

## ***Year Ending Top 20 High School Football Rankings***

### **Southeastern Pennsylvania Football**

**Featuring District 1, 12, the Philadelphia Catholic League and the Inter AC**

**December 6, 2005**

**(All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise)**

I want to thank Louise at *DelawareCountySports.com*, Don at *ePaSports.com*, Mike at *HavenFootball.net* and Ted at *TedSilary.com* for providing needed statistics and resources without which this write up could not be completed. Thanks also to Louise, Don and Mike for publishing the Top 20 on their web sites. And thanks to all those that emailed opinions of support and criticism. It's been a fun year!

### **The Playoffs**

#### **AAAA: Dec 10, 7 PM, Hershey Park Stadium**

**Liberty (13-1, D-11) verses McKeesport (13-2, D-7):** Many felt these two teams would be on the losing end of last week's games. But here they are after defeating what were clearly two of the best teams in the state. Liberty beat North Penn (12-2) 14-12 while McKeesport edged Bishop McDevitt (13-1) 14-13. In both games, special teams failures were decisive. North Penn had an extra point blocked and a 2 point conversion failure. McDevitt's kicking game in part, led to their defeat when an extra point attempt sailed wide right. Defensively, they never solved the hurry up, no huddle Flexbone as McKeesport ran all over the larger McDevitt team for 322 rush yards. They also owned 33 minutes of the clock. For the year, McKeesport's QB Dan Kopolovich has 1312 yards rushing. Both team come into this one brimming with confidence. Liberty's balance verses McKeesport's Flex says this one should go down to the wire.

#### **AAA: Dec 9, 7 PM, Hershey Park Stadium**

**Pottsville (13-1, D-11) verses Franklin Regional (14-1, D-7)** Pottsville followed up their impressive win against Strath Haven by defeating Manheim Central (12-2) last week 14-9. This wasn't your typical large-physical Central team, but they had a 9-0 lead at the half. Thereon, Pottsville's size took its toll as they marched downfield for two 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter scores behind their sizeable line which wore down the smaller Barons. The final was 14-9. Out west, Franklin Regional eased past General McLane (12-1) 27-21. It's tough going against WPIAL pedigree, especially a team like Franklin Regional, but the Crimson Tide is capable of making this a close game, and should. They seem destined, but the Panther's are more, and should pull it out.

#### **AA: DEC 10, 1 pm, Hershey Park Stadium**

**Wilson Boro (12-2, D-11) verses South Park (15-0, D-7)** This is where Lansdale Catholic was supposed to be until Wilson nipped them 19-13. The Warriors began the year 1-2, with losses to Northern Lehigh (10-1) 28-21, and Saucon Valley (7-3) 30-23. Since then they've won 11 straight including last week's nail biter over Montoursville 33-32. It took a 25 yards field goal in the final 6 seconds to pull that one out. At the opposite end of the state, South Park had an easy time with Reynolds (11-3), winning 28-

2. Wilson is obviously a resilient opponent but South Park is special. They're scoring 38 ppg in their 6 playoff games and allowing 10. That includes wins against powerful Greensburg Central Catholic and Mohawk. Wilson averages 31 ppg in 4 playoff games, but has allowed 18. South Park will not be as lenient as Montoursville was last week and Wilson won't be able to keep pace with the Eagles strong running game.

**A: Dec 9, 1 PM, Hershey Park Stadium**

**Southern Columbia (12-2, D-4) versus Duquesne (14-0, D-7)** The Tigers of Southern Columbia often have talent and size atypical of a Single-A program. This year is no different with 6-2, 245 pound junior fullback Henry Hynoski gaining 1970 yards through 13 games. Another back, 6-2, 200 pound Kyle Connaghan rushed for over 1000 yards before switching to quarterback when starter Ted Heitzman went down 2 weeks ago, apparently for the season. The way this Class A program continues to replace people through the years is phenomenal. Their 7 year won-loss is 91-13. They are the *3 time defending state champ*, making an *8<sup>th</sup> consecutive appearance* in the State Final! This year was a rebuilding year after going 14-1 in '03, then 15-0 last year. The line evidently jelled since they're averaging 332 yards rushing a game. Last week saw them crush a good Steelton-Highspire team 41-7. The Rollers had no answer for Josh Marks, the Tiger's 6-5, 300 pound DT. This week they play undefeated Duquesne, 14-0. Throughout the playoffs, the Dukes beat 3 undefeated teams, Bishop Canevin, Rochester and Coudersport (13-1) last week, 33-2. The Rochester win *at* Rochester (12-1) 14-6, says they can go with any Single-A team in the state. Rochester is one of the more storied schools in the state with their 79-17 seven year won-loss and 4 State Finals appearances in the same time span. They faced Southern Columbia from 2000 through 2002, then again last year. For Duquesne, it's their first appearance in the State Final. If they can manage that, they can beat SC.

