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Harrison vs. Glenn for crown

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Everyone knows it will take a Herculean effort to unseat Farmington Harrison as Western Lakes Activities Association football champion.

Ironically, 6-1 Westland John Glenn, the Lakes Division champ, has the final shot against the 7-0 and Western Division champion Hawks, who will be leaving the WLAA after this season to join the Oakland Activities Association.

Game time is 7 p.m. Friday at Glenn.

FOOTBALL

Glenn and Harrison have some history between them when it comes to WLAA finals.

Harrison, running for its 16th Western Lakes grid title since the league was formed in 1982, has met Glenn seven times, the last in the 1998 season when Harrison prevailed, 20-14.

Harrison is 5-2 against Glenn in the WLAA championship game series.

"We're very excited to go down there and play against Glenn; we hope to be at the top of our game," said Harrison coach John Herrington, whose Hawks are riding a 29-game winning streak. Harrison is ranked No. 1 among all classes in Michigan and No. 11 nationally by USA Today. "Glenn has probably been our main rival through all these years, and it's a perfect way to go out."

"This game is hittersaw for me. It's been fun playing in this league. I'm the kind of guy who resists change, but I guess it's good for the teams in the other sports (to join the OAA)."

Glenn coach Chuck Gordon, who has faced Herrington in all seven WLAA championship meetings, calls this Harrison team "the best high school football team I've ever seen."

"They have a great running back (Marcus Woods), a Big Ten quarterback (Drew Stanton) and a Big Ten wide receiver (Agim Shabaji)," Gordon said. "They have all kinds of weapons on offense. They're a big-play team, and they do it with more than one guy."

"They also have a great defense and a solid kicking game. I've never seen anything like it."

If you compare one common opponent, Glenn comes up woefully short.

Harrison racked up more than 600 total yards in a 61-20 win over Northville. Meanwhile, Glenn's only loss of the year came against the same Northville squad, 13-7.

"We're going to have to play a great game," Gordon said. "You can't turn it over, and you try and limit their big plays. Nobody has been successful yet because of their great team speed. It's going to be a tremendous challenge."

Harrison's lone challenge so far came against Plymouth Canton. The Hawks rolled to a 35-14 halftime lead and came away with a 45-34 victory.

"Canton got some pressure on their quarterback at times," Gordon said. "But he (Stanton) gets rid of it so fast, and their offensive line is well coached. They protect well."

Harrison will be missing two starting inside linebackers due to injury. Bill Richeson went down in last Friday's 62-7 victory over Franklin, and Kevin Zerbo, whom Herrington calls "a Division I player," will be out again this week after suffering an injury against Northville.

Woods, a junior who has excelled at tailback, may see some time at linebacker this week.

"Things have been going well this year except for a rash of injuries," Herrington said. "Our

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Mercy still Oakland County's best

BY DAN O'NEARA
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Farmington Hills Mercy made it five titles in a row with another successful effort Saturday at the annual Oakland County girls swimming and diving championships.

"The Marlins maintained possession of the trophy by scoring more than double the points of Catholic League rival and runner-up Birmingham Marian, 279 1/2-132."

North Farmington, led by senior double-individual winner Lindsay McErlane, also had a fine performance, finishing third with 112 points.

GIRLS SWIMMING

"It's very difficult to win that five times with 30 some schools," Mercy coach Jim Downs said. "Getting kids into a situation where they're not complacent is hard to do. We worked on that right off the bat. Defending something is hard to do when you do it this many times."

Downs was surprised by the margin of Mercy's victory, pointing out the Marlins scored one less point than a year ago despite losing a lot of seniors from last year's team.

"At the beginning of the year, I didn't think there was any way we could win by that much until I saw the seed sheets," he said.

"I saw we had a lot of kids seeded eighth and 10th and a couple who were 15th and ended up 12th. I didn't think we could win all three relays either."

A sweep of first place in the relays was the foundation for Mercy's success. The Marlins won the meet



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMAYER

Repeat winners: Senior Becca Hallin and her Mercy teammates dominated the Oakland County championship meet Saturday and won the title for the fifth consecutive year.

with superior relay teams and depth in the other events.

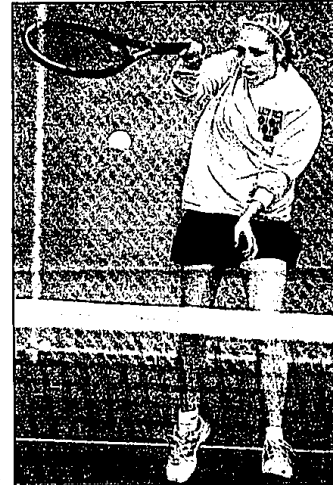
Mercy had just one individual winner - Caitlin Kelly in the 100-yard freestyle - but 21 additional swims that produced points.

"That depth wasn't there at the beginning of the year," Downs said. "I made that a big project, to try to do something with that depth. Here it is October and it came out."

