

# Top 20 High School Football Rankings

## Southeastern Pennsylvania Football

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

November 1, 2005

(All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise)

**1. Saint Joseph's Prep (8-1)** St. Joseph's got their 4<sup>th</sup> shutout of the season last week by defeating North Catholic 35-0. Other shutouts came against Roman Catholic and Archbishop Ryan by 41-0 scores, and Father Judge, 38-0. North was held to 36 total yards of offense. The win keeps the Hawks deadlocked with Cardinal O'Hara at 6-0 in Red Division play. But that's about to change Saturday when the two face off to determine the regular season champion, and seeding for the postseason tournament. At the top of the season we mentioned St. Joe's phenomenal Catholic League winning streak. This is a good time to revisit the streak with O'Hara up next. The streak covers Catholic League regular season games dating to 1999, where a 7-5 Hawk team won the last 2 regular season games against Ryan and LaSalle 7-0, 21-20 respectively, after losing to Roman 27-24. Thereon they reeled off 37 straight wins between 2000 and 2004, and another 6 this year for a total of 45 consecutive regular season Catholic League wins! That brings us to this week's game with O'Hara, the defending Red Division champ. Last year's 14-13 final was a classic that mimicked the regular season slugfest won by the Hawk's 12-7. The difference between this year's teams and last year's is offense. St. Joe's is much improved at 32 points per game from last year's 22 ppg average, whereas the Lions' have declined from 30 ppg to 25 this year. They've had power outages against West Catholic, Judge, LaSalle and Roman where they put up 14, 13, 14 and 14 respectively. That's a concern. St. Joe's is more productive with no outages against a schedule that is *arguably* more difficult than last year's non-league slate of Pittsburgh CC, St. Ignatius and Poly Prep. Only Gilman (7-0), 20<sup>th</sup> ranked in the country by Prep Nation and #1 in Maryland contained them in the Hawk's 22-19 overtime loss. The same poll has the Hawk's 24<sup>th</sup>. The other non-league opponents, Neshaminy and St. Ignatius were handled easily by identical scores, 28-14. Defensively, the Hawk's have allowed 71 points all year. O'Hara allowed 87. So both have outstanding defenses but only one has demonstrated consistent offense against a difficult schedule.

**2. Neshaminy (8-1)** Despite the preseason hype and national rankings, you still figured *someone* in the National Conference would give these Redskins a game. Maybe last year spoiled us with the exciting triumvirate that was Neshaminy, North Penn and Pennridge. But when an undefeated North Penn team can't compete you've got to wonder if any PIAA team, at least in the East, can. Last week's Owls from Bensalem couldn't and were overwhelmed 45-7. That's really par for the course this year with the Skins beating all National Conference teams by an average score of 38-8. So where will the competition come from? Typically it comes from the Lehigh Valley's District 11. The team many felt was special despite going untested was 8-1 Bethlehem Liberty. They finally got that test Saturday and failed against last year's D-11 champ Easton (6-2), 28-21. Another strong candidate was Delaware Valley (8-1) from District 2. A few weeks ago they lost their star running back. Then last week they suffered their first loss of the season to fellow D-2 power Abington Heights, (9-0, AAA), 21-6. Out west, the historic powers come from

District 3 and District 7. District 3 is all about the Mid-Penn Conference's Commonwealth Division powers, including Bishop McDevitt (9-0), Harrisburg High (7-2), Cumberland Valley (7-2) and Carlisle (7-2). Carlisle's Thundering Herd (is that a great name or what) upset Harrisburg last week 40-34. When The Herd and Cougars take the field you're in for real fireworks from their skill people. State College and Central Dauphin at 6-3 are very powerful, but a small notch below the rest. Others in York and Lancaster area are Central York (9-0), Manheim Township (8-1), not to be confused with Manheim Central Barons at AAA, and Hempfield (8-1). Hempfield is in Landisville just west of Lancaster. District 7's top team is a surprise with the defending Quad-A champ Pittsburgh Central Catholic Vikings atop the WPIAL's Section 2, followed by Penn Hills and Woodland Hills, both at 8-2. Section One has ever present Upper Saint Clair (9-1) and North Hills (8-2). Section Three's power is McKeesport at 8-2. The Erie teams from District 10 aren't as strong as usual with McDowell at 7-2 and Cathedral Prep at 6-3. Erie Strong Vincent from the AAA classification is powerful at 8-1. Back on the home front all that's left is a road trip to Pennsbury's 8-1 Falcons Friday night. A win there should secure at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> playoff seed or higher for the Skins. *Thanks to epasports.com for updated scores, schedules and records.*

