

Catholic Athletes For Christ Top 25
Presented by Siena Heights University
& Global Football

Notes 2018-07

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CATHOLIC ATHLETES FOR CHRIST TOP 25 WEEK 6 RANKING

Weekly Ranking of Catholic High School Football Teams Presented by Siena Heights University and Global Football

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018 - ALEXANDRIA, Va. – It doesn't get any better than No. 1 vs. No. 2. When the Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football rankings came to fruition, the goal was to see games such as St. John Bosco (Bellflower, Calif.) versus Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.) help sculpt the rankings.

When deciding CAC Top 25 teams, the criteria boils down to strength of schedule and the quality of the league, conference or district that you are a part of. Coincidentally both these teams are members of the uber-competitive Trinity League, composed of teams mostly from Orange County (south of Los Angeles) and smack dab in middle of fertile recruiting grounds for schoolboy football. More than 10,000 fans will shoehorn into the Santa Ana Bowl on Friday night. In spite of the late start for those of us in the Eastern Time Zone, a large cup of Dunkin' coffee will fuel the midnight session.

This won't be the last time these rivals meet this season. Count on it.

As for the CAC Top 25 presented by Siena Heights University and Global Football, for the first time this season, we are not adding any newcomers. That's going to change quickly with teams dropping off in form and others rising. The teams that are listed in the Special Consideration are those on the cusp of entering the CAC Top 25 or waiting to re-enter. Keep an eye on them. Patience is the only advice; that and keep on winning.

No. 15 Good Counsel (Olney, Md.) makes the biggest climb, moving up 10 slots, after a quality league win. No. 10 JSerra (San Juan Capistrano, Calif.) also received a healthy bump of six slots for stellar play in one of the nation's top leagues. No. 16 Gonzaga (Washington, D.C.) dropped eight spots and No. 25 St. Joseph Regional (Montvale, N.J.) fell seven after losses. Both have time to recover thanks to strong schedules.

Before we get rolling here's a note out of Illinois.

There is good news out of Chicagoland, one of the strongholds of Catholic school football, where the Chicago Catholic League and East Suburban Catholic will merge for football only starting with the 2019 season. The move was unanimously passed on October 4 by a vote of the school's principals.

The conference, which will be named at a later date, will consider male enrollment, participation numbers and success rate during the 2017 and 2018 seasons. According to a report, the conference will be composed of six divisions with four teams. Each team's 10-game schedule would include three divisional games, four crossovers and two nonconference. The latter two games would allow teams to play national or regional oriented contests, especially in late August and early September when made-for-TV games are prevalent.

This isn't the first time the conferences merged. From 1996 to 2002 the byproduct was known as the Chicago Metropolitan Conference. No word if other sports would be affected, but high-profile sports like basketball, soccer, volleyball, track and field and baseball/softball will likely follow if all goes according to plan.

Mainstays from the Catholic League include Mount Carmel, St. Rita, De La Salle, Loyola Academy, St. Joseph and Fenwick. The 10-team East Suburban Catholic features Benet Academy, Carmel, Joliet Catholic Academy, Marian Catholic, Marian Central, Marist, Nazareth Academy, Notre Dame, St. Patrick and St. Viator.

That should create a super conference with an urban-suburban feel, starting in 2019 and surely their top teams will be included in the CAC preseason Top 25 rankings.

There's more: accolades for a young man from Missouri, who turned in a memorable performance and a coach that cultivated an esprit de corps and maintained excellence to secure victory. Also, a look ahead to where you need to be for our games of the week.

Triple Option

Player of the Week: Quarterback Brett Gabbert of No. 20 Christian Brothers College (St. Louis, Mo.). Gabbert is one of those pro-style signal callers that will find way to beat an opponent. Take last weekend when Gabbert turned dual threat, pummeling league rivals Vianney (St. Louis), 70-28. He completed 11 of 20 passes for 256 yards and four touchdowns from 64, 33, 12, and 35 yards and carried three times for 110 yards and scored his first TD of the season from 69 yards.

For the season, Gabbert has been the steady hand for the Cadets, who are 6-1 heading into a showdown with No. 21 Rockhurst (Kansas City) in a battle of Missouri's top two ranked Class 6 schools. Gabbert has been a model of consistency, completing 118 of 178 passes (.663 completion percentage) for 1,682 yards and 21 TDs and only one interception. He's done it with his legs too, rushing 18 times for 191 yards and a TD, good for 10.6 yards a pop.

Last season, the 6-foot, 200-pounder threw for 2,862 yards and 33 TDs as the Cadets won the Class 6 state title. As a sophomore, he passed for 2,965 and 31 scores. He committed to Miami (Ohio) and had interest from programs such as Eastern Michigan, Kent State, Central Michigan, Northern Iowa, Northern Illinois and multiple Ivy League schools. He has rich bloodlines, as older brother, Blaine Gabbert, is a QB for the Tennessee Titans after a stellar collegiate career at Missouri.

Coach of the Week: Andy Stefanelli of No. 15 Good Counsel (Olney, Md.). If you coach in the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference, bringing your A-game each week is the only option, with respected and talented coaches dotting the rosters of programs such as St. John's College, DeMatha, Gonzaga and Bishop McNamara. Add Good Counsel to that list after last Saturday's 38-31 comeback win at then-No. 8 Gonzaga (Washington, D.C.). Stefanelli pushed the right buttons, rotating running backs for maximum production and inserting a backup defensive back that intercepted two passes, including one for a pick-six in the second half.

In 2017, Stefanelli was hired as the head coach when Bob Milloy, Maryland's winningest coach with 405 career victories, retired. Stefanelli, a Good Counsel alumnus (Class of 1983) and former player for coach Tom Hilton, was a late bloomer by coaching standards. He owned a business and entered the profession as a junior varsity assistant at 40 years old. He learned under Milloy and coached the freshman team and was the program's recruiting coordinator for the last eight of the 10 years he was on Milloy's staff.

