

Warriors, Tigers to Battle for Class AAA Title

By Brian Carson

The playoffs are a new season. Every team starts with a clean slate. If you want proof of that old cliché look no further than last week.

The top two seeds in the District 6 Class AAA football playoffs – Huntingdon and Johnstown – were defeated.

That brings us to a new week and the championship showdown between No. 3 seed Hollidaysburg (7-4) and No. 4 seed Indian Valley (6-5) at Mansion Park on Friday night. The winner gets a fresh district title in the trophy case and the right to move on to the state playoffs and the loser, well, gets to go home.

The Golden Tigers, coached by John Barton, have benefited from a predominantly Quad-A schedule (Hollidaysburg was nine students short from being AAAA) that has helped make them tournament tough in the post-season.

The Tigers have faced Glen Mills, State College, Altoona, Mount Carmel and Washington, D.C. powerhouse Woodson during the regular season. The battled-tested Tigers showed their mettle last week in a 13-12 win over Johnstown.

Hollidaysburg is led by the running tandem of Brad Nocek (161-721-8) and Matt Wimbush (101-484-9) and the passing of Patrick Smith (925 yards, 3 TDs). His favorite targets have been Jared Wilson (22-286-1) and Brock Porter (16-148). David Lafferty leads the defense with four interceptions.

Indian Valley, coached by Gawen Stoker, boasts a potent offensive attack led by 5-foot-11, 230-pound junior fullback Nam Shartzter, who has rushed for 1,623 yards and scored 24 touchdowns — both IV single-season school records. Shartzter had 160 yards in the 28-21 win over the Bearcats last week.

The Warriors average 32 points per game on offense. In addition to Shartzter, IV also has had success rushing with Thad Rosenberry (356-7) and QB William Goss (315-5). Through the air, Goss has completed 56 percent of his passes (65-of-117) for 965 yards and seven scores. Jay Hartman (19-374-4) and Matt Daubert are his favorite receivers. Daubert also leads the defense with three picks.

Here's a look at the other District 6 playoff contests heading into week 12:

District 6 Class A Semifinals

No. 5 seed Juniata Valley (8-2), a 13-0 winner over Portage last week, faces top seed Purchase Line (9-1), who defeated Northern Cambria 34-6 in the quarterfinals.

In the lower bracket, No. 3 seed Bellwood-Antis (8-2), a 32-0 winner over Glendale, will challenge second seed Southern Huntingdon (9-1), a 43-0 winner over Laurel Valley, in a Saturday contest.

The Red Dragons average 236 yards a game on the ground and the main contributor of those yards is tailback Logan Small. The senior has rushed for 1,074 yards and 13 touchdowns on the season. The defense gives up only 12.3 points per game – tops in the Heritage Conference.

The Green Hornets rely on the efforts of running backs Joey Basil (849 yards, 8 TDs) and Sean McCrum (720 yards). The defense has pitched three straight shutouts and limited the high-powered Portage offense to only 74 yards last week.

The Rockets have out-scored their opponents 382-60 on the season and have recorded five consecutive shutouts. Offensively, Southern relies on RB Troy Hoover (177-1,097-17) and QB Tyler Mansberger, who has rushed for 574 yards with ten scores. In addition, Mansberger has thrown for 809 yards and 8 TDs, with Josh Crull (25-441-6) his favorite target. The defense, which has recorded 32.5 sacks, is led by Shane Thomas, Nathan Goshorn and Jason Foor.

Bellwood-Antis handed the Rockets their only loss of the season back on September 29. The 27-9 defeat was the most points Southern has allowed in a game this season.

Josh Kleinfelter (209-1,663-26) is the main cog of the Blue Devils offense. The senior has amassed over 5,000 yards in

his stellar career and will be the catalyst if Bellwood wants to make a run at the title. Jon Davila (82 tackles), Bruno Degol and Devon Clapper lead a defense that has surrendered only 76 points all year.

