



STEVE CHIODO



ED LYNCH



JON ENGLISH



BRIAN SWANSON



MARTY MARTINEZ



TOM SHELLEY



STU HIXON



BILL EBERHART



CHRIS VOGT



BRIAN PLACHTA



BUD PUSCAS



PAT COLLINS



DAN DEACON



TIM QUINN



JEFF COHEN



BILL KENDRO

COACH RON HOLLAND
NORTH FARMINGTON

JACK LAWLESS



TERRY WEATHERS



JOHN JAMES



BILL ALIBER

COACH BILL RANKIN
BIRMINGHAM GROVES

'Big Five' grid powers dominate O&E Area team

By TOM BAER

Five area high schools — North Farmington, Birmingham Brother Rice, Birmingham Groves, Birmingham Seaborn and Auburn Heights Avondale — enjoyed bumper years in football.

And their success shows in the selections for the 1978 Observer & Eccentric All-Area football team.

Area coaches picked 24 first-team players — 11 on offense, 11 on defense, a place kicker and a punter — and 18 of the 24 were from the Big Five: North Farmington, Brother Rice, Groves, Seaborn and Avondale.

Rice, which won the 1977 state Class A crown and looked like a good bet to repeat this season until it was shocked by North Farmington in the playoff semifinals, placed five first-team players.

Groves, which won nine straight games before bowing to Rice in the quarterfinals, had six first-teamers.

North, the Class A runner up after losing to Travers City in the finals, landed four players on the squad.

Seaborn, a state power after years of mediocrity, had two.

Avondale didn't make the Class B playoffs, but finished a fine season with the Oakland A League title and a 7-2 record. The school had one representative on the all-area delegation.

Rice senior Jon English (6-foot-3, 190

pounds) highlighted the offensive back selections. An outstanding passing quarterback, he completed 89 of 148 passes for more than 1,200 yards and 13 touchdowns.

GROVES' BILL

Eberhart (5-8, 170) was another understandable choice. The Falcon senior rushed for 1,090 yards and scored 15 touchdowns. Groves coach Bill Rankin called Eberhart "the best runner I've ever coached."

Jeff Cohen, North Farmington's tailback, had both the speed (4.6 seconds in a 40-yard sprint) and the size (190 pounds) to be a devastating runner. The Raider senior rushed for 730 yards and 17 touchdowns despite being sidelined by injuries early in the season.

Seaborn's Bill Kendro (5-8, 180) earned a spot on the backfield by gaining 992 yards in 124 carries and scoring 14 touchdowns for coach Chuck Skinner's Maples.

Little (5-3, 135) Bruce Bentley may be the smallest player on the team, but he did a big job for Troy Athens as a running back. The Athens' senior gained 1,110 yards and scored 10 TDs.

Two outstanding ends — Rice's Marty Martinez (6-1, 180) and Rochester High's Terry Weathers (6-4, 176) — were picked for the first team. Martinez, English's favorite target, caught 42 passes for 787 yards and eight touchdowns. Weathers, a good blocker from his tight end spot, hauled in 35 passes for 212 yards and three touchdowns.

The four offensive linemen were big (212-pound average) and experienced (all seniors). The line picks: Groves' Stu Hixon (5-4, 240), Detroit Country Day School's Bill Aliber (6-1, 225),

North's Dan Deacon (6-1, 196) and Seaborn's Craig White (6-0, 185). All were two-way players.

RICE NAILED down both kicking spots with punter Ed Lynch and place kicker Brian Swanson, both seniors. Lynch, who received a lot of votes as a lineman, punted for a 43-yard average. Swanson kicked 23 of 28 extra points and made good on four of 11 field goals, including 46-and 41-yard attempts.

The defensive first-team players were just as impressive as their offensive counterparts.

The squad included four rugged senior linebackers: North's Pat Collins, Bloomfield Hills Andover's Bill Hertle, Groves' Bud Puscas and Southfield-Lathrup's Paul Pyles.

The smallest of the lot at 5-10 and 175 pounds, Collins proved his worth to coach Ron Holland's Raiders by logging 33 solo tackles and 37 assists. He also blocked four passes and two punts. The hard-hitting Puscas (6-1, 156) was Groves' starting QB until an ankle injury forced him to concentrate on defense.

Hertle (6-3, 197) got credit for 69 solo tackles and 27 assists and recovered two fumbles for coach Frank Buford's Andover club. Pyles (6-0, 183) really piled up the points at Southfield-Lathrup. Based on the school's point system (two for an initial hit, one for an assist or a fumble recovery), he amassed 324 points.

THE COACHES picked two Groves players, senior Tom Shelly and junior Chris Vogt, for the defensive backfield. North's Tim Quinn and Avondale's John James, both seniors, completed the secondary.

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SPORTS

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BILL HERTLE



PAUL PYLES



CRAIG WHITE



BRUCE BENTLEY

Honored players - See Page 2