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Late Heroics Propel Raiders Past Stockdale

The Rice Raiders orchestrated yet another dramatic win on Friday night in Victoria to advance to the state quarterfinals for the second time in school history. The Raiders beat the Stockdale Brahmas 29-28 in a game that came down to the very end.

Stockdale drove the length of the field with time running down and scored a touchdown with just 22 seconds on the clock. With the score 29-28, the Brahmas decided to go for a two-point conversion and the win, rather than kicking the extra point for a tie and likely overtime.

After having run the ball, almost at will, against the Raiders all night, Stockdale ran a quick option play to the right and the running back raced for the right corner of the end zone.

Quarterback Taylor Cook, who played at safety on defense throughout the game, was also sprinting for the corner. It was one on one and the two players dove simultaneously for the goal line.

It was probably not the type of play a quarterback dreams of to win a game at the end, but the formidable Cook played the role perfectly.

When the players collided, it was like the ball carrier had hit a brick wall that had been erected just in front of the goal line. He fell to the ground after a slight spin and the extra point was no good.

The Raiders held a one point lead and needed only to secure the kickoff to seal the victory. Despite having been successful on an onside kick earlier in the contest, this attempt went directly to Marquis Toliver and the Raiders had only to take a knee.

"Well I hope we make one tackle tonight," said Dumont jokingly about what was on his mind during the play.

"We had one of our big time players make a big time play," he said.

"He is such a competitor and his desire to win is the reason he is where he is today. It goes through the whole group. Our desire to win and achieve is so great that they

are willing to make the sacrifice to win," Dumont said of Cook and the team.

"It puts things into perspective on how important it is to be prepared and to play every game and down like it is the last one you might play for the rest of your life," Dumont said about the close games the team has played.

Cook was 7 of 11 passing for 126 yards and three scores. He also ran in a touchdown.

Ziggy Foster finished the game with 148 yards. Sylvester Middleton, Duryel Stevenson and Marquis Toliver each caught a touchdown pass in the game.

Stockdale got the ball to open the game and put together a short drive, but turned the ball over on downs after a pass on fourth and one fell short.

The Raiders were forced three and out on their first possession of the game.

Cook's punt pinned Stockdale at the one-yard line, and after an

eight-play drive that went forward then backward then forward again, they were forced to punt from the 22.

Rice got the ball in excellent field position at the 46.

Cook threw to Toliver for 12 yards to the Brahma 42.

Two plays later he found Stevenson for a 23-yard gain down to the 21.

Foster carried twice for two then seven yards to the 12.

Cook pushed for the first down on a sneak and gained three for the first down at the 9.

After a short Foster carry and an incomplete pass, Cook found Toliver open in the end zone for the first score of the game.

Samaniego made he extra point for a 7-0 Raider lead with 9:22 left in the half.

Stockdale answered back with an 11-play touchdown drive.

They mostly ran the ball, but had two key completions of 23 and 18 yards for first downs, both

coming on second and long.

A one-yard keeper by the quarterback capped the drive at the 3:46 mark in the half. The extra point tied the game at seven each.

Rice went three and out on the next possession and Stockdale tried to put together a drive with 1:54 on the clock.

They were only able to reach the 35, and turned the ball over on downs with a few ticks left.

The Raiders kneeled the ball and went into the locker room with a 7-7 tie.

