

# Top 10 Southeast Pa. thrillers of the decade

In a back-and-forth Public League Red Division thriller, Frankford outlasted visiting Northeast, 40-34, in overtime Friday. Two weeks earlier, 17 touchdowns were scored in Penncrest's 66-54 victory over Central League rival Springfield (Delco).

Those two dramatic contests left us thinking about other pulsating, it's-not-over-till-it's-over games over the last decade. That said, here is one man's top-10 list of the most exciting and down-to-the-wire football games, excluding the aforementioned two, involving at least one Southeastern Pennsylvania school from



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2000 to 2009.

Of course, the more meaningful the matchup, the more riveting it was for glued-to-the-action spectators.

**1. Eric Cathedral Prep 41, Central Bucks West 35 (2000).** Avenging the previous year's title-game loss, won by the Bucks on a blocked punt late in the fourth quarter, Cathedral Prep triumphed in overtime and snapped the Bucks' state-record victory streak at 59.

On West's OT possession, Dale Williams, a 6-foot-7, 305-pound tackle for the Ramblers, blocked a 24-yard field-goal try by Jim Wiberly. Three plays later, Jawan Walker's 4-yard TD run decided things.

With 5 minutes, 19 seconds in regulation, Phil D'Giacomo's fifth touchdown had cut Cathedral Prep's lead to 35-34. C.B. West coach Mike Carey considered going for two, but decided against it.

**2. Bethlehem Liberty 45, Pennsbury 38 (2006).** The Hurricanes and Falcons battled for four quarters and four OTs in a Class AAAA Eastern final in front of 6,000-plus at War Memorial Field in Doylestown.

Liberty wasn't able to book a trip to Hershey until Pennsbury quarterback Victor Turbides, scrambling on fourth and goal, was dropped at the 3-yard line.

For the Falcons, who fought back twice to tie the game, halfback Jackson Fagan ran for 145 yards on 26 carries. "This is the worst feeling I've ever had in my entire life," he said after the smoke had cleared.

**3. George Washington 41, Northeast 34 (2008).** This triple-overtime spectacular finally was decided when, with the Vikings in a second-and-goal situation at the 8, Washington cornerback Lorenzo Adams intercepted a "speed-out" throw by Malik Stokes (22-for-42 passing, 256 yards, 3 touchdowns, 3 interceptions).



As Bethlehem Liberty players celebrate, Pennsbury's Jackson Fagan (on the ground) is comforted by teammate Jacob Link.

**4. Quakertown 52, Pennridge 45 (2000).** It took a then-state-record six overtime periods to decide this Thanksgiving Day clash. The teams combined for 791 yards of offense and 13 TDs. Three of Quakertown wide receiver Chris Griffin's four TD receptions went for scores, including the 7-yard OT winner. The game was tied, 14-14, at the end of regulation.

**5. West Catholic 55, St. John Neumann 48 (2002).** In a Catholic League Blue Division semifinal at Northeast's Charlie Martin Memorial Stadium, the Burrs weren't able to breathe a sigh of relief until they recovered an onside kick with 30 seconds to play.

West tailback Curtis Brinkley netted 241 rushing yards and four TDs on 25 carries. The never-say-die Pirates were spurred by workhorse Jimmy Porreca, who ran for 153 yards on 24 attempts and notched 26 total points.

**6. Holy Cross (N.J.) 36, St. Joseph's Prep 34 (2001).** The Lancers, led by running back Wali Lundy and a handful of other Division I-A recruits, held off the Hawks in Delran.

For the Prep, which had rallied from a 22-7 deficit to make things interesting in the late going, Kyle Ambroggi gained 193 yards on 34 carries and scored on an 8-yard burst.

**7. North Penn 31, Neshaminy 30 (2004).** At Wissahickon, arguably the most memorable regular-season tussle be-

tween the then-Suburban One League National Conference rivals was served up. The Redskins, though, had the final word that season. A month later, they topped the depleted Knights, 51-34, in the PIAA District 1 Class AAAA final.

**8. Neshaminy 21, C.B. West 19 (2001).** This National Conference battle at Heartbreak Ridge wasn't decided until the final play. Quarterback Jason Wlaser hit tight end Scott Mullin for a 6-yard TD to cap an eight-play, 70-yard drive. The Redskins began the series with no timeouts.

Down by 15-0 at intermission, the Bucks scored on three of their four second-half possessions and went in front, 19-15, with 1:57 to go.

**9. Strath Haven 37, Conestoga 29 (2007).** The Central League teams combined for 814 yards of offense in a Monday night game in Berwyn. Down by 37-13 in the fourth quarter, the Pioneers rallied with two scores (and a pair of two-point conversions) and nearly sent the game into OT.

**10. Upper Merion 55, Upper Merion 54 (2001).** In a Suburban One League American Conference Freedom Division game, the squads combined for 40 first downs, 16 TDs, and 1,098 yards of total offense. There was only one turnover.

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