

# **Top 20 High School Football Rankings**

## **Southeastern Pennsylvania Football**

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

### **PIAA State Playoffs:**

All the games are at Hershey Stadium, Friday December 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> in Chocolate Town, USA.

### **AAAA**

Upper Saint Clair (15-0) edged State College (12-3) 28-20 in the West Final last week and will play Bethlehem Liberty in the Final Saturday night at 7 PM. Liberty edged Pennsbury in an epic 4 overtime 45-38 struggle last week to win their 2<sup>nd</sup> straight Eastern championship.

### **AAA**

In the East, Pottsville (13-2) beat Red Land (13-2) 17-7 and will face General McLane (12-2) who surprised Thomas Jefferson (14-1) in the West Final 28-7. The AAA Final is Friday December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM.

### **AA**

Undefeated Wilson at 15-0 defeated Wyomissing (14-1) 21-13 in the East Final to advance against Jeanette (14-1) who beat Wilmington (14-1) 28-7. The AA Final is Saturday December 16<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM.

### **A**

Rather than undefeated, we should probably call the program at Southern Columbia nearly invincible at 15-0 and 107-13 over the last 9 years. The average score of their 5 playoff games to date is 48-12. They beat Bellwood-Antis last week 35-0 and go after their 5<sup>th</sup> straight title and 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive appearance in the Single-A Final against undefeated West Middlesex (15-0) who defeated Clairton in the West Final 37-30. The Single-A Final is Friday December 15<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM.

### **Note:**

How about District 11 advancing Liberty, Pottsville and Wilson to the State Final for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year. Shift in power away from District 1? Probably not as all 3 are well quarterbacked, coached teams with gifted talent. Good luck to all 3 to reverse last year's 0-3 outing and bring back the gold.

### **Final Note:**

I want to thank Mike at HavenFootball.net and Don at ePaSports.com for publishing the weekly Top 20. They are great guys with excellent, must see web sites. Also, a thank you goes out to Ted Silary of TedSilary.com for allowing me to use statistical information published there. Most of you know Ted's site. If not, go there! Many thanks to Ed Palmer or "Huck" as we know him. He's been supportive with his unmatched knowledge and

views about Philadelphia high school football. And finally, I am unable to thank Louise Capriotti who was taken from us suddenly on November 6<sup>th</sup> of this year. Louise developed DelawareCountySports.com into a top notch web site that served the community and kids well. She allowed me to do the rankings for Hoops and Football since 2001. Rest in peace Louise. To the fans, thanks for your opinions and criticisms. It was a great year and we look forward to another good one next year. Until then, Go Canes. Ed Thomas.

## **PIAA AAAA Final:**

### **Upper Saint Clair (15-0) vs Bethlehem Liberty (14-1)**

Undefeated Upper Saint Clair enters the Final after defeating the following teams in the playoffs; Plum (3-7) 35-6, North Hills (7-4) 34-10, North Allegheny (9-3) 24-3, Penn Hills (10-2) 18-12, Cathedral Prep (11-2) 30-7 and in the Western Final last week, State College (12-3) 28-20. On the year they're averaging 31ppg offensively while allowing 10 defensively. A reminder from last week; defense is their strength where they return 8 fulltime and a number of part time starters from last year. They also return veteran quarterback Pat McShane and running back Dan Crowell who runs behind a strong line. At the top of the season, all the talk out west and a good deal in the East was about Woodland Hills and Pittsburgh Central Catholic. Upper Saint Clair, Penn Hills, McKeesport and North Hills were also mentioned as powerful favorites to wear the Western and State crown. In some ways this was unusual since McKeesport was in a major rebuilding phase, as was Penn Hills who USC barely defeated in the playoffs. North Hills lost their quarterback and most of their skill players so that left the "biggies", Woodland Hills and Pitt CC. For all the lofty expectations and preseason hype, you've got to say 8-3 was a major disappointment for Woodland Hills, compounded by their early exit from the postseason in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round by North Allegheny. Pitt CC at 10-2 went further, but lost in the District 7 Semi Final to Penn Hills 14-6. (Guess Penn Hills rebuilt well!) Their only loss in the regular season was to Woodland Hills 17-14. Central Catholic and Woodland Hills are great teams but they didn't have it at money time. USC did! Will they be able to win District 7's 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive championship? Don't listen to me. I thought Pennsbury would be here. But the team from Bethlehem looks special. Add to that good coaching and a veteran, *tempo-setting* quarterback who is uniquely talented, as champions often are, and it looks like redemption time for the Canes to atone for last year's lopsided loss to McKeesport and bring home the gold. If Pennsbury couldn't set the tone against Liberty with their size, quickness, defense and backfield, it's doubtful any team can.