**1. North Penn (12-2)** North Penn had their title hopes dashed by Liberty High who earned their way to the final by blocking an extra point, then nailing quarterback Kyle Feister on a 2 point conversion effort a few yards short of the goal in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The conversion would have tied the score. Instead, the Knights went home with a 14-12 loss. No disrespect to a strong bunch from Bethlehem, but what a disappointing way to exit the playoffs for North Penn. It seemed they were destined for Hershey. A few weeks ago, many of us felt Neshaminy was destined for the same. Two bubbles burst in the span of 2 weeks is hard to take for the District One faithful, to say nothing of the Suburban One legions who expect annual forays west to pick up some gold. The Knight's hold on to the top spot but share it with a Saint Joseph's Prep team that won another Red title in manhandling O'Hara by 34 points. North Penn closed out with a difficult run of Coatesville, Central Bucks East, Downingtown East and Liberty. No team in the area faced such a schedule of difficult opponents on consecutive weekends except for the Hawks at the top of the season. Congratulations to the Knights in securing their 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive double-digit winning season.

**TIE**

**Saint Joseph's Prep (11-2)** St. Joseph's Prep won their 4<sup>th</sup> Red Division title in the last 5 years by walloping Cardinal O'Hara 41-7. You kind of thought this was coming after last year's loss in the Final, combined with the Hawk's entering this one off an overtime loss

to LaSalle, against O'Hara's sputtering offense. Maybe not quite this magnitude, but still a difficult spot for the Lion's. O'Hara was held to 54 total yards of offense and 1 first down! Against a team known for stout defense, the Hawk's rushed for 351 yards. They passed for another 27 and got 15 first downs. Their unstoppable sophomore running back Jamir Livingston had 187 yards on 32 carries. Remember, he's only 5-7 ½ and 158 lbs. A lot of it was off tackle stuff. QB Chris Whitney ran for another 87 yards. In the last two games with O'Hara, St. Joe's outscored them 72-14. Great year for the Hawk's who like North Penn will attempt to reload for next year. With a combined 4 year won-loss of 93-13, 46-5 for the Prep and 47-8 for North, you have the feeling they'll pull it off.

**2. Downingtown East (11-2)**

**3. Neshaminy (10-2)**

**4. Cardinal O'Hara (9-3)** Cardinal O'Hara fell short of defending their Catholic League Red Division title by losing to St. Joseph's in the regular season 31-7, and in the Red Final Saturday 41-7. Nevertheless, it was a solid season that saw them beat LaSalle on two occasions, West Catholic and Roman. At the top of the schedule they defeated Blue Division champ Archbishop Wood 26-0. The following week they lost competitively to North Penn 35-28. Not bad!

**5. Malvern Prep (10-1)**

**6. Central Bucks East (10-2)**

**7. Strath Haven (3A, 10-3)**

**8. Coatesville (8-3)**

**9. Conestoga (10-2)**

**TIE**

**LaSalle (9-4)**

**10. Pennsbury (8-3)**

**11. Archbishop Wood (10-2)** Wood got the 3-peat by beating West Catholic 30-12 for their 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive Catholic League Blue Division title. It was accomplished in convincing style as they held West to 129 total yards! A couple of interceptions and a fumble at West's 1 yard line kept it from getting worse. Wood's running back Bryan McCartney rushed for 115 yards on 21 carries. QB Joe Kosich did damage with 7 completions on 16 attempts by throwing for scores of 14 and 15 yards. It was 23-0 entering the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The offense generated 233 total yards for the day. When you shut down a running back like West's Dennis Shaw to 31 yards on 14 carries, the D is having a strong game. When you do it twice, as Wood's defense did in holding him to 40 rush yards in the regular season game, you're talking about a strong, well prepared unit. Congratulations to the Vikings for winning their 10<sup>th</sup> game in a row and getting their 3<sup>rd</sup> straight Red title. This was a special senior group that's had quite a run. They went 11-0 in 2003, 8-4 the following year, and 10-2 this season for a 3 year mark of 29-6, 83 %. Three in a row!

**12. Souderton (9-3)**

**13. Upper Darby (9-3)**

**14. West Catholic (10-3)** West Catholic lost to Archbishop Wood in the Blue Final 30-12. That's the 4<sup>th</sup> straight year the Burr's got to the Final only to be turned away empty handed. Back in 2002 they lost to Archbishop Carroll 22-7. The next year began a trend that would see them lose 3 straight to Archbishop Wood; 17-14 in '03, 29-0 in '04, then last week's loss. Despite losing 4 straight Finals appearances, remember, this is a

program that had only 6 winning seasons from 1980 to 2001. Six! When Coach Brian Fluck took over in 1999, his first 3 years of 5-6, 5-7 and 3-9 were followed by 9-4, 7-6, 11-2 and 10-3 seasons, and those 4 Finals appearances. Their won-loss against *winning teams* the past 4 seasons is 16-10, with a glittering 10-4 record the last 2 years. Coach has them on the right track.

**15. Interboro (9-3, 3A)**

**TIE**

**Ridley (7-4)**

**16. Pennridge (7-5)**

**17. Abington (7-5)**

**18. Plymouth Whitemarsh (8-3)**

**19. Tennett (7-4)**

**20. Roman Catholic (7-5)**

### **Honorable Mention**

**Archbishop Carroll (8-5)**

**Henderson (6-6)**

**Cheltenham (6-6)**

**Norristown (6-5)**

**Council Rock North (5-6)**

**Chichester (9-2, 3A)**

**Unionville (11-1, 3A)**

**Phoenixville (10-2, 3A)**

**Lansdale Catholic (9-3, 2A)**

**Marple Newtown (7-4, 3A)**