

Rice returns to playoff chase

By DENNIS O'CONNOR

It wasn't a normal Monday at Birmingham Brother Rice High School this week.

There was an air of excitement throughout the school. The Warrior gridders returned to the state playoffs, and one could sense the joy in the student body.

Rice failed to qualify for the playoffs last season after appearances in 1977 and 1978. But the Warriors' 27-3 thrashing of Detroit DeLaSalle in the Catholic League championship game last Saturday vaulted coach Al Fracassa's squad into post-season play.

The 9-0 Warriors, ranked No. 1 by the Observer & Eccentric, are everyone's choice to win the state title, as they did in 1977.

EVERYONE WANTED to share in

the Warriors' excitement.

First there was Wally English, offensive coordinator for the University of Pittsburgh. He visited Fracassa's office Monday with high hopes of recruiting seniors Brad Cochran, a wide receiver, and Joe Bars, a defensive tackle. And English's future interests are in 15-year-old junior quarterback Dave Yarema, who has thrown 16 touchdowns this season.

English, one will recall, is the father of former Rice All-Star Jon English, who quarterbacked the Warriors' 1977 and 1978 playoff teams.

Then there was Brother Dalton, Rice's former principal. He called Fracassa from his new residence in California Monday. Dalton wanted to know every detail of this 9-0 squad — who it defeated and who it will battle in the playoffs.

Dalton asked about North Farmington's playoff chances. He wanted to see a Brother Rice — North Farmington rematch. (The Warriors fell to North Farmington in the 1978 state semifinals.)

FRACASSA told Dalton the Raiders were knocked out of playoff contention by arch-rival Farmington Harrison. But the Rice coach had plenty to say about his squad's first-round opponent — Sterling Heights Stevenson.

"They're big, they're strong and they're aggressive," Fracassa said of Stevenson. "They run right at you, and they throw the ball. They are basically a very sound ball club. I have a lot of respect for Sterling Heights Stevenson."

The two undefeated teams clash at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Birmingham Groves, at 13 Mile and Evergreen. Game time was moved up one-half hour from its original starting time of 1 p.m.

Stevenson, the winner of the newly-formed Macomb Athletic Conference, qualified for the playoffs with a 10-0 victory over Warren Mott last Saturday night. The Sterling Heights team is led by 6-foot-4, 216-pound tight end John Oleksik. He is a big threat in the passing offense, engineered by 6-3, 190-pound quarterback Steve Caulter.

RICE HAS SOME potent offensive threats of its own. Yarema is an excellent passer with three fine wide receivers in Steve Allen, Paul Jokisch and Cochran.

All-State linkers honored

What's left, for Birmingham-Bloomfield high school golfers after winning three of the four state championships a few weeks back?

Well, area golfers didn't do too badly in the just released all-state selections.

The Super Six, a selection of the top six golfers, irrespective of school size, includes Bill Ammerman of Bloomfield Hills Andover and Ray Hajjar of Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook.

Other Super Six members are Dan

Roberts of Ypsilanti, Brian Glasco of Forest Hills Central, Chip Seltzer of Goodrich and Brian Kennedy of Webberville.

The Class A team includes another pair of local golfers — Pat Chisholm of Birmingham Brother Rice and Josh Mondry of Birmingham Groves.

And the Class C-D team includes state champion Steve John and Rich Shafer, both from Detroit Country Day.

Titans invade Rice gym

The University of Detroit men's basketball team brings its Titan Caravan into the Birmingham Brother Rice gymnasium at 7 p.m. tonight.

The Titan Caravan is a series of

inter-squad scrimmages designed to give local fans a look at this year's edition of the U-D basketball team.

The scrimmage is open to the public.

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