Elizabeth Garlow and Katie Naglick were members of the medley and 200 freestyle relay teams; Kristin Lortida and Kelly swam in both freestyle events, and Eloise Page took part in the medley and 400 freestyle victories. The 400 freestyle team also included Katie Benick.

Kelly also was second in the 50 freestyle, and Gar-

Please see SWIMMING, D2



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

League champs: Michelle Boothroyd (above) and Chrissy Dwyer won at No. 1 doubles.

Raiders whip tourney foes, defend Western Lakes title

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North Farmington's only blemish in its girls tennis season thus far was a season-opening 4-4 tie with Northville.

On Tuesday, the Raiders made it clear they are the undisputed champions of the Western Lakes Activities Association by winning six of eight flights en route to a team-high 30 points.

Northville was a distant second with 20 and host Livonia Stevenson was third with 13.

Once first-year coach Joe Brennan got his singles and doubles lineup situated, the Raiders had been a on roll.

They finished their dual meet season at 11-0-1 overall, including a 7-1 non-league victory Monday over West Bloomfield.

"I like the fact that the girls work hard, they want coaching and have shown improvement," Brennan said. "It was a very impressive performance today. I'm especially proud of the doubles teams because they've shown a lot of improvement."

North, which leaves the WLAA to join the Oakland Activities Association next year, won its second straight WLAA crown. But the Raiders might not return next season, because three of their four singles players

GIRLS TENNIS

In the featured match at No. 1 singles, North sophomore Emily Jaffe repeated as champion with a 6-1, 6-3 triumph over Stevenson junior Erin Mazzoni.

The two also met last Thursday with Jaffe coming away with a 7-5, 6-0 victory after starting out slowly.

"The game is all mental, you can't get negative, even when you're down or you'll get stuck in the mud," Jaffe said. "Joe (Brennan) tells me to be consistent, be patient and don't go for big shots too much and too soon. I also tried to get to the net and finish when I get the chance."

Both Jaffe and Mazzoni have impressive tennis resumes.

Jaffe has only lost two matches all year - to Laura Hutto of Ann Arbor Pioneer and Katie Lavoie of Bloomfield Hills Kingswood. She also captured the Okemos Invitational.

During the summer, Jaffe won a gold medal in the Girls 14-and-under division at the Maccabi Games in Philadelphia, Pa. She also reached the front draw of the Round of 16 and was a back draw quarterfinalist at the Western Tennis Association Open in Springfield, Ohio.

Please see TENNIS, D3

Falcons gain 1-1 tie with one of the best

BY DAN O'NEARA
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It wasn't a win, technically, but it might as well have been as far as the Farmington soccer team is concerned.

A 1-1 tie Monday with Plymouth Canton had more significance than any run-of-the-mill victory for the Falcons.

Farmington played one of the state's best teams to a stalemate, providing the Falcons with a huge boost of confidence.

"(The Falcons) felt real good about the way they played and the outcome of the game," Farmington coach Luke Juncaj said.

"The way we're playing right now we definitely can play with the best. If we play like we played tonight, we can beat anybody in the state."

Canton is perennial power in the Western Lakes Activities Association, is 14-1-1 overall and is ranked No. 3 in Division 1.

Farmington, which reached the semifinals of the Division 2 state tournament last year and hopes to have another long post-season run, has an 11-2-2 record and is ranked No. 2 in Division 2.

"It looks like we're peaking at the right time," Juncaj added.

The Falcons were first on the scoreboard with Nate Meyer scoring on a cross from Matt Okopyn in the third minute of the game.

Canton got the tying goal seven minutes later when Nick Rolfo scored off an assist by Nick Houdek, and it remained 1-1 for the duration.

BOYS SOCCER

"It was an even game; we could very easily have won it, too," Juncaj said. "It was even from then on. There were a lot of good scoring chances on both sides."

"In the last five minutes, we had some great chances to get the winning goal."

Farmington's Matt Konopinski was taken down in the box with three minutes left, according to Juncaj, but no penalty was called.

"It was a battle of two great teams," Juncaj said. "Neither team deserved to lose. I guess it was the was the right outcome."

The Falcons will be host for a Division 2 district tournament Oct. 22-26 that includes Dearborn Heights Crestwood, Dearborn Divine Child, Southfield, Redford Union, Redford Thurston and Farmington Harrison.

Farmington was a 4-0 winner over Westland John Glenn on Oct. 3. Konopinski scored three goals, achieving the first hat trick of his prep career, and Okopyn accounted for the other score.

Hawks win convincingly

It had been a long time since Farmington Harrison so dominated an opponent as it did Livonia Franklin Monday.

The Hawks didn't just win the game; they overwhelmed the visiting Patriots

Please see SOCCER, D7

Rocks throw Raiders for loss



STAFF PHOTO BY JEFF

High school soccer action: North Farmington's Jeff Shumer (foreground) tries to shield the soccer ball from Plymouth Salem's Brian Popeney in a game played Monday. Salem won the Western Lakes contest, 4-0. See details on Page D7.