

Herrington

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But when Berkley couldn't take advantage of the unhinged door, Harrison blew the roof off.

Roderick Heard scored on a 14-yard run to break the scoreless tie, and in the second, Hendricks officially shifted the Hawks into overdrive, scoring on a 73-yard run for a 15-0 lead.

Heard scored on a 17-yard run and then picked off a Berkley pass and returned it 27 yards for a 29-0 advantage.

A short field goal with just seconds remaining served as the exclamation point and a 32-0 lead at the break.

Ben Williams added the only score of the third for Harrison, a 42-yard run that put the running clock in motion.

Climb to the top

The outcome Friday night was as predictable as the attention it garnered, with numerous media outlets on sight, alumni from years past on hand, and an overflow crowd that was forced to park on hills, sidewalks and medians.

But Herrington becoming the winningest coach ever, well, that would have been tough to foresee.

He was a Waterford Township High graduate who wasn't sure where his coaching career was headed when it began many decades ago.

He started at North Farmington, cutting his teeth at the junior varsity level for seven years before becoming the first, and only, football coach at Harrison in 1970.

That team went 3-4-1. In fact, two of Herrington's first three seasons with the Hawks ended with losing records, and he admitted he wasn't sure coaching was really for him.

But in 1974, the tide started to shift. Harrison went 8-1 that fall, 7-2 the next and 10-1 in 1976, reaching the Class A final before falling to Midland Dow 36-27.

Herrington's impact was in full force: The Hawks were officially a football power in the state of Michigan.

The rest, quite literally, is history.

Herrington's résumé is a littered with wins, championships and accolades. Now 431-106-1 overall, he's won 91 playoff games, a record 13 state championships, six Western Six Conference championships, 15 Western Lakes Activities Association titles and seven Oakland Activities Association division championships, including in 2017, as his guys earned a share of the White Division crown with the win.

"It was the perfect storm after we beat Oak Park," Herrington said. "If we hadn't beat them, we'd be playing to tie (the record) and still wouldn't have made the playoffs."

For good measure, he's been a state runner-up four different times. He was inducted into the Michigan

High School Football Coaches Association in 1986, long before any of his current players were even born.

Alone on top

When Fracassa retired from Rice a few years ago, he did so as a three-time reigning champ and alone atop the MHSAA wins total for any coach ever.

But records are made to be broken, and Fracassa knew his No. 1 seed wouldn't be long-lived.

"Just like I did, John's had some great players, and when you have that, you're going to win a lot of games," Fracassa said with a laugh earlier this week. "But I'm so happy for him. I'm glad it's him (to top me). He deserves it. I'll be second, and that's fine with me."

It should be noted, however, that if weren't for Fracassa, Herrington would have had this party a long time ago.

The Hawks coach was 2-6 all-time against Fracassa and his Warriors.

"We had some good battles and some good rivalries," Fracassa said. "But after every game, it was a smile and a handshake. That's a great guy, a hardworking coach. He has kids that played for him and love him. That's not something you can buy."

"If he hadn't beaten me so bad, we could have done this party last year," Herrington joked.

There's more to the man than wins, though, even if that's what was highlighted Friday night.

"He's more than a coach," Hendricks said. "He cares about us on and off the field. I'll always remember the day we did something special for him, because he's always done something special for us."

Herrington is an educator, a mentor, a players coach, as so many people described him.

Always one to deflect the spotlight, he couldn't help but embrace it this time.

He was presented with the game ball, with the No. 431 already written on it.

Balloons soared, the band played, and family, friends and past players stormed the field for hugs and pictures and a simple pat on the back.

He entered the night as one of the best.

He exited as the greatest ever. Now, as he has 431 times before, he'll prepare for one more.

Spotlight on business ...



Superior Client Service at the heart of Estate Planning Law Firm

The Rutkowski Law Firm serves metro Detroit by specializing in Estate Planning, Probate, and Elder Law. Typical services include Trust or Will planning, Power of Attorney documents, Medicaid and Veteran's benefits, and Probate Administration in the event no estate plans are in place.

According to the Rutkowski Law Firm's founder and lead Attorney, Michael L. Rutkowski, clients at the firm are treated like family and receive a customized and attentive approach to their legal needs.

Rutkowski says his business is growing at a time when thousands of Baby Boomers are hitting the age of 65.

Rutkowski explains that he started the firm as a solo practitioner in Rochester almost five years ago, and the firm has since expanded by hiring nine employees and adding an additional location in Bloomfield Hills.

Rutkowski says he originally started his legal career doing insurance defense work, but truly fell in love with estate planning when he worked on a Will for the first time.

"I started working with clientele figuring out the clients' needs and goals and being able to provide a service or products that helped them fulfill those goals," he said. Rutkowski says he attributes his continued success to his dedicated approach to superior client service.

"Our success and growth is the result of a customer-service oriented law firm, which sets us apart from a client's typical experience with Attorneys who do not return phone calls promptly or at all," he said. "We have a policy of returning all phone calls and emails within less than a 24-hour period."

Rutkowski Law Firm's commitment to providing superior client service separates him from the stereotypical Attorney. "I hear it all the time - that clients' say, 'You're not what I expected. You are easy to talk to, and you truly understand our needs.'"

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