

# Football showdown set for Saturday

## At last! N. Farmington to face No. 1 Rice

By C.J. RISAK

North Farmington and Brother Rice, rated number one and two in most state football polls, now must face each other.

The regular season is behind them and the first playoff game is out of the way. The two squads will clash at Birmingham Groves this Saturday at 1:30 p.m. The winner will earn the right to play in the state Class A finals Saturday, Nov. 25, in the Pontiac Silverdome.

For a while, it looked like this game might not take place. As the regular season wound down, both Rice and North found themselves hoping for a playoff berth.

The computerized system used to pick the teams for the playoffs awards points to teams not only if they win, but if they play teams with good records. North's schedule included only one tough team (Westland John Glenn) and Rice played a number of Class B teams (which are not graded as highly as Class A teams) in their Catholic League.

But both survived to make the playoffs, thanks to a couple of key upsets in the final week that knocked other challengers out of the picture.

Rice has a 24-game win streak going, including a victory earlier this year against the top team in the football-crazy State of Ohio—Barberton. North's wins include a victory over league rival John Glenn (Glenn's only loss of the year) and the always-tough Farmington Harrison.

But neither was more impressive than in its first-round playoff victory.

**RICE FACED** the team with the toughest defense in the county, and with the highest computer rating in the state—Birmingham Groves. It was the Warriors' toughest challenge, but they manhandled Groves, 21-7.

Although the score was close through most of the game, it was Rice that moved the ball effectively, as they outgained Groves in total yardage, 273 to 128.

North Farmington was just as tough on their first round opponent, Livonia Churchill. After a shaky start, the Raiders went to work on the ground and put together two long drives, one

at the beginning of the second quarter, another at the start of the third. Combining those with a stingy defense gave North a 14-3 win.

North's defense, which has allowed only 38 points to be scored against it all year, will face its greatest test against Rice. The Warriors have a balanced attack, with a number of ways to score.

The most widely publicized of these is the passing of Jon English-to-Marty Martinez. The combination lived up to

### Farmington Observer

# SPORTS

Thursday, November 15, 1978

(F)1C

its reputation against Groves, as Martinez caught nine passes for 116 yards and a touchdown.

"They have a multiple-type offensive team," North coach Ron Holland said. "He (Rice coach Al Fracassa)

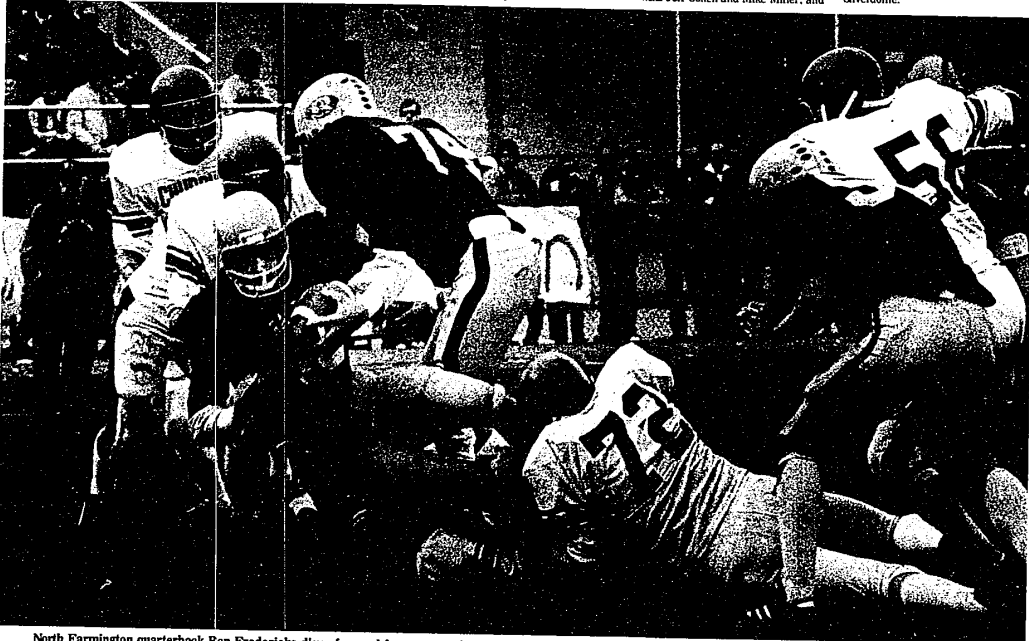
has been around awhile, he has a great knowledge of the game. He uses a lot of different formations, tries to confuse you with them.

"Defensively, we have to stop their power game and their passing game. But I don't think we'll be doing anything different. We'll stick with the things that have been going well for us."

Holland will have to deal with injuries. Against Churchill, three key players sustained injuries—running backs Jeff Cohen and Mike Miller, and

kicker Tim Quinn. Cohen gained 85 yards rushing in three quarters, and Miller, who didn't make an appearance until the second half, still gained 71 yards. Both seemed to have only minor hurts. But Quinn's ankle injury looked to be more serious.

Whatever the strategies or problems, it comes down to Rice's passing and power football against North's speed and running game. The winner of this game will be heavily favored to win the Class A title at the Silverdome.



North Farmington quarterback Ron Fredericks dives forward for more yardage against Livonia Churchill in first round state playoff action. North plays top-rated Brother Rice Saturday at Birmingham Groves. (Photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Rice ready for Raiders

By JOHN BOZZO

Over 8,000 fans. An intra-city opponent. A state championship game.

