

It's time to get playoff picks right

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Detroit Country Day! This is not the time to get shut out, and my fearless forecasting nearly managed to do just that.

Thanks to the Yellow Jackets' stinging of Macomb Lutheran North last Saturday, I was able to avoid a perfect weekend of incorrectness.

I was a little off in predicting victories for Lake Orion, Farmington Harrison and Birmingham Seaholm and a loss for Farmington.

Well, unlike those first three teams, there is another week, and I aim to redeem myself. (Last week's picks: 1 right, 4 wrong. Season's mark: 124 right, 50 wrong.)

DeLaSalle (8-3) vs. Brother Rice (9-2) at Groves, 1 p.m. Saturday. If previous meetings are an indicator, and in this case it certainly is, then the Warriors are the pick. In Week 5 of the regular season, the Warriors held the upper hand in posting a 28-12 victory. Coming



off another stellar performance in thumping Harrison, the Doug Pickers/Anthony Jackson-led Warriors will again ground the Pilots.

PICK: BROTHER RICE. Farmington (10-0) at Allen Park (10-0) 7:30 p.m. Friday. I know who I feel is going to win (Allen Park), but I also know who is going to win (Farmington). The Falcons have been blessed all season by my gross miscalculation and so this is no time to change. They've been impressive in scoring victories over a pair of Detroit opponents, but they will undoubtedly receive a stiff test from the Jaguars.

PICK: ALLEN PARK. Dearborn Divine Child (9-2) at B.H. Lahser (10-0) 7 p.m. Saturday. The Falcons have won 11 straight and there's plenty of reason to believe they can make it 12. Coach Dan Loria's club has played pretty solidly on both sides of the ball in their two playoff victories and now face a Falcons squad able and always willing to score. Even with multi-talented offensive weapon Davis Lesmeister, the Falcons fall

O & E STAFF'S FOOTBALL PICKS

Week 12 Jim Toth Marty Budner Tim Smith Dan Slickradt Ken Abramczyk Dan O'Neala

FRIDAY

Farmington at Allen Park	Allen Park	Allen Park	Allen Park	Farmington	Allen Park	Allen Park
D. Country Day at Erie-Mason	Country Day	Country Day	Erie-Mason	Erie-Mason	Country Day	Country Day

SATURDAY

DeLaSalle at Brother Rice	Brother Rice	Brother Rice	Brother Rice	Brother Rice	Brother Rice	Brother Rice	Brother Rice
D. Divine Child at B.H. Lahser	Lahser	Lahser	Divine Child	Lahser	Divine Child	Divine Child	Divine Child

LAST WEEK	1-4 (.200)	2-3 (.400)	2-3 (.400)	2-3 (.400)	2-3 (.400)	2-3 (.400)	2-3 (.400)
SEASON TOTAL	124-50 (.713)	128-46 (.736)	117-57 (.672)	120-54 (.690)	125-49 (.718)	129-45 (.741)	

short in their bid to blemish perfection.

PICK: LAHSER. Detroit Country Day (6-4) at Erie-Mason (11-0) 7 p.m. Friday. These two defenses will have their hands full trying to stop potent offenses. D.C.D.'s duo of Erie Jackson and Hugh Johnson sparked last week's victory, while the Eagles were nearly on pace of their 40-point per game output with the clearing of Highland Park. The final possession could be a crucial one and one the Yellow Jackets will cash in on.

PICK: COUNTRY DAY. Jim Toth is the Rochester-Troy sports editor for the Observer & Eccentric and can be reached at (248) 950-2578 or by e-mail at jtoth@oehomecomm.net.

GRID SCORES

FARMINGTON (10-1)	Farmington 49, Stoney Creek 0.	ALLEN PARK (10-1)	Allen Park 27, Belleville 16.
Farmington 51, Mad. Heights 6.	Farmington 14, Highland Park 0.	D'bn Fordson 29, Allen Park 6.	Allen Park 42, Monroe 7.
Farmington 3, Clawson 0.	N. Farmington 7, Farmington 0.	Allen Park 12, Dearborn 0.	Allen Park 36, Woodhaven 0.
Farmington 13, Oak Park 7.	Farmington 21, Henry Ford 14.	Allen Park 13, Wyandotte 7.	Allen Park 29, Southgate 7.
Farmington 49, Berkley 7.	Farmington 21, Central 0.	Allen Park 31, Taylor Truman 7.	Allen Park 50, Lincoln Park 13.
Farmington 41, Ferndale 13.		Allen Park 49, Garden City 0.	
Farmington 31, Pont. Central 12.	Farmington 293, opponents 66.	Allen Park 14, Ypsilanti 0.	Allen Park 309, opponents 66.

SHAMROCKS

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offense but brought the defensive points per game down to 5.5. Canton had averaged 38.5 points per game heading into the CC contest but limped out with just seven.

"They don't make a lot of mistakes out there," said Kellepoury. "Canton was a good team also, and they scored just seven points. That defense was just outstanding, shutting down a potent offense like that."

For CC coach Tom Mach, there's a simple reason behind it.

"Our philosophy is to emphasize defense first," said Mach. "You win championships with defense and games with offense. We try to emphasize scoring or to set up the score from our defense. It's a game of field position, and ideally we try to set up on the other side of the 50."

Novi, on the other hand, has done just enough to win. The Wildcats average just 21 points per game but give up nearly two touchdowns a contest - although they held Lake Orion scoreless in the second half of last week's regional final.

"Our defense has been pro-

ductive and saved us," said Kellepoury. "Our offense has put up just enough points to get wins. It's been a collective effort between the offense, defense and special teams."

The Wildcats offer a different challenge on offense for CC. Novi runs an option offense with the key coming from senior quarterback Chase Chandler, who has run for nearly 1,200 yards. When the Wildcats want to pass, they bring in junior Mike Hart, who's completed just 35 percent of his passes "but can get us first downs," said Kellepoury.

"They present different problems for us," said Mach. "They have a lot of emphasis on the quarterback option and have a multiple look, offensively. We have to cover the option and stop Chandler and make them do things that they might not want to do."

While the bread and butter of Catholic Central's offense has been - and always will be - the run, Shamrocks' quarterback Dave Thomas has quietly gone about doing a fine job in the air. Thomas has thrown for just 732 yards, eight touchdowns and seven interceptions in his 11 games, but has completed 60 percent of his passes. And sev-

eral of those have come opportune times, keeping drives alive - such as four completions in CC's first two scoring drives against Canton.

"He's been pretty effective this year," said Mach. "He reads well, throws to the right person, runs well, knows when to do things and knows when not to do them. He's executed well in big games. He's become a pretty good all-around quarterback."

But to advance to next week's Division I semifinal against either Macomb Dakota or Dearborn Fordson, the offensive line is going to have to continue to open holes for the trio of Derek Brooks, Eric Vojtkosky and Randall Means as well as keeping the pressure off Thomas.

"Last week, we got hurt by Lake Orion's power running in the first half," said Kellepoury. "We made adjustments in the second half, and it paid off. CC has different type of runners; they aren't as much of a power team. Defensively, we've got to work on tackling and making sure we're in a position to make tackles. We can't let them break tackles and need to hold their runs down."

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