**1. Pennsbury (13-2, 6-1)** Pennsbury's super season came to a frustrating conclusion at Doylestown's War Memorial Field Saturday afternoon where they lost the Eastern Final to Bethlehem Liberty (14-1) in 4 overtime periods. Liberty scored more points in the overtime periods than they did in regulation. More importantly, they scored 7 more than Pennsbury to win it 45-38. Statistically, 270 rush yards by Pennsbury with no lost fumbles should have won the game, especially when 116 of those yards were by quarterback Victor Iturbides who also rushed for 2 scores. Jackson Fagan's 126 yards, Josh Parkes' 26 and C.J. Marck's 2 yards round out the rush totals. QB Iturbides completed 4 of 7 for 49 yards with 1 interception. 2 receivers caught the 4 completions.

The difference between these two teams was quarterback Dan Persa's multiple skills, combined with his ability to convert crucial 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> down conversions in regulation and overtime. As much as you want to and should credit the Pennsbury defense for putting the Hurricanes in those situations, you have to give credit for Liberty's ability to convert. Much of the credit goes to QB Dan Persa. He rushed 30 times for 118 yards and 2 scores, while completing 16 of 25 passes for 161 yards and 3 more scores. He spread the ball around effectively by going to 6 different receivers. Pennsbury threw to 2 receivers. Liberty's balance was impressive as the following *scoring review* shows. In regulation, they scored on quarterback Dan Persa's run, running back Akheem Smith's touchdown reception and another quarterback run for a score. In overtime, tight end Ray Mamuzich caught a TD pass, kicker Rocky Sawyer hit a field goal, receiver Justin Rivera caught a touchdown pass and running back Akheem Smith rushed for the final score. How's that for spreading things around. For Pennsbury, the scoring went as follows; quarterback Victor Iturbides ran in 2 scores before Jackson Fagan tied it in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter with a rushing touchdown. In overtime, they got a defensive score from lineman Jacob Link who fell on a fumble in the end zone, a field goal from C.J. Marck and a Josh Parkes run for another score. That's Pennsbury football, running and defense, with an occasional lift from special teams. Across the field, Liberty did what they've been doing all year, spreading the ball around, keeping you back on your heels with a strong armed quarterback and a boatload of receivers, then springing QB Dan Persa out of the back field. The Canes had 3 scores on the ground, 3 through the air and a field goal. The loss brings the curtain down on the Falcon's remarkable season where they won the District One championship with a record setting 13 win season. Well done!

**2. Ridley (13-1, 9-0)** District One runner-up Ridley ends the year with a record setting 13 wins that saw them get playoff wins against Plymouth Whitmarsh 36-29 in overtime, Hatboro-Horsham 38-14 and North Penn 21-17 before losing to Pennsbury in the District Final 14-0.

**3. LaSalle (9-3, 4-3)** LaSalle is the Philadelphia Catholic League-Red Division champ after sweeping Cardinal O'Hara 39-38 in OT, Roman Catholic 28-7 and St. Joseph's Prep in the final 14-7, despite ending the regular season in a 3 way tie for 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**4. St. Joseph's Prep (9-3, 7-0)** The Hawks went through the Philly Catholic League Red Division regular season undefeated, beat North Catholic 36-0 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round after a bye week before losing to LaSalle 14-7 Thanksgiving Day in the Red Final.