**3. Cardinal O'Hara (8-1)** There was a major disturbance in the force last Friday when the empire stuck back in the latest saga of the Red Division wars between Roman Catholic and Cardinal O'Hara. Last year's game was a struggle, with O'Hara eking out a 24-21 victory. The year before saw O'Hara sweep Roman convincingly. In 2002, RC prevailed, 12-7. These 2005 Romans saw hard campaigning at the beginning of the season where 4 of their first 5 games were played on the road. 3 of their first 4 were against 8-1 West Catholic, 6-0 Valley Forge Military Academy and 8-1 St. Joe's. The 1-3 start was followed by a 4-0 run leaving them 4-1 in Red play, meaning they were in the hunt. And they played like it Friday holding O'Hara scoreless until the 6 minute mark of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Roman struck in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter to hold a 7-0 half time lead. That shook up the O'Hara brain trust enough to change quarterbacks. In trotted Tom Savage, a *15 year old freshman* who promptly threw for 2 third quarter scores to senior quarterback turned wide-out Anthony Walters. Roman wasn't finished. In came sophomore QB Chris Jordan who hit Dan Johnson for a 57 yard touchdown pass, cutting the lead to 14-13 at the 2:15 mark of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. How's that for a tremor in the force! But it quickly subsided when the extra point sailed wide right. How many times have we seen special teams deciding games this year? One thing for certain, with LaSalle playing St. Joe's tight and Roman resurfacing against O'Hara, the Red Division playoff promises to be special.

**4. North Penn (8-1)** The Knight's returned to form last week with their 41-10 rout of Truman. Oddly, North Penn's loss to Neshaminy the week before was for all intents and purposes negated, except for National standings, when then top seeded Conestoga lost to Haverford. The loss dumped Stoga to 6<sup>th</sup>, with the Knight's moving into the top spot. As is, we have 2 teams currently seeded in the Top 8 with 2 losses, Plymouth Whitemarsh and Coatesville. That could increase with 5 of the 8 venturing onto the road this week in need of wins. All need wins but the road typically offers more pitfalls than home. Here's the lineup; Neshaminy at Pennsbury, Downingtown East at Henderson, Central Bucks East at Council Rock South, Conestoga at Marple-Newtown, and Coatesville at

Downingtown West. The homers see North Penn home to Council Rock North, Plymouth Whitmarsh to Cheltenham and the head-to head of Pennsbury against Neshaminy. The Knight's opponent this week is Council Rock North (5-4). The Indians appeared as a threat early on with the 3-0 start that included a 28-10 road win at Central Bucks East. Then, narrow, frustrating road losses of 3, 5 and 7 points to Pennsbury, Abington and Pennridge brought them down. Still, the team that needed a wake up call against Pennsbury and Bensalem needs to have their eyes wide open in this one.

**5. Malvern Prep (8-0)** Malvern Prep routed their 3<sup>rd</sup> Inter-AC opponent in a row last week with a 44-24 win against Penn Charter. Penn is the first IAC team to score on the Friars this season. Malvern's last 4 opponents, Salesianum, Haverford School, Germantown Academy and Penn Charter were defeated by a combined score of 176-45. So they've shifted into another gear since opening wins against Chester, Henderson, Downingtown East and Peddie School. Even there they were winning by an average score of 29-15. At 37 points per game this year, they are just above the 2002 squad that averaged 35 ppg while allowing 6. What a team that was! They went 10-0 with a 21-0 shutout of 10-3 Red Division champ St. Joseph's. They also got a 35-7 rout of Downingtown's 9-3 team that advanced to 2<sup>nd</sup> round postseason action before losing to eventual state champ Neshaminy. Last week saw the Friar's run wild against Penn, getting 409 on the ground and another 56 up top. Quarterback Ian Mitchell was unstoppable on land and air. On the ground he rushed for 183 yards on 18 carries! Up top he went 4/8/1 for 56 yards. Other's contributed as well with tail back Jim Cotton getting 95 yards on 14 carries, while fullback Tom Hagan got 98 on 13 attempts. Penn's QB Brendan McNally had a decent game at 15/27/1 for 184 yards. The Quaker's were held to 74 yards rushing. *Thanks to TedSilary.com for information and statistics about the Inter-AC, Catholic League, and District 12 teams.* IAC action continues Friday at Episcopal Academy where the Churchman are floundering at 5-3 after a 4-0 start. They're right there at 1-1 in conference play but that may not help them after pounding Malvern 28-7 last year.

