Fired-up Brother Rice squad eliminates Rochester, 59-48

By MARTY BUDNER

Rice's Bill Norton called it improvisational. Rochester's John Bailey termed it active.

No matter how they described it, both coaches agreed that defense was the spark which ignited Birmingham Brother Rice (21-2) to a 59-48 regional triumph over Rochester (22-2) Tuesday evening at a jam-packed Pontiac Central High School gym.

The Warriors, who never trailed against the Greater Oakland Activities League (GOAL) co-champions, now advance to tomorrow's (Friday) regional finals. They will play the winner of last night's Royal Oak Kimball-Pontiac Central game at 7 p.m.

Rice started in a man-to-man defense, but switched to zone midway through the second quarter. The Warriors stayed with it until Rochester — which failed to get good inside shots throughout the game — rallied late in the third quarter.

When Rochester got back to within two points, Norton ordered his team back to man-to-man. The Falcons were unable to get good shots, and Rice eventually built its lead back to eight points.

"We like to play with a multitude of defenses. Sometimes we improvise and even make 'em up in the huddle," said Norton, whose team beat Bloomfield Hills Lahser in last week's district finals. "We didn't know Rochester that well, so we had to mix things up.

"We wanted to shut off (Tom) Dieters and their (Rochester's) perimiter shooting. They can all shoot the ball, and we felt we had to have pressure on them at all times."

Rice's vast experience was evident against the underdog Falcons.

Brother Rice has a tradition of playing important games. The Warriors had two tense battles against Lahser, a Catholic League championship over Royal Oak Shrine, and a metropolitan encounter with Detroit Public School champion Murray-Wright.

By contrast, Rochester's two biggest games this year were against Clarkston. The Falcons had easy wins over their other opponents.

"I don't know whether it was experience, or what," said Norton. "But, I do know that our team plays with a lot of confidence. It's an identifiable quality that we have. It's something that comes natural with us — like dribbling a ball with your left hand and hitting the open man."

The game was sluggish at the start because of nervousness and cold shooting.

However, with the game tied at 4 Rice jumped ahead to stay. Mike Walsh made a 15-footer, and all-everything center Tim Andree had two baskets — including a stuff shot on a nice feed from junior Brian Brennan — to give Rice a 10-4 lead.

The Falcons moved better offensively in the second quarter by making six of eight shots. But, Rice countered every Rochester basket and outscored the Falcons 15-12 for a 25-16 halftime lead.

Dieters and Jim Jagels keyed Rochester's third-quarter rally, which eventually cut the lead to 34-32 at one point. The Falcons outscored Rice 16-11 in the quarter.

However, Rice kept its poise and never let Rochester gain the advantage.

Walsh made in important basket at the third-quarter buzzer off an offensive rebound. And, early in the fourth quarter, Mike Dietz stole the ball and scored a coup-de-grace lay-up for the Warriors early in the fourth quarter.

Rice went on to tally 10 straight points. It's quickness and semi-press kept Rochester off balance the rest of the way.

"I was proud of the way we came back in the third quarter," said Bailey. "Their press bothered us a little, and it shouldn't have. They just played great defense. "They have good, active hands, they're quick, and they apply good pressure. We just didn't convert our chances when we had them.

The Warriors finished with a 50 per cent average as they made 23 of 46 shots. Rochester made 20 of 46 for a 43 per cent clip.

Jagels, whom Bailey said played a brilliant" game, was the evening's leading scorer with 18 points. Dieters and junior forward Chris Ribant each had 10.

Andree had 10 points, eight rebounds, and played a fine overall game. The 6-foot-10-inch senior was instrumental in breaking up the Falcon press, and assisted on some important Rice baskets.

RICE 59—ROCHESTER 48

RICE (59): Mike Dietz 3, 2-3, 8, Brian Brennan 2, 0-0, 4, Bruno Petrella 0, 4-4, 4, Steve Ameli 2, 1-1, 5; Mike Walsh 5, 0-0, 10, Rob Manilla 1, 3-4, 5, Don Pietrowski 3, 2-2, 8, Steve Kaiser 0, 0-0, 0, Tim Andree 5, 0-0, 10, Paul Jokish 2, 1-2, 5. Totals: 22, 13-16, 59.

ROCHESTER (48): Tom Dieters 5, 0-0, 10, Jim Jagels 6, 6-9, 18, Al Karafa 1, 2-2, 4, Chris Ribant 4, 0-1, 8, Dan Sargent 0, 0-0, 0, Jeff Vincent 4, 0-0, 8, Terry Weathers 0, 0-0, 0. Totals: 20, 8-12, 48.

Team Fouls: RICE 15, ROCHESTER 13

Fouled Out: Karafa (Roc)

RICE	10	15	11	23	—59
ROCHESTER	4	12	16	16	—48

3 OCC cagers are all-stars

Three Oakland Community College basketball players — Walker D. Russell, Kurt James and Johnny Keel — have been named to the Michigan Community College Athletic Association's Eastern Conference all-conference team.

James, a graduate of Pontiac Northern High School, was OCC's leading scorer and rebounder. The 6-foot-7 sophomore averaged 21.3 points and 11.3 rebounds a game. Russell, a 6-4 freshman from Pontiac Central, averaged 20.4 points and 7.1 rebounds a game. Keel, a 6-3 sophomore from Pontiac Catholic, averaged 13.1 points and 9.2 rebounds.

Russell and James were also named to the All-Region 12 team, which includes players from community colleges in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The honor qualifies them for consideration for the National Junior College Athletic Association's All-America team.

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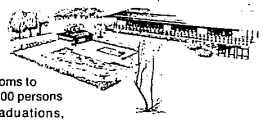

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