**5. North Penn (10-3, 7-0)** Won the Suburban One-National title at 7-0, and progressed through *Districts* by beating Interboro 49-21 and Downingtown West 21-17, before losing in the Semifinal to Ridley 21-17.

**6. Abington (8-5, 4-3)** 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher in Suburban One-National (tied with Neshaminy 4-3) and 16<sup>th</sup> seeded in *Districts* where they upset top seeded Council Rock-North 21-20, then Souderton 25-22 before losing to Pennsbury 27-12.

**7. West Chester East (10-2, 7-0)** Went through the Ches-Mont undefeated to enter the playoffs as the 5<sup>th</sup> seed where they won in the 1<sup>st</sup> round against Tennett, 42-34, before vanishing in a 2<sup>nd</sup> round loss to Pennsbury 34-14.

**8. Downingtown West (10-2, 5-1)** The Whippets are the Ches-Mont runner-up seeded 2<sup>nd</sup> in the postseason where they defeated Boyertown 35-6 before losing to North Penn, 21-17 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

**9. Council Rock North (10-1, 7-0)** Council Rock North went through the Suburban One League-Continental Conference undefeated before bowing to Abington in the 1<sup>st</sup> round 21-20.

**10. West Catholic (9-4, 6-1)** The Burrs are the Philadelphia Catholic League-Blue Division regular season champion by way of a 13-12 neutral site win against Archbishop Wood with whom they ended the regular season tied at 6-1. They defeated Conwell-Egan 42-7 and Archbishop Wood 20-12 to claim the Blue Division championship.

**11. Archbishop Wood (9-3, 6-1)** The Vikings failed in the attempt to capture their 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive Catholic League Blue Division title by losing in the Final to West Catholic 20-12.

**12. Souderton (9-3, 5-2)** Souderton finished the regular season in a 2<sup>nd</sup> place tie with Hatboro Horsham and Tennett at 5-2 in the Suburban One-Continental to get the 8 seed in postseason play where they defeated Downingtown East 42-7, then lost to Abington 25-22.

**13. Tennett (6-4, 5-2)** Like Souderton above, tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Continental and advanced as the 12<sup>th</sup> seed against West Chester East where they lost competitively 42-34.

**14. Hatboro Horsham (9-3, 5-2)** Another 2<sup>nd</sup> place finisher in the Continental who as the 6 seed, defeated Upper Darby in the 1<sup>st</sup> round 27-26, before losing at Ridley 38-14.

**15. Penn Charter (8-2, 5-0)** The Quakers are the Inter-Academic champ with their only blemishes being a season opening 20-6 loss to Archbishop Wood and a 12-6 loss to Valley Forge Military Academy.

**16. Malvern Prep (8-2, 4-1)** The Friars ended the year tied as runner up in Inter-Ac play with Germantown Academy. The losses came to Salesianum 22-15 in overtime and Penn Charter, 23-19.

**17. Roman Catholic (9-3, 5-2)** The Catholic League Red Division regular season runner up won the 2 seed but lost in the 1<sup>st</sup> round to eventual champ LaSalle, 28-7.

**18. Downingtown East (7-4, 4-2)** Ches-Mont 3<sup>rd</sup> place Dtown East lost in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the District One playoffs to Souderton, 42-7.

**19. Plymouth Whitemarsh (6-5, 5-2)** Tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Suburban One-American Conference with Wissahickon, a team they shutout 25-0, the Colonials lost a thriller in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of playoffs to Ridley 36-29 in overtime.

**20. 3A Garnet Valley (11-2, 5-1)** In the SCCL's final season, the Jaguars finished tied with Unionville at 5-1 and went on to win the AAA District One championship by defeating Upper Perkiomen 35-7, Edward Bok Vo-Tech, 26-8 and Upper Moreland 17-14, before bowing to Pottsville in the State Quarter Final, 51-20.

## **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)**