

# **Top 20 High School Football Rankings**

## **Southeastern Pennsylvania Football**

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

November 28, 2006

All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise

### **The East:**

#### **AAAA District 2/4/11/Sub Regional Playoffs:**

Lehigh Valley's Bethlehem Liberty (12-1) had a much easier time with Easton (12-2) the second time around as they handled the Red Rovers 35-14, to win their 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive District 11 championship. During the regular season they beat Easton 17-7. Liberty's Hurricanes play in the Lehigh Valley Interscholastic Athletic Association, Northampton Division. They move on to play District 12 champ Frankford (9-2), who lost to North Catholic last week in their annual Thanksgiving Day game, 23-14. The game with Liberty is scheduled for 1 PM, Saturday at Northeast High in Philadelphia. The winner plays whoever comes out of the District 1 game Friday night between Ridley and Pennsbury.

### **The West:**

#### **AAAA Districts 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10 overview:**

Out west, Upper Saint Clair won the District 7 WPIAL championship to remain unbeaten at 13-0 by edging powerful Penn Hills (10-2), 18-12. The Panthers play in the WPIAL AAAA Greater Southern Conference. They play Friday in Wexford against 11-1 Erie Cathedral Prep from District 10. Cathedral Prep defeated District 8's Pittsburgh Brashear (8-5), 44-22. The Ramblers only loss is to Pittsburgh Central Catholic 21-7 so they should be able to give USC a game, although they are the clear underdog. Whoever emerges in this one plays the winner of the Governor Mifflin-State College game to be played Saturday in Altoona. District 3's Governor Mifflin is 12-1 after routing 11-2 Wilson (West Lawn) 47-13. They nipped the Bulldogs 14-12 at West Lawn in the first game of the year, but it was a different story playing the Mustangs in their house. Governor Mifflin plays out of the Berks Inter County Conference, Section 1, along with Pottsville, the team Garnet Valley battles in the AAA quarterfinal this weekend. That's quite a coup for the Berks Conference advancing two teams to the quarterfinals in different classifications. GM's opponent Saturday is State College. The Lions are geographically in District 6 but play in the predominantly central Pennsylvania Mid Penn Conference in District 3. "State" beat fellow MPC member Bishop McDevitt, 34-20 last week, avenging a regular season 24-16 loss in Harrisburg. That had to be sweet since McDevitt eliminated State College in the quarterfinals last year 20-17. State's other loss this year was to Harrisburg High 32-27, meaning they are something of a darkhorse.

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

Corrections to last week's write ups: Last week's write ups were poorly worded, leading you to believe the Blue Division final was to be played last weekend. It was not. West

Catholic played Penn Wood while Archbishop Wood was idle. In District 12, Frankford did not have a bye week as mentioned, rather, their annual Thanksgiving Day game with North Catholic. Sorry for misleading anyone.

**1. Ridley (13-0, 9-0, #3)** Ridley got a little more respect last week by toppling the team many had already penciled in to win yet another District One title, North Penn. Upset? You decide. When's the last time North Penn was held to 24 yards rushing or 6 first downs? How about heretofore unstoppable tailback Tyrece Ervin being held to 46 yards on 13 carries? How about their generating a sub-par 132 yards of total offense, or held scoreless for the last 19 minutes and 47 seconds of the game? On the Ridley side, the Green got 18 first downs, 256 yards of total offense and came back from a 17-7 deficit to pull out a 21-17 win. All of that in conjunction with St. Joseph's Prep losing to LaSalle in the Red final propelled the Mean Green to the top spot in the rankings. How about these Green Raiders! If nothing else, perhaps this game demonstrates that you really can't prepare for speed. Can't catch it on film, can't simulate it in practice. 4<sup>th</sup> seeded Pennsbury is next after defeating 16<sup>th</sup> seeded Abington.

