

# Class A Playoffs Begin; State High Looks to Tame Cougars

By Brian Carson

Let the playoffs commence.

The race for District 6 gold begins in earnest for Class A with three games kicking off the postseason slate.

No. 9 seed Ligonier Valley (6-3) travels to No. 8 seed Northern Cambria (6-3) on Friday, while No. 11 Conemaugh Valley (4-5) meets No. 6 seed Glendale (7-2) and No. 10 seed Blacklick Valley (4-5) is on the road at No. 7 Laurel Valley on Saturday. All games are 7:00 p.m. starts except for Blacklick Valley-Laurel Valley which begins at 1:00 p.m.

The winner of the Ligonier Valley-Northern Cambria contest will meet top-seeded Purchase Line (8-1). The Conemaugh Valley-Glendale victor will hook up with No. 3 seed Bellwood-Antis (7-2); and the Blacklick Valley-Laurel Valley winner takes on second-seeded Southern Huntingdon (8-1).

Also on tap is the final week of District 3-6 qualifying in Class AAAA and the big matchup on the docket is the clash between Harrisburg and State College. Both teams are 8-1 and state ranked, with the Cougars rated third and the Little Lions tenth.

QB Brook Hart has thrown for 1,395 yards and 14 TDs to lead the State College offense. Andrew Kerr (32-414-3) and TE Nathan Stupar (23-370-6) are Hart's go-to guys. Tailbacks Matthew LeClair (33-425-7) and Terna Ityokumbul (48-455-7) are a solid 1-2 punch in the backfield.

The Cougars, who have out-scored opponents 340-53, rely on the arm of Nate Brown on offense and the speed of linebackers Deries Hodge and Xzavier Hunter on defense.

The game will take place at Severance Field Saturday at 1:00 p.m. On the line will be the Mid-Penn Commonwealth championship and the potential number one seed in the District 3-6 playoffs.

Here's a look at the playoff contests heading into week ten:

## Ligonier Valley-Northern Cambria

It will be a back-to-back contest for the Mounties and Colts with Northern Cambria winning last weeks battle by a 14-0 score.

Ligonier Valley lives by the run – the Mounties rushed for 2,331 yards and 28 touchdowns in the regular season. A trio of runners has done most of the damage, led by quarterback Jon Cotchen (101-641-8), Brandon Boyd (114-630-7), and Steve Hunt (114-594-8). Cotchen is also the leader on defense with 93 tackles and seven sacks from his linebacker spot.

Northern Cambria has a more balanced attack but is still ground heavy at times. Jeremiah Dunchak (155-804-8) and Andrew Paronish (57-351) are the main running threats. QB Joey Rocco has thrown for 632 yards and 9 TDS with three of those going to Paronish. Defensively, Paronish has 137 tackles and four interceptions.

## Conemaugh Valley-Glendale

The Vikings not only picked up their first winning season in 21 years, but have qualified for the playoffs for the first time in school history.

Glendale has done it with a power running attack led by Derek Nash (216-1,314-10) and Gary Walstrom (145-698-13). The defense is led by Vince Kimmerly, who has seven sacks on the year.

The Blue Jays counter with a strong runner of their own. Robert Gundy is one of the top backs in the state and the focus of the Conemaugh Valley offense. Gundy has rushed for 1,403 yards and 17 touchdowns on 248 carries. Backfield mate Steve Emigh (82-425-3) is a serious threat as well.

## Blacklick Valley-Laurel Valley

This will be a battle between two teams that like to run different formations with the emphasis on a power rushing attack.

The Vikings switch in and out from the I-Formation and the Wing-T and rely on the combined efforts of running backs Michael Murphy (116-547-3) and Gary Sheesley (83-366-4). QB Michael McDermott has passed for 473 yards and three scores with William Chilcott (18-211-1) his favorite target. The defense is led by Kyle Link (91 tackles) and Dan Jackovich (85 tackles).

The Rams defense has two 100-tackle performers – Shane Dickert (112 tackles, 4.5 sacks) and Andrew Miller (110 tackles) – that will try and shut Blacklick Valley down. RB Justin Shetler (103-500) and QB Derek Ludwig (500 yards, 2 TDs) lead the Laurel Valley offense.

**Week Ten Schedule:**

Bedford (Dist 5 AA 6-3-0) @ Chestnut Ridge (Dist 5 AA 6-3-0)

Everett (Dist 5 AA 0-9-0) @ Mount Union (Dist 6 A 1-8-0)

Bellefonte (Dist 6 AAA 3-6-0) @ Penn Cambria (Dist 6 AA 8-1-0)

Bellwood-Antis (Dist 6 A 7-2-0) @ Juniata Valley (Dist 6 A 7-2-0)

Bishop Guilfoyle (Dist 6 A 3-6-0) @ Central Cambria (Dist 6 AA 5-4-0)

Cambria Heights (Dist 6 AA 0-9-0) @ Moshannon Valley (Dist 6 A 2-7-0)

Central (Dist 6 AA 1-8-0) @ Philipsburg-Osceola (Dist 6 AA 6-3-0)

Hollidaysburg (Dist 6 AAA 5-4-0) @ Chambersburg (Dist 3 AAAA 1-8-0)

Huntingdon (Dist 6 AAA 8-1-0) @ Central Mountain (Dist 6 AAAA 5-4-0)

Indian Valley (Dist 6 AAA 4-5-0) @ Somerset (Dist 6 AAA 2-7-0)

Johnstown (Dist 6 AAA 7-2-0) @ Tyrone (Dist 6 AA 9-0-0)

Ligonier Valley (Dist 6 A 6-3-0) @ Northern Cambria (Dist 6 A 6-3-0) Playoff Game

Penns Valley (Dist 6 AA 5-4-0) @ Lewistown (Dist 6 AAA 0-9-0)

West Branch (Dist 6 A 2-7-0) @ Southern Huntingdon (Dist 6 A 8-1-0)

DuBois (Dist 9 AAAA 1-8-0) @ Altoona (Dist 6 AAAA 6-3-0)

Karns City (Dist 9 AA 9-0-0) @ Forest Hills (Dist 6 AA 7-2-0)

Punxsutawney (Dist 9 AAA 3-6-0) @ Bald Eagle Area (Dist 6 AA 3-6-0)

Redbank Valley (Dist 9 A 7-2-0) @ Marion Center (Dist 6 AA 8-1-0)

Union-Rimersburg (Dist 9 A 2-7-0) @ Saltsburg (Dist 6 A 0-9-0)

**Saturday's Games:**

Blacklick Valley (Dist 6 A 4-5-0) @ Laurel Valley (Dist 6 A 6-3-0) Playoff Game

Conemaugh Valley (Dist 6 A 4-5-0) @ Glendale (Dist 6 A 7-2-0) Playoff Game

State College (Dist 6 AAAA 8-1-0) @ Harrisburg (Dist 3 AAAA 8-1-0)