

Top 20 High School Football Rankings

Southeastern Pennsylvania Football

Featuring District 1, 12, the Philadelphia Catholic League and the Inter Ac
November 8, 2006

All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise

District Eleven playoffs, Friday, November 10th

1st seed Parkland 10-0 home vs 8th seed East Stroudsburg South 8-2

4th seed Easton 9-1 home vs 5th seed Wyoming Valley West 9-1

3rd seed Liberty 9-1 vs 6th seed Delaware Valley 9-1

2nd seed Abington Heights 9-1 vs 7th seed Hazelton 8-2

** The number following a team's won-loss is the seeding order for the playoffs.*

1. St. Joseph's Prep (8-2, 7-0, #1 CL Red, bye) St. Joseph's Prep extended their regular season game winning streak to 48 games by routing Cardinal O'Hara 41-7. 48 games! The streak goes back to the 1999 regular season final against Archbishop Ryan where the Hawks won 7-0. That begs the question, who last defeated them? The honor goes to their old adversary Roman Catholic, the eventual Red Division champ that year. Because of an inquiry about St. Joe's and Cardinal O'Hara, here are a few thoughts. Not long ago, 2004 to be exact, it appeared the gap between St. Joseph's and O'Hara had narrowed with the Lions (11-1) defeating the Hawks (10-3) 14-13 in the Red final. Since that win, St. Joseph's responded as if under attack in defeating the Lions by run away scores of 31-7 and 41-7 last year, then last week's 41-7 rout. One win in a final doesn't mean O'Hara has arrived as St. Joseph's equal, but many of us felt it suggested as much. Realistically, the 2004 Hawk edition was not their strongest, making it a poor year for any comparisons. The Hawk's were crushed that year by eventual state champ Pittsburgh Central Catholic, 38-12, and St. Ignatius 26-6. Back to SJP, with the top seed comes a bye week, awaiting the winner of the LaSalle-O'Hara game, the 3 and 6 seeds respectively.

2. West Chester East (9-1, 7-0, #5) 35-0 at the half. Mercy! West Chester's newest high school, Bayard Rustin, fell to their powerful neighbor to the East, 42-14. For a team that doesn't have one senior, you've got to give it up to Bayard for staying the course and winning three games. About these Vikings, this is one huge offense that's averaging 39 points per game! They'll play the speed game or bang with you in the trenches. Ask Coatesville who felt they'd have their way only to leave West Chester with a 31-14 loss. Even Downingtown West who has some big people and good skill couldn't hold them down. East surpassed the 40 point barrier six times! Their toughest Ches-Mont opponents, Downingtown West, Coatesville and Downingtown East barely slowed them, allowing 35, 31 and 28 points respectively. In 1st round action Friday, it's hard imagining Tennett can slow them down especially on the plastic at East.

3. Ridley (10-0, 9-0, #3) Ok, now we can say the "U" word about Ridley and Council Rock North since they've made it through the regular season undefeated. Congratulations

to both. The thing about Ridley is they haven't been challenged since early in the season where they beat Bensalem and Strath Haven by fourteen points in the first and second game of the season, edged Penncrest 14-3 in the third game then outlasted Conestoga 7-0 in game four. That is in stark contrast to their last six games where they outscored their opponents 225 to 25! That may not be a problem against 14th seeded Plymouth Whitemarsh (6-4) who hasn't faced an attack of this proportion at all on the road where they played Methacton, Upper Dublin, Upper Merion and Cheltenham. They faced decent stuff at home, beating Abington and Wissahickon, while losing to LaSalle, Upper Moreland and Hatboro Horsham. If they can't hang with Hatboro and Upper Moreland *at home*, it's unlikely they'll find success in Folsom against the Raiders. Still, it's a prideful program with history. They won't be cowered.

