

TALES OF THE TAPE

Lansdale Catholic vs. Littlestown

■ PIAA Class AA semifinal, 1 p.m. tomorrow at Coatesville

By Don Beideman
INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

Lansdale Catholic and **Littlestown**, two similar football teams meeting for the first time, have their own special incentives for winning the PIAA Class AA semifinal tomorrow at 1 p.m. at Coatesville.

The District 3 champions from Littlestown, a town located on the Pennsylvania-Maryland border 10 miles south of Gettysburg, won district Class A championships in 1984 and 1989, but had never advanced this far in the state playoffs at any level. The Thunderbolts are looking for more recognition after trailing Tyrone and Lansdale Catholic in one statewide Class AA poll.

Lansdale Catholic, which won the District 1 title, wants to improve on past performances. The Crusaders are making their first appearance in the PIAA semifinals since losing to Bishop McDevitt of Harrisburg in 1995. The Crusaders' move to Class AAA the following year pitted them against Strath Haven in the district opener. They are now back in the AA.

The winner will play in the championship game Dec. 11 at HersheyPark Stadium against either District 6 champion Tyrone or District 10 winner Grove City.

Records

Littlestown: 11-2.
Lansdale Catholic: 12-1.

Coaches

Littlestown: Mike Lippy.
Lansdale Catholic: Jim Algeo.

Knockout punch

Littlestown: Running back Brett Stoops, a cornerback on defense, leads a Littlestown ground attack that has rushed for more than 1,700 yards. He is part of a balanced offense that has seen junior quarterback Zach Beaver break the school record for passing yards in a season with more than 1,600.

Lansdale Catholic: Running back R.C. Lagomarsino, with his speed, is capable of breaking a touchdown run from anywhere on the field. Receivers Jim Kelly, a freshman, and Brendan Brett give quarterback Mike Adams two very capable targets.

Weaknesses

Littlestown: Lippy has had only 33-34 players at any given time during the season, so many of them have to go both ways.

Lansdale Catholic: The Crusaders' offense can be sluggish and inconsistent at times.

Analysis

The two teams appear evenly matched. The difference could be Lansdale Catholic's combination of athleticism and speed, along with a deeper bench.



LINDA JOHNSON/Inquirer Suburban Staff

Neshaminy's George Coleman (left) outraces North Penn's Alex Zebulum to the end zone in last Friday's 51-34 district title win.

Neshaminy vs. Easton

■ PIAA Class AAAA semifinal, 1 p.m. tomorrow at Bensalem High

By Rob Parent

INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

The PIAA Class AAAA state football semifinal pits District 1 champion **Neshaminy** against District 2/11 sub-regional champion **Easton**.

These two solid teams face off at Memorial Stadium at Bensalem High tomorrow at 1 p.m., with the winner earning a promotion to the state championship game at HersheyPark Stadium on Dec. 11 against either Bishop McDevitt (District 3) or Pittsburgh Central Catholic (District 7).

Records

Easton: 13-0.
Neshaminy: 12-1.

Coaches

Easton: Steve Shiffert.
Neshaminy: Mark Schmidt.

Last time they met

They have not played recently. But according to Neshaminy athletic director Sheila Murphy, the two schools had a nice rivalry going back in the 1950s, when they were both members of the old "Big Seven" league, with schools from the Lehigh Valley and Bucks County.

Knockout punch

Easton: Lately, it's steady running back Ovid Goulbourne, who carried 20 times for 121 yards in a 15-10 victory over District 12 champion George Washington last Saturday. Sophomore Ryan Hartzell is a big-play man on a Red Rovers defense that needs to come up with a lot of them against the high-charged Redskins.

Neshaminy: Leading the way for a varied and vaunted Skins' offense is George Coleman, the prolific back who rolled up 280 yards rushing and five touchdowns in a wild 51-34 district championship victory over North Penn last Friday.

Neshaminy will also need sophomore QB Andrew Fogel to scramble and mix in a few successful passes to keep the Easton defense off balance.

Analysis

The luck of the draw puts this game essentially in Neshaminy's backyard. So, the intangibles say the Redskins will reach their first state final since winning a Quad-A title in 2001. Talent says it, too.

Parent's Picks

By Rob Parent

■ **No. 3 Neshaminy (12-1) vs. Easton (13-0)**, tomorrow, 1, Bensalem High.

Saw the Red Rovers just once. Saw Neshaminy's offense enough to predict a 35-21 Redskins victory in this Class AAAA state semifinal.

■ **No. 9 Lansdale Catholic (12-1) vs. Littlestown (11-2)**, tomorrow, 1, Coatesville Area High. Littlestown's 10-game winning streak owes itself to a defense that has allowed six points in three Class AA playoff games. Jim Algeo's Crusaders triple that total in a 18-7 win.

■ **Archbishop Wood (7-4) vs. West Catholic (11-1)**, tomorrow, 4, Villanova Stadium. The Burrs wrap up their finest season in years with a 22-14 victory and a Catholic League Blue Division title.

■ **No. 1 St. Joseph's Prep (10-2) vs. No. 2 Cardinal O'Hara (10-1)**, tomorrow, 7:30, Villanova Stadium. Wonder if Lansdale Catholic's Dad Algeo arrives from Coatesville in time to see Dan Algeo win a Red Division title? ... O'Hara gets revenge with a 17-13 win.

Last week: 3-1 (on games reported). To date: 35-10.
— Rob Parent