

A better name than 'National Conference'

"Hello, PIAA Answer Man."

"Hey, Answer Man! Back for another school year. I thought for sure that you had closed up shop for good this time. But then I dialed your number — 900-PIAA-UGH — and you answered! And I have a toughie that really will make you earn your \$2.50 per minute."

"OK, caller. The PIAA Answer Man is here to tackle any question about the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, a well-oiled athletic bureaucracy if ever there was one. But remember, the Answer Man will not..."

"Yeah, I know. The Answer Man will not take any questions about the ratings system used to determine qualifiers for the state football playoffs. You know, sometimes you get a little redundant, Answer Man."

"The Answer Man has his limits, young caller. Any subject is OK — even the proper color of the undergarment that the PIAA allows a basketball player to wear — except the playoff point system. Even the people on *Jeopardy!* could not figure that out."

"I get the point, Answer Man. Anyway, my question is about the Suburban One League National Football Conference."

By DAVE CALDWELL



"Best high school football conference in Eastern Pennsylvania, in the Answer Man's opinion. This year, the 10 largest and most powerful teams in the league have been put into one conference, and the other 13 teams have been put into another conference — the American — that has been divided into the seven-team Liberty Division and the six-team Freedom Division."

"I already knew that, Answer Man. The National Conference is a great football league. Abington coach Doug Moister says, 'With the level of play, week in and week out, anything can happen. Anybody who's a high school football fan and isn't excited about it, well, there must be something wrong.' And poor ol' Doug is not having a very good season, so it *must* be exciting."

"So what was your question?"

"Well, it is more of a request than a question, Answer Man. The National Conference needs a better nickname than the ones it has. And just calling it 'National Conference' seems so... boring. We need something more exciting for an exciting league, and if there is someone who can think of something, it is the always-inventive Answer Man."

"You are so right — well, right about the nickname, anyway. Some people are calling the conference the 'Power 10,' but that sounds to the Answer Man like either a brand of malt liquor or a weightlifting club. Others call it the 'Big 10.' Correct me if I am wrong here, but I think another very famous football conference uses that."

"Yeah, I know, Answer Man. And some guy with bushy brown hair, glasses and a snarly smile playfully suggested 'Crunch Conference' back when the league was realigned. That was cute. Catchy. Concise. And alliterative. Never caught on, though, A.M."

"The Answer Man was just talking to his good friend, Bob Buckanavage, about this very subject the other day. Bob is the athletic director at Pennsbury, and was the vice

chairman of the committee that devised the realignment plan for the league. Even though league officials said they were going to try to think of another name for the new football conference at the time of the realignment, they never did. 'Never even came up,' Bob told the Answer Man. 'The coaches never raised a question in terms of the name of the conference.' Bob said they probably had other things on their mind — like how they would survive nine league games. The Answer Man asked Bob Buckanavage what he would call the league, and he said, 'The Power 10, the Big 10 — I think that people say "Suburban One League National Football Conference," it's representative of the dynamics of the conference.'

"Well, those Suburban One people never have exactly been wild thinkers when it has come to naming things, Answer Man. How original: National and American Conference. Wonder where they got that? How about the Revolutionary War motif for the division names! This might be the only league in America where you have a team nicknamed the Patriots in the Colonial Division, and a team nicknamed the Colonials in the Liberty Division.

Good thing Bethlehem Liberty and Bethlehem Freedom are in another league."

"Well, caller, the Answer Man asked North Penn football coach Bill Travers for a nickname, and even he came up empty. And Bill Travers is the league's unofficial stand-up comedy act. 'I like the Big 10,' Travers said. 'We could call it the Physical 10, if you want. ... When you think of the Big 10, you think of physical, physical football. When games are over in this league, win, lose or draw, you know you've been in a game.'"

"So what do you think, A.M.?"

"I always did like what that guy with the bushy brown hair, glasses and the snarly smile suggested — the Crunch Conference. How about the Concussion Conference? The Collision Conference? The Super Conference? Or maybe something with '10' in it. The Terrific 10. The Terminating 10. The Top 10. How about the Super 10?"

"Super 10. Not bad, Answer Man."

"The Answer Man is on a roll, caller. How about this. With seven teams from Bucks County and three from Montgomery County, how about... the Bux-Mont League!"

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