4. Council Rock North (10-0, 7-0, #1) Council Rock North no doubt approached last week's game against Council Rock South with a reasonable level of trepidation. And well they should. Last year's season ending 16-7 loss to CR South ended things negatively and denied them a winning season. A loss this year would have been even more devastating by denying them a perfect regular season. Who knows how that would have affected their psyche entering the playoffs. This year found South again in the role of the spoiler, sitting at 2-7 with little to gain except a year's worth of bragging rights. All those elements conspired to give the game with North something of a playoff atmosphere, certainly a game of importance. The difference this year is the game had tremendous significance to North and they were one heck of a better football team than last year. So they went out and took care of business with a vengeance, pounding the Hawks 42-20. In a tradition rich district like district one, how difficult is it saying "Council Rock North, the # 1 seed." But it's a legitimate team with road wins at Conwell-Egan, Tennett and Souderton, a defense allowing 9ppg and a substantial, balanced offense scoring 30ppg. They're home against a quirky but dangerous Abington team Friday. Except for the North Penn loss, Abington is 4-1 their last five games, with the loss occurring in four over time periods at Pennsbury. Otherwise they're 1-5 on the road vs Plymouth Whitemarsh, Neshaminy, North Penn, Pennsbury and CB South. SOL-National pedigree? We'll see. The Ghosts are used to playing quality opposition on the road so it should be a good game with Abington's 23ppg defense probably being the difference.

5. North Penn (8-2, 7-0, #7) North Penn concluded the regular season with a 35-13 win against CB South. If seeing Council Rock North with the 1 seed seems odd, how unusual is it seeing North Penn as a 7 seed? But here they are as probably the best 7 seed the district will ever produce. Early season losses to Wood and O'Hara, combined with Pennridge and Neshaminy not winning as many games as usual, plus other teams having successful campaigns landed the Knight's on the seven spot. These Knights' have really played two seasons. The first five games presented a more difficult slate of opponents than the last half as they slugged their way past Wood, O'Hara, Carroll, Pennridge and Pennsbury, scoring 83 points and allowing 75. The second half of the season saw them hit their stride against Bensalem, Abington, Neshaminy, Truman and CB South, scoring 164 points while allowing 34. Importantly, running back Tyrece Ervin is healthy and quarterback Kyle Feiser seems more comfortable in his role this year. They may have started off 0-2 but they're on a roll now scoring 33ppg and allowing 7. That's

championship caliber ball plus they're home in the first round against always gritty Interboro.

6. Pennsbury (9-1, 6-1, #4) Like North Penn above them in the rankings, here's another team playing championship caliber ball. Even with the Abington score reflecting four overtime periods, they're averaging 11ppg defensively, with a well oiled offense supporting them at 27ppg. Their won-loss verses winning teams and road games are both 4-1. That's special in the SOL-National Conference. The big fullback Josh Markes allows them to control the clock and play keep away while tailback Jackson Fagan finds the seams with a quick first step. No one has stopped him this year. The one thing Pennsbury and a number of teams lack in this year's expanded playoff format is playoff experience. Using ePaSports.com shows no appearance back through 1999. The same applies for their opponent Friday, 13th seeded Wissahickon. The Trojans cooled off considerably the last few weeks going 2-2 after a 6-0 start. They have some outstanding players, but it's a bad sign when you lose to the toughest teams on your schedule, AAA Upper Moreland and Plymouth Whitemarsh, then find yourself lined up with Pennsbury on the road in a playoff game.

7. Downingtown West (9-1, 5-1, #2) How about these Whippets, going from 4-7 last year to 9-1 this year and gaining the 2 seed? Last year they were losing to Bishop Shanahan and Owen J. Roberts. This year they're smokin people, scoring 32 a game while allowing 11. Excluding West Chester East putting up 35 on them back in week five, they've only given up 8ppg! The Whippets are a big team with good skill and a 6-4 220 pound quarterback, junior Nolan Kearney, who can hurt you with a strong and accurate arm, or run over you when in fullback mode. Round one finds them in a rematch with 15th seeded Boyertown, a team they beat in the third week of the season 38-0. The Bears haven't lost since, ending the regular season in a tie with Upper Perkiomen atop the PAC-10. This bunch has heart, coming back as they have from a 1-3 start. They shouldn't win but have got to love getting a second shot at Dtown.

