

Top 20 High School Football Rankings

Southeastern Pennsylvania Football

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

October 24, 2006

All teams are 4A unless indicated otherwise

Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?

It seems all you hear this season is how weak District One teams are and what little chance they have of getting to Hershey. In conjunction with that, a considerable number of print and electric media would have you believe District Eleven is loaded and a lock on representing the East in Chocolate town. Maybe District One, Two, Four and Twelve shouldn't even show up! Remember, last year's "awesome" Bethlehem Liberty edged North Penn (Pete Stoll, Alex Johnson injured) 14-12 on the strength of 2 missed extra point conversions at J. Birney Crum Stadium in Allentown. In the State Final they were mauled by McKeesport's Tigers 49-10, despite top Tiger back Travis McBride sidelined with a bad hamstring from the second quarter on. Still, McKeesport rushed for 384 yards! This year the media would again have you believe District Eleven's trilogy of Easton (8-0), Parkland (8-0) and Liberty (7-1) are invincible. Across the state they're in nearly everyone's top ten. While all three teams are impressive, a fast look at the schedules might show another side. Coming into last weekend, five of Easton's opponents had losing records for a combined 8-27 won-loss. The rest were all 4-3. All totaled, their opponents won-loss was 20-36. Parkland played four opponents with a combined won-loss of 3-25. The three winning teams were 4-3. Bethlehem Catholic was 6-1 for a combined won-loss of 21-35 for all opponents. Bethlehem's Liberty High has played five opponents who have a combined won-loss of 6-29! Two were 4-3. The other was Bethlehem Catholic. The combined won-loss of all their opponents is 20-36.

In comparison and keeping this within the PIAA, District One's top three teams could very well be the two undefeated teams, Ridley and Council Rock North, and North Penn. Through last week's games, the won-loss of Ridley's opponents was 30-34, with four of their opponents having losing records. CR North faced a slate with a combined won-loss of 31-34. Four have losing records. North Penn's opponent's won-loss is 34-29, with three having losing records.

In terms of head to head games, there are only two such encounters between District Eleven's *top three* and *any* District One team. Easton edged Cardinal O'Hara (3-5) 6-0, while Parkland beat Glen Mills (4-4) 27-19. All Easton could muster against O'Hara was a blocked punt run in for the score. Since then they've averaged 41 point per game. In Parkland's win, Bulls' running back Raymone West rushed for 229 yards on 29 carries! Statistically, all three seem awesome. Easton averages 36 ppg while allowing only 14 points all year. Parkland is averaging 40 offensively and allowing 5. Liberty scores 43 a game while yielding 13. This isn't rocket science nor is it definitive by any means, but it does suggest Easton's, Parkland's and Liberty's records and numbers are inflated with a strong dose of weak opponents. Time will tell, but the way North Penn, Ridley, Council

Rock North, Pennsbury and the Ches-Mont reps from West Chester East and Downingtown are playing, I'm saying, bring em on! ET.

1. St. Joseph's Prep (6-2, 5-0) The Hawks battered upstart LaSalle in a divisional show down to take sole possession of first place with a 42-14 win. Talk about making a statement! If there was ever doubt before, there is none now about who is the top dog in the Red Division. Was there ever a doubt? St. Joe's out rushed LaSalle 276 yards to minus 25 yards. Minus 25 yards! Another upstart visits the Prep Saturday when North Catholic pays a visit. North is 5-3 on the year and 3-2 in Red play. The Hawks should dominate the smaller Falcons unless there's a hangover from LaSalle.

2. West Chester East (7-1, 5-0) East moves into the two spot with LaSalle's lopsided loss and their own destruction of Bishop Shanahan 48-7. They are undefeated in league play but have one more major Ches-Mont challenge in the form of Downingtown East Friday. The Cougars are 3-1 in league action, 6-2 overall, coming off a hard fought 24-13 loss at Downingtown West last week. The emotional after effects of a rivalry loss are bad enough. Add to that the West Chester East team on the other side of the field with the bitter after taste of last year's 57-28 rout at Dtown East.

4. Ridley (8-0, 7-0) The Raiders put Upper Darby in their place, second place to be exact, in a four way tie with Marple-Newtown, Conestoga and Strath Haven, two games off the lead with two games remaining by stuffing the Royals 27-6 on Upper Darby's field. Winless Lower Merion is next. They are 0-8, averaging 7 points a game with a defense that allows 39. Ridley closes with Springfield who is currently 1-7, meaning the next two weeks will see lots of playing time for the second units and rest for the starters.

4. Council Rock North (8-0, 5-0) Last week's thoughts went like this about Council Rock North's pending game with 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"*. Coach had them ready enough as they managed to hold off a tough East squad 17-7. All that stands between the Indians and a Continental title are road trips to Central Bucks West Friday, followed by arch rival Council Rock South who incidentally has been playing much better the last few weeks.