**6. Downingtown East (8-1)** Downingtown East crashed the 50 point mark for the 2<sup>nd</sup> straight week with a 57-28 win against West Chester East. The week before they defeated Bishop Shanahan 56-17. Last week's win combined with Conestoga's loss elevated the Cougars' to the 2<sup>nd</sup> seed in the 8 team tournament with 1 game to go. That opponent is 4-5 Henderson Friday. The Warriors lost their last two games by 22 and 27 points, and shouldn't offer much resistance here. The last time East traveled it was west to Coatesville where they defeated the Red Raiders handily. The trip south to West Chester should be even less difficult against a team that has seen the bottom drop out of what promised to be an exciting year. A win here gets them to .500. But Downingtown would have to drop to yet unseen depths to falter that poorly here. Wouldn't East love to get a big lead early and sit some people. These guys have to be the wildcard in the playoffs. Everyone else plays relatively predictable, conventional football. For the most part you know what the other guy's going to do. It's just a matter of lining up to see if you can stop him. No one has seen a quarterback of Pat Devlin's caliber in this district for years. We've seen some good ones, but this one is different. And with little time to adjust and prepare, Downingtown East should be a load.

**7. West Catholic (8-1)** West Catholic's defense stepped up HUGE again last week holding Archbishop Carroll to *minus* 4 yards rushing and 26 yards passing. And Carroll didn't come into this one cold, rather, on a roll, winning 4 straight while averaging 34 ppg to 14 allowed in those 4 games. Regardless, they ran into a wall as the Burrs' got their 5<sup>th</sup> shutout of the year, 20-0. Remember it was only a matter of missed extra points and penalties that prevented WC from going overtime in the 2 point O'Hara loss, so were talking legitimate stuff here. They also shut out Roman and St. John's. They get another test Saturday against underrated Archbishop Wood (7-2). West and Wood have this thing all to themselves at 6-0 atop the Blue Division. Carroll and Egan are 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4-2 so it's all about Saturday's game where we'll see if West can dethrone the 2 year reigning Blue champ. It won't be easy. Wood's on a 6 game winning streak as the Burrs are, so both have a head of steam built up for this one. With West Catholic getting deserved hype about their defense, you might be surprised to know Wood is allowing just 11 ppg. Both have outstanding running backs. West has Dennis Shaw at 115 carries for 1126 yards, a 9.8 yards per carry average! The Vikings have a pretty fine tailback themselves in Bryan McCartney who has 807 rushing yards on 146 carries. It'd be easy to knee jerk a West win in this one but that would ignore history that shows Archbishop Wood winning 3 of the last 4 against West Catholic.

**8. Strath Haven (7-2, 3A)** Strath Haven won their 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive game since the overtime loss to Upper Darby in convincing style by throttling Springfield 35-6. Before that, they won 5 consecutive games following another overtime loss, this one at Conestoga. If this team fails to make the AAA playoffs, what a way to go out by losing in overtime to two of the better AAAA teams in the district. On a points-for, points-against basis alone, the Panther's are at 2001's level that scored 32 a game and allowed 9. That team went 14-1 before losing to West Allegheny in the State Final 28-13. But that team had no close calls except for the 7 pointer against Penncrest. As things stand now, the Panther's need to beat Central League rival Penncrest Friday, and have Interboro do the same against Chichester also Friday, at Interboro. The Panther's have dominated Penncrest recently, winning by an average score of 34-3 the last 3 years. For Interboro (6-3), the loss at Salesianum last week ended their hopes of making the playoffs, but not of winning another Del-Val championship. This may be one of Interboro's weaker teams but it's more than capable of beating upstart Chichester. While Chi scheduled non-league teams like Avon Grove, West Chester East and Double-A Schuylkill Haven, the Bucs were playing Sussex Central of Delaware, Monsignor Bonner and Downingtown East. Both played Salesianum. Chi lost at home 35-20, Interboro lost on the road last week, 27-21. Chi has really turned things around, but to go into Interboro and beat the Bucs at home will take a special effort in a pressure game they may not yet be ready for. The playoff veteran Bucs know all about pressure. *See HavenFootball.net for more information about Strath Haven football and the AAA playoff picture.*