8. Souderton (8-2, 5-2, #8) Very fine win by Souderton last week venturing to Tennett High for a 21-17 win, their third road win in four trips. In their previous road game, they lost at Hatboro, making this an important win for conference and seeding purposes as well as their confidence heading into the playoffs. The win secured a tie for second place in the SOL-Continental Conference with Hatboro and Tennett, two games behind CR North, and garnered the 8th seed guaranteeing them a home opener in the first round. They open against Downingtown East, the 9th seed. East comes in on wobbly legs after just getting by Henderson at home last week 28-21. The win halted a two game slide following back to back losses to Downingtown West and West Chester East. Souderton will test East's suspect D with super quick Ronnie Powell (122 RY last week) and QB Mike Franklin balancing things out with timely completions. You've got to love the job Coach Ed Gallagher has done since arriving in 2003. I'm going over ground covered before but it's important enough to mention again. In Coach Gallagher's first year, the Indians went winless, 0-11. Thereon they've gone 9-3, 9-3, and 8-2 this year, making them one of the more successful programs in the district the last three years.

9. Downingtown East (7-3, 4-2, #9) The Ches Mont League has two of the finest junior quarterback in the district, Nolan Kearney at Downingtown West and Pete O'Connor, 6-3, 190 at Downingtown East. East's QB had a cast on his non-throwing hand and saw limited time last week. But they have other weapons including wide receiver Justin Blye who's back from injury and senior Richie Walls, their all purpose running back that can burn you with his running and receiving abilities. And they've played a road schedule that prepped them well for the playoffs. Good luck finding a team in the area that played a higher quality of road opponents than the Cougars who faced Lancaster McCaskey, Tennett, Coatesville Downingtown West and West Chester East. Souderton may show up better on the D stats, but they haven't faced a schedule, especially on the road like East has. If QB O'Connor is healthy, this is a toss up.

10. Archbishop Wood (8-2, 6-1, #2 CL Blue, bye) Archbishop Wood lost two games this year by three total points, 21-19 to Archbishop Ryan and 13-12 last week to West Catholic. A missed extra point was the difference against West. The loss to snapped a three game winning streak against WC, going back to the 2004 season. The Vikings ended the Blue Division campaign at 6-1, good enough to secure the 2 seed in the playoffs and giving them the week off awaiting the winner of the Conwell Egan- Bishop McDevitt game.

11. Tennett (6-3, 5-2, #12) Here's another team with some close calls resulting in three losses. In the second game of the season they lost to Downingtown East 23-21 at home. After an open date, they lost again to Council Rock North 17-7. At 1-2 they could have packed it in, but didn't and won their next five games. Last week they lost another narrow one, 21-17 to Souderton. The loss dropped them to the 12th seed where they'll face powerful West Chester East on the road Friday. Tennett is a nice team but East is on another level.

12. Hatboro Horsham (8-2, 5-2, #6) How about the Continental Conference getting four teams into the playoffs and decent seeds at that with the 1, 6, 8 and 12 seeds! All are well coached and quarterbacked. Still, Hatboro is one of the better kept secret in the district. They won't be now, not with the 16 team playoff format, but many would be surprised knowing they've had only one losing season the last eight years. Don't you wish the 16 game format existed a few years ago for that high flying circus act that was the 10-2 Hatter's of '03. This year's team doesn't have that explosiveness but it's a solid group. They're 4-0 at home. More impressively, they're 4-2 on the road and 3-2 (4-2 if Henderson beats Stoga Friday) against teams over .500. In baseball parlance, they're a tough out, losing at CR North 24-14 and Tennett 37-28. They're going to score, so *your* offense better show up. They are home Friday against 11th seeded Upper Darby. The Royals are a big, physical, *come right at you* football team. All the running backs can motor. Quarterback Blaine Fox is an experienced senior with a division one prospect at tight end, Dave Wilson. The line is huge, 250-260. Last year's team was a notch better with RB Simoni Marco Lawrence rushing for 2142 yards. It's more of a committee this year with the Roman transfer Aaron Duncan heading the list. If the Hatter's can survive the shock of the Royal's size and power, they can probably out finesse them. Still, this is a difficult opponent, despite their predisposition to coming up short.

13. Roman Catholic (8-2, 5-2, #2 CL Red, bye) Talk about owning another team, Roman's 27-21 double overtime win against LaSalle last week was their third consecutive win against the Explorer's going back to 2003. The win broke a deadlock between the two giving them full possession of second place in the Red Division. We all know St. Joseph's owns the thing, so Roman came out on top of everyone else. With it comes the 2 seed meaning they get a bye this week awaiting Saturday's winner of the North Catholic-Father Judge game. Wouldn't The Empire love another shot at Father Judge who beat them three weeks ago 10-7. The difference between Roman this year verses last year, they're beating the teams they lost to last year with wins against Valley Forge, West Catholic and O'Hara.

