

Top 20 High School Football Rankings

Southeastern Pennsylvania Football

Featuring District 1, 12, the Philadelphia Catholic League and the Inter Ac
December 5, 2006

All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise

The East:

AAAA

Bethlehem Liberty had no trouble dispatching District 12's Frankford High (9-3), jumping out to a 35-0 lead at the beginning of the 4th quarter. From there on their starters sat, while Frankford scored 15 unanswered points for the 35-15 final. The win puts Liberty in the State Semi Final against Pennsbury Saturday afternoon at War Memorial Field in Doylestown. Both are 13-1. We all know about Pennsbury, they're led by running back Jackson Fagan (2120 rush yards), fullback Josh Parkes (855 rush yards) and quarterback Victor Iturbides (685 rush yards!). That should be enough to keep Liberty's defense busy. Iturbides has a powerful arm that Liberty must respect, or not, at their own peril. Defensively, they're as good as anyone, allowing an average 10ppg. Good luck keeping track of the sacks, thrown-for-loss and tipped balls with this group. They got to West Chester East's quarterback Bob Brice atleast 3 times and Kevin Morton from Abington 6 times. Against Ridley, they sacked Al Humes 3 times, getting 4 tipped passes in the 1st quarter alone. Their last two opponents have been held to negative rush yardage. East got most of their yardage against the 2nd units, while Wissahickon was simply routed, 43-6. For Liberty, we're talking about a large and versatile attack led by a 4 year starting quarterback. He's a good one. Senior Dan Persa defines double threat, passing for 1817 yards and rushing for 978. He averages 6 yards per carry. His pass completion is an uncanny 68%, connecting on 132 of 193. His touchdown to interception ratio is 17/3 and he's rushed for another 14 TDs. Not surprisingly, he has a full ride to Northwestern. It doesn't end there. Running back Ahkeen Smith has rushed for 1325 yards and 27 touchdowns. They've scored 560 points in 14 games (40ppg), with numerous blowouts inflating the D stats to 13ppg per early outs for the first units. They are led by seniors Al Petros and Eric Blum on the line, and Mike Catchings and Ray Mamuzich at backer. Against Easton, top receiver Ray Olivo (36/481) went down with an ACL. That will cause some newness and shuffling of personnel in the secondary. Summing up; although Liberty's offense seems unstoppable, they have not met a team like Pennsbury who will maul you with a triple headed running attack and defense, then sneak up on you with the underrated arm of Victor Iturbides. If the Falcons match the Canes speed, they'll win. I think they will.

The West:

AAAA

Undefeated Upper Saint Clair (14-0) beat Cathedral Prep (11-2) easily, 30-7, to move on to the Western Final against a 12-2 State College team that got the shutout against Governor Mifflin, 21-0. GM ends the year 12-2. Although Upper Saint Clair came into the postseason undefeated, there was still some question how they'd do against a *steady diet* of quality opponents. During the regular season, they faced only 2 winning teams! Both North Allegheny (9-3) and McKeesport (8-3) gave them competitive games while losing 16-7 and 28-14 respectively. The 9 opponents had a combined won-loss of 36-55. Counting the playoffs, the W/L of their opponents is 76-73. But coming from the WPIAL 4A Southern Conference with McKeesport and Mt.Lebanon, no one doubted their

pedigree. And it showed with the Panthers blowing past 5 playoff opponents by an average score of 28-8. Included in their victories were strong teams from Penn Hills (10-2) and North Allegheny (9-3). On the year they're averaging 31ppg offensively and 9 defensively. Defense is their strength where they return 8 fulltime and a number of part time starters from last year. They also return a veteran quarterback and running back, behind a powerful line. Facing them Saturday evening at Mansion Park Stadium in Altoona is State College, a 12-2 Mid Penn Conference survivor (3rd place) from the Commonwealth Division. No doubt about their pedigree facing Harrisburg's powerful triumvirate of Bishop McDevitt (9-4), Central Dauphin (9-3) and Harrisburg High (10-2) annually. It's not Cincinnati but they sure play some good football in Harrisburg. The Lions are close to being undefeated themselves, with an 8 point loss to McDevitt and a 5 pointer to Harrisburg, all on the road. The schedule reads like a minefield playing 9 winning teams and only 5 losers. The combined won-loss of all teams played is 93-68. The last 5 games have seen them face Harrisburg in the season finale, 3 more Mid Penn teams in *Districts*, Lower Dauphin, Central Dauphin and McDevitt, before playing Governor Mifflin in the title game last week. Against a schedule like that, their *points for* and *points against* average of 35-12 is pretty impressive. The Mid Penn is down a little this year but *State* can still go with USC.