**9. LaSalle (7-2)** Over the weeks the Explorer's demonstrated that narrow losses to O'Hara and St. Joe's were no fluke. After all, they've allowed but 69 points the entire season, and got 4 shutouts. George Washington got 6 and Germantown Academy got 7. In the season opener, Plymouth Whitmarsh scored 21 in a 42-21 rout. So for the most

part, they've been doing it all year. Their next opponent is a team no one's been talking about. Getting off to a 1-3 start will do that. But Roman has reemerged at 5-4 overall and 4-2 in the Red Division meaning, a win against LaSalle, also 4-2 in the Red, would advantage them for seeding purposes. The reason for Roman's rebound is defense. They've quietly developed into a force. For the year, they've allowed 117 points or 13 a game. That's skewed by the 41 allowed to St. Joseph's. Eliminate that to find a team allowing 9.5 ppg and that's a team that can beat the Explorer's, especially with LaSalle's offense scoring 0, 15, 14 and 13 the last 4 games. If Roman has anything left after last week's 14-13 loss to O'Hara, it's a game!

**10. Pennsbury (8-1)** Looks like Pennsbury read the papers after the North Penn game! Whatever it is, they've won 4 straight, and disproved critics by winning 8 of 9 games this year. That translates into a pretty good team, at least in the SOL-National Conference it does and that's where the Falcons play. Well done. Better yet, they currently hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> seed for the playoffs heading into the last week of the season. It appears even a loss this week at home to Neshaminy won't eliminate them from the postseason. Some might say a guaranteed spot in the playoffs is the good news, with the bad news being their next opponent is Neshaminy. But that's not how football players see it. This is a tough opponent for sure, but one the Pennsbury players have every intention of beating. The hype stuff is for the media. The Falcons are looking forward to the game and getting after these people like any other team they've played. Everyone knows Neshaminy is more except the Falcons who should be sky high for this one.

**11. Coatesville (7-2)** Guess which team was on the outside looking in a week ago as the 9<sup>th</sup> seed in an 8 seed tournament? You guessed it. So a tremendous cheer must have reverberated around Coatesville that equaled the groan from Upper Darby when the Ridley-Upper Darby score flashed across the message boards and onto the newspapers last week. Here in Delaware County we're used to the Royals pulling up short. And nothing Ridley does should surprise anyone from this part of the state. Coatesville still had to do their part and did they ever in annihilating Henderson 55-28. The win threw them back into the playoff picture with the 7 seed. That's interesting because if the seeds hold, they'll get another crack at Ches-Mont rival Downingtown East who currently hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> seed. First up is game against 4-5 Downingtown West. The Whippets lost 3 of their last 4 and 3 of 4 home games. Their last 2 home losses came against less than frightening West Chester East and Bishop Shanahan, suggesting they're in real trouble here against a focused group of Red Raider's trying to get back to the playoffs.

**12. Central Bucks East (8-1)** The common theme shared by most playoff contenders is good defense. Whether that's these Patriots at 7 points allowed per game or the prolific Downingtown East team where defense at 14 ppg is still an integral part of their success, most of the top 8 seeded playoff contenders play good defense. There are exceptions, notably North Penn at 19, Coatesville at 20 and Plymouth Whitemarsh at 22 ppg. In all cases, each is well supported by offense, lots of it. North Penn scores 32 a game on average with Coatesville getting 34 and Plymouth Whitemarsh 37. For Central Bucks East with a D allowing 7 a game, they can score 25 a game as they do, and still win comfortably. East is currently 5<sup>th</sup> in seeding for the playoffs with a road game at Council

Rock South Friday. That sounds simple enough with their 3-0 road won-loss, but won-loss records can mislead. That could be the case here with C.R. South's unimpressive 4-5 record masking their more recent 3-1 surge the last 4 games.

