

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

DISTRICT 6 CLASS AA

Ligonier Valley chasing back-to-back titles in talent-heavy field

BY JIM HAMMETT
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Favorite - Ligonier Valley

Dominant is probably the word that best describes Ligonier Valley this season. The Rams (10-0) are outscoring opponents 494-26 on the year. Ligonier Valley has won 24 of it's past 25 games, including a 41-0 thrashing of Berlin Brothersvalley in this past week's Appalachian Bowl. Coach Roger Beitel's squad has an explosive offense, led by two electric playmakers in Jackson Daugherty and Aaron Tutino. Those two have combined for 39 touchdowns this season, and both get it done in a variety of ways. The Rams are the clear favorites heading into Friday's first-round matchup with West Shamokin.

Challenger - Bishop McCort

Bishop McCort is in search of it's first District 6 title since the 2009 season. The Crimson Crushers (8-2) may have the team to make a run at it this year. Bishop McCort boasts perhaps the best running back duo around in Anthony Walters and Carnell Andrews. The pair have each eclipsed the 1,000-yard mark on the year, with the power of Walters and the speed of Andrews. Also watch for sophomore quarterback, William Miller, who is also a threat to carry for McCort's run-heavy offense. If the running game is clicking, perhaps a rematch with Ligonier Valley at Mansion Park is possible.

Sleeper - Cambria Heights

Need a sleeper? Go with the Highlanders. Cambria Heights is riding a four-game winning streak, including a statement 49-20 victory over Greater Johnstown in Week 10. Jarrod Lewis' team has a long trek for its first-round game at Southern Huntingdon, but if the Highlanders can survive and advance, that could make for an intriguing game with Ligonier Valley in the semifinals.

Players to Watch

Carnell Andrews - RB/DB - Bishop McCort

Andrews is usually a very busy man on Friday nights. The versatile Andrews leads the Crimson Crushers in rushing (1,268 yards, 12 touchdowns) and receiving (16 receptions, 152 yards) on offense. He has a team-high three interceptions on defense, and is the team's primary return man. Chances are you may never see No. 5 on the bench for the Crushers.

Jackson Daugherty - QB/WR/DB - Ligonier Valley

Daugherty is everywhere. Literally. The 6-foot-3 senior for Ligonier Valley is his team's leading rusher with 794 yards and 13 scores. He is also the team's second-leading receiver with 26 catches for 610 yards and seven touchdowns. Daugherty even throws it from time to time (384 yards and six touchdown passes). He is also a key defensive back for the Rams' stout defense.

Daunte Martin - RB/DB - Mount Union

Mount Union features one of the most pro-life backs in District 6 over the past few seasons in Martin. The senior has rushed 160 times this season for 1,721 yards and 28 touchdowns. He has gone over the 100-yard mark nine times this season with a pair of 200-plus yard showings, and also a monster 328-yard, seven-touchdown performance against Everett on Oct. 6.

Aaron Tutino - WR/DB - Ligonier Valley

Tutino has 19 total touchdowns this season. He has managed to score those touchdowns in four different ways. The junior has a team-high 11 touchdown receptions. He also has recorded five touchdowns rushing, two via punt returns, and one on an interception return. The speedy Tutino is a threat to score every time he touches the for the Rams.

Pick - Ligonier Valley



TODD BERKEY/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT
Ligonier Valley's Aaron Tutino runs with the ball during an Oct. 20 game against Blairsville at Weller Field.

DISTRICT 5/6 CLASS AAA

Forest Hills, Huntingdon atop competitive six-team bracket



TAMI KNOPSNYDER/FOR THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT
Forest Hills' Adam Cecere (12) fights for yardage during a Sept. 29 game against Cambria Heights at Forest Hills High School.

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Favorite - Huntingdon

Huntingdon has had some rough seasons in recent memory, but the Bearcats seem like they are back in a big way. Huntingdon rolled through the regular season with a 9-1 record the Bearcats are beating teams 44-12 on average this season. Ian Border heads an offensive attack with a power running style. The defense has been stingy as well, with 23 takeaways and 31 sacks as a team. The Bearcats seem to have it all going into the District 5/6-AAA playoffs.