Birmingham Brother Rice won a tremendous 21-7 victory over Birmingham Groves last Saturday in the quarterfinals of the state playoffs.

It was a victory to be savored and enjoyed. But after the shouting was over Rice players quickly forgot about their conquest.

Looming ahead was still another foe—North Farmington. The Raiders, who like Rice are 10-0, invade Groves Field 1:30 p.m., Saturday for the semi-finals of state tournament action.

"It's surprising how the players soon forget and prepare for the next encounter," said Rice coach Al Fracassa. "The game is over and we've got another one. They've forgotten about that Groves game already."

"We're playing teams that want to beat us really bad," Fracassa said. "Every game we have played has been like a championship ball game from the beginning of the season up to now. We know how badly teams want to beat us."

"THE KIDS HAVE BEEN under pressure two years with many things, like trying to keep the number one rating going," Fracassa said. "It's amazing how these kids are responding to pressure. I have to give them a lot of credit. They are handling it well."

Coaches also are involved in the extensive pre-game preparations. One of the main activities is watching films of the opposition.

"I watch films all the time," Fracassa said. "I look for weaknesses. Sometimes I don't find a weakness until I see a game three or four times. I keep watching and sometimes get an idea, a little idea, that could make the difference between winning and losing."

Brother Rice has benefitted from that film watching to the tune of 24 consecutive wins over three years. Rice is the defending Class A state champion.

Shining stars throughout those victories have been quarterback Jon English and wide receiver Marty Martinez.

English has completed 82 of 132 passes for 1,172 yards and 13 touchdowns. An average of 63 per cent of his passes are caught by Rice receivers.

Exactly 50 per cent of those passes, 41, have been caught by Martinez. Those 41 receptions have accounted for 685 yards and eight touchdowns. Martinez averages a 16-yard gain every time he catches the football.

Rice's opponent this Saturday, North Farmington, is a strong, well-balanced football team.

"I respect their defense and team quickness an awful lot," Fracassa said. "North Farmington's team speed is unbelievable. They have a couple guys who run 4.5 seconds in the 40-yard dash."

"THEY HAVE A VARIED offensive attack," Fracassa said. "They can keep you guessing about what they're going to do. They're nobody to play around with—that team is with a 10-0 record."

"We'll have to be at our best to beat them," Fracassa said. "They'll have to be at their best to beat us."

Fracassa discounted any advantage that playing at Rice's home field may offer the Warriors.

"In a game like this it doesn't make any difference where a team plays," Fracassa said. "It's the same grass. It's the same football field dimensions. After the whistle blows starting the game the players are not thinking we got the advantage or they got the advantage."

Fracassa mentioned his team's victory over a squad from Barberton, Ohio, earlier in the season as an example. Rice won the game in Ohio.

## Mercy rally leads to win

By C.J. RISAK

Mercy's girls basketball team moved one step closer to winning another Catholic League title last Saturday, as they staged a furious second half rally to edge Livonia Ladywood, 59-57.

Caroline Chapman's two free throws with 30 seconds remaining clinched the victory for Mercy, now sporting a 13-3 overall record. Ladywood finished the league season with a 12-4 mark.

Mercy now moves into the Catholic league semifinals against defending Class B champ Bishop Gallagher. The game will be played at Centerline St. Clement Thursday at 8 p.m. The winner will move into the finals, to be played at U of D's Callahan Hall on Sunday.

In last Saturday's game, Mercy fell behind early, trailing by as many as 14 points in the first half. They narrowed the gap to 10 at halftime, and

in the second half came out in a press and started surging back.

The comeback effort was hampered when two Mercy starters fouled out. Deanne Banfield was the first to go late in the third period. Laura Zwiler followed her to the bench early in the fourth quarter.

But Mercy's bench came through, finally catching Ladywood late in the game and, although never leading by more than three points, managed to hold on for the win.

"Our bench was the difference in the game," Mercy coach Larry Baker said. "Our press worked for us in the second half, but the play we got from the bench was great." Anne Haubold was the leading scorer for Mercy, as she hit 14 points in a substituting role. It was Haubold's second game back after being hit by a car in the Mercy parking lot two weeks ago. Gretchen Larges also had 13 points for Mercy.

## GET YOUR NEW NORDICAS TODAY!

**NORDICA**  
Designed for Comfort, Fit and Performance.

The Breeze

The Tornado II

The Hurricane

The Tempest

### Bavarian Village Ski Shops

VISA • MASTERCARD  
DISCOVER • AMERICAN EXPRESS

• **BLOOMFIELD HILLS:**  
2540 WOODWARD AT SQUARE LAKE  
• **BIRMINGHAM:**  
101 TOWNSEND COR. PIERCE

• **LATHRUP VILLAGE:**  
28545 SOUTHFIELD AT 12 MI  
• **LIVONIA/REDFORD:**  
14211 TELEGRAPH AT SCHOOLCRAFT

• **MT. CLEMENS:**  
1216 S. GRATYD NORTH OF 16 MILE  
• **EAST DETROIT:**  
22801 KELLY RD. BET. 8 & 9 MILE  
• **ANN ARBOR:**  
3308 WASHINGTON, WEST OF U.S. 23

OPEN EVENINGS TIL 9 • SAT. 10-5:30 • CLOSED SUNDAY