**13. Conestoga (8-1)** Maybe a team that previously won 6 games by 6, 6, 7, 7, 7 and 1 point had to lose a game like this. Conestoga has been eking out wins the entire season, rarely opening up an offense that appeared to have some size to it. With a big offensive line, good speed at tailback (Leviston), a nice fullback (Herzlick) and good receivers, in fact one of the best in southeast PA in Dwuan Clark, and a QB like Brian Ikeda who can get it there, you expected more from this offense, not 18 points a game. Against Haverford, Stoga relied on the big play, getting a 69 yard run from their huge fullback Mark Herzlick (6-4, 245), and 2 touchdown strikes to Dwuan Clark of 50 and 54 yards, from Ikeda and Leviston. That's the big stuff we expected, *but* with more regularity. Clark also had a 9 yard run late in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Stoga scored once in each quarter. On the other side, Haverford kept pounding away behind the bullish runs of Scott Lipschutz. He battered the usually stiff Pioneer defense for 157 yards on 38 carries. QB Matt Rementer kept them honest by completing 6 of 18 passes for 63 yards and scoring on a 1 yard keeper in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Haverford's 7-3 run to pass ratio sustained them enough to keep the chains moving. The Fords got 14 first downs to Conestoga's 7, and out rushed them 165 yards to 135. Stoga finally loosed their effective air attack, getting 159 yards through the air on just 5 completions in 14 attempts. Where's that been all year? In the end, the outcome came down to what else but special teams, when a very cool Eric Berkowicz trotted onto the field to make a 21 yard field goal with 7 seconds left to play giving Haverford a memorable 30-28 win.

**14. Ridley (6-3)** Ridley's 32-17 win over Upper Darby probably surprised many in other parts of the state, but here in Delaware County it was business as usual. In a sport where too much emphasis is placed on size when measuring a team, and not enough on technique, fundamentals and attitude, the Raider's are typically said to be overrated. Yet there was nothing overrated about their 4.3 yards per carry average against the Royals last Friday, the 13.7 yards per pass completion average, or a demoralizing 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter goal line stand after the Royals got to the 7 for a 1<sup>st</sup> and goal. Standout tailback Simoni Marco Lawrence had a huge night, getting 168 yards on 29 carries. What a back. But the quicker Raider's D wall stacked him up on 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 and that was *the play*, the big momentum shifter that denied UD the chance to cut into a 26-17 lead. That's where it stayed until QB Al Humes carried it in from the one with 7:24 to go in the game. Running back Casey Grugan had a strong performance getting 120 yards on 22 carries. Humes went 13/22/0 for 179 yards throwing primarily to Dino Vasso who caught 7 for 53 yards. Humes' classmate junior Marcus Payton (6-3, 185) caught 2 for 43 yards. Look for those two next year along with junior receiver Larry Pinto (6-1, 188). For those enamored with size, check out the sophomores coming up; Derrick Horton 5-9, 230, John Vona 6-0, 252, Joe German 6-1, 312, Ryan Eckenrode 6-0, 255 and Tim Schultz 5-11, 238. Whether they'll fit into Coach Waller's scheme is another thing. About this season, congrats to the young Raider's who will probably see their 3 year playoff run come to an end. It was a nice run. And with District One's playoff format set to expand, they'll be a regular fixture in the post season for years to come. But there's still plenty of football left with rival

Springfield in Friday, and Interboro paying a visit for the annual Thanksgiving Day game down the road. See *DelawareCountySports.com* for all the news on Delco sports.

**15. Upper Darby (7-2)** We mentioned last week that Upper Darby needed to bring their A game to beat Ridley in Folsom. Although they brought a heck of an effort, it wasn't the A game needed to beat an aroused Ridley. That would take the same effort, and maybe the same good fortune found at Strath Haven 3 weeks ago where in the end, it came down to a missed extra point allowing UD to prevail in overtime 27-26. There would be no such luck last week against a fired up Ridley team coming off an upset by Marple-Newtown where their own missed extra point, in part, led to a 7-6 loss. In this one, Upper Darby played good football, surprisingly good football considering Ridley forced them from relying totally on their strength, the running game, and going to the pass where they performed well. Quarterback Blaine Fox had a strong night, completing 10 of 13 for 152 yards. Dan Dibona booted a 39 yard field goal so it wasn't just about the powerful Upper Darby ground assault. To some of us observers it was about unusual play calling and clock management. But, we weren't privy to sideline reality. Once again it seems the Royals post season aspirations have been thwarted. They're currently in the 9 spot, behind Plymouth Whitmarsh and Coatesville. It's doubtful Coatesville will lose at Downingtown West. And Whitmarsh should not lose to unpredictable Cheltenham. But that's why they play the games. Darby's at home Friday against PennWood.

