

Hawks whip Wildcats again, 48-7

Woods scores 4 TDs in semifinal victory

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As easily as Kevin Woods ran through the Oxford defense Saturday, Farmington Harrison coasted into the championship game of the Class A state football tournament.

The junior tailback averaged an amazing 20.25 yards per carry and a touchdown on every second attempt, leading the Hawks to another rout of the Wildcats, 48-7.

Woods carried the ball on just eight plays but had scoring runs of 56, 63, 7 and 22 yards in a semifinal game at Rochester High School.

"I just play to win," said Woods, who finished with 162 yards and probably had nearly 100 more on two kickoff returns. "It's not a one-man team. We've got the line; we've got the quarterback; we've got the coaches. That's what it's all about."

The 6-foot-10, 178-pound Woods is playing a lot more than he did early in the season and has become the featured back in recent weeks.

In the last four games, he has rushed for 527 yards and seven touchdowns, averaging 12.86 yards per carry. He has become the team's leading rusher with 850 yards and 11 touchdowns.

"I'm starting to get more opportunities now, and I'm building my confidence," Woods said. "Coach has a lot more confidence in me. When I run with the first team, the line has confidence I'm going to get the job done."

Woods, a sprinter on the track team, was motivated to do better when his coaches told him he had to run harder. He has and the results are impressive.

"When people say I don't run hard, that puts a little fire deep down in my heart," he said. "I just gotta do the job."

On the second play of the game, Woods dashed around

right end, bounced off one tackler and down the sideline for his first TD.

The first of six extra points by Joe Gannam made it 7-0 with barely a minute gone in the game.

Oxford gave the ball away with fumbles on its first two possessions, and Harrison turned them into short touchdown runs by Matt Turney, whose specialty has become short-yardage, goal-line situations. He has scored 10 touchdowns this year.

"We lost two turnovers and that really swung the game to their favor," Oxford coach Bud Rowley said. "But it was early; we should have been able to overcome that. It might have shaken our confidence, but I can't say turnovers were the difference in the game."

The Hawks (12-0) scored on all five first-half possessions and led 34-0 at halftime. Woods again went around right end and outran all defenders for his longest TD run, and his third was a beeline for the front corner of the end zone with 35 seconds left in the half.

"We saw how their defense was playing tough in the middle," Woods said, "and coach (John) Herrington said, if the hole wasn't there, I could get at least a couple yards outside."

Mike Head sacked Oxford quarterback Brad Nowacki and forced the Wildcats (9-3) to punt from deep in their territory at the start of the third quarter.

Harrison got the ball at the Oxford 32 and Woods scored his fourth TD three plays later, running right over one would-be tackler en route to the end zone.

With a 41-0 lead and the clock running, Herrington began substituting, and the Wildcats following a fumble led against the second Harrison defense.

Oxford's Joe White had a 1-yard run on the first play of the fourth quarter, and Harrison's Corey Davis finished the scoring with a 62-yard run.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRISLER

Semifinal action: Harrison senior Matt Reed charges through the Oxford defense for a 12-yard game Saturday. The Hawks won the Class A playoff game, 48-7.

"I'll tell you what; they have a nice football team," said Rowley of the Hawks. "They have players and they had a great day again today. They had a little more than we did, and that's the bottom line."

Rowley already was looking forward to next season. "Let's get the winter and spring over with, and let's get ready to play foot-

ball again," he said. Harrison quarterback Dave Pesci was 7-of-9 passing for 105 yards. Head, Ricky Bryant and Brian Nelson caught two passes apiece for 36, 32 and 30 yards, respectively. Oxford's George Gomez had 85 yards on 14 attempts, White 32 on 12. Nowacki was 1-of-5 passing for 13 yards. The Hawks outgained

the Wildcats 380-173 overall. Head 11 made tackles, Steve Migliore nine and Dario Otero eight.

"It was a good game; I liked it," Herrington said. "The players had a very businesslike attitude. They didn't take anything for granted. They came out on the first drive ready to play, and I'm very proud of them."

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went to state. Her older brother, Matt Lorida, is a starting defensive-back for the Catholic Central football team, which plays Rockford in the Class A championship game Saturday afternoon. It could be state titles on back-to-back weekends for the Lorida family.

Like the Mercy swimmers, the Harrison football team is on a mission this week.

The Hawks will play in a record 12th state final (breaking their own record of 11 which they set last year) and will try to win their ninth championship Friday.

If Harrison should win, Herrington will have the most state titles any coach in the history of Michigan playoffs. The late Ron Thompson won eight at Detroit DePores, which still holds the record for most overall titles (10).

"I don't really think of it as a major goal," Herrington said. "We'd like to win this one, because this team has been such a good team to coach."

"As we tell the players, individual records aren't what football is all about. We're looking for the team goal, and the state championship is this team's goal. That's

been their goal from the start of the year."

Hudsonville, located west of Grand Rapids about midway between there and Holland, provides the opposition this time, and it will be the first time the two schools have ever played each other.

