

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

### **Southeastern Pennsylvania Football**

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

**November 15, 2005**

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

### **The AAAA Playoff Picture Across The State**

#### **AAAA East:**

**District 1, District 12, District 2/11;** In *D-2/11* action Hazelton (10-1) beat Delaware Valley (8-2) 42-21 last week while Bethlehem Liberty (10-1) evened the score with Easton (7-3) by overwhelming the Rovers 48-10. A few weeks ago in regular season action, Easton gave Liberty their only loss, 28-21. Hazelton comes into this one on a 10 game winning streak following a season opening loss to AAA power Abington Heights 38-27. The Hazelton-Liberty winner plays the *District 12* winner, Frankford (8-3) or Northeast (10-1). That winner faces whoever emerges from *District 1* where Central Bucks East visits North Penn, and Downingtown East plays last year's AAAA runner up Neshaminy.

#### **AAAA West:**

**District 3/6; District 7, District 8, District 9/10;** In *D-3/6*, powerful Bishop McDevitt of Harrisburg (11-0) leveled Central Dauphin (7-4) 33-0 in the playoffs after beating them in the Mid Penn Commonwealth Division regular season 42-0. But the big news last week was Mid Penn Commonwealth runner up Cumberland Valley (8-3) losing to Hempfield 42-28. There's a real bias in Central Pennsylvania for anything not associated with the Mid-Penn, but the Black Knights at 10-1 are the real deal and have smoked everyone this year except for the 10-7 upset to Manheim Township. Speaking of Township, they were routed by one of the hottest teams in the state, State College, 51-20. This is another Mid-Penn Commonwealth team. All that separates the Lions from perfection is 2 point loss to McDevitt, a 3 pointer to Harrisburg, and a 1 point loss to Cumberland Valley. And finally the York League has something to brag about with undefeated Central York beating Carlisle 23-7. Those games set the stage for this week's match ups of McDevitt verses Hempfield and State College (8-3) against Central York (11-0). *District 7's WPIAL* action saw Woodland Hills (10-2) get a reversal by eliminating last year's AAAA champ Pittsburgh Central Catholic 28-7. Pitt CC (10-2) won the regular season game 23-13. In the other bracket, McKeesport (10-2) righted their wobbly ship by beating 8-4 Mount Lebanon 39-18. McKeesport began the season with a 33-7 thud at North Hills, and ended it, the regular season, with a 26-7 loss to Highlands, a 2-7 AAA lightweight? Since then they've been on a tear in the playoffs beating Shaler 60-13 and North Hills 28-7 before beating Mt.Lebo. In *District 8*, Pittsburgh's Perry Traditional Academy, a perennial AAA powerhouse beat AAAA Pitt Brashear in the City Final 21-7. Perry moves on to the AAA playoffs while Brashear gets Erie Cathedral Prep (8-3), who won the *District 9/10* title by defeating a strong 8-2 DuBois team from D-9, 42-35.

**1. Saint Joseph's Prep (9-1)** The Hawk's had a bye week after beating Cardinal O'Hara and winning the Catholic League Red Division regular season title. Their opponent this week is surprising Father Judge (4-7), fresh off a stunning 27-19 1<sup>st</sup> round upset of Roman Catholic. Call it an upset but Judge put it to Roman good by holding them to 78 yards rushing and 121 passing. Although Roman held the Crusader's running attack to 49 yards, quarterback Justin DeCristofaro went unchecked, throwing for 270 yards on 12 completions in 22 attempts. That's the 2<sup>nd</sup> all time playoff yardage mark in Catholic League history. Bonner's Mike Mitros threw for 274 yards against Roman in 1992. *Thanks to Ed "Huck" Palmer of TedSilary.com for that information.* DeCristofaro has a way of stepping up in the big games. Against O'Hara he went 13 for 20 for 147 yards. Against St. Joe's he had another fine outing completing 11 of 22 for 148 yards. The hopes of Father Judge rest on a similar performance if they expect to have any chance against the Hawks this weekend. The Hawk's beat them soundly in the regular season 38-0. In that one, they rushed for 167 yards and threw for 144. Judge was held to 50 yards rushing and 148 through the air. Judge had a big high last week but won't duplicate that here. 4-7 teams don't have that consistency and St. Joseph's isn't Roman Catholic.

