

Win streak, playoff berth on the line for C.B. West

By Dave Caldwell
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It almost requires a box of No. 2 pencils, a ream of scratch paper and a team of IRS auditors to figure out, but the bottom line is rather easy to comprehend for the Central Bucks West football team.

Should the Bucks defeat Central Bucks East, an arch rival, in today's regular-season finale at Delaware Valley College, they will gain one of four berths in the inaugural Class AAAA playoffs of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

"I'm not going to even comment about anything about the state playoffs now," Bucks coach Mike Pettine said sternly earlier this week. "We have an important game coming up. I don't want to be talking about something I've asked my players not to talk about. I don't want to be a hypocrite."

His caution is understandable. Should Central Bucks West (10-0) lose to the Patriots (7-3-1) — or even tie them — the Bucks' 53-game winning streak, a state record, would screech to a halt. Moreover, the Region 1 playoff berth would be awarded to Neshaminy, which concluded an 11-0 season Friday night with a 49-14 trouncing of Pennsbury.

"We're resting this week," Neshaminy coach John Chaump said.

Nervously resting. If the Bucks defeat Central Bucks East and finish 11-0, Central Bucks West and Neshaminy would both finish with 72 ratings points. But the Bucks would edge out Neshaminy on the fifth of nine tie-breakers established before the season by the PIAA — the worst record of a team's best nine opponents.

Should it win today, Central Bucks West would be allowed to scratch its victory over Class AAA Lansdale Catholic, for which the Bucks earned only seven ratings points, and its victory over Pennridge, which is 0-10. Neshaminy would wipe out its victory over Pennridge, plus triumphs over one of three 2-8 teams: Downingtown, Harry S Truman or Archbishop Wood.

Going into today's games, Central Bucks West's nine opponents have a combined record of 46-45-1, and a winning percentage of .505. Neshaminy's opponents are 39-54-2, with a percentage of .419.

Even in the unlikely event that Downingtown, Norristown (5-5) and Truman win and North Penn (6-4) and West Chester Henderson (6-3) lose today, the best record with which Neshaminy's opponents could finish is 42-55-2 (.433); the worst record with which Central Bucks West's opponents could finish is 48-48-1 (.500).

A Central Bucks West victory today would negate the PIAA's first four tie-breakers. The Bucks and Redskins did not play this year, which eliminates tie-breaker No. 1. A Central Bucks West triumph today would make both teams 9-0 in the nine games used for the ratings, which eliminates tie-breaker No. 2.

Both teams would be 10-0 under tie-breaker No. 3: their record in the nine ratings games, plus one game in the highest classification. Even though one of Central Bucks West's victories was over a Class AAA team, both also would be 11-0 under tie-breaker No. 4: their record in the nine ratings games, plus two games in the highest classification.

Football schedule

CENTRAL LEAGUE	
Marple Newtown at Conestoga, 10:30	Haverford High at Upper Darby, 10:45
SUBURBAN ONE AMERICAN LEAGUE	
Upper Moreland at Hatboro-Horsham, 10	Wissahickon at Upper Dublin, 11
SUBURBAN ONE NATIONAL LEAGUE	
Central Bucks East at C.B. West, 11	
DEL-VAL LEAGUE	
Sun Valley at Chichester, 10:30	
CHES-MONT LEAGUE	
Coatesville at Downingtown, 10	W.C. Henderson at West Chester East, 10
PIONEER CONFERENCE	
Pottstown at Owen J. Roberts, 10	Phoenixville at Spring-Ford, 10
St. Pius X at Pottsgrove, 1:30	
BICENTENNIAL LEAGUE	
Morrissville at Bristol, 10:30	
NONLEAGUE	
North Catholic at Frankford, 9:45	Bishop Egan at Truman, 10
Upper Merion at Norristown, 10	Methacton at Perkiomen Valley, 10
Olney at Cardinal Dougherty, 10	Mastbaum at Dobbins, 10
Bishop Kenrick at Ply.-Whitemarsh, 10	Pennridge at Quakertown, 10:15
Washington at Archbishop Ryan, 10:30	Germanstown at Martin L. King, 10:30
Father Judge at Lincoln, 10:30	Southern at St. John Neumann, 10:30
Lansdale Catholic at North Penn, 10:30	Central at Northeast, 10:30
Roman Catholic at Roxborough, 10:30	St. Joseph's at La Salle, 10:30
Ridley at Interboro, 10:30	Springfield (M) at Arch. Kennedy, 10:30
St. James at Chester, 10:30	

"I think the language is stupid," Chaump said. "In the tie-breaking procedure, No. 3 and No. 4 will never come into play."

There is a simple alternative to deciding which team will represent the region in the state playoffs: Establish football playoffs for District 1, the only one of 12 districts in the state without playoffs. Then Central Bucks West and Neshaminy could settle the score on the playing field.

But District 1 chairman James Gallagher said the creation of playoffs was highly unlikely for one main reason — the existence of 21 Thanksgiving Day games involving 39 teams from the district.

Squeezing district playoffs and Thanksgiving Day games into the schedule would require ending the regular season three weeks before Thanksgiving, he said.

That would result in a long layoff for teams that do not make the district playoffs. "And I just don't see it," Gallagher said.

Three Class AAAA teams from District 3, which does not have Thanksgiving Day games, also finished their regular seasons with unbeaten records — Cedar Cliff, McCaskey and York.

But McCaskey (11-0) defeated York in the first round of the District 3 playoffs, and will meet Cedar Cliff (12-0) Saturday, in Hershey, for the district championship. To the winner goes the right to meet Central Bucks West or Neshaminy in the first round of the state playoffs on Dec. 3.

Central Bucks West and Neshaminy aren't the only teams hoping to advance to the state playoffs. St. Pius X (8-3) of the Pioneer Conference can clinch the Region 1 Class A berth with a victory over Pottsgrove (4-6).

Coached by Bill Rogers, the Winged Lions will have 44 points if they knock off Pottsgrove. A win also will give the Lions their best record in at least 15 years. If St. Pius X loses, Dunmore (7-3) of District 2 will win the berth with 43 points.

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