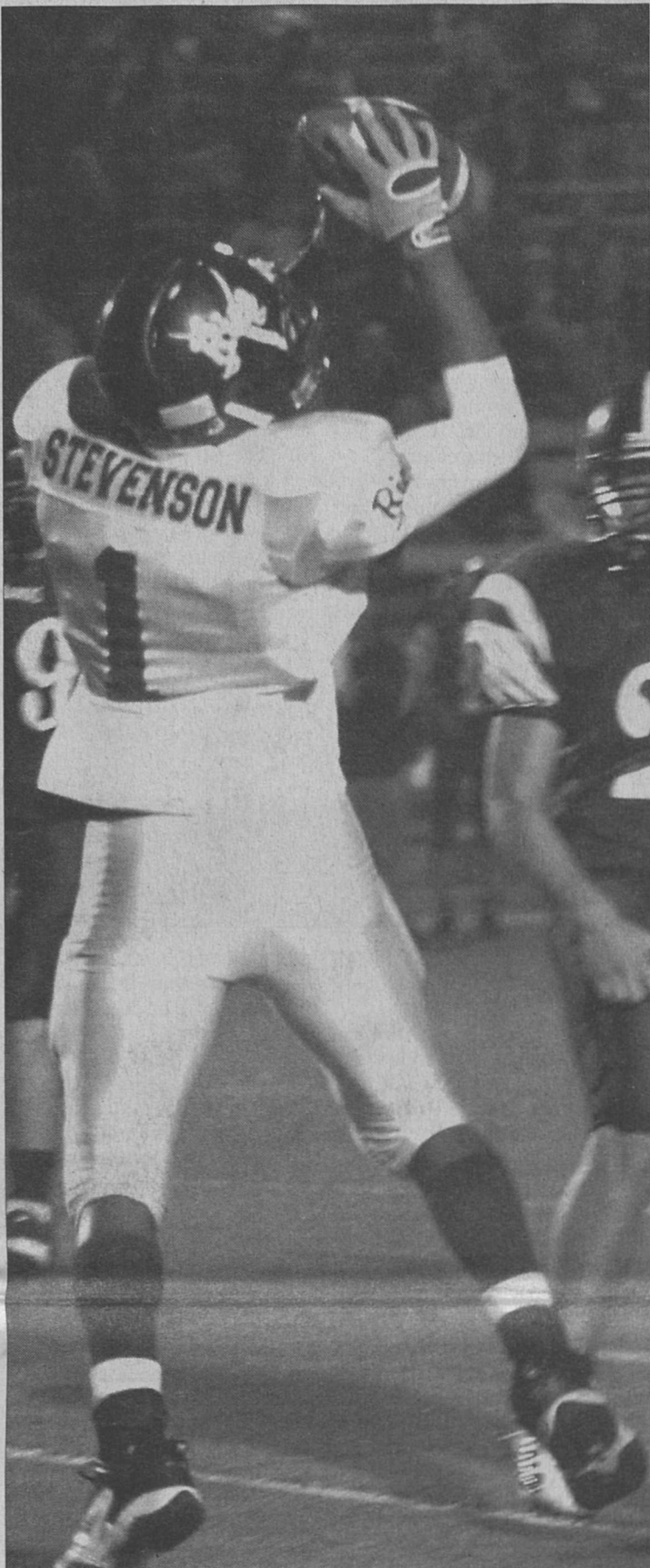
Rice was set to get the ball to start the second half, but Stockdale snuck an onside kick and recovered it successfully.

In three plays they reached the end zone to take a 14-7 with 10:37 left in the third.