1. Pennsbury (13-1, 6-1) The Fairless Hills Falcons checked into Folsom last Saturday to challenge the undefeated Green Raiders of Ridley High for the right to represent District One in the Pennsylvania High School Football State Semifinal. They battled on even terms until deep into the 3rd quarter when Kyle Reaves got behind a Raider defender (5 yard line) at the 4:53 mark of the quarter, pulling in a well thrown 45 yard heave from strong armed quarterback Victor Iturbides for the first score of the game. 31 minutes and 47 seconds of the game had transpired when Kyle crossed the line for 6. Those of us fortunate enough to be there witnessed one of the epic encounters seen in recent district one title games. After the last three finals saw 71, 85 and 75 total points scored from 2003 to 2005, we finally got a game where defense dominated. On one hand you had heavy weight Pennsbury, a 12-1 immovable force from the famed Suburban One League's National Conference on an 8 game winning streak (how did they lose to North Penn?), pitted against undefeated Ridley, a team that has become as much synonymous with winning as they have with fielding super quick passing attacks with excellent skill players. Ridley was so quick defensively and Pennsbury so powerful on the same side of the ball that neither was able to muster anything resembling rhythm, until the 4:53 mark of the 3rd quarter. Following the kickoff and subsequent Ridley punt, the Falcons went to the ground and scored on Jackson Fagan's 31 yard run at the 11:53 mark of the 4th quarter. What a game and what a win for Pennsbury, getting their first district crown on the road against Ridley. That was a great tune up for the next opponent, Bethlehem Liberty, who also advanced to the State Semi Final by beating District 12 champ Frankford Saturday afternoon in the Northeast, 35-15. Congratulations to our new District One champ Pennsbury.

2. Ridley (13-1, 9-0) A record setting team led by a record setting quarterback provided those lucky enough to see them with the rare treat of an undefeated regular season, followed by a deep run into the PIAA 4A playoffs that came up one game short of winning a district title. What a ride! Pennsbury is one fine team but these Raiders gave them a game to remember. How about that defense! Pound for pound that's one of the quickest, hardest hitting defenses seen in years. For the first 31 minutes and change, they held one of the most prolific offenses in the district (29ppg) to 55 yards rushing.

Pennsbury's Jackson Fagan, with 2053 yards rushing coming in, was held to 67 yards on 20 carries. 31 of those came on their second touchdown to begin the 4th quarter meaning he was held to 36 yards on 19 carries before that run. He and Josh Parkes, a 6-1, 250 pound fullback are probably the most versatile, dangerous tandem in the state, providing the Falcons with a rare blend of talented speed and power. The big guy is athletic as well, ending the night with 15 carries for 58 yards. For a team that doesn't pass often quarterback Victor Iturbides showed a powerful arm, with one toss going 45 yards for the score. On the Ridley side, quarterback Al Humes was harassed all night with unrelenting pressure from Pennsbury's front, especially DLs Greg Bickel 6-3, 230, Dennis Lynch 6-2, 195 and Cory Llewellyn 5-9, 190. They are a nice blend of strength and speed. As good as the Raiders are the Pennsbury D is better, holding them to negative 9 yards rushing and a woeful 9 completions on 37 attempts. They also got 2 picks. At least 4 passes were tipped at the line. Pennsbury rushed for 164 yards and got another 72 through the air. For Ridley, when you get this far, the last thing you're expecting is that it will end. But in time, they will be able to look back with perspective to see what a unique and historic season they had. Well done Green Raiders!