**16. Archbishop Wood (7-2)** This is great. We're at the end of the Catholic League regular season, featuring a game between two undefeated Blue Division teams. Did the CL get it right this year or what with St. Joe's also hosting O'Hara over in the Red this weekend. It doesn't get any better. And this game between Archbishop Wood and West Catholic should be one of the best games of the season. While West has had the more flamboyant teams the last two years, guess who's going for the 3peat? And they have the tools to get it. Bryan McCartney is a load at running back, but the hidden strength is quarterback Joe Kosich completing 52% of his passes for 905 yards. West counters with QB Eric Brennan completing 46 of 110 for 738 yards and Steven Powers completing 16 of 36 for another 235 yards. West has speed everywhere, but Wood is the defending champ so the Burrs will have to take it from them. That won't be easy.

**17. Pennridge (5-4)** A few weeks ago we mentioned Pennridge's inability to find a flow, or momentum generating rhythm largely because of a schedule that always had winnable games *followed by* difficult games. So you had a Hatboro-Horsham win followed by a Central Dauphin loss. In the next game a Bonner win was followed by a North Penn loss, Abington win, Neshaminy loss. And finally, a Truman win followed by a Pennsbury loss. That was further compounded with 3 of the 4 difficult games, CD, North Penn and Pennsbury, being played on the road. Who says schedules are fair. Last week saw the Rams edge Council Rock North 14-7. But this week instead of a monster team on the schedule, a 1-8 Bensalem team is up, meaning the Rams get their first real shot at winning back to back games.

**18. Tennett (6-3)** Defending Continental Conference champ Tennett was looking pretty good last week. They had Central Bucks East coming to their field for a decisive

conference game, enough points to land the 8<sup>th</sup> and final seed for the postseason playoffs, and a 7-0 lead with only 8 minutes to go in the game. Then in a flash, their season turned completely around when the Patriots exploded for 21 unanswered points. How unlike the Patriots is that? The loss shattered Tennett's chances of making the postseason and dropped them into a 2<sup>nd</sup> place tie with Souderton. But how close was this group to a larger story had they been able to hold on here and 4 weeks ago when they lost, again at home to Quakertown, 19-16 in overtime. They're at Souderton Friday.

**19. Plymouth Whitemarsh (7-2)** The Colonials won the American Conference title last week with a 46-34 win at Wissahickon. They'll go undefeated in American play if they can beat Cheltenham Friday. Cheltenham looked like they turned the corner getting 4 impressive wins in a row. Then last week they bottomed out against 3-5 Upper Moreland, losing a 14-7 decision at home? Their offense nearly vanished the last 3 weeks with 19, 14 and 7 point outings against Methacton, Upper Dublin and Upper Moreland. So it's unlikely they'll be able to keep up with a Whitemarsh attack that's feasted on American Conference competition.

**20. Phoenixville (8-0, 3A)** Not many weeks ago we considered the difficulty of Phoenixville running the PAC gauntlet that was *perceived to be* Lansdale Catholic, Boyertown and Pottsgrove. And why not? The Phantoms have been true to their name over the years, a ghost like apparition almost, with 1 winning season the last 6 years. During that period they experienced the depressing depths of a down cycle from 2000 through 2002 where they won 4 games. Following 0-12 and 1-10 campaigns in '01 and '02, they managed a 4-7 record in '03, and something of a breakthrough last year at 6-6. Maybe now it's time to think of them more for the city they play in than the Phantoms because like the mythical Phoenix, they have risen from the ashes of their funeral pyre past to live through another cycle. Here they are at 8-0, leading the PAC, with 2 of those 3 *gauntlet* teams having been deposed. The third one, Pottsgrove, is in Friday. Because Phoenixville has demonstrated the ability to bang with a big team, Boyertown, and match speed with speed against Lansdale Catholic, Pottsgrove can be had. Phoenixville is led by senior quarterback Bill Shirk and a slew of skill, mostly seniors with a long memory. The new lines have clearly jelled with an offense producing 30 points a game backed by a defense allowing 10. And talk about rising to the top, they currently hold the # 1 seed for the AAA postseason playoffs.

## **Honorable Mention**

**Roman Catholic (5-4)**

**Council Rock North (5-4)**

**Abington (5-4)**

**Soudertown (6-3)**

**Marple Newtown (6-3, 3A)**

**Pottsgrove (6-2, 3A)**

**Lansdale Catholic (7-2, 2A)**

**Interboro (6-3, 3A)**

**Chichester (7-1, 3A)**

**Unionville (9-0, 3A)**