**2. Pennsbury (12-1, 6-1, #4)** Pennsbury beat Abington in the District One semifinal game 27-12. They out-rushed the Ghosts 273 yards to *negative* 28 rushing yards, sacking dangerous quarterback Kevin Morton 6 times along the way. Stellar Falcon running back Jackson Fagan ran for 162 yards on 20 carries, taking him to 2033 yards for the year. Sounds like a romp doesn't it? Actually, nothing could be further from the truth since this one was a missed 2 point conversion from being deadlocked at 14 all with 2 minutes left in the game! Abington moved the ball well through the air, going up and down the field all night. But Pennsbury made the big stops, turning the Ghosts away time after time. The missed 2 point conversion with 2 minutes left had Pennsbury up 14-12. From there, Pennsbury lived up to its reputation (running and defense) by springing J. Fagan on a 50 yard TD sprint, and returning an interception 48 yards for the score, *all in the final 2 minutes of the game*. Two things stick out in this one relative to the upcoming District final with Ridley; Pennsbury was able to bring pressure on quarterback Morton, yet he still threw for 241 yards. He completed 58% of his passes, 14 of 24, for TD strikes of 38 and 81 yards. That's 17.2 yards per completion. Take away the scoring completions and it's still over 10 yards per catch, on Pennsbury's turf. Next week's game is in Folsom against one of the premier passing attacks in the state. The North Penn game should have shown Ridley is not a finesse team. Rather, they're a physical, quick team with tremendous tradition having them believe they will win every game. Many are picking Pennsbury but last week's results say it's real dangerous going against Ridley on their home field.

**3. LaSalle (9-3, 4-3, # 3 CL Red)** LaSalle dethroned defending champ St. Joseph's Prep in the Red Division final last week in a well contested game. This was an odd one with LaSalle rushed the ball 9 times for zero yardage! Although the Explorer's defense allowed 390 total yards, they made the big plays when they had to and helped the offense by scoring a touchdown. A hit on Hawk's quarterback Chris Whitney at the 4 yard line saw linebacker Greg Frantz motor 96 yards for the score in the first quarter. In the second quarter, QB John Harrison (17/29/175/1TD) hit Joe Migliarese on an 18 yard scoring

strike putting LaSalle up 14-0 at the half. St. Joe's got on the board in the third quarter when running back Jamir Livingston ran one in from 18 yards out. The final score was 14-7. You've got to credit the LaSalle D for applying the adage of *bending but not breaking* in holding the Hawk's offense to 55.71 yards per point. That's how far they had to go to get a single point. Hard hits and heads up play forced a few fumbles and an interception. The win gave first year coach Drew Gordon an early Christmas present and the school their first championship since 1998. It also brings the curtain down on their 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive 9 win season.

**4. St. Joseph's Prep (9-3, 7-0, #1 CL Red)** St. Joseph's 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive appearance in the Red final was blunted by a fired up LaSalle team that prevailed 14-7. Despite losing, running back Jamir Livingston had another superb outing, rushing for 145 yards to bring his season total to 1502 yards. For the Hawks, it was the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 7 years they did not reach double digits in the win column. The loss ends the 2006 season but you know these Hawks will field another powerful edition next year.

**5. North Penn (10-3, 7-0, #7)** Many pundits expected North Penn to beat Ridley and advance to the district final for a rematch with Suburban One, National Conference foe Pennsbury, but it wasn't meant to be. It is no small task getting past an undefeated team playing at home! What they ran into there was a buzz saw of a team that probably shocked them with their team speed and grit. North Penn had the door slammed on them by the Green Raider defense that held them to 24 yards rushing on 28 carries. That's less than one yard per carry, .85 ypc. The punctuation mark on that was Quarterback Kyle Feiser being sacked 4 times and outstanding running back Tyrece Ervin being held to 46 yards rushing. For whatever reason, Ridley is always said to be a small team, too small is often the implication. But there is nothing small about 6-2, 240 pound Mike Wilkins, one of the best defensive ends in this part of the state. The Knights had no answer for him. He had 3 sacks and at least 2 thrown-for-losses. 5-11, 205, Lenny Pinto and Zac Gallagher, 5-8, 185 penetrated all night against North Penn's line, so the size thing is often blown way out of proportion. For the Knights, you've got to say it was a successful year especially as they recovered from a 0-2 start to get their 5<sup>th</sup> double-digit winning season in a row. With an 84-20 eight year won-loss record, you know the Knights will be back next year, loaded as always.

**6. Abington (8-5, 4-3, #16)** Something happened to this team following the 35-0 loss to North Penn way back in game number seven. They were 5-3 after the loss. From that point on they went 4-2 against some of the toughest competition in the district. Their only losses were to Pennsbury, 35-28 in 4 overtimes and last week in the district semifinal, 27-12. Otherwise they beat Bensalem and Truman in the regular season, then went 2-1 against undefeated Council Rock North, a 21-20 win, and Souderton, 25-22. In the Pennsbury game, they were down by 2 points with 2 minutes left in the game, so we're talking about a team that made tremendous improvement over the course of the season. Because quarterback Kevin Morton and others return next year, look for the Ghosts to mount a serious challenge for district honors in postseason play. Heck of a year!

