

Top 20 High School Football Rankings

Southeastern Pennsylvania Football

Featuring District 1, 12, the Philadelphia Catholic League and the Inter Ac
September 19, 2006

All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise

The write ups were shortened this week because of travel issues that put me in Harrisburg to see the Mid Penn Conference's best two teams go at it, Harrisburg and Bishop McDevitt. Harrisburg beat McDevitt 29-7, holding a rebuilding but talented Crusader team to 38 total yards of offense. About Harrisburg, the Cougars are everything positive that has been said of them. They are well coached by George Chaump and for a change, they are disciplined. The defense is suffocating. The offense explosive. Glen Mills transfer Deries Hodge who rushed for 2008 yards last year, is the lead back this year. Against McDevitt he had scoring runs of 4, 66 and 75 yards. Topping that is a veteran 6-5 quarterback in Nate Brown who has touch and arm strength. His rushing ability is second only to Hodges. To say they have team speed is an understatement. After seeing a fair cross section of our local teams including St. Joseph's-Neshaminy, Cardinal O'Hara-North Penn, Ridley-Strath Haven and Pennsbury-Glen Mills, it's hard to imagine anyone beating this team.

The front end of the weekend's double header was at Glen Mills Friday night watching the talented Bulls self-destruct against a strong Pennsbury team. This was a real war in the trenches. We sat in the visitors stands that were filled with a strong contingent of at least 100 Pennsbury fans. It was a pleasure meeting nice people like the Marck, Emmon, Link and Bickel families. RB/LB Charles Marck, RB/LB Daniel Emmons, and the big linemen, Gregory Bickel and Jacob Link all had good performances. Pennsbury was impressive in beating the Bulls 28-6. They have good special teams, particularly a nice kicking team, enough speed and size on defense (nice backers!), a quarterback that doesn't hurt you and a talented running back.

1. LaSalle (3-0) Tough edging the Explorers past the Hawks but you can't continue rewarding teams for losing, however difficult the schedule, while not rewarding those that are winning. Don't forget, LaSalle beat St. Joe's 14-13 in OT at the end of last season. Back to this year; LaSalle beat West Catholic, who came out strong (181 rush yards!), but not strong enough to compete with the Explorer's versatile attack that rushed for 110 yards and threw for another 256 yards. Quarterback John Harrison completed 19 of 28 while tossing 5 touchdown passes. North Catholic (2-1) is next.

2. St. Joseph's Prep (1-2) Another hard loss for the Hawks who fell to Hilliard-Davidson in the Kirk Herbstreit Ohio vs USA Challenge held last weekend in Massillon and Cincinnati, OH. After coming back in the 3rd quarter to take a 14-10 lead, a 4th quarter Davidson score was the difference as the Hawks fell 17-14. That should but them in a foul mood against Roman in the Red opener Saturday.

3. Pennsbury (3-0) The Falcons put on an impressive demonstrate of power football by rushing for 272 yards and holding Glen Mills to 6 points in a 28-6 win. The Bulls rushed for 128 yards, of which 64 came on a scoring scamper by tailback Raymone West, who finished with 144 yards on 23 carries. Other than that run, Pennsbury shut them down. One of the *most underrated running backs in the area* put on quite a display when Pennsbury's Jackson Fagan rushed for 194 yards on 20 attempts. He rushed for 166 yards last week. He floats and darts, rarely taking a direct hit on his 5-11, 175 pound frame. The big fullback Josh Parkes, rushed for 50 yards on 12 carries despite a straight up running style. Barring injuries or other drastic change, Pennsbury is going to be a difficult team to beat in the postseason. There are lots of big games before that but they're looking good, and are at a much improved Central Bucks South Thursday. The Titans will attempt to regroup from a bitter 10-7 home loss to CB East last week.

4. Cardinal O'Hara (1-2) When this young team comes together it is going to be one special team. Until then, against the likes of public school powerhouse Colerain, they'll take a beating, hopefully one where the injuries are nonexistent to body and soul. In the Kirk Herbstreit Ohio vs USA Challenge, Colerain dominated O'Hara 28-0. For the Lions, the real season starts Friday at home in the Red opener against Father Judge. Judge lost the opener to Council Rock North 20-14, then, won the last two against Northwest, 27-7 and Neumann-Goretti, 35-14. They come in with momentum, and the memory of last year's 13-7 loss.

5. Souderton (3-0) The Indians are off to a hot start after 3 games, outscoring their opponents 106 to 31. Methacton fell last week 38-14. Continental Conference play opens this weekend with Souderton playing newcomer Central Bucks West. West played in the American Conference last year where they posted an overall won-loss of 3-7.

