

## FROM THE SIDELINES: WITH LARRY SPEGAR

### District 2 and 4 Highlights

- **Southern Columbia Opens With Win Over Shamokin:** Welcome Pa High School Football Fans to another exciting season! With four consecutive State Titles under their belts, the Tigers of Southern Columbia opened their season and title defense in grand fashion courtesy of a 48-21 win over Shamokin. Forget that this is only Week 1 and that Shamokin was the home team and that Shamokin is a larger classification, Southern plays traditional Southern football and this weekend's victory is a signature win for the Tigers reminiscent of earlier years which found the Tigers on the prowl for Hershey kisses come December. These Tigers already have the scent for chocolate and appear to have picked up right where they finished last season – as PIAA “A” State Champions. Remember the names, Josh Marks (Committed to Penn State); Henry Hynoski (Committed to Pittsburgh); Ted Heitzman; Colby Snyder; Tommy Admire; Nick Gallinot and a number of other reliable, talented and hard working Tigers as the season progresses. This is a team loaded with senior experience and plenty of heart and spirit to mix with that. That is Southern football. To quote a prominent “Monday Night Football” sportscaster, “It’s a good thing to see good things happen to good people.”
- **Lakeland Outlasts Valley View In Classic Rivalry:** Chapman Lake was the setting Friday night for the heated rivalry between neighboring AA power programs. Ask players from either school, they were excited and pumped to start the new football campaign and it makes it even sweeter getting ready to play your archrival across town...or up on the mountain that is if you’re living in the Valley. Valley View and Lakeland have slugged it out for years bringing much excitement to their respective faithful followers. Fans of both schools are treated year in and out to great football action and especially where it brings together such successful and storied programs as shared by both the Chiefs and the Cougars. Look no further than the Coaches. Frank Pazzaglia, at Valley View is truly a Dean of the Pennsylvania High School Football Coaches. In his 38<sup>th</sup> season and the only Head Coach the Cougars have known since the inception of Valley View in 1969 (merger between three schools, namely Blakely, Jessup and Archbald High Schools) and add to that his amazing feat of 310 career coaching wins (3<sup>rd</sup> all time leader in the entire State of Pennsylvania) one can truly appreciate that Frank Pazzaglia is indeed a living legend along the sidelines and among coaches in this great game we love. To see Coach Pazzaglia brimming with enthusiasm and excitement and yelling encouragement to his players and sharing strategy and advice with his staff along the sidelines is poetry in motion. To witness is to know that one has indeed seen the very best of what football has to offer in our state and to know that history is indeed in the making. Across the field from Coach Pazzaglia on Friday night was none other than Lakeland mentor, Dan Case, who with his very capable staff have molded Lakeland into a perennial contender among AA schools in the state. Lakeland has dominated District 2 AA Football over the past 5 seasons, including appearances in the State Semifinals and Quarterfinals. Adding to the rivalry between the two opponents, Dan Case played on the first Valley View football team

in the 1969 season. Case, an All-World Lineman for the Cougars was coached by, you guessed it, Frank Pazzaglia. Talk about an interesting game with a lot of history and tradition to go with it. Friday's game was yet another exciting chapter between the schools. Defense ruled the night. These teams were dead even the whole night. Literally, they were two heavyweight fighters holding the line and refusing to let up and allow much rushing yards at all. Lakeland finished with 128 yards while Valley View came up with 127. Real close!!! The Cougars actually managed 10 first downs to 9 for Lakeland. Valley View also led with passing yards, 50 to 28. The sad statistic for Valley View, however, was committing three turnovers, including an early fumble in the first period deep in Cougar territory and eventually leading to Lakeland's only score in regulation, a 1 yard blast by hard running, Craig Chopko. Chopko will cause problems for all opponents this season and is impressive with his strength and size (Chopko doubles nicely as a Linebacker). Lakeland's 7-0 lead registered at the 5:00 mark of the opening quarter held up all the way until only 2 minutes remaining in the game. At this time, Valley View put together a patented fourth quarter drive with Coach Frank Pazzaglia displaying great spirit and emotion while sending in each and every play. The TD came by way of 2 yard run by QB, Dave Abdalla. A successful conversion by Pat Sotak sent the game to overtime. In OT, Valley View took the ball first and fleet footed, Kyle Passeri scored on the first play from 10 yards away. Sotak's kick was blocked, however, and Valley View held a six point lead at 13-7. Immediately, thereafter, Lakeland answered the call as any true champion does. On Lakeland's first play, receiver, Drew Babcanec scored on a ten yard run. Lakeland kicker, Spencer Clauss-Walton sealed the Cougars' fate by nailing the conversion kick straight through the uprights and kicking off a jubilant celebration among Chief players, coaches and fans. Final score: Lakeland 14 – Valley View 13. A great game, great traditions, great rivalry, great coaches, great fans. Watch for a possible rematch of these two AA powers in the District 2 Tournament, as well as both to make some noise in the State Title Hunt come November and December.

See You On The Sidelines,

Larry Spegar