosphere of civility and sportsmanship.

South Lyon coach Bob Schelske had the right perspective on what should be a fine game: "It's two fine teams, two good coaching staffs and two quality groups of kids. That's high school football at it's best."

Should be another great game

Having said all of that, South Lyon should be eager to play Harrison again and vice versa for the sake of competition between two excellent teams.

It's a battle between the Kalamazoo Valley and Western Lakes champions again; it's Harrison trying to topple the No. 1 South Lyon; it's the Lions trying to knock off the two-time defending state champs and begin their own title march.

I've seen the Lions play and they're good! South Lyon is deserving of the big-dog label. It's a senior team with size, backfield speed and an aggressive defense.

The same can be said of Harrison except it plays more underclassmen, but this is the playoffs and everybody is a veteran now.

While one could make a case for it being South Lyon's year, the Hawks won't be pushovers. With seven state titles, they're used to being the big dogs and not underdogs.

"We'll take a team over there, for sure," Harrison coach John Herrington said.

Tradition, coaching and playoff experience help, but players must play, as coaches like to see. From the first game with Brother Rice, I thought this Harrison team could do just that when it got to November.

The playoffs are here. It's time to get off the porch and see who the big dogs are.

Harrison High tangles with the Lions of South Lyon in a Class A playoff football game for the second year in a row Saturday.

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER



"Welcome to the Jungle" remains the South Lyon football team's theme song, but nobody expects the Lions to roll out the welcome mat for Farmington Hills Harrison.

The Class A playoffs will meet again at 1:30 p.m. Saturday in a first-round playoff game at South Lyon.

While the No. 1-rated Lions are still rockin' and rollin' to the beat of the Guns and Roses song, Harrison's choice might be the 1960s hit tune "The Lion Sleeps Tonight."

The Hawks (8-1) hope to send South Lyon into an early hibernation and end its season with a repeat of last year's tournament victory.

The Lions (8-0) want to avenge a 29-20 loss in the regional final and terminate sixth-ranked Harrison's two-year reign as state champion.

"They've been rated No. 1 all year, and they've proved they deserve it," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "They're an outstanding team, and we know we have to be at our best to stay in there."

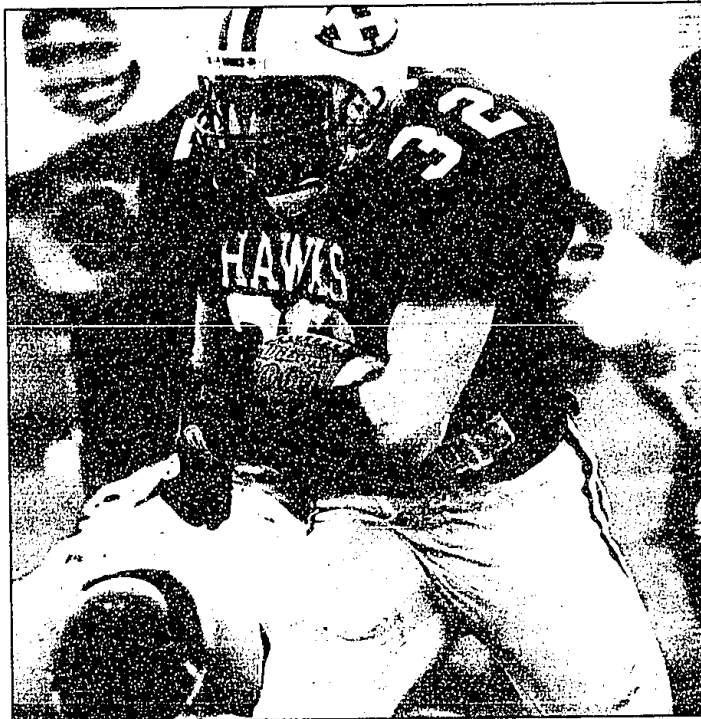
"They'll be fired up, and we'll be fired up, too. This is the state tournament, so the hype doesn't bother us. Everybody in our league was fired up to play us."

Both teams feature potent running games, outstanding backs and excellent defenses.

But the Lions are an offensive machine, executing the deceptive Wing-T with precision and accumulating virtually all of their yardage on the ground.

"They just keep coming at you; they're relentless on offense," Herrington said.

See **PLAYOFFS**, 4C



SHARON LEMMEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Goal oriented: Fullback Nick Shaieb is headed for the goal line and a Harrison touchdown Saturday against Oxford. The junior linebacker is also a standout on defense.

