

Top 20 High School Football Rankings

Southeastern Pennsylvania Football

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

October 17, 2006

All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise

1. St. Joseph's Prep (5-2, 4-0) St. Joseph's holds onto the top spot after gaining their third shutout of the season in a 24-0 Red Division win against Father Judge. Up next is a rare event where the Hawks have a game against a division opponent that beat them last year, LaSalle. The Explorer's were a thorn in St. Joe's side last year, even during the regular season by refusing to go away easy in a 21-14 loss. Then came the annual Thanksgiving week game. That one was decided by special teams play when LaSalle's Scott Waters blocked a 36 yard field goal attempt by Tim Edger with 5 seconds left in regulation. LaSalle scored first in OT when a John Harrison pass to Jack Forster resulted in a mid air wrestling match won by Forster who ripped the ball out of Hawk's defender Andy Shalbrack's hands for the score. St. Joe's roared back with Chris Whitney hitting Bill Edger for 6. Poor special teams play reared its head again when a bad snap for the extra point ended the game in LaSalle's favor 14-13. You can bet St. Joe's staff and players are looking forward to this one. Check out TedSilary.com to see how many regular season consecutive wins the Hawks have.

2. LaSalle (7-0, 4-0) LaSalle is having a fine season but many don't realize just how close they came last year to having a special season. They started off 5-0, with two shutouts, then lost to O'Hara 14-0, SJP 21-14 and Roman 26-23 in overtime to end the regular season 7-3, oh so close to a far better record. In the first round of the Red Division playoffs they swamped Ryan 28-3 only to be routed by O'Hara in the second round, 35-14. But they finally broke through to gain something other than a moral victory by upsetting St. Joseph's in overtime 14-13. They've used the momentum of that win, plus the return of some very fine players to win eight in a row counting the year ending win against the Hawks. So here they are off another big win, Bonner 35-7, tied with the Hawks atop the Red Division and looking forward to a showdown Saturday against St. Joseph's. You've got to give the edge to St. Joe's with their 8-2 run to pass ratio producing points at the same level as the Explorers, but against a tougher schedule. There are no Neshaminys, Don Bosco Preps or Davidson types on their schedule and they allowed two more points per game. The Hawk's average 6 yards on *every* carry. Their passing game is understated at a 54% completion rate that has generated 905 yards. At 22 yards per completion, it can be explosive. LaSalle runs the ball 57% of the time for 3.6 yards per carry. Nothing special there but enough to keep opponents honest. The passing game is exceptional at 65% for 1087 yards, 182 more than St. Joe's. Their yards per completed pass average is 12.1. Statistically, the Hawks win this one. But they don't play on paper! Add to that the intensity of Coach Brooks and players towards an opponent that beat them and the emotional edge is theirs as well. Toss this one up and expect the Explorer's to keep it tight.

3. West Chester East (6-1, 4-0) East High thumped Ches-Mont power and rival Coatesville last week 31-14 to remain undefeated in league play. That's two solid teams East defeated counting the win against Downingtown West three weeks ago. They're at winless Bishop Shanahan Saturday before coming home for the showdown with Downingtown East.

4. Ridley (7-0, 6-0) Wow, Ridley's D is something to see! They got their fourth shutout of the season last week against powerful 3A playoff hopeful Marple Newtown, 24-0. The Tigers were held to 148 total yards and 7 first downs. The loss knocked them back to 4-2 in league action and kept the Raiders unscathed at 6-0, atop the Central League, one up on Upper Darby, their opponent Friday in Upper Darby.

5. Council Rock North (7-0, 4-0) 49-0 over Norristown! Looks like Coach isn't letting up and that complacency will not be an issue with this group. It's little signs like that that let you know this is a special team. 49 points is quite a statement after running the table against Tennett, Hatboro Horsham and Souderton. Again, the schedule is favorable, with the most difficult of the last three remaining opponents coming to Newtown, Central Bucks East. The Patriots (3-4) have had some dings but managed to hang tough in 3 and 7 point losses to Pennridge and Abington respectively. A well coached, proud team like East has nothing to lose. Used to hate games like this. North is much better but needs to take care of things here.

6. Downingtown East (6-1, 3-0) No one expected the Cougars to have any trouble with undermanned Bishop Shanahan (0-7) and they didn't in rolling to their sixth straight win since the controversial loss at Lancaster McCaskey in the opener. In that one, with East trailing 24-21 with seconds left on the clock, Richie Walls returned a kick off to McCaskey's 20 where the Red Tornadoes were flagged for a late hit. But the refs said the clock had expired, so the game was over. Evidently games can end on a defensive penalty in Lancaster. Anyway, East shutout Shanahan 24-0. They're at Downingtown West Saturday in a game that will impact the Ches-Mont, seeding for the post season and more importantly, bragging rights in the Downingtown area. Dtown East embarrassed Dtown West last year 28-0. With two gun slinging quarterbacks in Nolan Kearney for West and Pete O'Connor for East, look for a tremendous offensive display with lots of highlight footage.