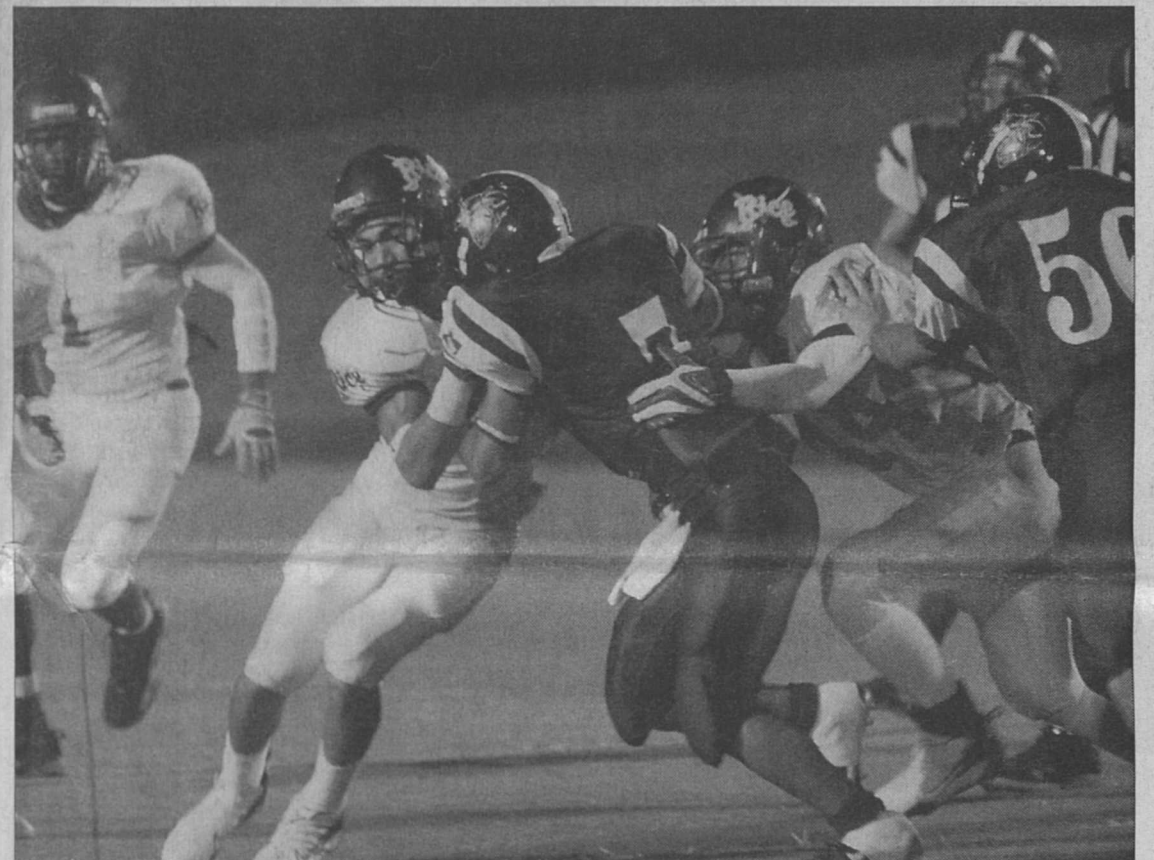
Rice answered back on their next possession.

Foster carried four straight times for one, then 17, 17 and 14

Continued on page B1



Duryel Stevenson brings in a catch during the win on Friday.



Mario Hull, left, and Chito Vasquez bring down the Stockdale quarterback.

Raiders Take On Refugio In State Quarterfinal Fri.

The Rice Raiders (12-1) have made it as far as any previous Raider team.

They will try to push on to the next round on Friday night when they travel to San Antonio to take on undefeated Refugio (13-0) in the State Quarterfinal Region IV 2A Division II Championship at

Bob Farris Stadium. Game time is set for 7:30 p.m.

The Raiders' previous trip to this round was in 2003 when they lost in four overtimes to Port Isabel in the 3A playoffs.

Refugio, champions of district 31AA, dispatched Banquete and Dilley in the first two rounds of

the playoffs before beating East Bernard last week in San Marcos, 21-14.

"We cannot have turnovers and we have to try to control the ball to limit their possessions," said Coach Brad Dumont.

"We are the underdog by 10 points in Dave Campbell's Padillia Poll," he said.

"But at this point, on any given Friday night, anything can happen," he added.

"They have tradition, but so do we," he said.

Refugio's closest game of the season came on September 7 in the second week of the season when they defeated Hallettsville

35-34.

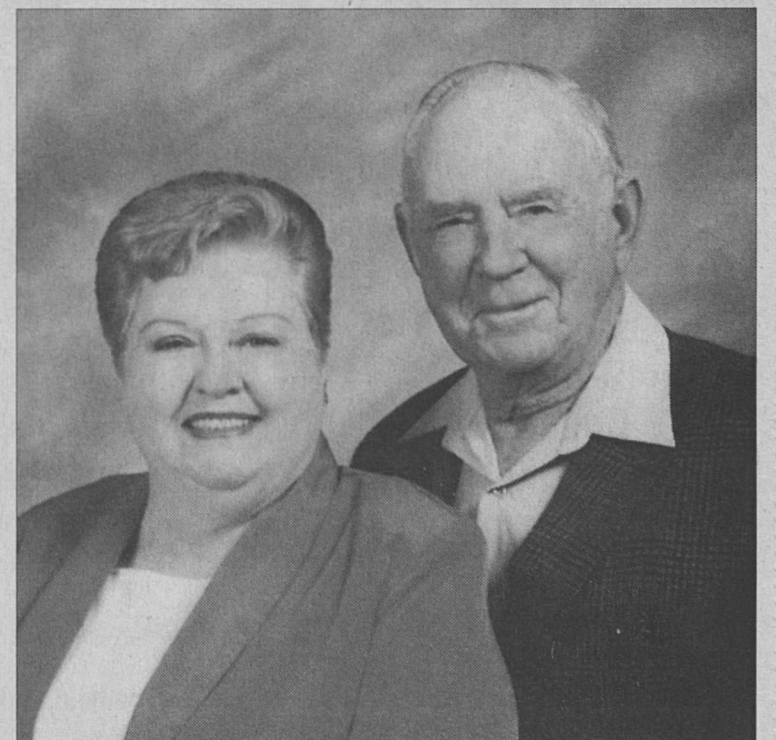
Rice will have to stop quarterback Malcolm Whitmire who has thrown for 2,268 yards and 23 touchdowns.

