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out on their first series, but when Mike Doyle blocked a Dearborn punt, Harrison got the ball at the Dearborn 40, and Turney scored six plays later.

The Pioneers tried a fake punt at their own 39, but Nelson miscalculated and the pass away from Colin Wilkinson.

Starting in good field position again, the Hawks scored in just three plays. Senior full-back Blake Ashley's 28-yard gain with a screen pass set up Reed's TD.

Turney's second TD gave Harrison a 19-0 lead with 1:55 left in the half and followed two big fourth-down plays. Reed gained 8 yards on fourth-and-1 at the Dearborn 29, and Posci, on a fake field goal, passed 13 yards to senior tight end Zach Burton to the 6.

The Pioneers used the hook-and-ladder play to set up Wilkinson's 2-yard TD pass to Eric Green with only three seconds remaining for a 19-7 halftime score.

Dearborn could've made it closer but lost a fumble at the Harrison 5 early in the third quarter.

"When you lose by 18, people will say it's a blowout," Mifaud said. "We had a chance to keep it close and put the ball on the ground."

"When you're playing a championship-caliber team like Harrison, you can't afford to make those turnovers."

Harrison had a nine-play (running all the way), 51-yard scoring drive that ended with

a 6-yard TD run by Woods, who had 120 yards on 18 carries in the second half. Harrison led 29-7 after three quarters.

"We knew we could run the ball," senior tight end Mike Road said. "Every week we think we can, but we start passing and picking teams apart."

"But we can run the ball, too, and the backs ran hard. (Dearborn) had some big boys on the defensive line, so we had to get low, under the pads, and drive them back."

"They were a big team, but the offensive line did the job," senior guard Steve Migliore said. "We took over and ran the power game. We thought the line of scrimmage was going backwards for them. Every one of the guys did a great job."

Nelson's TD catch made it 33-7 with 4:23 left in the game. The Pioneers resorted to trickery again to score on their final possession.

Wilkinson's transcontinental pass to quarterback C.J. Kruger went for 30 yards, and Wilkinson later caught a 33-yard TD pass from Kruger.

Kruger rushed 24 times for 66 yards, Wilkinson 14 for 91 and Green seven for 20. Kruger and Wilkinson were 3-of-8 passing for 65 yards.

"Today we came right out of the blocks and took it to them," Road said, adding the Hawks hadn't done that in recent games. "It makes you feel more comfortable instead of playing catch-up."

O'Meara from page C1

much psychological as physical. But the same goes for the Wildcats, of whom I also wonder 'How great can their confidence level be as they get ready to face an opponent that gave them such a thorough thrashing?'

If I know Oxford coach Bud Rowley, I'm sure he's been working on his team's collective psyche and ridding it of any negative thoughts. Winning nine of their last 10 games has no doubt helped the Wildcats recover their confidence, too.

I've talked with Rowley enough times to know he likes a challenge, and this is a challenge I suspect he is relishing despite the apparent odds.

At a time when Harrison was having trouble finding opponents to fill its schedule, Rowley was the only public-school coach willing to put the Hawks on his. He told me he wanted to play the best and he liked the challenge of doing that.

And, as big and daunting as this one might be for his Wildcats, I just know Bud is playing up the opportunity his team has this week.

From an Oxford perspective, the Wildcats got a rare second shot at Harrison — No. 1-ranked and defending state champion Harrison! — with a chance to avenge a humiliating defeat.

Certain of being huge underdogs, the Wildcats can use that as a motivator and let it all hang out since no one expects Oxford to be in the game with Harrison.

And there is a precedent for the Wildcats doing just that.

These teams have played the last five years in the regular season, with Harrison winning all five. But the first time they

played, and it remains Oxford's only victory, was also in the state semifinals of the 1990 Class BB playoffs.

It was the second half of a doubleheader at Wilmington Stadium in Jackson. Kickoff was at 3:30 p.m. and as a cold but sunny day faded into twilight so did Harrison's hopes for that season.

Though a fine team as it turned out, Oxford was an underdog in that game, too, but managed to upset the Hawks in a wild, high-scoring game, 48-38.

The Wildcats ran the veer option then as opposed to the I-formation now, and the Hawks couldn't stop their offense.

If you were a Hawk fan, it was a frustrating game. It was obvious Harrison could score on Oxford, and you kept thinking the Hawks could win the game, if only they could stop the Wildcats. But it seemed every time Harrison would score it would give up a touchdown.

"It was a track meet," Harrison coach John Herrington said. "We tried to get to the quarterback real quick, but he was getting the pitch outside before we could get anybody out on him."

Though few of his current players either saw or remember it, Herrington said he would mention that game and what happened sometime this week.

"They kept us from getting to the Silverdome," Herrington said. "It won't be harped on, but it will be mentioned."

Not that it was an issue in 1990 or will be this year, but the point is overconfidence could be as much the opponent as the Oxford eleven on the other side.

But complacency has never

been a problem for Harrison teams. You don't establish the record and rich tradition Harrison has by being complacent.

No, the Hawks keep going for the gold year after year, and I think this year's team has the same fire in the belly, the same drive and determination, as any other Harrison team.

Herrington went to the heart of the matter, as far as what will ultimately decide the outcome of this game, when he spoke of the character of his players.

"We have very mature seniors on this team who know the score is 0-0 and what we did last time doesn't have much bearing on this game," he said. "I don't think any of our players are going to take them lightly, because this is the state semifinals."

"I don't think it will be hard to get our kids motivated. They know Oxford is eager to play us."

The Hawks always show up ready to play, even if they've fallen behind early in some games. The '98 Harrison team gives a steady, consistent effort that has been a trait of previous teams, and it's that businesslike approach I think will enable the Hawks to focus on this game, play well again and win this one, too.

Trojans upset Eaglets in BB

Orchard Lake St. Mary's lost leading rusher James Gonzales and receiver Larry Clark early in its Class BB regional championship game Saturday at Trenton, but coach George Porritt wouldn't make excuses for a 20-16 defeat.

"Trenton did a nice job and came up with a defensive scheme that kept us off balance," he said. "That was the difference. This is a game of execution, and I don't think we executed. That's the bottom line."

St. Mary's (8-3) had a chance to take the lead late in the game when it got within 20-14 after Jermaine Gonzales passed 6 yards to David McDermott for a touchdown.

Gonzales picked off a pass at the 25 and returned it deep into Trenton territory, but the Trojans (11-0) made a go-line stand and then took a safety for a 20-16 final score.

"That was the ballgame," Porritt said. "I'm shocked we didn't get in from that distance. We've been doing it all year, but I guess it was just their day."

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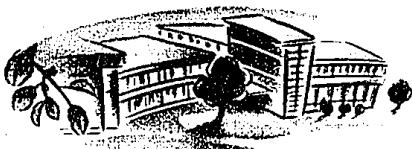
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