3. LaSalle (9-3, 4-3)

4. St. Joseph's Prep (9-3, 7-0)

5. North Penn (10-3, 7-0)

6. Abington (8-5, 4-3)

7. West Chester East (10-2, 7-0)

8. Downingtown West (10-2, 5-1)

9. Council Rock North (10-1, 7-0)

10. West Catholic (9-4, 6-1) Finally! After 5 *consecutive appearances* in the Catholic League Blue Division Final and 4 *straight finals* against Archbishop Wood, West Catholic came away with the divisional title by defeating the Vikings 20-12. The score belies the fact that West shut Wood down on the ground, holding them to 14 yards in 21 carries, a .6 yards per carry average! Contrast that with the Burrs further physical domination of Archbishop Wood by way of 236 rushing yards on 40 carries. Ouch! West is such a great blend of youthful talent supported by a cast of some of the best senior talent in the area. Check out seniors Anthony Rhoades, a 6-2, 245 pound DE/OLB, and DE Isiah Edmond at 6-1, 250 pounds. How's that for bookend DEs! Terrorizing the middle is MLB Marc Holloway a 6-1, 225 pound senior. Hopefully senior running back Dennis Shaw's accomplishments won't be forgotten to soon. He rushed for 3444 yards in 3 seasons. Curtis Brinkley was the bomb but that's not bad! Some of the younger talent is represented by junior LB Marquese Sanders, 6-1, 220 and promising sophomore quarterback Curtis Drake. He had a strong game against Wood, sweeping around the end for a 2nd quarter 54 yard touchdown jaunt before connecting with junior Rodney Blango on a 17 yard TD to finish the day at 2/3/18/1TD. Another soph, speedster Raymond Maples, had a 58 yard touchdown run and 78 for the game on 11 carries. 9-4! What a great ending for a team that began the year with 3 straight losses. Look out next year!

11. Archbishop Wood (9-3, 6-1) Archbishop Wood made it to the Blue Final for the 4th consecutive year despite replacing the entire OL, their 3 year starting running back Bryan McCartney, who ground out 3670 rush yards, and quarterback Joe Kosich who threw for 1363 yards and 16 touchdowns passes! What a find Kosich was replacing departed QB Chris Hanson's 1442 passing yards and 21 TDs! Wood has had no difficulty recently replacing quarterbacks, including this year with QB Sean McCartney having a solid sophomore year, completing 44 of 91 passes for 700 yards and 9 touchdowns in 8 games. He saved his best for last and was largely all the attack they had against West Catholic by completing 19 of 36 tosses for 285 yards. West won but what a game for the sophomore and learning experience for the coming years. Senior receivers Chris Lorditch and Pat Devlin had an outstanding game. Lorditch caught 6 passes for 98 yards and 2 touchdowns while Pat Devlin snagged 9 for 133 yards. The aerial display was impressive but not enough to ward off determined West Catholic who prevailed 20-12. What a 4 year run for the Vikings, banging out a 38-9 record and 3 Blue Division championships.

12. Souderton (9-3, 5-2)

13. Tennett (6-4, 5-2)

14. Hatboro Horsham (9-3, 5-2)

15. Penn Charter (8-2, 5-0)

16. Malvern Prep (8-2, 4-1)

17. Roman Catholic (9-3, 5-2)

18. Downingtown East (7-4, 4-2)

19. Plymouth Whitemarsh (6-5, 5-2)

20. 3A Garnet Valley (11-2, 5-1) Garnet Valley got a major dose of *playoff football* this year by advancing through the district to the championship game where they beat Upper Moreland 17-14. Then came Pottsville, a District 11 playoff powerhouse that showed the Jaguars a whole other level of play by pasting them in the Quarter Final 51-20. Odd as it sounds, the Jags had surprising ease in moving the ball by churning out 173 yards on the ground in 38 carries and another 141 in the air. But, 4 fumbles and 2 interceptions will get you every time against an opponent of Pottsville's prowess. One interception was returned for a touchdown. The Tide rolled as well by getting 282 yards rushing on 50 attempts and 112 passing. They move on to play Red Land. That's a tough way for the Jags to end the year, but getting a district crown will ease a lot of pain. It was a great year for them and we look forward to their inclusion in the Central League in 2008.

Honorable Mention

North Catholic (7-5, 4-3)

Father Judge (7-5)

Neumann Goretti (8-5)

Chestnut Hill Academy (7-3)

Frankford (9-3, 5-0)

Coatesville (6-4)

Interboro (8-3, 4-0)

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

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

3A Unionville (9-3, 6-1)

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

3A Sun Valley (8-4, 4-2)