**2. Neshaminy (10-1)** As expected, Neshaminy had no trouble with Plymouth Whitemarsh in 1<sup>st</sup> round action as they took apart the American Conference champ 38-0. That's special considering Whitemarsh came in averaging 37 points per game. Holding heralded tailback Da'Rel Scott to 82 yards on 24 carries is misleading. One carry netted 36 yards, meaning for all other carries he was held to an average of 2.0 ypc. For the Skins, Jarred Kinney accumulated 136 yards on 14 carries while quarterback Andrew Flogel was on the money in 8 completions of 10 thrown for 174 yards. Jason Kinney and Doug Rosnick each had 3 receptions for 74 and 77 yards respectively. The win advances them to 2<sup>nd</sup> round action in Langhorne Friday against Downingtown East. The Cougar's come in with all the hoopla and hype that follows a D1 recruit. Quarterback Pat Devlin is special stuff, but so is quarterback Andre Flogel. He, along with running back Jarred Kinney and fullback Abe Brooks, supported on the flanks by receivers Jason Kinney and Doug Rosnick, behind the best offensive line this side of Harrisburg Bishop McDevitt's OL, represent one of the most productive (37ppg) and balanced attacks in the state. That's all complimented by one of the top defenses in the state, allowing 10ppg.

**3. North Penn (10-1)** Most would probably agree Neshaminy's game against Plymouth Whitemarsh and North Penn's with Coatesville played to form. Neshaminy had the 2 seed and 2<sup>nd</sup> position in the rankings, while North Penn weighed in as the top seed and 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked team. PW came in as the 7<sup>th</sup> seeded team ranked 18<sup>th</sup>, whereas Coatesville had the 8<sup>th</sup> seed, ranked 8<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully the rankings show a better understanding of area teams than the convoluted PIAA point system. The ranking for PIAA-AAAA teams last week in descending order was Neshaminy, North Penn, Downingtown East, Coatesville, Central Bucks East, Conestoga, Pennsbury, Ridley, Upper Darby, Plymouth Whitemarsh and Abington. Right, Abington below PW. That's a reflection of a dismal performance at Bensalem, followed by a home loss to Pennsbury while PW kept winning. *Private Schools* were aligned with SJP on top followed by CO, Malvern Prep, Wood, West Catholic, Roman and LaSalle. AAA entries had Strath Haven 7<sup>th</sup> and Phoenixville 19<sup>th</sup>.

The PIAA saw it otherwise, with Strath Haven the 4<sup>th</sup> or bottom seed in the playoffs, while Phoenixville had the top seed. Back to North Penn-Coatesville; What a game, with the combatants locked in a tight 12-7 struggle through 3 quarters in Lansdale. In the final period, North scored 15 points to the Red Raider's 6 to pull away with a hard earned 27-13 victory. In the end, the Knights' had more offense and a stiffer D with Brandon Turner's speed and Pete Stoll's power separating the two. Turner had a spectacular night rushing for 244 yards. Playoff action continues Friday night at home against Central Bucks East.

**4. Cardinal O'Hara (8-2)** The Lion's 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the Red Division earned them a bye last week and a home game this weekend against LaSalle. The Explorer's had no trouble with Archbishop Ryan in a 1<sup>st</sup> round game they won 28-3. They needed a big win like that after losing the regular season finale to Roman the week before. For Saturday's game they'll need something more than they brought in the first encounter with O'Hara 6 weeks ago where the Lion's shut them out 14-0. O'Hara held them to 12 yards rushing and 32 through the air! They hounded LaSalle's young quarterback John Harrison throughout the game, holding him to a 6 for 16 outing. Plain and simple, the Explorer's line was overwhelmed. Weather influenced with a steady drizzle occasionally turning nasty. But it rained on both sides of the field. O'Hara's backs got 211 yards on the night with QB Anthony completing 3 of 7 for 100 yards. He tore them up in that one by rushing for 86 yards on 17 carries. With the weekend forecast calling for clear skies, O'Hara's attack should be even more pronounced on firm footing.

**5. Malvern Prep (9-1)** In a surprise, Malvern Prep lost to Valley Forge Military Academy last week 40-23. VFMA came in undefeated and that's how they left with a 7-0 record. The Eagles are big stuff at 32 points per game offensively, backed by a D that allows 11. But because they play *post graduate players*, the game, in fairness to the Malvern players won't count against them in the rankings. That's why VFMA's team hasn't been ranked in the Top 20, or in the Honorable Mention section since discovering that a few weeks ago. The Friar's hopes of an undefeated season were squashed but not a shot at another 10 win season. In something of a revival, they've added a Thanksgiving week game the last 2 years after a 3 year absence. 5 years ago they played Archbishop Carroll Thanksgiving week. Last year they played and defeated Monsignor Bonner 36-12. This year the game's at Bonner, the day before Turkey Day.