7. Archbishop Wood (6-1, 4-0) Archbishop Wood remained undefeated in the Blue Division by holding off Bishop McDevitt 10-0. "*All Everything*" Chris Lorditch scored all the points with a 21 yard field goal and a 44 yard return of a fourth quarter interception. Still, give McDevitt credit for stepping up to keep Wood's offense out of the end zone. Big game at Conwell Egan Saturday. The Eagles are 3-4 overall but 3-1 in the Blue after losing to Neumann Goretti last week 44-26. Hard saying how they'll come out after such a home pounding but rest assured Coach Powel will have Wood ready.

8. North Penn (5-2, 4-0) North Penn took Abington apart last week 35-0. That's the problem with teams like Abington in the National Conference, you win a few games, make some noise and the big boys take notice. For North Penn, a win like that strongly

suggest they've ironed out the kinks and are rounding into shape, playoff shape. One thing for certain, they are beating the teams they have to beat, teams like Pennridge, Pennsbury and now Abington meaning a win against Neshaminy Friday essentially locks up the National Conference. Talk about owing these guys one for last year! Neshaminy routed the Knights 41-13 with Jarred Kinney running wild for 217 yards rushing. Don't count on that happening this year, not in Lansdale. If anything, look for the reverse of that if Neshaminy's defensive yields the last two games mean anything. In those games, both at home, the Skins allowed 62 points, 33 points to Pennridge and 29 to CB South. North Penn allowed 89 points all year!

9. Pennsbury (6-1, 3-1) The Falcons got their wings clipped against North Penn three weeks ago but have been flying high ever since with a 42-13 win against Truman followed by a shutout of Bensalem last week, 27-0. Plain and simple, this is one of the best defenses in this corner of the state. They've allowed as many points for the *entire season* as Neshaminy allowed the last two games, 62. With a slate of opponents that includes Archbishop Ryan, Glen Mills, CB South and North Penn, that's saying something. A revitalized Pennridge team is up next. The Rams won their last two games against Neshaminy 33-13 and Truman last week 20-7. Earlier in the year they lost a nail biter to North Penn 19-13. So as much as it seemed the Rams would disappear this year, they very clearly have not. Pennsbury struggled with them last year barely winning at home, 14-7. Should be a good one!

10. Downingtown West (6-1, 2-1) I used to say about these Whippets "whip it good". Then someone misunderstood the phrase, telling me I had gone off the deep end. A few others said they never heard of the group Devo. Anyway, they are whipping it good the last two games by trouncing Henderson, 42-0 and then Avon Grove last week, 38-6. Those lopsided wins may not seem beneficial, but they do allow your offense to develop and find its stride. Nothing wrong with a little chest thumping, plus, people other than your first unit get playing time. Defending Ches-Mont champ Downingtown East is in town Friday for what should be a memorable encounter. They've proven themselves on the road (2-1) with wins at Tennett and Coatesville. The offense is huge at 33 point per game but the D allows 18 ppg. The Whippets O is just as big at 33 ppg, but the D is more stubborn, allowing a mere 10 ppg.

11. Neshaminy (5-2, 3-1) Neshaminy defeated CB South 43-29 to remain one game behind front running North Penn in the conference race. The clash between these two National Conference titans takes place Friday in Lansdale. If North Wins, they pretty much knock the Skins out of conference contention. If Neshy wins and Pennsbury beats Pennridge, there's a three way tie between NP, Neshaminy and Pennsbury. It gets interesting with Pennsbury still having to play Abington and Neshaminy. Stay tuned!

12. Hatboro Horsham (6-1, 3-1) Hatboro Horsham beat Souderton 21-14 last week in a critical Continental Conference game to stay one game back of undefeated Council Rock North. Staying on the North's heels will be difficult with a tough road test Friday against Tennett. Tennett whipped them last year 32-6 and will do the same here unless the Hatters bring their A game.

13. Roman Catholic (6-1, 3-1) North invaded The Empire last week and were defeated in a tight one 14-13. North Catholic was peaking, with the 8 point loss to LaSalle, the one point win against O'Hara and the romp over Father Judge 34-14. North will have its hands full at Archbishop Ryan this weekend as will Roman against Father Judge as the fight for postseason playoff seeding gets fierce.