5. Archbishop Wood (7-1, 5-0) Archbishop Wood sent Conwell Egan packing with a decisive 42-14 Blue Division win. The win keeps them undefeated atop the Blue, one game ahead of a team we haven't heard much from this year, West Catholic. You'll be hearing a lot about them soon after the youth movement this year. In fact, they're on something of a roll now with wins in four of their last five games getting them to 4-4. If they beat Carroll next week and Wood does Dougherty Friday, we'll get to see a fine Blue Division regular season final at Widener between Wood and West.

6. North Penn (6-2, 5-0) North Penn reasserted itself as the dominant alpha team in the National Conference by crushing Neshaminy 29-7. How often do you see anyone rush for 341 yards against Neshaminy? It even looks like a misprint, as does a 409 to 213 total yardage advantage. All that in just 9 possessions! The line was firing and dominating. Unfortunately for the rest of the district, perhaps further, running back Tyrece Ervin is now healthy. He dominated this one, rushing for 215 yards on 20 carries and 3 scores. Even quarterback Kyle Feister looked good toting the ball. The Knight's D was on the money, holding Neshaminy to 139 yards on the ground. North Penn is two games away from securing the National Conference title. Truman is up Friday on the road followed by Central Bucks South at home.

7. Pennsbury (7-1, 4-1) Pennsbury took no prisoners last week against Pennridge as they routed the Rams 42-19. The win keeps them one game off the pace behind North Penn. That's a gap they'll not likely close considering North Penn's schedule. Conversely for Pennsbury, they have a dangerous home game against Abington Friday, followed by regular season ending road game at Neshaminy. Those aren't the easiest teams to close against. Abington's in a must win situation with a loss ending any post season playoff hopes. They battled hard last year losing a 21-20 nail biter to the Falcons. Like CB East at CR North last week, Abington has nothing to lose. With a quarterback like Kevin Morton, it could get interesting.

8. Downingtown West (7-1, 3-1) Downingtown West passed a test of sorts last week by defeating bitter rival Downingtown East 24-13 in a key Ches-Mont game. The win avenges last years 28-0 shutout, gives East their first league loss and keeps West one game behind league leader West Chester East. Downingtown East is still right there, one game off the pace with a 3-1 Ches-Mont record. Guess who Dtown West is rooting for this week when Dtown East and West Chester East collide? The Whippets have a tough assignment themselves with fired up Coatesville coming in after being upset by Henderson last week. But Coatesville put a 44-9 hurtin on West last year so rest assured they'll get their full attention.

9. LaSalle (7-1, 4-1) LaSalle lost to St. Joseph's 42-14. A more believable score might have been 42-28, maybe a field goal getting it to 42-31, but 42-14! More than a few of us felt it would be a competitive game. But then how could it be when a glance at the box shows Hawk's tailback Jamir Livingston running for 250 yards (34 carries), fully 25 % of his total yards rushing for the year. That had to hurt more than just the physical. LaSalle's running game was stuffed (-25 rush yards) and the passing game for all its size, 290 yards on a 23 for 42 outing, produced one TD strike. But this LaSalle bunch is made of good stuff. They'll bounce back strong against an Archbishop Ryan team in full retreat! Ryan got our attention at the top of the season with a 10-7 loss to Pennsbury. Two weeks later sitting at 0-2, they upset Archbishop Wood 21-19. Since then they've gone 1-4 and are currently in a 4 game slide. Look for LaSalle to let loose here if there's anything left after the St. Joe's debacle.

10. Downingtown East (6-2, 3-1) East saw their six game winning streak come to a close at Downingtown West last week, losing a game that was closer than the score, 24-13,

indicated. Because this is the same team that beat Tennett and Coatesville, both on the road, West Chester East needs to take care of things Friday or the Cougars will steal one. This is a solid team with strong armed quarterback Pete O'Connor and lightening quick running back Richie Walls both capable of taking over a game. They are special talents that can light it up. Walls is a double threat, one of O'Connor's favorite targets. This is going to be a tremendous game with the Cougars fighting for the Ches-Mont title and their playoff lives.

11. Souderton (6-2, 3-2) After losing two tough ones to CR North and Hatboro Horsham, Souderton got back on the winning track with a overwhelming road win at Norristown. The 42-19 victory ups their road record to 3-1. The Indians can be explosive at times. That's the third time they've topped the 40 mark. On the year they're averaging 29 ppg and allowing 13. The next game is against Central Bucks East. At 3-5, East is struggling, but it's a key game for Souderton with an away game at Tennett the following week. East won last year 23-3.

12. Malvern Prep (5-1, 2-0) Malvern Prep got into a *running game* with Germantown Academy (5-2, 1-1) but came away with a 40-30 win in their Inter-Ac home opener. Up next is a difficult game against rival Penn Charter (5-2, 2-0). Both are undefeated in league action. Penn's a tough road opponent with competitive losses to Archbishop Wood and Valley Forge Military Academy. Maybe there's some extra incentive knowing Prep pounded them last year 44-24.