14. LaSalle (7-3, 4-3, # 3 CL Red) After seeing LaSalle take apart Cardinal O'Hara in Springfield, October 10th, it's hard imagining they are on a three game losing streak. But here they are with consecutive losses to St. Joe's, Ryan and the Double-OT loss to Roman. With O'Hara out of the picture, this was the year you figured they'd pull down second place in the Red. They lost that to Roman last week and so must play in the first round where they face a team they probably would rather not play again, Cardinal O'Hara. For the Lions, does it get any better after a disappointing 3-7 season, to be playing in the postseason against a team that whacked you at home earlier in the year, but is now second guessing themselves after losing three straight? For players past and present, just to be playing this time of the year is a good thing.

15. Penn Charter (7-2, 4-0) Penn keeps on winning with last week's 56-0 shellacking of Haverford School. Their only losses are narrow ones to Archbishop Wood, 20-6 and Valley Forge Military Academy, 12-6. The Wood final misleads with the Quakers out rushing the Vikings 176 to 154. But Wood's QB Sean McCartney had the hot hand, completing 8 of 13 for 166 yards and 3 touchdowns. As you know, Penn always has a number of quality athletes. This year's attention getter is running back Sean McNally, who has 935 rushing yards on 175 carries. Penn is a running team, rushing the ball 79 % of all plays. They are one game from locking up their first *outright* Inter Academic title in 4 years. They shared championships in '03 and '04 to Malvern Prep and Germantown Academy, with Malvern winning it outright last year. To get the title, they have to beat a capable 7-2 Germantown Academy team on a two game roll. A win by the Patriots ties them with Penn and Malvern Prep if the Prep wins at Chestnut Hill Saturday. You know GA wants some after getting beat last year 28-6.

16. Malvern Prep (6-2, 3-1) Malvern Prep went out and had a lot of fun last week, putting it to Episcopal Academy 42-7. That's as good as good can feel after losing the previous week to Penn Charter. With Malvern's powerful OL blowing the Churchmen off the line, they easily rushed for 207 yards, getting another 141 through the air. EA was held to 97 on the ground and 23 passing. The Friars have one of the better lines in the area so Episcopal isn't the only opponent to be blown off the field this year. The best Malvern can do now is to share the Inter-Ac crown if two things happen. They have to beat Chestnut Hill Saturday, and Penn Charter has to lose at Germantown Academy. Beating the Hill (7-2) isn't a piece of cake. Their losses are to Penn by 3 and GA by 7.

They have quite a talent in junior Rashad Campbell, a 5-8, 175, quick but strong running back who has gained 1623 yards on 237 carries. With those numbers, you know he has help. Seniors Wayne Crawford and Don Houck, 6-3, 295 and 6-2, 275 respectively, anchor the line. That's enough to keep Malvern's super OL'er Paul Ostick and scrappy Ron Bates busy all day.

17. Interboro (8-2, 4-0, #10) The Bucs are back! Despite going 9-3 the last two years, Interboro failed to make the playoffs. How time flies seeing its been since '03 when they last made the playoffs, going three deep before losing to North Penn. They did the same the year before, beating Hazelton and Scranton, then falling to the Knights 26-14. Guess who the Bucs play Friday in round one? It's really special when you get programs of Interboro's and North Penn's stature teeing it up on the same field. Both teams represent some of the finest football played in the state. Since 1999, North Penn's won-loss is 82-19 counting this year, with a State Championship in 2003. Interboro stands at 78-18 over the same period. That's a feat knowing they are one of the smallest 4A teams in the district with 582 males enrolled in grades 10 through 12. Fortunately, football is also about attitude, not simple numbers. Rest assured you'll see plenty of that Friday. The same goes for North Penn who has really found their groove the last half of the season. The Bucs will get up their face but this is one tall order in bringing down North.