Challenger - Forest Hills

Don Bailey's 2017 Forest Hills team has the look of some of the great Forest Hills teams of the past that have helped the coach and the school claim nine district titles. The Rangers boast a talented quarterback and a stingy defense. Adam Cecere has thrown for 1,734 passing yards and 17 touchdowns, while also rushing for eight more scores. The defense is surrendering just 10.5 points per game, and has generated 25 turnovers this season. The Rangers look like a team ready to claim its first district title since 2010.

Sleeper - Central

Nobody should be counting out this football program. The Scarlet Dragons have won two consecutive district championships, so everyone is well aware of what this team is capable of doing in a playoff setting. It seemed as though that 2017 was going to be a bit of a rebuilding year for the Scarlet Dragons, but a late season 14-10 upset of Huntingdon proves that this team has the ability to win a third straight title.

Players to Watch

Ian Border - RB - Huntingdon

Huntingdon's main source of offense comes from Border. The senior leads the Bearcats with 1,256 yards and 23 scores. Border had a game this season in which he went for 227 yards and three touchdowns, on just eight carries. He is a special back, and one who can carry his team to a championship.

Adam Cecere - QB/DB - Forest Hills

Cecere is a unique talent. He is a three-sport star for the Rangers, and has already pledged to play baseball for Wake Forest in the ACC.

The junior has been the Rangers' starting QB since his freshman year, and that experience should be key for him in his third postseason trip. Cecere is a prolific passer and a skilled enough runner to make plays with his feet, and has been a solid player on defense for the Rangers as well.

Jon Long - WR/DB - Forest Hills

Jon Long just knows how to make big plays. The senior wideout is Cecere's favorite target, with 41 receptions for 830 yards. Long is also a threat in the rushing game with 484 yards there. He is also one of the team's leaders on defense, and is a threat in the return game. He is even the Rangers' punter as well. Long can do it all.

Austin Garner - DE - Central

Central may not have the flashiest offense in the world, and sometimes it has to rely on its defense. On this side of the ball it starts with the imposing Garner. Checking in at 6-5 and 241 pounds, he has the ability to chase down quarterbacks and make plays behind the line of scrimmage.

Pick - Forest Hills

SUBREGION 5/6/9 CLASS AAAA

Can Greater Johnstown make it three straight championship runs?

BY JIM HAMMETT
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Favorite - Bellefonte

Bellefonte has not won a district championship since 1999, but it has the look of a team ready to end that streak. The Red Raiders have just found ways to win all season long, and finished in a three-way tie for the Mountain League championship this season. The Greater Johnstown offense is led by senior quarterback Austin Barber, who has posted a 1,711 passing yards, and 515 rushing. He has had a hand in 30 of the Trojans' touchdowns this season. Barber has a 19-5 record as the team's starting quarterback, and the Trojans go as he does.

Sleeper - Clearfield

If there is a team that can upset the pecking order, it just might be the Bison of Clearfield. Veteran head coach Tim Janocko has had his fair share of success through the years, and will have his team ready to play. Clearfield runs a pass-happy offense, one that is difficult to slow down, as the Bison are averaging 33 points a contest.

Players to Watch

Imil Britt - WR/DB - Greater Johnstown

Britt is an electrifying player who has the ability to take it the distance any time he touches the football. Britt is the Trojans' leading receiver with 27 catches 457 yards and five scores.

Shamar Jones - DT/OT - Greater Johnstown

Shamar Jones is a force on the defensive line for Tony Penna's squad. The 6-foot-1 275-pound Jones recently pledged to Indiana University. Jones leads the Trojans in tackles this season, and has a team-best nine tackles for loss.

Dylan Dietrich - QB - Bellefonte

Deitrich is the catalyst to Bellefonte's offense. The senior quarterback leads the Red Raiders' read-option offense with 1,268 yards and 19 touchdowns. He's also a 1,000-yard passer.

John Eakin - RB/LB - Bradford

Bradford relies heavily on Eakin, and he has been up to the task all season long. Eakin leads the Owls in rushing with 1,332 rushing yards and 21 touchdowns.

Pick - Greater Johnstown



THOMAS SLUSSER/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT
Greater Johnstown's Austin Barber (right) carries the ball against Bishop McCort during an Oct. 13 game at Trojan Stadium.