

Warriors nip Ford on last-second free throw

By JOHN BOZZO

Ron Washington played a supporting role throughout. Brother Rice's slim 56-55 regional championship victory over Utica Ford, Friday at Birmingham Seaholm.

He applied defensive pressure to whoever brought the basketball up court for Utica Ford and helped run Rice's offense. He scored only one point and grabbed only one rebound. But those turned out to be the most important statistics of the night.

With two seconds left to play in a game tied 55-55, Washington stepped to the free-throw line to face a one-on-one situation. He had not taken a shot all evening.

While over 3,000 fans in the packed gymnasium screamed, Washington sank the first shot, recovered the rebound from the missed second attempt and held on to the ball until time ran out, to preserve the Rice victory.

It was a victory which allows Rice a berth in the quarter-final game of the Michigan High School Athletic Association Class A basketball tournament.

ment. That game will be played 7:30 p.m. at Ferndale High School against Pontiac Central.

A JUNIOR, Washington has been a starter only in Rice's four tournament games. He broke into the lineup through his fine play in practice after the regular season had ended.

"I didn't know if he was going to make it or not," Rice coach Bill Norton said. "It took a lot of concentration and courage."

Washington's heroics were set up when he was fouled by Utica Ford's Darryl Moon. Ford had regained possession of the ball with the score tied and 1:05 left to play. They stalled

until 11 seconds were left and called time out.

As soon as they lined up to inbound the ball, Rice called time out to plan a defense. The Warriors knew that Ford would try to get the ball to Moon, who led all scorers with 24 points.

Despite Warrior efforts, Moon received the ball and had a short shot near the basket. He missed the shot and fouled Washington while trying to get the rebound.

"We were awfully lucky to win," Norton said. "We're don't fear PC (quarterfinal foe Pontiac Central). We have to play much better than tonight and we have to shoot better than we

did tonight to win."

Utica Ford led throughout the first three quarters of play against Rice, building up leads of seven and eight points during the middle of each quarter.

WARRIOR RALLIES' whittled down the leads to five after the first quarter and two following the second quarter. Rice took the lead for the first time in the game when Mark Hayden sank two free throws after time elapsed in the third quarter. Those two points gave Rice a 47-45 edge going into the final period.

Rice clung onto the lead and was able to build it up to four points.

Then, with 2:45 left to play, Kevin Smith fouled out. He had been in foul trouble the whole game, having drawn three in the first four minutes of the game.

Utica Ford quickly tied the game on the strength of Scot Glidden's four points, setting the stage for the last-second heroics. Glidden finished the contest with 19 points.

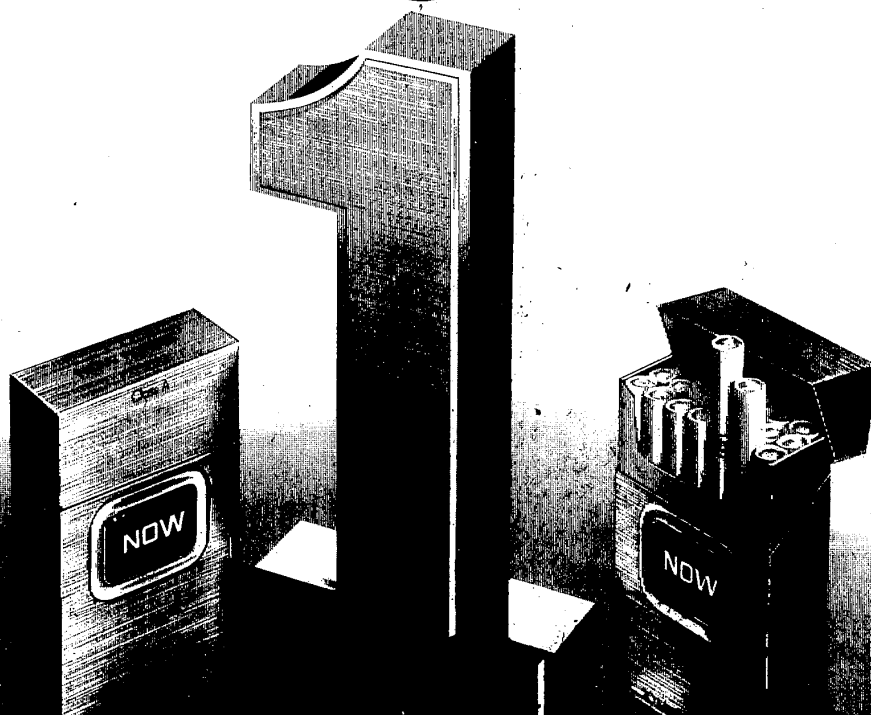
Utica's shooting percentages had as many ups and downs as a roller coaster. They 50 per cent from the field in both the first and third quarters and 30 and 33 per cent respectively in the second and fourth periods. They finished the night 17 of 55 for 30 per cent. They were fantastic from the free-

throw line in the first half, making 12 of 13 attempts. They finished with 19 of 29 free throws.

Rice was 44 per cent from the field, making 22 of 49 shots and 54 per cent from the free-throw line, making 12 of 22. The Warriors had their ups and downs from the field, shooting 45, 53, 54 and 30 per cent in the first through fourth quarters respectively.

RICE OUTREBOUNDED Ford by a 37-27 margin. Tim Andree had 12 rebounds and Tim Scheerer and Smith each had five. But, Rice had 14 turn-overs as compared to only seven for Ford.

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