

Senior halfback Mike Neff (43), who finished with 109 yards in 20 carries, grinds out yardage against the Fordson defense. The Warriors finished a perfect 12-0 season with the six-point victory over Dearborn Fordson.

Rice goes all the way!

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Who would have thought the "5-2 Rock-In" would be the key to Birmingham Brother Rice's state championship quest?

It was this special defense which led the Warriors to football supremacy Saturday afternoon.

Brother Rice thwarted Dearborn Fordson's potent running attack at every turn en route to a 6-0 victory and the Class A title before 25,521 fans at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Senior tri-captain Tim MacLean, who calls the defensive signals for the Warriors, credited assistant coach and defensive coordinator Ron Kalcynski with the defensive adjustment.

"All year long coach Kalcynski has put in new defenses against a team's specialty," MacLean explained. "Fordson's specialty was the power-I, so the coach took out a defensive back and put another player on the line — Pat Panelli.

"We call him (Panelli) 'Rocky' so it was the '5-2 Rock-In' defense."

ADDING THAT sixth defensive lineman was just the ingredient Rice (12-0) needed to stop a spirited Tractor attack for its second state crown in four years.

Junior quarterback Dave Yarema hit junior 6-foot-7 split end Paul Jokisch with a 17-yard screen pass for the only score of the game.

The touchdown pass came two plays into the fourth quarter. Jokisch dodged two players after the catch and streaked untouched into the end zone for the six points.

Jim Ostrowski's extra-point kick was wide to the right, but it really didn't matter to the Rice defense.

FORDSON (11-1) NEVER came close to scoring. The Tractors' deepest penetration in the first half came on their second possession. Fordson drove to the Warrior 35-yard line, but Rice nose-

guard Fred Konkel jumped on a fumbled snap to end that threat.

Fordson reached midfield only once in the second half.

Offensively, Rice didn't look like a team which scored 349 points in its first 11 games.

But when it counted, the Warriors' executed its short passing game to perfection.

"They (Fordson) were watching for the long pass, so our short passing game worked well for us," said Rice head coach Al Fracassa. "Our kids made some good catches down there."

The only scoring drive went for 60 yards in eight plays. Besides the touchdown toss to Jokisch, Yarema hit the tri-captain with three passes of seven, six and four yards.

BROTHER RICE dominated the action in both halves. The team had two excellent scoring opportunities in the second quarter but failed to score.

Early in the period, Rice drove the ball from its own 35-yard line to the Fordson eight-yard line before a fourth down, fake field-goal attempt failed to produce a first down inside the Tractor five-yard line.

With only 47 seconds left until halftime, Yarema lateraled on one hop to Jokisch on the right side-lines. Jokisch, in turn, threw a 42-yard strike to Allen, who was all alone in the Fordson end zone for an apparent Warrior touchdown.

But the tricky play was called back and ruled an incomplete pass by the officials — an obvious mistake.

"That play could have helped us a lot at the time," said Fracassa, who wasn't pleased with the call. "We call it the 'bounce pass' and it worked."

"They (the officials) just said I'm sorry. We knew they blew the call. I just tried to keep my composure — the Italian in me didn't come out."

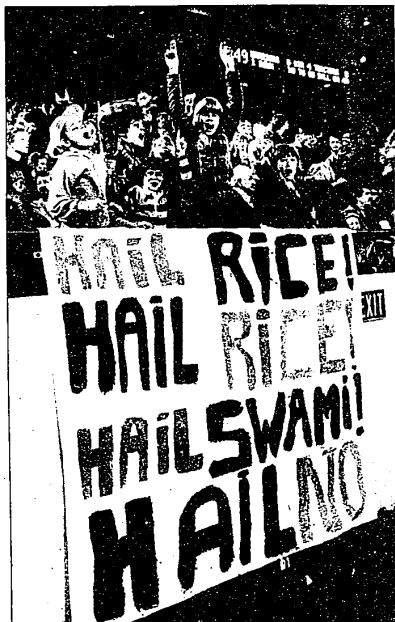
"But I don't blame the officials," Fracassa said, after admitting he didn't inform them of the play before the game. "Next time I'll tell the officials — I'll diagram it for them."



A dejected head coach Al Fracassa gets his thoughts together at halftime — only minutes after an apparent touchdown was disallowed by the officials. Rice went on to win the game, 6-0, to make Fracassa smile.

MIKE NEFF, the Warriors' leading rusher, gained 109 yards in 20 carries for the winners. Yarema finished nine-of-18 for 70 yards, one touchdown and no interceptions. In his last four games, Yarema, a 6-3, 185-pounder, threw 10 touchdown passes. He established a new Rice record with 23 touchdown passes this season. Jokisch caught 11 of them.

Fordson's one-two rushing attack of Mike McGowan and Tom Matellie was ineffective. McGowan finished with 45 yards in 10 carries, while Matellie, playing both quarterback and halfback, rushed seven times for minus one yard.



The Warrior fans came out in full force, signs and all, to cheer Brother Rice to the Class A football crown.



Linebacker John Maher receives congratulations from teammate Bob Sweeney (79) after intercepting a Fordson pass late in the game.



A smiling, but relieved, Warrior coach Al Fracassa gets a hug from a teary-eyed player after Rice wins its second state title in four years.