District 5-6 Class AA Semifinals

No. 4 seed Forest Hills (9-2), a 20-14 winner over Marion Center in the quarters, will take on a familiar foe in No. 1 seed Tyrone (11-0), a 35-0 winner over Chestnut Ridge last week. In the bottom bracket, No. 6 seed Philipsburg-Osceola (8-3), a 35-8 winner over Penn Cambria, takes on No. 2 seed Bishop McCort (9-1), who beat Bedford 27-7 last week. All games are scheduled for Friday.

The Rangers, who defeated Tyrone in the district semifinals a year ago, rely on the arm of All-State QB Travis Rearick. The senior has had another solid season in 2006 – throwing for 1,895 yards and 23 touchdowns on 118-of-192 passing. Ross Carpenter (40-654-7) and Josh Shope (32-524-10) were the main recipients of Rearick's passes. Forest Hills is not all pass either as Jared Kostan (148-997-14) and Scott Mehall (81-678-8) have been the cogs in the rushing attack for a Rangers offense that scores 35 points a game.

The Golden Eagles, ranked third in the state by PFN, are loaded with talent on offense as well. Johnny Franco (194-1,454-22) and Tyler Gillmen (107-712-11) form a potent 1-2 punch in the backfield, while Justin Schopp (28-755-8) is a big-play threat at wide receiver. QB Tyler Golden (1,204 yards, 12 TDs) is not flashy, but consistent. All-State DT Tyler Hoover (8.5 sacks), Jason Reese (8 sacks), Johnny Shaffer (6 sacks) and Schopp (8 int.) are the leaders on a defense that gives up only 6.5 points a game.

The Mounties live to run and the main yardage producers on the ground are RB Dimitri Sidorick (161-820-11), QB A.J. Czap (94-470-7) and Brad Smith (46-381-5). J.D. Mason (24-491-2) is the go-to guy when P-O takes to the air. Czap has thrown for 793 yards with five touchdowns. Mason (9 int.) and Smith (3.5 sacks) are the defensive leaders.

The Crushers, winners of nine straight, win because of a power running game and a stifling defense that has given up only 68 points all season and a measly 14 in the last five games.

Scott Lewis (119-994-7) and Brad Barbin (134-735-17) power the rushing attack for Bishop McCort. QB Jordan DeFrances has thrown for 1,106 yards and seven touchdowns with Chris Seidel (31-572-2) and junior TE Michael Cruz (19-191-3) his go-to guys. Cruz has already given a verbal to Pitt. Lewis leads the defensive attack with 80 tackles and seven sacks.

District 3-6 Class AAAA Semifinals

No. 4 seed State College (9-2), a 56-21 winner over Lower Dauphin last week, will meet No. 5 seed Central Dauphin (9-2), a 31-17 victor over Warwick, in a rematch of a September 16th game won by the Little Lions 28-7. The game is slated for Friday evening.

State High, ranked eighth in the state by PFN, runs a high-powered offense that's scored 405 points on the season – good enough for a 36.8 average per game. QB Brook Hart has thrown for 1,726 yards, on 118-of-200 passing, and 21 TDs. Andrew Kerr (36-469-5) and TE Nathan Stupar (27-455-6) are his prime targets.

On the ground, Matthew LeClair (46-500-10) and Terna Ityokumbul (50-450-7) have combined for almost 1,000 yards rushing. The defense, led by returning All-State LB Stupar, has held opponents to only 11.6 points per game.

Week 12 Schedule:

Central Dauphin (Dist 3 AAAA 9-2-0) @ State College (Dist 6 AAAA 9-2-0)
Indian Valley (Dist 6 AAA 6-5-0) @ Hollidaysburg (Dist 6 AAA 7-4-0)
Forest Hills (Dist 6 AA 9-2-0) @ Tyrone (Dist 6 AA 11-0-0)
Philipsburg-Osceola (Dist 6 AA 8-3-0) @ Bishop McCort (Dist 6 AA 9-1-0)
Juniata Valley (Dist 6 A 8-2-0) @ Purchase Line (Dist 6 A 9-1-0)

Saturday's Games

Bellwood-Antis (Dist 6 A 8-2-0) @ Southern Huntingdon (Dist 6 A 9-1-0)