It will be Hudsonville's first visit to the Silverdome. The Hawks are certainly more experienced in these games and familiar with the indoor environment.

Seniors Brett Foster, Bryan Moore, Mike Head and Ricky Bryant are three-year starters

and will play in their third consecutive state final.

"It's good that we know the routine and all we have to do is get on the bus and drive over there like it's another away game," Herrington said.

"It doesn't mean our kids aren't excited to walk into the Dome and to be playing there. They'll be just as excited as any team but maybe a little more under control."

As they have been throughout this tournament and were last year, the Hawks will be heavy favorites. But Grand Rapids teams have dealt Harrison 20

of its three losses in state-final games, and teams from that part of the state play a solid brand of football.

But I think Harrison's exceptional combination of good defense, strong offensive line, dangerous passing attack and solid running game, as well as size, speed and strength will decide the outcome in its favor.

"This team has risen to the occasion every time," Herrington said. "If a team has challenged us in a game, they've immediately responded, and I really think they will rise to the occasion again Friday."

GRID LINEUPS

- HUDSONVILLE OFFENSE**
 C: senior Kevin Koster (6-0, 190)
 Q: senior Tom Folkert (6-2, 185)
 T: senior Jason Durham (5-11, 185)
 T: senior Dan Woodruff (6-2, 240)
 T: senior Kevin Clement (6-1, 220)
 E: senior Jaime Butkema (6-5, 210)
 E: senior Casey Glass (6-2, 170)
 Q: senior Jordan Beel (5-9, 165)
 T: senior James Kulpura (5-10, 205)
 T: sr. Nate Luurtsema (5-10, 195)
 E: senior Larry Brooks (6-1, 175)
- HUDSONVILLE DEFENSE**
 T: senior Chuck East (6-1, 270)
 T: senior Dan Woodruff (6-2, 240)
 E: senior Bob Oppen (5-10, 240)
 E: senior Jaime Butkema (6-5, 210)
 E: senior Joe Niemi (6-0, 185)
 L: senior D.J. Van Slyke (5-11, 180)
 L: junior Kevin Clement (6-1, 220)
 L: senior Jason Durham (5-11, 185)
 Q: senior Casey Glass (6-2, 170)
 C: senior Mike Smith (5-11, 160)
 S: senior Josh Northouse (6-1, 189)
- HARRISON OFFENSE**
 C: senior Mike Atopuli (5-8, 233)
 Q: senior Brett Foster (6-1, 220)
 T: senior Steve Migliore (5-11, 225)
 T: senior Bryan McBee (6-1, 278)
 T: senior Dario Otero (6-2, 240)
 E: senior Mike Head (6-1, 205)
 E: senior Ricky Bryant (6-1, 165)
 Q: senior Dave Pesci (5-11, 170)
 F: senior Blake Ashley (5-11, 190)
 T: senior Matt Reed (5-10, 185)
 T: senior Andre Davis (6-3, 165)
- HARRISON DEFENSE**
 N: senior Bryan McBee (6-1, 278)
 T: senior Steve Migliore (5-11, 225)
 T: senior Dario Otero (6-2, 240)
 E: senior Brett Foster (6-1, 220)
 E: senior Zach Durton (6-4, 215)
 L: senior Mike Head (6-1, 205)
 L: senior Steve Migliore (5-11, 225)
 N: senior Blake Ashley (5-11, 190)
 S: senior Ricky Bryant (6-1, 165)
 H: senior Andre Davis (6-3, 165)
 C: junior Brian Nelson (6-2, 170)

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cal chairs at quarterback. Jordan Beel was the starter last year but missed the first seven games with an injury. His replacement, D.J. Van Slyke, was injured in the sixth game, and Kenny Rangan led Hudsonville to victory in Week 7.

"Luckily for us, by that point, Beel came back," Duram said. "This year luck was with us. As one good kid went down, we had someone come back."

"They prefer to run it, but they have a kid (Casey Glass) who is a good receiver, and the quarterback does throw the ball accurately," Herrington said.

"Our linebackers are going to have to be very active. We have to get people to Luurtsema, and we can't let the fullback run up the middle on us, either."

The Hawks will have to watch for the unexpected, too. The Eagles recovered an onside kick to start the game against Saginaw last week and scored as a result en route to a 32-6 victory.

"They let the momentum away from Saginaw early, and it didn't look like Saginaw ever got in sync," Herrington said.

"They'll put the slabback in the guard-tackle gap, which makes it an eight-man line, and you have to adjust to that."

Duram knows what kind of challenge the Eagles face in trying to plan a defense for Harrison, which is comfortable and capable of either passing or run-



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRISLER

Coaching legend: The Hawks can give John Herrington his 261st career victory and ninth state title Friday.

his cuts. So we kept running him in our inside drill against the first-team defense, and he kept getting better and better.

"We thought he really came alive when he played Reggie Spearman the week of the Glenn game, although he always gained yards whenever he got in there."

"After what Woods has done in the last two playoff games, does Herrington think he has become a varsity back now?"