**6. Downingtown East (10-1)** After getting a 20-0 lead early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, Downingtown East hung on for a 1<sup>st</sup> round 26-21 playoff win against Pennsbury. Quarterback Pat Devlin passed for 394 yards (27 of 38, 4 TDs) to break the state passing mark of 7447 yards held by Lakeland's Evan Kraky since 2001. Pennsbury's comeback was stymied by untimely mistakes and a Cougar defense that turned away 3 Falcon forays inside East's 35 yard line. That was quite a test for Downingtown. They move on to 2<sup>nd</sup> round action Friday for a *much* larger test at Neshaminy. Downingtown East and company will get a look at another fine quarterback in Neshaminy's double threat QB Andrew Flogel. They've seen a similar quarterback in Ian Mitchell of Malvern Prep (844 passing, 609 rushing), and had no luck with the Friar's winning 23-20, and Ian running for 104 yards, and completing 4 passes for 61 yards. It's true Devlin wasn't in game

shape, but that wasn't the issue. The problem was a defense that was clueless in stopping Mitchell, or any running back for that matter with Malvern getting 285 yards on the ground. The Skin's Andrew Fogel can scamper to. And with a 57% completion rate and just over 1000 yards passing to receivers like Kinney and Rosnick, most defenses are back on their heels when Jarred Kinney comes storming out of the backfield. It looks like East is a touchdown or two over their heads in this one.

**7. Strath Haven (3A, 9-2)** 4<sup>th</sup> seeded Strath Haven returned to the spotlight of AAA postseason action Friday by defeating top seeded Phoenixville at Phoenixville's Washington Field by the lopsided score of 41-21. Strath Haven's line blew out Phoenixville's, with the Panther back field getting 313 yards rushing. The big tackles, Bob Wise, 6-0, 268 and 6-1 Steve Marion at 248 along with tight end Sawyer Weir 6-4, 228, aided by super quick guards Ben Skalina 5-11, 190, Kyle Holstein 6-1 210 and powerful center/nose guard Rich Peticca, 5-7, 234, were literally blowing Phoenixville's D line backwards as the game developed. That doesn't mean the Phantom's weren't game, they were. A 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter flurry closed a 28 point deficit to 35-14 at the half, and 35-21 mid way through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. That closed out the scoring for Phoenixville, with Strath Haven adding the coup de grace as Jared Bradley scored with 2:42 left in the game. Bradley rushed for more yardage than Phoenixville's entire backfield with 29 carries netting 193 yards rushing and 3 TDs. Kevin Kaminski got another 79 and a score on 6 rushes, and a 28 yard TD reception. Steve Johnson added 34 yards on 6 carries and 1 touchdown. Phoenixville's Travis Ford-Bey is the real deal at running back and linebacker with 106 yards rushing on 17 attempts and numerous tackles. What a way for the Panther's to return to the postseason by routing the top seed. It's unthinkable a team of this quality could miss the playoffs because of a poor format. Things don't get any easier for the Panther's with playoff action continuing Friday at undefeated Unionville.

**8. Central Bucks East (10-1)** Central Bucks East won their first ever district playoff game Friday by narrowly defeating Conestoga. It wasn't easy and it wasn't looking good at the mid way point with Conestoga holding a 14-10 half time lead. Up to that point, most of the damage done to each other was through the air with East's quarterback Max Islinger throwing for 131 of 185 total yards, and Stoga's Leroi Leviston throwing for 70 of their 116 total yardage. In the end, C.B.East got more from their offense than Conestoga did despite Conestoga's D stopping at least 3 Patriot drives, 2 of them deep in Stoga territory. Diminutive running back John Cataldo at 5-6 160 was nearly impossible to see or stop, while Adam Fellicetti made a number of outstanding catches. East overcame 5 penalties for 45 yards and 4 turnovers to pull out a hard fought 23-21 win. The win moves them to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round against top seeded North Penn. In some ways Conestoga exposed the Patriots by playing them so close. The narrowness of the win on East's field against a pedestrian offense that's hiccupped all year says they're in trouble on the road against a more formidable opponent like North Penn. But the Knight's haven't been the picture of offensive consistency either. Because East has more weapons than Coatesville, good team speed and an underrated offensive line, this looks to be a pretty tight game, so long as the Patriot's don't come out in awe of circumstance. Could be a surprise, but more likely a narrow Knight win.

