

Rice takes top poll spot

By DENNIS O'CONNOR

Birmingham Brother Rice, by virtue of its 45-43 victory over Bloomfield Hills Lahser Tuesday night, has been unanimously selected as the No. 1 basketball team by the Observer & Eccentric area cage poll.

The Warriors, ranked No. 2 by the O&E all season, dethroned Lahser, which had held down the top spot since the beginning of the year.

Rice, after losing its first two games of the season — both on the road to Warren High and River Rouge — has rebounded with 10 straight victories. The Warriors will be hard-pressed to keep that winning streak alive, however, when they travel to Detroit Catholic Central for a Catholic League Central Division showdown with the Shamrocks Friday night. The last time these two state powers met, Rice won on its own court 58-53.

Other Tuesday night results caused a shakeup in the O&E rankings. Orchard Lake St. Mary's won an impor-

ant Catholic League game over Class D state-ranked Wyandotte Mt. Carmel Friday night and rebounded with a 96-63 shellacking of Redford St. Agatha Tuesday night to maintain its No. 3 spot with a perfect 11-0 record. The Eagles are the only undefeated team in the O&E area.

Southfield-Lathrup (9-3) moved up one notch to the No. 4 position and within one point of tying St. Mary's after its narrow 66-65 victory over arch-rival Southfield coach Jim Kourtakos, have not lost since the holiday break. They put their five-game winning streak on the line when they face No. 2 Lahser (9-2) Friday night in a big Metro Suburban Association contest.

The Blue Jays from Southfield (7-4) dropped one notch to No. 5 after their setback to Lathrup. Southfield will have its work cut out to maintain that position when it meets 11-1 Ferndale High Friday night in a Southeastern Michigan Association showdown.

Last week's No. 6 and No. 7 teams, South-

field Christian and Rochester Adams, both failed to win and dropped out of the top seven, paving the way for Bloomfield Hills Andover and Rochester High.

Andover (6-5), despite its 54-40 loss to Ferndale Tuesday night, has played fairly consistent basketball under leading scorer Tim Meyer. The Barons nailed down the No. 6 position in their first week of consideration in the poll.

Rochester (7-5) comes back to the area's elite after a one-week absence. The Falcons defeated a spunky Birmingham Groves team 59-48 Tuesday night to regain consideration by the pollsters.

O&E PREP CAGE RANKINGS

1. Brother Rice (27 points) 10-2
2. B.H. Lahser (21) 9-2
3. O.L. St. Mary's (14) 11-0
4. Southfield-Lathrup (13) 9-3
5. Southfield (9) 7-4
6. B.H. Andover (6) 6-5
7. Rochester (3) 7-5

Falcons edge WL Central volleyballers

Farmington's volleyballers got a little complacent in the second game of their match with Walled Lake Central. But the Falcons had no trouble in the other two games enroute to their sixth win in seven matches, 15-4, 11-15, 15-1, Monday at Farmington.

After easily beating Central in the opening game of the match, Falcon coach Ben Shortt started substituting for his regulars. Although the subs played well, the team suffered a let-down and blew an 11-4 lead. Failure to keep their serves in play hurt the Falcons.

Shortt wasn't worried, however. "I knew we could beat them," he said.

Julie Tadrzynski and Stacy Green led the Farmington spikers with seven and four spikes, respectively. Team captain Erica Stevens recorded nine unreturned serves during the match.

The victory ended the first half of the Inter Lakes League season for the Falcons. The team has a 4-1 record in the conference, one game behind Livonia Stevenson.

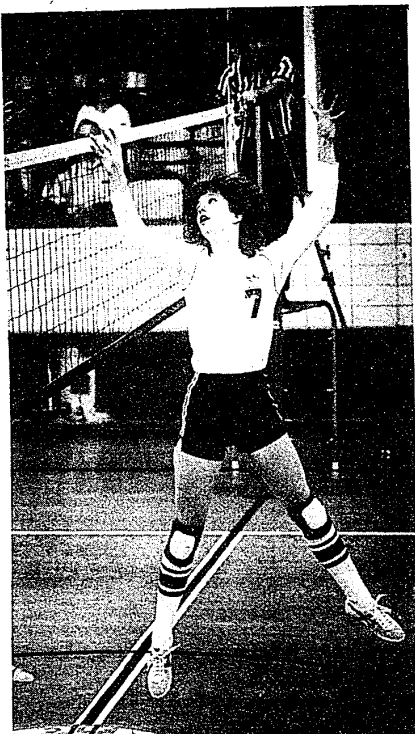
North Farmington is Farmington's next opponent on Friday at 3 p.m. at North. On Saturday, Farmington will compete in the Plymouth Invitational.

Joining the Falcons in their pool at the tournament will be Livonia Bentley, Walled Lake Western, Westland John Glenn and Howell. Bentley should provide Farmington with the biggest challenge — the Bulldogs were runners-up at the Schoolcraft Invitational two weeks ago.

Shortt is confident his team will fare well in the tourney.

"Some weird things can happen in those tournaments. If we're on our game, we'll do pretty well. But if we're off, forget it."

North and Farmington Harrison will also participate in the Plymouth Invitational.



Erica Stevens collected nine unreturned serves against Walled Lake Central. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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