

Playoff Chaos Continues

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By Joe Stokes

We are now through the first six weeks of the 2006 high school football season and the playoff picture remains in doubt. Perennial AAA power Strath Haven is 3-3 and the Panthers greatly improved their post season chances with a 12-0 win over previously undefeated Upper Darby on Saturday night. Over in the Catholic League Cardinal O'Hara is 1-5 and Sunday afternoon's 24-7 loss to LaSalle puts the Lions on edge of elimination from post season consideration

Last week's predictions left this writer with another 4-1 record (19-6) on the season. The only game to defy this writer's prognostication was Strath Haven's shut out of Upper Darby. The Haven defense forced five turnovers while holding the Royal offense to just 167 total yards on the night. Upper Darby dropped to the eleventh playoff slot in the PIAA District One AAAA rankings with sixteen teams qualifying this year.

Strath Haven jumped to the eighth ranked AAA squad with six playoff slots available to District One teams in 2006. Since several teams above the Panthers play against each other in the next few weeks it appears Strath Haven may have dodged elimination with last weeks upset victory.

Games to watch this week find upstart Marple Newtown traveling to Ridley for a Central League showdown that will also greatly affect both schools playoff hopes. While both teams are in good position to seal their post season prospects a loss could drop them several slots in the final rankings. Marple is presently third in the AAA race while Ridley is second at the AAAA level. Look for a defensive struggle in this one.

Prediction: Ridley 7 Marple Newtown 0

Upper Darby travels to Penncrest and this is a must win for the Royals to remain in contention to win a Central League championship. Look for just enough offense to win this one for the Royals

Prediction: Upper Darby 14 Penncrest 10

Here is the rest of my fearless forecast:

Prediction: West Chester East 35 Coatesville 24

Prediction: Hatboro Horsham 28 Souderton 13

Prediction: Garnet Valley 21 Unionville 14