Shamrocks won't take Spartans lightly

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

It's Tuesday afternoon and Rich Deputa is getting dressed for football practice with his teammates inside the locker room at Redford Catholic Central.

Deputa must have had to remind himself he's getting ready for a playoff game and not going out dressed as a football player on Halloween.

"This is the first year I'm playing November football," said Deputa, a 6-foot-11, 230-pound junior defensive tackle who played his first two years at Dearborn Divine Child. "It feels real good. I've had to work myself into the lineup because this is mostly a senior team."

The Shamrocks (9-0) are heavy favorites in their Class AA Region III playoff game Saturday against Livonia Stevenson (7-2). Kickoff is 1:30 p.m. at Livonia Clearcreekville, and fans should get there early or risk standing.

Deputa will be banging heads with a familiar opponent, Stevenson senior fullback/linebacker Rudy Pacheco, who also is a transfer from DCC.

Deputa is one of four players rotating at defensive tackle for the Shamrocks. The others are seniors John Spolsky (6-0, 235), Chuck O'Connor (6-1, 190) and Bryan Jeffords (6-0, 205).

Senior defensive end Mike Smiley (6-0, 210) leads CC with three sacks and Deputa has 2½, including 1½ in last week's 17-7 win over Birmingham Brother Rice in the Catholic League championship at the Silverdome.

Mike Smiley and Deputa combined for a safety after Spolsky had fumbled at the 1 late in the game.

"I told John once he had the fumble to pick his head up because we'll get them in the end zone," said Deputa, sixth in tackles with 42.

The sequence epitomized the kind of opportunists the Shamrocks have become in outscoring their opponents 237-69.

The Shamrocks won't overwhelm people with their size on defense, but they look pretty imposing on the offensive line, which averages 238 pounds per man and is one of CC's best, according to coach Tom Mach.

The ends are Eric Gilbo (6-7, 250) and Eron Kosmowski (6-7, 235), who doubles as the placekicker with eight of 11 field goals and 25 of 31 extra points.

The rest of the line consists of seniors Matt Ehl (6-2, 265), Smiley, James McFarlane (6-2, 216), Jeff Monnette (6-2, 220) and Nick Lechapski (6-1, 270).

Gilbo is quarterback Greg Call's favorite target with 18 catches for 220 yards and two touchdowns. No one else in CC's run-oriented offense has more than two catches.

"He can catch anything, but where he's really blossomed is blocking," Mach said. "He's one of the better tight end blockers we've ever had."

Call, a junior left-hander, has completed 25 of 51 passes for 352 yards and three TDs and has rushed for 208 yards in 68 attempts. Take away 76 yards lost in sacks and Call's average per rush is about 5 yards.

Senior Kevin Quay has taken over at tailback and has 613 yards (103 carries for an average of 6.0 with five TDs). But Spolsky is the go-to back, gaining 910 yards in 143 carries (6.4 average) with 12 TDs.

This is the first meeting between CC and Stevenson.

Mach is impressed with the Spartans' aggressiveness on defense. He also thinks they pose a double threat with the passing of senior quarterback Dean Bachelder to wide receiver Jeff Backus and Tom DuMont's aid.

See **SHAMROCKS**, 5C

FOOTBALL

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Farmington High School's girls cross country team is on the right path to bigger and better things.

The Falcons achieved their second most important goal when they qualified for the Class A championships Saturday in Ann Arbor.

Farmington tied Novi for second place in the regional meet at Bubb Park with 87 points apiece.

Both teams advance to the state meet with regional champ Livonia Stevenson (59) and Ann Arbor Pioneer (83).

"To place at state has been our goal all year," Farmington coach Liz Zynda said. "Everything else was just a stepping stone to this. The top of the ladder was going to be the state."

The Falcons will try to accomplish their number one goal of finishing fifth in the state Saturday at Seakaton Golf Course in Grand Rapids. Farmington was ranked five in

Class A behind Troy Athens, Stevenson, Novi and Flushing in the last coaches poll.

A fifth-place finish also would equal the best performance by a Farmington girls team in a state meet.

The Falcons placed fifth in 1983 under former coach John Barrett, as well as sixth in 1966, 12th in 1987 and 14th last year.

"We're not as young as last year," Zynda said. "Few had ever run in a big meet like that. This year everybody but our seventh runner has run at state, so six are veterans on this course."

Zynda was encouraged by a solid team showing in the regional, with only 27 seconds separating Farmington's top five.

See **CROSS COUNTRY**, 5C



SHARON LEMMEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

State qualifiers: The Farmington girls earned a return trip to the Class A championships in cross country.

Farmington girls qualify for state

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

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