**7. West Chester East (10-2, 7-0, #5)** Season over

**8. Downingtown West (10-2, 5-1, #2) Season over**

**9. Archbishop Wood (9-2, 6-1, #2 CL Blue)** Archbishop Wood was idle last week while West Catholic, their opponent in the Blue Division final this Friday at Northeast High, had a fierce encounter with a well improved Penn Wood team. Whether West is better off staying in *game shape* or Wood for the chance to mend some aches and pains is a good topic for debate. I'll take staying on the field. On Friday evening Wood gets a shot at redemption against a West Catholic team that beat them in the regular season final to get the 1 seed atop the Blue Division. The score was 13-12 with a missed extra point being the difference. Actually, West's defense made the difference by holding Wood to 78 yards rushing and 101 through the air. Their offense was an all-out ground assault, pounding the Viking D for 162 yards on the ground. Another performance like that will deny Wood their 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive Blue Division championship.

**10. Council Rock North (10-1, 7-0, #1) Season over.**

**11. Souderton (9-3, 5-2, #8) Season over**

**12. Tennett (6-4, 5-2, #12) Season over.**

**13. Hatboro Horsham (9-3, 5-2, #6) Season over**

**14. Penn Charter (8-2, 5-0) Season over.**

**15. Malvern Prep (8-2, 4-1)** Malvern Prep concluded another successful season by defeating hapless Monsignor Bonner 40-6. Bonner's 4 year won-loss now stands at 7 wins and 37 losses. That's got to be tough for the players. Conversely, Malvern's 8-2 season puts their 4 year won-loss at 29-13. That includes 2004's 3-8 campaign, their only losing season in the last 8 years.

**16. West Catholic (8-4, 6-1, #1 CL Blue)** West struggled past improved Penn Wood last week but came out on top with a 7-0 win. Penn Wood finished the year 6-5, their first winning season since 2002. This is a program that went 4-32 the preceding 3 years. Any maturity next will see them reverse this year's narrow losses of 3, 6, 7 and 7 points. Do that, and this year's team is 10-1. Nice job by first year Coach Sam Mormando. About the game, the Burrs had difficulty getting anything going against a stout Patriot D that held them to 85 yards rushing and another 70 through the air. West's D was a force as well, holding the Pats to 47 yards rushing and 166 passing. What a great warm up for the Blue Division final Friday night against Archbishop Wood where the Burrs make their 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive appearance!

**17. Roman Catholic (9-3, 5-2, #2 CL Red)** Roman Catholic ended the season on a strong positive by defeating Roxborough 19-6. The 9 win season is their highest win total since 2002 when they went 11-3. That's quite a turnaround from last year's 7-5 campaign.

**18. Downingtown East (7-4, 4-2, #9)** Season over.

**19. Plymouth Whitemarsh (6-5, 5-2, #14)** Season over.

**20. 3A Garnet Valley (11-1, 5-1, 2 seed)** Garnet Valley moves into the 20<sup>th</sup> spot vacated by an Upper Moreland team that lost to the Jaguars in last week's AAA District 1 final. There are only 8 AAA teams still playing in the state and the Jags are one of them! Since the one point loss to Unionville September 13<sup>th</sup>, they've won 6 straight so they're on a roll. They'll need to stay at a high level of performance to beat the next opponent on their schedule, Pottsville. The Crimson Tide from District 11, play out of the Berks Inter County Conference, Section 1. They are one of the real football powers in the state and have won the district title 3 straight years. Last year's 13-2 team made it to the state final before losing to Franklin Regional, 23-13. This year's 11-2 team is loaded again. They've beaten strong football teams to get this far including Lehighton (7-4) in a surprising 56-21 rout. In the district final they beat Northwestern Lehigh (9-3) 13-7. Northwestern got there by defeating a talented Bethlehem Catholic team, 35-33. Becahi ended the year 8-3. Last week saw the Tide defeat District 2 champ West Scranton (7-6!), 40-28 to reach the Quarterfinals against Garnet Valley. The game is essentially a home game for Pottsville, being played in Orwigsburg, home of rival Blue Mountain High School.

## **Honorable Mention**

**North Catholic (7-5, 4-3, #4 CL Red)**

**Father Judge (7-5)**

**Neumann Goretti (8-5)**

**Chestnut Hill Academy (7-3)**

**Frankford (9-2, 5-0)**

**Coatesville (6-4)**

**Interboro (8-3, 4-0, #10)**

**3A Upper Moreland (10-2, 6-1, 1 seed)**

**3A Marple Newtown (8-3, 7-2, 3 seed)**

**3A Unionville (9-3, 6-1, 4 seed)**

**3A Strath Haven (7-3, 7-2)**