

Prep Football

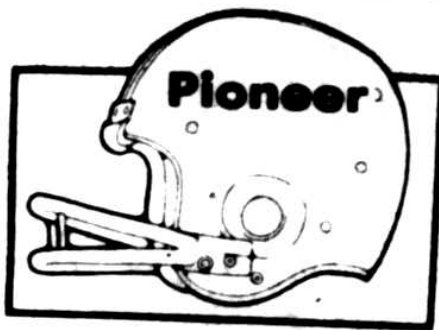
Injuries crippled Pioneers

By John Viges

Crippling football injuries crippled Pioneer's chances for a winning season as well.

Frustrations grew throughout the season for Coach Chuck Ritter as his team started very slowly before fighting back to respectability. Along the way, it seemed all the players he counted on missed portions of the season.

Floyd Rowry missed the entire season because doctors, examining for something else, found a birth defect which would have made it dangerous for him to play; John Harbaugh missed the first six games with a knee injury;



Dave Lyon missed the first six games with a leg fracture; Van Belanger was hurt early in the third game and needed a knee operation; Tim Anderson was hurt in the sixth game and needed a knee operation; Brian Allen didn't come out for the team because of a hockey injury and Tracy French played all season with a back

problem that hurt his effectiveness.

"Injuries were the most disappointing part of the season," Ritter said. "There's no question they had an effect on our record. We said at the beginning, our problem was depth."

Pioneer also couldn't find a quarterback until mid-season when sophomore Jim Harbaugh took over. The Pioneers could not score in regulation during their opener, losing 6-3 in overtime and were then shut out in the second game by an average Lansing Eastern squad.

When South Central Conference play began, Harbaugh was installed at quarterback and showed

excellent potential for coming years while giving Pioneer a passing threat. Pioneer won three of its final five games, also giving Adrian and Ypsilanti tough battles in defeat.

"A good part was the kids didn't give up, they came back," Ritter said.

Tom Hill and Bubba Green provided good running for Pioneer but both will graduate. Almost certainly, one of the backs next year will be Greg Parham who had a good junior varsity season this year. The fullback and tailback spots will be up for grabs, however.

See Pioneer, Page C-5