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12/02/02 Solicited testimonial containing voluntary statements edited for clarity.

Rice escapes with victory over Oxford

BY DANIEL STICKRAAT
STAFF WRITER

Like a heavyweight bout, or an old fashioned western gun-slinging showdown, Birmingham Brother Rice and Oxford went the distance Friday night until only one was standing.

Thanks to two big plays by senior running back Anthony Jackson, the visiting Warriors, ranked No. 3 in Division 2, outlasted No. 6-ranked Oxford in a non-league battle 35-28. It was the first-ever meeting between these two perennial powers.

"I didn't have the greatest game (rushing), but our team still came and played great at the end," said Jackson.

Jackson, who had 90 yards on 12 carries, picked off a pass in the end zone with three seconds left in the game. Earlier in the fourth quarter, Jackson rumbled for 47 yards on a fake punt down to Oxford 10-yard

line to set up the game-tying score. Jackson's 1-yard plunge knotted matters with 7:47 to play, while junior quarterback Doug Pickens' 10-yard TD toss to senior Al Gloutos with 6:27 remaining gave the Warriors (2-0) their final margin of victory. That quick drive was set up by an interception by junior Jeff Snow at the Oxford 35, which he returned to the 10.

"Those were the two key plays of the game," Rice coach Al Fracassa said. "The fake punt and the interception return that set up the (game-winning) touchdown."

"But Oxford's quarterback is really good, he's a competitor and a winner (Kyle) Rowley gave us a battle."

It was Rowley, who finished 10-for-17 passing for 97 yards and two interceptions and had 77 yards rushing on 18 carries, that helped Oxford control the clock for the later part of the game. The Wildcats (1-1)

picked up 216 yards rushing and 97 in the air, and totaled 25 first downs compared to 14 for Rice. But the two late mistakes were costly.

Rice led 14-7 after the first quarter, but Oxford led 21-14 at the break and held a 28-21 lead entering the fourth.

Rowley scored on runs of 1 and 16 yards for Oxford, while senior Ryan Marsh (18 carries, 100 yards) scored on a 3-yard run, and senior Tony Lysicist caught an 8-yard TD pass from Rowley.

Rice's first three scores included a 2-yard scamper by Jackson, a picture-perfect 42-yard TD bomb from Pickens to senior Jeff Stachowiak, and another 17-yard TD pass into the hands of Jackson with 8:35 left in the third which tied the score at 21-all. Pickens finished 12-for-19 for 153 yards and three TDs, while senior Brian Batzoni was a perfect 5-for-6 on PATs.

Country Day clips Eaglets, 35-28

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The Beverly Hills-Detroit Country Day football team had to wait a week longer than most other prep grid squads to begin the 2002 season.

It turns out the wait was worth it for the Yellow Jackets, who edged Orchard Lake St. Mary's 35-28 in a see-saw contest Saturday afternoon.

With the victory, the Yellow Jackets claimed the coveted Gridiron Award - the trophy given to the winner in the annual DCD-St. Mary's tilt - for the first time since 1995.

"I give my kids a lot of credit for gutting this thing out," said DCD head coach Dan MacLean, whose team took a late lead and then had to hold on as the Eaglets made an unseasonable last-ditch attempt to tie the game. "Full marks to Orchard Lake though, they're a great football team. They find a way."

MacLean said the season-opening victory for DCD - an independent team - was "a

great one, especially in light of the fact, ... it's tough not to have a game. The guys were ready to play last week."

Eaglets head coach George Porritt credited DCD for making three clutch receptions during what was "the signature drive of the game."

With about two minutes left in the game, Yellow Jackets quarterback Earnest Jackson was faced with a third-and-10 situation at the DCD 29. He connected with senior wide receiver Kim Thompson to move the sticks.

The Jackson-to-Thompson Express continued in full force on the next two plays. The first was a short gain to the Yellow Jackets 44-yard-line. But then Thompson (9-168) corralled a long toss down the right sideline for a 41-yard pickup to the St. Mary's 15.

Jackson, who threw for 288 yards and four touchdowns, then drilled the ball over the middle into the hands of junior Adrian Martin (three TDs). He scored the winning 15-yard touchdown with 1:31 to play.

After the Eaglets could not move the ball during the next series, the Yellow Jackets received a punt with around one minute left.

Jackson downed the ball four consecutive plays, but St. Mary's called successive time-outs and regained possession at their own 40 with 40 seconds to play.

St. Mary's quarterback Troy White completed two passes to Matt Moyski (9-165) and one to Kenny Porritt to move his team to the DCD 22 with 10 seconds remaining. But White failed to get a pass off on fourth down as the clock expired.

The Eaglets never would have had the chance, MacLean explained, had he not misread the number of time-outs remaining for St. Mary's.

"Well, we kind of got a wrong read on the (number of) time-outs from our sideline official and we thought they were done," MacLean said. "But they had one more. We had to hang on there at the end."

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