**9. Coatesville (8-3)** The Red Raider's were ousted in 1<sup>st</sup> round playoff action Friday by top seeded North Penn 27-13. Still, Coatesville had a solid 2 year ride with their 19-4 W/L. While the 2005 campaign was successful, it was a drop off from last year's team that won the Ches-Mont and compiled a 7-1 record against winning teams. This year's team slumped to 3 losses against a weaker schedule of 3 winning teams. They went 1-2 against Carroll, Downingtown East and North Penn. The Ches-Mont will certainly go through major changes next year with the departure of Coatesville's C.J. Gray and Downingtown East's Pat Devlin. And, there's the formation of a new school in West Chester, Bayard Rustin High. Some students will come from Henderson and East High so expect a drop off there, with the likelihood of their dropping down from AAAA to AAA. Avon Grove, an AAAA school from the Southern Chester County League comes on board as well.

**10. Conestoga (9-2)** Conestoga's season came to a disappointing conclusion with a 23-21 loss to Central Bucks East in 1<sup>st</sup> round action Friday. Exciting game and a tough one for either side to loss. But East had a better game plan that hurt Stoga with the more balanced attack. The Pioneer's could not hold their 14-10 halftime lead despite intercepting East on their 2 yard line to open the half, and recovering a fumble on East's 2<sup>nd</sup> possession of the half. Central Bucks East by no means played the perfect game. They made numerous errors. When Stoga looks back on this one they'll see a number of missed opportunities, but few more pronounced than their inability to convert turnovers. Add to that their own miscues, especially an unforced fumble with 1:02 left in the game while driving to C.B. East's 30 yard line, and you're left with a pile of "what ifs". Like Coatesville above, you sense something is coming to an end following Stoga's two exceptional seasons. But, there's still a game to play Thanksgiving Day at Great Valley to see if they can get their 3<sup>rd</sup> double digit winning season in the last 5 years.

**11. Pennsbury (8-3)** "If they can keep from falling behind early at 3<sup>rd</sup> seeded Downingtown East Saturday, they have a chance". That was last week's thoughts. Unfortunately for Pennsbury, it didn't happen. In fact just the opposite, as Downingtown jumped out to a 13-0 first quarter lead behind quarterback Pat Devlin's 10 and 68 yard touchdown strikes. The Falcon's barely broke a sweat when the lead ballooned to 20-0 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter compliments of another Devlin air strike of 33 yards. This was one of last week's games that held great potential for the upset with a vastly underrated Pennsbury coming in against a Dtown group that had not been tested against SOL quality comp. But, road games are a bear, especially against a team that possesses one of the best high school quarterbacks in the country. Although down 20-0 early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, credit the Falcon's for outplaying the Cougars significantly by mounting a 21-6 come back that fell just short of the upset. The final was 26-21 but East knew they'd been tested, almost beaten.

**12. Archbishop Wood (8-2)** Archbishop Wood had the week off as a result of winning the Blue Division regular season title. The rest had to do them good following the season ending game with West Catholic. The Vikings won that one 23-12 and are well rested for Conwell-Egan (7-4) coming in off a 27-21 overtime playoff win at Bishop McDevitt last week. Wood shutout Egan 35-0 in the regular season and can name the score here barring

complacency. If that happens, we'll likely get another great rematch of Archbishop Wood against West Catholic.

**13. West Catholic (8-2)** West Catholic had a bye after finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in Blue Division regular season action. This week they play Archbishop Carroll (7-4), who won an exciting game against Saints Neumann-Goretti, 41-27 in the 1<sup>st</sup> round. A few weeks ago West beat Carroll in the regular season 20-0. But the loss to Wood their last time out should have them focused here. Still, they need to take care with Carroll on a roll winning 6 of their last 7 games. That momentum, and the memory of the shutout, combined with WC coming off a loss should provide for great intensity here. It wasn't so many years ago that Carroll was strutting their stuff atop the CL Blue with incredible teams. They're a prideful tradition that won't go down easy.

**14. Ridley (7-3)** Had a bye week. Play Interboro Thanksgiving Day.

**15. LaSalle (8-3)** LaSalle pounded archbishop Ryan 28-3 in Red Division 1<sup>st</sup> round action Saturday and move on to play Cardinal O'Hara in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round Saturday. See O'Hara.