14. Coatesville (5-2, 1-2) The Red Raiders are a passing attack away from being a real force in the district, instead of a powerhouse with flaws. The loss last week at West Chester East demonstrated again that speed tends to kill and absolute speed kills absolutely. Lord Acton didn't play football but he'd probably agree with that. East ran around and sometime through larger, slower Coatesville for an impressive 31-14 win. They get another go at a West Chester school Friday at Henderson.

15. Souderton (5-2, 2-2) Souderton lost their second key Continental Conference game in a row last week by losing to Hatboro Horsham 21-14. With three of their remaining four games on the road, the playoff picture just got a bit dimmer. Norristown's up Friday, then a homer to CB East followed by hard games at Tennett and Abington who are both fighting for their playoff lives.

16. Malvern Prep (4-1, 1-0) Malvern Prep often starts the season a week after everyone else. Plug in a *bye* week to make it more difficult to even see this team, let alone get a reasonable fix on them. Now that they've got Salesianum under their belt and other games by which to measure them, the word is out. The Friars again field a powerful team. What's new? The only loss is to a veteran, undefeated Salesianum team that had to go OT to beat them, 22-15. Prep opened Inter-Ac comp last week with a 41-0 shutout of Haverford School. Germantown Academy is next.

17. Upper Darby (6-1, 5-1) Upper Darby rebounded from the Strath Haven loss to defeat Penncrest 34-17 and stay one game off the pace set by hard charging Ridley. Realistically, this is the last opportunity for the Royals since it is unlikely Ridley will lose in upcoming Central League games to Lower Merion or Springfield. So it's up to the Royals who may use last year's 32-17 loss at Ridley as extra incentive, not that it's needed.

18. Pennridge (4-3, 2-2) Pennridge won their last two in a row for some good confidence Friday at home against powerful Pennsbury. Forget the Abington disaster. Any team that can lose to North Penn by 6 and crush Neshaminy by 20 points at Neshaminy, can beat Pennsbury. The Rams beat Truman last week and will be sky high for the Falcons with both fighting for a spot in the postseason playoffs.

19. Tennett (4-2, 3-1) Two road wins, and a three game winning streak fueled by shutdown defense has the Panther's sky high and back in the Top 20. Nicely done! This is a team that lost heartbreaking games to high quality competition, 6-1 Downingtown East and undefeated Council Rock North, 7-0. And remember, Tennett is right there with Hatboro Horsham (3-1), one game off the lead behind Council Rock North. So this is still

about the conference race. In fact, as a football player, it's more about the conference race than the playoffs. You win your games, the playoffs take care of themselves. Tennett will be hard to beat at home on a Friday night.

20. 3A Unionville (6-1, 4-0) How much longer can you ignore a team that opens the season with a 34-0 destruction of 4A Interboro, then goes on a tear winning 5 of their next 6 games? The inexplicable 21-20 loss to Avon Grove, who struggled with 3A Bishop Shanahan and Oxford is a mystery. Still, hats off to Avon Grove. Back to Unionville; they shut everyone up about their graduation losses by cranking out a 6-1 campaign, topped by last week's win *at* previously undefeated Garnet Valley, 29-28. Coach went for 2 with 1:26 in the fourth and got it! The win puts them in sole possession of first place in the SCCL with games against Great Valley this week, followed by Sun Valley the following. Unionville and Garnet Valley have been getting some deserved press, but no one is talking much about Upper Moreland (5-1), who has defeated both 4-3 Plymouth Whitmarsh and 6-1 Wissachickon *on the road*. They currently hold the top seed for the 3A playoffs, followed by Unionville, Upper Perkiomen, Garnet Valley, Sun Valley and Marple-Newtown in the 6th and final spot for District One. Lurking at 7 are the Panthers of Strath Haven, waiting to pounce at the slightest sign of weakness. Ironically, the victim could be Sun Valley, the same Sun Valley that beat Strath Haven 12-7 at the top of the season. Their upcoming games include an away game at Kennett, followed by homers against Unionville, Garnet Valley and Haverford. Unionville is definitely more than Sun and the Jags of Garnet Valley are just as special. If Sun can run that gauntlet, they will have earned it. The same holds true for Strath Haven who must also win out. Keep up with the Panthers at HavenFootball.net.

Honorable Mention

North Catholic (4-3, 2-2)

Chestnut Hill Academy (5-1, 0-1)

Penn Charter (4-2, 1-0)

Frankford (4-1, 3-0)

Abington (4-3, 2-2)

Wissachickon (6-1, 3-1)

3A Upper Moreland (5-1, 3-1)

Interboro (6-1, 2-0)

Glen Mills (4-3, N/A)

3A Strath Haven (4-3, 4-2)

3A Garnet Valley (5-1, 2-1)