6. Neshaminy (2-1) Neshaminy responded to the season opening loss to St. Joe's by handling Archbishop Ryan, 27-7, then Germantown last week, 48-6. That puts them in good shape for the SOL-National opener against 2-1 Abington. The Ghosts lived up to their name the last two weeks with disappearing acts against Plymouth Whotemarsh, a 26-9 loss, and last week against Northeast, where they barely pulled out a 19-13 overtime win. The Skins pounded them last year 50-17.

7. Coatesville (3-0) Coatesville surprised by dominating a good J.P. McCaskey team to earn their second consecutive shutout, 28-0. The Red Raiders have allowed 6 total points this season. Ches-Mont action opens this weekend with Downingtown East showing up well following heavy graduating losses, namely quarterback Pat Devlin, and a season opening loss at J. P McCaskey 24-21. The road win at Tennett two weeks ago, followed by a home opening rout of Hempfield, 49-12, suggests they've regrouped and fielded another strong edition. Coatesville will be ready for them following last years 34-20 loss.

8. Ridley (3-0) The Green Raiders stumbled but got their third win of the season last week. It wasn't pretty. Penncrest controlled a lot of the clock by getting 18 first downs and another 183 yards through the air. Not bad. Ridley's defense saved the day by holding Penncrest to 48 rush yards on 33 attempts. Two second half scores wiped out a 3-

0 Penncrest half time lead as the Raiders prevailed 14-3. Conestoga is next. Ridley lost 2 straight to the Pioneers but should see that streak end here. Conestoga at 1-2 is struggling.

9. Upper Darby (3-0) A steady diet of running backs Aaron Duncan, Brandon Murray and Charles Mulbah, behind Upper Darby's big line, combined with the effective passing of QB Blaine Fox (11/21/186), wore Conestoga down as the Royals prevailed 27-14. Duncan lead the way with 130 yards on 23 carries. Central League action continues Thursday at Lower Merion where the 2nd and 3rd units will see plenty of playing time against the overmatched Aces.

10. Downingtown West (3-0) In their third consecutive road game, the Whippets rolled to a convincing win at Chester, 35-0. Quarterback Nolan Kearney was strong in completing 8 of 14 for 154 yards. RB Roshaan McCain gained another 108 yards on 17 carries. All totaled, Downingtown West out-gained the Clippers 400 yards to 76, holding them to 18 yards rushing. The opponent this week is Boyertown, fresh off a mild upset of Pottsgrove, 42-21. At one point the Bears led 42-7. Before that, they lost the first two games to Muhlenberg 35-17 and Lansdale Catholic, 14-0. Not a good sign. With their substantial line, they are a typical Boyertown team, going 6-1, 255 at C, 5-10 220 and 5-11, 240 at G, and 6-4, 255 and 6-5, 280 at T. Losses to the Muhls and LC says they're slow. And since this is West's opener, the Bears are in a lot of trouble.

11. Roman Catholic (3-0) Roman moved to 3-0 with a 21-20 win at Valley Forge Military Academy. The win atones for last year's 14-6 loss. Catholic League Red Division play begins Saturday against St. Joseph's. At this point last season, Roman was 1-2, against the same schedule faced to date. So they come in with more confidence and will need it after last year's 41-0 loss to the Hawks. Add to that St. Joe's two 3 point losses to out-of-state powers and you know they'll be some hitting here.

12. Archbishop Wood (2-1) What's up with Archbishop Ryan? Before Saturday's game against Archbishop Wood, they were the last team to beat the Vikings, September 16, 2005. The score was 28-26. Last week they did it again, winning by two, 21-19. The game match ups about Ryan last week went like this. "They're a spooky bunch that hung with Pennsbury 2 weeks ago before falling 10-7. Last week they gave Neshaminy a scare by holding a 7-0 half time lead. The Skins recovered to win 27-7". We'll see if this was their coming out party. Meanwhile, although they're a solid team, Wood took a hit and fell from 5th to 12th in the rankings. Archbishop Ryan will have many occasions in forthcoming games to prove they are back. They have Bonner this week, followed by SJP, Roman and O'Hara. On Saturday, Wood is at Archbishop Carroll to open Blue Division play.

13. North Penn (1-2) After two losses to two of the better teams on the Catholic League, the Knights got their first win of the season by defeating Archbishop Carroll 24-7. This looks like a North Penn team as they pounded away with 38 carries netting 244 yards rushing. Tyrece Ervin had 108 yards on 21 carries, while power back Kyle Bell had 90 yards on 10 attempts. That's North Penn football! QB Kyle Feiser completed 7 of 12 with two interceptions. Carroll was held to 3.4 yards per carry (140 yards), enough to move

the chains and gain 18 first downs. Carroll has weapons. QB Matt Cantifio completed 11 of 20 for 131 yards. That's a nice win for the Knights before the Suburban One-National Conference opener at Pennridge, a team they beat last year 35-13. The Rams showed life last week so it should be a good game.

