

Familiar foes ready to go in football playoffs

Tom Markowski/ The Detroit News

This time we'll have to wait a week before a possible Farmington Hills Harrison vs. Birmingham Brother Rice showdown in the playoffs.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association announced the official pairings for the eight-division, 256-team state playoffs on Sunday and Harrison (9-0), ranked No. 1 all season, will host Birmingham Seaholm (6-3) in a Division 2 predistrict likely on 7 p.m. Friday. The official time and dates for all 128 first round [games](#) will be announced today. Brother Rice (5-4), which made the playoffs for the 13th consecutive season, was one of 20 teams that made the playoffs as an additional qualifier. Brother Rice opens at North Farmington (7-2).

Last season Harrison defeated Brother Rice in the first round, 37-27. Brother Rice led 27-22 and had possession until a fumble late in the game turned it around.

"That's a good thing," Harrison coach John Herrington said about not having to play Brother Rice this week. "We didn't figure on Seaholm. We didn't have them in the picture. Oh well. Now we'll go to work preparing for them."

Harrison won its 13th state title last season; Brother Rice has won six titles.

Plymouth vs. Canton rematch comes early

Last season Plymouth upset Canton 17-7 in a Division 1 district final. This season these rivals will play on Friday in a predistrict.

On Oct. 7 Plymouth (8-1) came from nine points down in the final minute to pull out a 31-30 victory.

"Hey, it's the playoffs," Plymouth coach **Mike Sawchuck** said. "You have to play who you have to play. I thought we might play Livonia Churchill. I thought (Ann Arbor Pioneer) would be in our district, too. We knew they would put Canton in the same district."

The other bracket has Northville (8-1) playing at Detroit Catholic Central (8-1). The winners will play for the district title the following week.

This might be the most competitive district in this division. C.C. is ranked No. 7, Plymouth is No. 10, Northville is No. 11 and Canton (7-2) is No. 12.

Last season Canton defeated Plymouth 36-0 then lost in the playoffs. Plymouth continued on to the final, where it lost to Lake Orion, 21-13, at Ford Field.

"It's amazing how things change," Canton coach **Tim Baechler** said. "In the past when Pioneer or Monroe made the playoffs they would be in our district."

Baechler said the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association is considering a proposal that would seed each team according to playoff points. The current system seeds teams in each district, not statewide or even in a region, as many coaches would prefer.

Catching a break

Churchill (6-3) made the playoffs on the final weekend as it defeated Livonia Stevenson 56-13. Not only does Churchill bypass Plymouth and Canton — and it would have been the road team against either one — but Churchill was placed in a different region and it will host Detroit Cass Tech (6-3).

Churchill lost to Plymouth, 41-0, during the season and upset Canton 27-26.

Warren DeLaSalle (7-2), which upset Plymouth, 28-25, last Friday, is the 32nd and last team (by enrollment) in Division 1 and it will host Roseville (6-3). DeLaSalle is not only the top seed in its district, it's the top seed in its region. That means DeLaSalle would host the first three rounds as long as it remains in the playoffs.

Allen Park (7-2), which competes in Division 2, is also fortunate. It is the top seed in District 2 Region 4. In District 1 Region 4, Wyandotte Roosevelt (8-1) and Southgate Anderson (7-2) both have higher playoff-point averages. Allen Park will host Garden City (6-3). Should it win it would host the winner between Detroit King (6-3) and Grosse Pointe South (6-3).

Three-year plan

Riverview had six consecutive losing seasons before this year but finished 8-1 and a game behind Carleton Airport (8-1) for first place in the Huron League.

Coach **Jeff Stergalas** is in his third season at Riverview and his team will host Chelsea (7-2) in the first round of the Division 3 playoffs.

"I'm happy getting a home game," he said. "Now it's survival of the fittest. I thought we might get Chelsea. We were looking at them and Detroit Pershing."

The MHSAA sent Pershing (7-2) north to play at Orchard Lake St. Mary's (7-2) in a different region.

Should Riverview get past Chelsea it could play Airport, a team that defeated Riverview 35-7 on Sept. 2. Airport will host Adrian (5-4) this week.

"They obviously know us and we know them," Stergalas said. "If we're lucky to get past our first-round game it would be a good matchup."

Not so lucky

Croswell-Lexington (8-1) lost its regular-season finale last Friday to Mason (8-1), 32-28, and is the fourth seed in the Region 4 District 2 in the Division 4 playoffs. Cros-Lex will play at Marine City (9-0) and the other bracket features Pontiac Notre Dame Prep (9-0) hosting Marysville (8-1).

Cros-Lex has more playoff points than three of the four teams in the other district in Region 4.

First-timers

In Division 8 Region 4 District 2, three of the four teams are in the playoffs for the first time.

Detroit Westside Christian (5-4), the smallest of the 607 schools that compete in football, made the playoffs for the first time and will play at Petersburg Summerfield (6-3), which is in for the fourth time.

Melvindale Academy for Business and Technology (5-4) will play at Lutheran Westland (6-3) in the other District 2 predistrict. It's the third year for the program at ABT.

Lutheran Westland played its first full varsity schedule in 1987.

2010 champions

Division 1: Lake Orion

Division 2: Farmington Hills Harrison

Division 3: East Grand Rapids

Division 4: Grand Rapids Catholic Central

Division 5: Grand Rapids West Catholic

Division 6: Ithaca

Division 7: Hudson

Division 8: Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart

Key dates

Oct. 28-29: Predistricts

Nov. 4-5: District finals

Nov. 11-12: Regional finals

Nov. 19: State semifinals

Nov. 25-26: State finals at Ford Field

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