18. Frankford (7-1, 5-0) Frankford did not play Central in the opening round of 4A District Twelve action last week as written here. My apologies for that. They played and crushed Olney (6-2, Blue Div) 58-12. The Philadelphia Public League or District Twelve, started their playoff last week with a slate of seven quads and one AAA going at it. Frankford did Olney pretty good. Northeast at 4-5 pulled the shocker by bouncing undefeated 3A Bok out of the playoffs, 9-0. At 3-5, Dobbins was not supposed to beat White Division champ Philly Central, but they did, 28-19. And finally, ever present 7-2 George Washington (84-19, last 8 yrs) routed Bartram (7-1) 43-0 to give the Red Division a sweep in the first round. In the second round Frankford plays Dobbins Saturday at Germantown High, 11 PM, followed by the 2 PM game, GW vs Northeast. GW beat them in the regular season 19-0 while Frankford beat Dobbins 38-25. With Frankford and Washington cruising last week, they're primed. Dobbins and Northeast let it all out on the field last week in real upsets making it look like a Frankford-GW final.

19. Abington (6-4, 4-3, #16) It's nice seeing Abington back in the playoffs. But it does demonstrate the shortcomings of the playoff point system. In the real world, the Ghosts are anything but a 16 seed in *this* field. An improved system would better factor in the realities of *schedule strength*, unless you feel 15th seeded Boyertown faced stiffer comp than Abington. Let's take a look. The Bears went 1-3 against the four winning teams on their schedule at the top of the year. One of those losses was to AA Lansdale Catholic, 14-0. Against the last six opponents, of which two were AAA teams and one a single A, the Bears went 6-0. None of those teams had a winning record. This is a wrap against the system, not Boyertown. Those guys sweated, sacrificed, played hard and won 7 games. Another example; in the SOL-American Conference, 14th seeded Plymouth Whitmarsh finished the season in a tie for second place with 13th seeded Wissahickon. Both were 5-2, but the Colonials beat Wissahickon 25-0 and still finished one seed below them

because of playing a tougher non-conference schedule. While they were going 1-2 against LaSalle (7-3), Abington (6-4) and Hatboro (8-2), the Trojans went 3-0 against Germantown Academy (7-2), Bishop McDevitt (3-7), Kennedy Kenrick (0-10). The logic here says, play a tough non-conference schedule at your own peril. The loser here isn't Abington, Whitmarsh or Wissahickon. Each play a powerful adversary Friday. The real loser is Council Rock North who is suppose to benefit as the top seed by playing the weakest team in the district, not an Abington team that could rightly fit anywhere from 8 through 12. This is a diatribe to some but can anyone offer an argument *that is reasonable*, why strength of schedule should not be factored in? Abington and Council Rock North should be hard fought well contested game.

20. West Catholic (6-4, 6-1, #1 CL Blue, bye) Sometimes you just need a little luck. Isn't it interesting how the better teams seem to have more of it! West Catholic should qualifies as that by turning their season around following a 0-3 start. 6 and 1 is one heck of a rebound from that. Archbishop Wood's "All Everything" Chris Lorditch missed an extra point which allowed the Burrs to prevail last week, 13-12. At the top of the season, West couldn't seem to do anything right. The offense was stuck in the mud at 18ppg, while the defense allowed a sieve-like 31ppg. But over the last seven games, the offense found itself, scoring 27ppg while the D dug in to allow an impressive 13ppg. So, things have really come together for the young Burrs who will likely be quite a force next year. West's win earned them the top seed in the Blue Division playoff and a bye week awaiting the winner of the Neumann Goretti-Carroll game.

Honorable Mention

* All playoff games are Friday, November 10th

North Catholic (6-4, 4-3, #4 CL Red) at Northeast vs Father Judge

Father Judge (6-4, 4-3, #5 CL Red)

Chestnut Hill Academy (7-2)

Plymouth Whitmarsh (6-4, 5-2, #14) at Ridley

Wissachickon (8-2, 5-2, #13) at Pennsbury

Boyertown (7-3, 7-1, #15) at Downingtown West

Upper Darby (7-2, 6-2, #11) at Hatboro Horsham

3A Upper Moreland (8-1, 6-1, 1 seed) Home vs Sun Valley

3A Garnet Valley (8-1, 5-1, 2 seed) Home vs Upper Perkiomen

3A Marple Newtown (8-2, 7-2, 3 seed) Home vs Unionville

3A Unionville (8-2, 6-1, 4 seed)

3A Upper Perkomen (8-2, 7-1, 5 seed)

3A Sun Valley (7-3, 4-2, 6 seed)

3A Strath Haven (7-3, 7-2) Season over.