



‘Two of the best’

Brian Brennan and Jim Rademacher are Hall of Fame bound at Brother Rice

By Mike Moore
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BIRMINGHAM — In 2009, four longtime coaches and two former pro athletes made up the first class of the Birmingham Brother Rice Athletic Hall of Fame.

Needless to say, it was a class of Warriors that would be tough to top.

The 2010 group, although only a third in size, is sure to give them a run for their money.

“These are two of the best people we’ve had here,” Brother Rice President John Birney said of Brian Brennan and Jim Rademacher, the 2010 inductees. “Both guys belong in our Athletic Hall of Fame, without a doubt.”

Seven titles

In the 50-year history of Brother Rice, there has never been a shortage of state championships, and Rademacher played a significant role delivering several titles.

The school’s golf coach from 1977 through 2000, Rademacher led his teams to seven state titles and recently completed his 38th year teaching at Rice.

“What a track record,” Birney said. “Seven state titles highlight the tremendous success of someone who is beloved by his players and very well respected in his coaching profession.”

Rademacher led the Warriors to their first championship in 1977, four in the 1980s and two more in the ‘90s.

“Wow, I really didn’t see this coming,” Rademacher said in a prepared statement. “It was a great run. ... I’d love to have a golf outing with all the state championship teams to see who can still play today.”

Orange, black and Browns

While Rademacher is being honored for his time at Brother Rice, Brennan’s recognition has a lot to do with his accomplishments after his days in Birmingham.

Following a standout career with Rice’s football, basketball and track teams, Brennan, a wide receiver, teamed up with Heisman Trophy winner Doug Flutie at Boston College before being drafted by the Cleveland Browns in 1984.

He played for the Browns until 1991 and then split time with the Cincinnati Bengals and San Diego Chargers in 1992 before retiring.

He finished his nine-year career with 334 receptions, 4,336 yards and 20 touchdowns.

“He was just an amazing athlete,” Birney said of Brennan. “People remember him for the type of player he was, but also for the kind of person he is.”

“Because of all of the great athletes that have played for Brother Rice, being selected into the Hall of Fame is truly an honor,” said Brennan, who resides in Cleveland and is managing director for KeyBanc Capital Markets. “I always looked at my time as a student-athlete at Rice as a privilege. The coaches and the guys I played with while there provided me with such a solid foundation that I carried into college and then the NFL.”

On Jan. 11, 1987, Brennan hauled in a 48-yard touchdown pass from Bernie Kosar with

5:43 remaining in the AFC Championship Game, giving the Browns a six-point lead and apparent ticket to Super Bowl XXI. But in what became known as “The Drive,” John Elway took Denver 98 yards in 5:02 to tie the game at 20-20.

“I thought we were going to the Super Bowl,” Brennan said with a laugh of his touchdown. “John Elway became pretty famous after my catch.”

The Broncos eventually won 23-20 in overtime, and the Browns have yet to reach a Super Bowl.

Brennan is also a member of the Boston College Hall of Fame and the Greater Cleveland Sports Hall of Fame.

An induction date for Brennan and Rademacher has not been set.

The two will join Al Fracassa, Bill Norton, Mike Popson, Bob Stark, B.J. Armstrong and Michael Lodish — inducted in 2009 — in the school’s Hall of Fame.

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