

Brother Rice prepares for Notre Dame

By TOM SCHRAM

A divisional title, a chance for a league championship and a possible mythical state championship — Birmingham Brother Rice will put it all on the line when they take on Harper Woods Notre Dame High School Saturday night at the Groves High School field.

In what is certainly the biggest prep football game of the week and possibly the best of the year, the unbeaten and second ranked Warriors will face eighth ranked and equally unbeaten Notre Dame for all the marbles.

The winner will go on to the Catholic League's yearly championship series, a victory in which might very well show Brother Rice right to the top in the football rankings.

"RIGHT NOW, this is the biggest game in the world to us," said Brother Rice head coach Al Fracassa.

"Of course if we win, the next game will be the biggest," he said. Fracassa has been in the head

coaching ranks for some 15 years and the soft spoken Warrior mentor knows what a championship game is all about.

"Over the years I've coached in such games as the Boys Bowl and the Soup Bowl, so I've been there before. While this might not be the biggest game I've ever coached in, this is the best team, all around that I've ever had," he said.

HIS TEAM, or at least a good portion of it, knows what a championship game is all about also. The Warriors made it all the way to the Catholic League finals before they fell to Class B champion Dearborn Divine Child last year.

Despite the fact that winning against Notre Dame will perhaps mean another shot at Divine Child, still rated on top in Class B, Fracassa says his team is not even thinking about looking ahead.

"We don't know who we will play and right now, it doesn't matter," Fracassa said.

Notre Dame is a big, fast team that relies heavily on its running

game. According to Fracassa, the Irish use the pass often as a weapon of deception.

"THEY WILL often run a play that will look initially like a run and turn it into a pass," he said.

Comparative scores in judging the game are of little use. The Irish decimated a good Catholic Central, then ranked second in the state, 34-0. Rice had more than its share of problems with CC in the Boys Bowl before taking a 16-6 victory.

However Notre Dame had its best fight with Detroit De La Salle before emerging 10-7 victors while last Friday, Brother Rice dominated the same team 18-0.

Fracassa said that he plans no major changes for the Saturday clash which will determine the Central Division championship.

"WHEN THINGS are going

well you don't want to change them very much," he said.

The coach said that, however, that after reviewing the Notre Dame films he may add a "new wrinkle or two" to the Warrior offense.

The Brother Rice practice field this week has been the scene of confidence and determination as the team prepares. The players have been loose and high spirited as a good team to be. Fracassa, always the perfectionist has been critical caustic and intolerable of mistakes.

His domineering, highly verbalized projections are the antithesis of his behavior on the field where he is invariably self-contained and under complete control of the situation despite the score.

"WE WORK hard and have fun in practice. You always have fun

when you're winning," he said.

Fracassa said that his team is stressing defense and, somewhat amazingly for a team at this point in its season, fundamentals, in its practices.

"But we have to stress fundamentals now. Too often a team will take fundamental football for granted as the season goes on and you can't win if you do that," he said.

Fracassa added that the defense will have to do the job if Brother Rice is to win.

"WHEN YOU get to the last three or four games of the season the defense has to play its top

Stevenson slides past Milford, 34-0

With a little help from Walled Lake Central, Jack Reardon's Stevenson Spartans became the first area club to move into loop title limelight.

A combination of Stevenson's victory over Milford Lakeview, 34-0, and Walled Lake Central's dumping of Pontiac Northern, has assured the Spartans of at least a tie for the Inter-Lakes crown.

Stevenson is now 4-0 with just Farmington the remaining conquest to an unbeaten loop crown.

The Spartans upped it to 20-0 at the half, Nichols hitting Galindo again, this time for a 36 yard score.

Nichols and Galindo combined again in the third for a 23 yard score. Lokar converted and it was Stevenson 27-0.

Stevenson's final spur came in the closing minutes with backup quarterback Jim Dolmetsch hitting Joe Centers on a 35 yard toss. Lokar's conversion was good and the Spartans were assured of at least a share of the Inter-Lakes crown.

THE SPARTANS host Farmington Saturday, Oct. 26, at 2 p.m. and it will be homecoming time for Reardon and his crew.

Stevenson lost to Farmington last season, 13-9. The '72 season saw the Spartans topple Farmington, 20-13.

And now for the fourth time in seven years, Stevenson is in the Inter-Lakes spotlight.

The Spartans are 5-1 overall, that solo loss at the hands of state ranked Franklin, and just a narrow 14-9 setback.

"This is one of the better teams to come out of Stevenson," commented Reardon whose '68 club was 8-0 and ranked 10th in the state.

"These kids are really hanging on despite the lack of depth."

And a big key in the Milford conquest had to be in the performance of 5-foot-11, 160 pound John Lokar.

THE JUNIOR back along with his brother Paul started the '74 campaign as defensive backs. On offense, the senior Paul at 5-foot-8 and 148 pounds was the No. 1 tail-back and brother John his replacement.

Paul was injured in the Pontiac Northern contest and his brother has stepped right in and done the job. The junior Lokar carried 18 times for 149 yards and scored a touchdown along with kicking four extra points against Milford.

Stevenson collected 11 first downs while its defense, which has given up just 23 points in six games, held Milford to seven.

The rushing contest saw Stevenson a 267 yard to 72 victor. Bruce Nichols' aerial assault hit on five of 11 for 142 yards, three of them five completions going for touchdowns into the arms of Dave Galindo.

STEVENSON scored the first time it got the ball with Nichols hitting Galindo for a 33 yard score. Lokar converted and with 9:06 left in the first quarter, it was 7-0 Stevenson.

Six minutes later, Lokar dashed in from five yards out and made good the conversion for a 14-0 first quarter lead.

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