14. Council Rock North (3-0) Council Rock North is doing about all you can ask a team to do by beating a competitive Father Judge team at home, then winning convincingly on the road against two teams they were suppose to beat, Truman and Conwell-Egan. They're averaging 27 points per game and allowed 9. Those numbers will be well tested Thursday at William Tennett in the SOL-Continental opener for both. Tennett opened the year with a shutout of Cheltenham, 35-0, then, suffered a mild upset at home by Downingtown East, 23-21. Tennett is the best team CRN faced this season. They were idle last week, giving them an extra week practice. This is a big road test for the Indians, the kind of test you expect a playoff contender to pass.

15. Hatboro Horsham (3-0) How about these Hatters! They opened strong at home against Pennridge, winning 26-7 and followed that up with two consecutive road wins. That's good stuff, and they've outscored the opposition 71-30. The opponent this week in the Continental opener is 0-3 Council Rock South. The Golden Hawks are going in the opposite direction of the Hatters, being outscored 92-49. They showed some good things last week in losing to Interboro (199 rush yards on 39 attempts) that will need to carry over here to have any chance of slowing Hatboro's versatile attack.

16. West Chester East (2-1) East lost a narrow decision on the road to Newark, Delaware, 50-48. Coming up two points short (3 really), may hide the fact that East's offense is cranking out the highest point total in southeast PA after scoring 121 points in three games. Of course, when your defense allows 50 points, no one is going to notice such things. The Vikings stay on the road Thursday in the Ches-Mont opener against rival Henderson, 1-2. With games against Hatboro Horsham and Malvern Prep, Henderson played the tougher schedule. Last year East was trounced by the Warriors twice, 37-20 and 32-7. Because it's a bitter conference showdown, throw any and all predictions out the window.

17. Malvern Prep (2-0) Malvern Prep graduated all their skill people, including multi-dimensional QB Ian Mitchell and running backs Jimmie Cotton and Tom Womack. But they return most of the OL/DL, in particular senior Paul Ostick, 6-3, 275, one of the top linemen in the area. Evidently # 76 and the others, plus the replacements at skill has gone well since they are just stuffing people, like they did last year. The Friars went 10-1 last year with wins against Downingtown East, 23-20 and Salesianum, 48-21. The only loss was to Valley Forge Military Academy who played at least one 5th year senior. The Friars are off to a 2-0 start, with wins against Chester, 42-0 and Henderson, 31-7. They're idle this week before a game with Peddie School, NJ.

18. Downingtown East (2-1) Downingtown East held on to the 18th spot by routing District Three's Hempfield, 49-12. They get the opportunity to climb in the ratings Friday in the Ches-Mont opener at Coatesville. This is a tall order. Coatesville is a hammering,

ball control team that can own long periods of the clock with 6-4, 260 pound battering ram fullback Derrick Morgan. Coatesville's quarterback Scott A'Hara can air it, making them a double threat. If East brings the game they brought to Tennett two weeks ago, it's a close game.

19. Abington (2-1) For the second straight week, Abington was less than impressive. The difference being they won last week's game against Northeast, 19-13 in overtime. The week before, they lost large at Plymouth Whitmarsh, 26-9. Looking ahead sees road games at North Penn and Pennsbury. Other competitive games feature an awakened Pennridge team, a dangerous CB South team, and a season closer against powerful Souderton. Playing in the National Conference makes this something of a make or break game with Neshaminy Thursday. At some point you have to win a game like this.

20. Pennridge (2-1) The Rams are rolling with two straight wins after losing in the opener to Hatboro Horsham, 26-7. Since then, they beat CB East 10-7, then, won at home last week against Monsignor Bonner, 48-6. They really did a number on Bonner, rushing for 332 yards on 56 carries. Standout back Tristan Roberts rushed for 208 yards on 20 carries. Quarterback Joe Reichwein is evidently making good reads and managing the ball well. The Rams put it on the ground once, and recovered. The defense stepped up to, holding Bonner to 71 rush yards and 86 total yards. Nice outing! The conference opener is Thursday against North Penn. The Knights beat them last year 42-21, but haven't shown anywhere near that level of production this year. Defense is supposedly a strong suit for North Penn this year. By allowing 25 at home in the opener to Archbishop Wood says otherwise. The offense is misfiring like it hasn't in years! Since 1999, they've averaged at least 28 points per game. Last year they averaged 31. This year they're averaging 14 ppg! If ever there was a time for a true underdog to ambush the Knights, it's this year. This is a great spot for that, especially for a team with a back like Tristan Roberts.

Honorable Mention

Father Judge (2-1)

Archbishop Ryan (1-2)

George Washington (3-0)

Central Bucks South (2-1)

Tennett (1-1)

CB East (1-2)

Norristown (3-0)

Wissahickon (3-0)

Interboro (2-1)

Henderson (1-2)