13. Tennett (5-2, 4-1) With Council Rock North finally getting some press and what precious little is left for the oft overlooked Continental Conference going to Hatboro and Souderton, guess who just snuck into second place in the standings? They got there by not folding their tents after the 17-7 home loss to CR North back on September 21st, and winning their next four games. Last week's 37-28 win against Hatboro Horsham was the most impressive. To keep it going they'll have to beat improving Council Rock South away, then, tackle Souderton the following week at home. CR South is 2-6 overall but 2-2 the last four. Three of those were on the road including a 12-0 loss at Souderton, a 24-21 loss at CB East a home win against Norristown 22-7 and away against CB West last week, 49-14. Their last 3 games are home so look for inspired efforts.

14. Neshaminy (5-3, 3-2) Neshaminy is out of the running for the National title. That's not easy to say, especially after putting together a four game win streak after the season opening loss. They were actually looking like something close to the Neshaminy of old, meaning last year's team. What followed was a bad stretch of road where the wheels blew off by allowing 91 points in their next three games. 91 points, Neshaminy! What happened to the defense that sacked St. Joe's quarterback 5 times in the opener? Throughout most of the season the Skin's could at least count on their offense. That piece came apart as well last week where 9 possessions against North Penn resulted in 4 punts, 1 fumble, 2 interceptions, 1 score, and one possession just as the first half ended. North Penn routed them 29-7. Bensalem is up next on the road followed by the closer against Pennsbury.

15. Hatboro Horsham (6-2, 3-2) After winning their first four games, Hatboro cooled off to a 2-2 won-loss the last four outings. Losses to CR North and to Souderton last week 37-28, knocked them out of contention in the Continental race. But they're still good to go for the playoffs. They are home Friday against plummeting Norristown. The Eagles lost their last five games by an average score of 9 to 30. The Hatters then close out on the road against always feisty Central Bucks East.

16. Roman Catholic (6-2, 3-2) Roman Catholic was upset last week by a Father Judge team (4-4, 2-3) that awoke from a three week slumber to shock the Cahillites 10-7. It's a bad day when you hold the other guy to 45 yards rushing, 85 through the air and lose. As things stand now, Roman hangs onto the third seed for the Red playoffs by way of a 14-13 win against North Catholic (5-3, 3-2) two weeks ago. The problem for Roman is the schedule that has them closing with Cardinal O'Hara and LaSalle. Further bad news for RC, O'Hara is getting healthy. Running back John Dempsey is now 100 % as evidenced by his 19 carries against Bonner last week that netted 142 yards. Last year's best team with a losing record was 5-6 Council Rock North. This year's recipient could well be Cardinal O'Hara at 3-5.

17. Coatesville (5-3, 1-3) Coatesville is 0-2 against the West Chester teams, losing on consecutive weekends to East High, then Henderson last week 27-20. Worse still, they're playing themselves right out of the playoffs. Were they held today, the Red Raiders would be on the outside looking in as the 17th seed in a 16 team format. Three weeks ago the Red Raiders were 5-1. A loss at Downingtown West Friday will likely seal their fate.

18. Unionville 3A (7-1, 5-0) Unionville held onto the SCCL's top spot by winning another road game, this one at Great Valley 30-13. Garnet Valley and Sun Valley are in contention at 3-1. Both Uville and Sun Valley control their own destiny in a face off Friday at Sun. Uville won last year's game 28-14 and will settle for a similar score here.

19. North Catholic (5-3, 3-2) North Catholic slugged their way back into the Top 20 by winning at Archbishop Ryan 31-15. Nice win and a good rebound from the 14-13 loss at Roman the week before. Against Ryan, star running back Daryl Robinson rushed for 178 yards on 29 carries. That's a workout! On the year he has rushed for 932 yards on 152 carries, a stellar 6.1 yards per carry. Many thanks to the good folks at TedSilary.com for that information. The opponent this week is juggernaut St. Joseph's Prep. A hangover from LaSalle could keep it respectable and a look ahead to O'Hara makes it a "*sandwich*" game for North. North should not win but LaSalle shouldn't have won last year's Thanksgiving Day game against the Hawks either.

20. Interboro (7-1, 3-0) The hordes are pacified! Just kidding, this is not to quell the Interboro faithful. Interboro earned their way back into the Top 20 not by just beating teams, but by devastating them by the average score of 41-9, since the loss to Unionville at the top of the season. That's the good news. The bad news is they lost perhaps their best player last week, FB/MLB Mike Sullivan, with what appears to be a broken ankle. You hate seeing that. He'll be missed. Delaware's # 1 team, undefeated Salesianum (7-0) is up next Friday night at Interboro. The Bucs lost a close one last year in Wilmington 27-

21 and should do better here at home with a more mature team. The problem is the Sals are an experienced, veteran team that's healthy. This should be a competitive game with a lean to the hometown Bucs.

Honorable Mention

Chestnut Hill Academy (6-1, 1-1)

Penn Charter (5-2, 2-0)

Frankford (5-1, 4-0)

Father Judge (4-4, 2-3)

Wissachickon (7-1, 4-1)

Abington (5-3, 3-2)

3A Upper Moreland (6-1, 4-1)

Upper Darby (6-2, 5-2)

Conestoga (5-3, 5-2)

3A Strath Haven (5-3, 5-2)

3A Garnet Valley (6-1, 3-1)