"Yes, I think so," he said. Herrington plans to mix the

HISTORY

- FARMINGTON HARRISON FOOTBALL PLAYOFF HISTORY**
- 1998 — CLASS A**
 Final: Harrison vs. Hudsonville?
 Semifinal: Harrison 48, Oxford 7.
 Regional: Harrison 33, Dearborn 15.
 Playoff: Harrison 42, Hartland 14.
- 1997 — CLASS A**
 Final: Harrison 21, Midland Dow 6.
 Semifinal: Harrison 21, Seaholm 7.
 Regional: Harrison 38, Ypsilanti 0.
 Playoff: Harrison 56, Edsel Ford 21.
- 1996 — CLASS A**
 Final: Grandville 24, Harrison 17.
 Semi: Harrison 52, G.P. North 34.
 Regional: Harrison 35, Trenton 21.
 Playoff: Harrison 45, D. Chadsey 22.
- 1995 — CLASS A**
 Playoff: South Lyon 40, Harrison 0.
- 1994 — CLASS A**
 Final: Harrison 17, F.H. Central 13.
 Semifinal: Harrison 38, Kimball 25.
 Regional: Harrison 28, So. Lyon 26.
 Playoff: Harrison 14, Det. Chadsey 6.
- 1993 — CLASS A**
 Final: Harrison 12, Midland 9.
 Semifinal: Harrison 35, Fraser 14.
 Regional: Harrison 23, Northville 16.
 Playoff: Harrison 44, Edsel Ford 13.
- 1991 — CLASS BB**
 Final: Harrison 34, Cheboygan 7.
 Semifinal: Harrison 32, Tecumseh 7.
 Regional: Harrison 21, Allen Park 6.
 Playoff: Harrison 49, Crestwood 8.
- 1990 — CLASS BB**
 Semifinal: Oxford 48, Harrison 38.
 Regional: Harrison 48, Avondale 16.
 Playoff: Harrison 22, Clintonville 19.
- 1989 — CLASS B**
 Final: Harrison 28, DeWitt 27.
 Semi: Harrison 3, E. Grand Rapids 2.
 Regional: Harrison 29, Allen Park 6.
 Playoff: Harrison 23, Riverview 7.
- 1988 — CLASS B**
 Final: Harrison 44, St. Joseph 9.
 Semifinal: Harrison 22, Avondale 7.
 Regional: Harrison 35, Riverview 0.
 Playoff: Harrison 23, Clawson 0.
- 1987 — CLASS B**
 Final: Gd. Rapids CC 19, Harrison 7.
 Semi: Harrison 35, Marysville 20.
 Regional: Harrison 35, Monroe CC 6.
 Playoff: Harrison 29, Allen Park 6.
- 1986 — CLASS B**
 Semifinal: Marysville 22, Harrison 6.
 Regional: Harrison 36, D. Northern 16.
 Playoff: Harrison 21, Riverview 14.
- 1984 — CLASS A**
 Semifinal: Fordson 9, Harrison 6.
 Regional: Harrison 17, Seaholm 6.
- 1982 — CLASS A**
 Final: Harrison 17, Fordson 14, 20F.
 Semifinal: Harrison 6, Lakeland 3.
 Regional: Harrison 23, Lahser 0.
- 1981 — CLASS B**
 Final: Harrison 7, Muskegon CC 0.
 Semifinal: Harrison 36, Willow Run 0.
 Regional: Harrison 23, Marysville 13.
- 1980 — CLASS B**
 Semifinal: Okemos 14, Harrison 3.
 Regional: Harrison 7, Lumen Christi 6.
- 1978 — CLASS A**
 Final: Midland Dow 36, Harrison 27.
 Semifinal: Harrison 21, Lamphere 0.
- GRID SCORES**
- FARMINGTON HARRISON (12-0)**
 Harrison 48, Oxford 0
 Harrison 47, Farmington 0
 Harrison 35, Northville 0
 Harrison 41, Livonia Franklin 6
 Harrison 35, W.L. Westlake 13
 Harrison 49, Plymouth Canton 0
 Harrison 54, Livonia Churchill 10
 Harrison 20, Westland Glenn 14
 Harrison 43, Detroit Country Day 7
 Class A Playoffs
 Harrison 42, Hartland 14
 Harrison 33, Dearborn 15
 Harrison 48, Oxford 7
 Harrison 49S, opponents 86
- HUDSONVILLE (13-1)**
 Johnson 29, Hudsonville 12
 Hudsonville 23, E. Grand Rapids 6
 Hudsonville 27, Zeland 14
 Hudsonville 20, Wyoming Park 14
 Hudsonville 30, G.R. Northview 6
 Hudsonville 12, Lowell 0
 Hudsonville 28, Hastings 13
 Hudsonville 7, Forest Hills Central 0
 Hudsonville 41, Grandville 6
- Class A Playoffs**
 Hudsonville 28, Portage Central 21
 Hudsonville 21, East Lansing 9
 Hudsonville 32, Saginaw 6
 Hudsonville 281, opponents 124