Refugio also boasts a potent running attack with Carl Swain who has rushed for 1,528 yards and 17 touchdowns. Collin Avery adds another 750 yards and 12 touchdowns.

The two have also combined for 44 catches for 850 yards and 10 scores.

The winner of the game will advance to the state semifinals and take on the winner of Arp and Elysian Fields from Region III.

Directions on B3.



John and June Mahalitic will be Marshals for the 2007 Chamber of Commerce Lighted Christmas Parade.

Mahalitics Named Parade Marshals For Sat. Event

John Mahalitic was born in Columbus. He graduated from Eagle Lake High School and served one tour of duty with the Army. He worked for Schlumberger Well Surveying Corp. in Victoria before returning to Eagle Lake and his first love, farming.

June B. Mahalitic was born in Erick, Oklahoma in 1934 and moved to Hereford at the age of six. She graduated from Miller, Missouri High School. She worked at American Telephone and telegraph long lines operator in Kansas City until returning to Texas and working for Schlumberger in Victoria thus meeting John.

They were married here, May 9, 1964, at Our Lady of Perpetu-

al Help Catholic Church. They raised three sons then joined what was then Eagle Lake Volunteer Ambulance Corps, serving as volunteer emergency medical technicians as that organization grew and evolved to Colorado County EMS.

June and John each gave over 25,000 hours to the citizens of Eagle Lake and Colorado County. June was also an EMS Instructor/Examiner/Coordinator for the State of Texas during these years. In 1996, June decided 20 years was enough of jumping in and out of ambulances but continued teaching for a few more years.

June and John are retired and spending their time in trying to turn John into a bionic man.



Last year's parade was a delight to young and old alike.

NEWSBRIEFS

Quarterfinal Pep Rally In Altair Fri. at 12:45

There will be a pep rally at 12:45 on Friday for the Rice Raiders Quarterfinal Game. Members of the 2003 Raiders will be recognized at the rally. Come out and show your support.

Special Closing Friday

The First National Bank's lobby will be closed at 3 p.m. but the drive thru will remain open until 6 p.m.

Senior citizen's dance is Friday

The last Senior Citizens Dance for 2007 will be held Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Eagle Lake Community Center from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. Daniel and The Country Boys will provide the music. Come celebrate Daniel's 60 years in music. For more information call 979-234-2903.

Chamber to hold bake sale Saturday

The Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce at 303 E. Main Street will hold a bake sale, and be selling hot chocolate and apple cider on Saturday, December 8. Stop by before or after annual "Traditional Christmas Parade of Lights" to check out the progress and warm up with some of their goodies. The Chamber is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thomas to be honored Dec. 9

We, the family and friends of Malcom Thomas, Sr. would like to invite the community to come out and fellowship with us on Sunday, December 9 at 2:30 p.m. at the park in Eagle Lake. This year is a small event, but the future years we are expecting to do great things to keep "The Legend", of Malcom Thomas Sr. alive. So come out and have hot dogs, chips, punch and cookies and enjoy this day.

MMBC to hold Gospel Fest Dec. 16

Mt. Moriah Baptist Church (MMBC) of Alleyton will present a Christmas Gospel Fest Sunday, December 16 at 4 p.m. some of the featured artists will be the Bradby Girls of Houston, Just Twynz of Bryan, Puntin The Prodigal Son of Houston and many others. The public is invited. Please bring canned goods for our Christmas basket for the needy. For more information you may call 713-303-4371 or 281-935-3573.