

Short Picks

The first weekend of Pennsylvania high school football produced some really exciting games and a shake-up in PFN's AAAA rankings. Gateway raised some eyebrows with a 19-7 win over highly regarded Penn Hills. Most expect the Gators to be good this year, but not many thought Gateway could go into the Indians crib and come out with a victory. I was a bit surprised by the Little Lions of State College moving into the number 2 spot in the rankings. It all adds up to what should be some great football on the road to "ChocolateTown". Let's see what goodies lie ahead for this week.

Now that North Penn has taken over the number one spot in AAAA, a bulls eye has been painted on the Knights. The Knights host an always tough Lansdale Catholic squad. The Crusaders will be facing their second AAAA school in this week's game. Lansdale Catholic will have to find a way to stop the running of tailback Craig Needhammer. I think the Knights will put the "Hammer" down...**North Penn.**

The Panthers of Strath Haven try to regain their form of a couple of years ago with a second win this week against the Harriton Fighting Rams. The Fighting Rams held off Octorara last week with a 31-28 victory. I like past history in this game...**Strath Haven.**

In District 2, the Patriots of Pittston host the Knights of Scranton. Both schools are looking to improve on last year's win total of six games apiece. I like the visiting team's chances...**Scranton.**

Bishop McDevitt is the consensus top team in District three. However, I don't see the Crusaders having a cake walk through a very formidable schedule. Cedar Cliff's Colts will be the first of many challengers for the Crusaders. I said the schedule will be tough, but I see another win for...**Bishop McDevitt.**

Cumberland Valley got out of the gate with a convincing win at Red Lion. The Eagles will find the going a bit tougher this week when they trek to State College where the Little Lions lie waiting in their den. Not sure if the Little Lions can handle PFN's number two ranking. I'm counting on the Little Lions to not get caught up in the hype...**State College.**

Shippensburg is coming off a .500 season with hopes of more W's in the win column in '09. The Greyhounds tangle with the Polar Bears of Northern York. Northern looks like a team that could make a run for the playoffs in District 3. With Ship on the road, I like...**Northern.**

I will get back to District 3 later. In District 5-6, the Bisons of Bedford travel to Richland. I am confident Bedford will improve on last year's record, but Richland is not the kind of team you can push around on defense, and the Rams also have a potent offense...**Richland.**

The Hilltoppers of Westmont host the Red Devils of Central Cambria. Price Field is always an extremely difficult place to play on a Saturday afternoon. The Red Devils need a win here to get some confidence back...**Central Cambria.**

The Panthers of Penn Cambria came to life last week in the second half of their game with Westmont. If Penn Cambria has any chance to win this week, they must come out swinging on the

opening whistle. The reason, the Crushers of Bishop McCort, ranked number 4 state wide, welcome the Panthers to Johnstown Point Stadium. The Crushers have a wealth of football history and a number of championship trophies. They also have a lot of talent on this year's squad...**Bishop McCort.**

Could the Tigers of Beaver Falls be on the path to duplicate last year's twelve win season? It won't be easy as everyone has the Tigers circled on the schedule. This week the Tigers invade the home of the Bulldogs of Freedom. The 'Dogs are coming off a 20-7 win last week and should be fired-up for the Tigers in their home opener. Tigers get win number two...**Beaver Falls.**

The Trojans of Greenville get a shot at the number one team in AA, the Greyhounds of Wilmington. The Greyhounds are flying high after last season's Chocolate Town championship win by a score of 35-34. Too much of Greyhound running back Derrick Burns for the Trojans...**Wilmington.**

Up north in one of the longest running rivalries in high school football, the Bradford Owls venture across the Pa/NY border to face Olean. This game has been in existence for over 100 years. The Owls won by a touchdown last year and should do the same this time around...**Bradford.**

In yet another good game in the state, District 4 powerhouses, the Montoursville Warriors and the Tigers of Southern Columbia get together in Catawissa. The Warriors will be a handful! I'm going with the home team...**Southern Columbia.**

In the slobberknocker of the week, District three fans are in for a real treat. Wilson West Lawn head coach, Doug Dahms takes his Bulldogs into Manheim to face the Barons of head coach, Mike "Huff" Williams. Both teams are loaded with talent. The Bulldogs offense is lead by quarterback Zack Zweizig while the Barons defense is lead by Penn State bound linebacker Dakota Royer. Should be a great game and one that I hate to pick, but here goes...**Manheim Central.**

In other games:

Coatesville over Perkiomen Valley

Great Valley over Henderson

Dallas over Coughlin

Valley View over Wyoming

Boiling Springs over Palmyra

Athens over Wyalusing Valley

Mt. Carmel over Shamokin

Meyersdale over Conemaugh Valley

Blairsville over Purchase Line

Tyrone over Huntingdon

Gateway over Baldwin

Blackhawk over Knoch

Woodland Hills over Connellsville

Carrick over Taylor Alderdice

Smethport over Kane

Corry over Franklin

McDowell over Seneca Valley

Sharon over Reynolds

Beth Freedom over Whitehall