**16. Abington (7-4)** Abington avenged last year's loss to Boyertown by trouncing the Bears 35-7. Nice. What a way to bring the curtain down on a successful season by building momentum for next year. A win against Cheltenham Thanksgiving Day gets them to 8-4 and ends the season on a 3 game winning streak.

**17. Souderton (8-3)** Too bad these guys didn't make the playoffs because they're hot at just the right time of the season. Since the loss to Council Rock South 6 weeks ago, the Indians have won 5 straight including last week's big win at Upper Dublin, 42-15. In an expanded playoff, this is one of the teams that gets in, along with teams like Abington 7-4, Ridley 7-3, Upper Darby 8-3, maybe Haverford 7-4, Pennridge 6-5, Tennett 7-4, and Wissahickon 6-4. It will be interesting seeing how that plays out over the years but it will open things up, and with that comes the possibility of upsets to make the thing even more exciting. Expansion will keep more team focused longer, instead of slumping off towards the end.

**18. Upper Darby (8-3)** It has been 4 days now so evidently the 49-48 loss to West Chester East wasn't a misprint. This is the team that beat Strath Haven in Wallingford? The answer to that is a resounding no. Something has gone very wrong since the overtime win against Strath Haven back on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October. Thereon the Royals beat Penncrest 24-16 (5-6), lost to Ridley 32-17 (7-3), narrowly beat Penn Wood 21-12 (1-10), and now the loss to 4-6 West Chester East. If this is a glimpse of a young East team coming into their own, look out next year. Viking's Quarterback Bob Brice passed for 208 yards on 10 completions of 19 thrown with 3 interceptions. Running back Fred Maldonado rushed for 187 yards on 18 carries and got another 101 yards in 3 pass receptions. Fellow running back Jarrod Williams added 109 yards on 18 carries. Wide out John Ray had 6 catches for 94 yards. All totaled, the Vikings generated 315 rush yards and 208 pass yards. UD had 313 rush yards to 61 pass yards. In a game like this you know Simoni

Marco Lawrence ran wild. Make that very wild with 22 carries yielding 284 yards of real estate! That's 12.9 yards per carry. A few weeks ago this team had a playoff seed nearly locked up. Unless there's drastic change soon, they'll get clocked at resurgent Haverford Thanksgiving Day.

**19. Plymouth Whitemarsh (8-3)** The 38-0 shutout to Neshaminy in 1<sup>st</sup> round action last week was only the 3<sup>rd</sup> time the Colonials have been shutout in 7 years. With that said, there's really no way to put a positive spin on a 38-0 thumping in a playoff game is there. Still, except for the St. Joe's loss, who hasn't Neshaminy sent packing after a lopsided loss? For most schools, winning 8 is a good thing and that's no less true for the Colonials however the season may have ended. Well done!

**20. Unionville (11-0, 3A)** Who are these guys? For one thing they're the Southern Chester County League champ. For another, they're undefeated after beating Bok 28-0 in the opening round of the Triple-A playoffs. Coach Pat Clark and staff have them playing very good football, scoring 31 points per game. Sophomore quarterback Matt Carroll has been a major surprise. At 6-1 ½ he has good vision. He's a tough, poised, 185 pounder more inclined to run than throw. And he runs well. The Indians rarely throw the ball, preferring instead to use their considerable bulk up front with running backs David Cloud, a 5-8, 165 pound senior and junior running back Eric DiProspero, 5-10, 175, doing most of the damage. Tackles Pete Schilthius, 6-2, 290, and sophomore Steve Caputo, 6-2, 270, anchor a line that's manhandled SCCL competition the entire season. Kicker Dave Schultz has hit field goals from beyond 30. The defense is coached by Mike Dugan. It's a fast closing group led by DL Cotton Vosburgh, DE Anthony Fusco and LB Brian Guest that allows 7 ppg. Their 2<sup>nd</sup> round opponent Friday is Strath Haven. They get them at home and that's where the good news ends. There is nothing on the schedule that remotely compares to or prepares them for the prowess, confidence, talent and playoff experience Strath Haven brings to the game. Like their name, the Panther's are cat-like quick, strong, and eager to reassert their dominance in the district.

## **Honorable Mention**

**Tennett (7-4)**

**Pennridge (6-5)**

**Hatboro-Horsham (6-5)**

**Roman Catholic (6-5)**

**Interboro (8-3, 3A)**

**Chichester (8-2, 3A)**

**Phoenixville (9-1, 3A)**

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

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

**Haverford (7-4)**