Stefanelli's team improved to 5-1 overall and 1-0 in the league with another big game this Friday against No. 3 St. John's. The WCAC playoffs start in November and expect Stefanelli's Falcons to be in the thick of things. Great drama is unfolding in this talented league.

Games of the Week (All times Eastern): We're all over the East Coast, Midwest and the Big Easy for pivotal games that will go a long way to determining seeds in state and conference tournaments. In four instances, the teams could face each other in the postseason.

No. 15 Good Counsel (Olney, Md.) at No. 3 St. John's College (Washington, D.C.), Friday, 7:30 p.m.: You know it's a big-time game when the ESPN2 cameras roll into Catholic University's Cardinal Stadium. It's Homecoming for undefeated SJC and Good Counsel recorded a signature 38-31 win over then-No. 8 Gonzaga (Washington) last weekend. First place is up for grabs in the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference with three critical weeks left before the playoffs, along with a prominent CAC Top 25 placing.

No. 1 St. John Bosco (Bellflower, Calif.) at No. 2 Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.), Friday, 10:30 p.m.: If you don't have tickets already, forget about it. At least you can watch it on Fox Sports West Prime Ticket. The winner of this one has the inside track to the Trinity League title but a rematch (like last year) is anticipated in the CIF-Southern Section Open Division playoffs. And, of course, the victor will likely sit at the summit of the CAC Top 25 next week.

St. Ignatius (Cleveland, Ohio) at Archbishop Moeller (Cincinnati, Ohio), Saturday, 2 p.m.: Another great Midwestern rivalry between major Ohio cities that sit on polar opposites of the state. Last weekend, St. Ignatius (5-2) posted the school's 700th all-time victory, including No. 350 for legendary coach Chuck Kyle. Moeller (6-1) rallied to defeat Elder (Cincinnati), 24-21, tallying the final 10 points of the contest in the fourth quarter. The two could meet again in the Division I state final.

Jesuit (New Orleans, La.) at Archbishop Rummel (Metairie, La.), Saturday, 8 p.m.: The path to the District 9-5A title starts with this rivalry game at Joe Yenni Stadium in Metairie. Rummel is 5-1 overall, having won four straight, and 2-0 in district play, Jesuit 4-2 and 2-1 in the district, losing last week to John Curtis Christian (River Ridge, La.), 23-0. John Curtis and Rummel are tied for the district lead. Rummel recorded a pleasing 39-3 win over Holy Cross (New Orleans) last weekend, the same team that upset the Raiders in 2017 ending a 22-year losing skein. Rummel's main threat is USC-bound WR Koy Moore.

De La Salle Collegiate (Warren, Mich.) at Central Catholic (Novi, Mich.), Sunday, 1 p.m.: The De La Salle Pilots (6-1), are No. 8 in the Michigan state rankings, and are fresh off an impressive 35-7 win over Davison while Central Catholic fell to league rival St. Mary's (Orchard Lake), 31-29. With a win, De La Salle wraps up the Detroit Catholic League title with the postseason on the horizon.

That's a full plate for the second weekend in October. We'll give a detailed update of the donnybrook in southern California. Perhaps there's a new No. 1 in the CAC Top 25. I can't wait for it!

Fans, coaches, players and parents are encouraged to follow the CAC Top 25 through social media at www.Facebook.com/CACTop25 and on Twitter @CACTop25. The CAC Top 25 rankings will return on Oct. 17. If you want to nominate a player or coach for CAC recognition get us the information no later than each Monday morning during the season by 11 a.m. ET.

Thank you for your readership and maybe we'll meet at game soon. God Bless and enjoy the games and sportsmanship of the competition. – *Christopher Lawlor*

2018 Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25, October 10, 2018

1. St. John Bosco, Bellflower, Calif. (7-0)

Previous rank: 1.

In the Huddle: The Braves were a well-oiled machine in a 63-28 win over Orange Lutheran in Trinity League action. Kristopher Hutson scored four TDs, including two on kickoffs. Now the focus shifts to the most-talked-about game at No. 2 Mater Dei (Santa Ana) on Friday – the battle for the summit of the CAC Top 25. This one has the markings of a classic.

2. Mater Dei, Santa Ana, Calif. (6-1) #

Previous rank: 2.

In the Huddle: Junior QB Bryce Young was an efficient 11 of 14 for 283 yards and threw for four TDs during a 49-7 win over Santa Margarita (Rancho Santa Margarita). Young's targetman was WR Bru McCoy, who had three catches for 109 yards and three six-pointers. The Monarchs led 28-7 after one quarter. Next is up is No. 1 St. John Bosco (Bellflower) Friday. Enough said.

3. St. John's College, Washington, D.C. (6-0)

Previous rank: 3.

In the Huddle: The Cadets defeated Archbishop Carroll (Washington), 42-0. Friday night the stakes are ratcheted up with a national TV (on ESPN 2) against surging No. 15 Good Counsel (Olney, Md.).

4. Archbishop Hoban, Akron, Ohio (7-0)

Previous rank: 4.

In the Huddle: DeaMonte Trayanum made the most of his opportunities, carrying four times for 90 yards and three TDs and added a 90-yard score on a kickoff during a 52-3 victory over Lake Catholic (Mentor). The Knights play Padua Franciscan (Parma) on Friday.

5. De La Salle, Concord, Calif. (7-0)

Previous rank: 5.

In the Huddle: The Spartans scored on their first seven possession and easily dispatched Monte Vista (Danville), 55-0. Next is a Friday date against Foothill (Pleasanton).

6. St. Thomas Aquinas, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (5-1)

Previous rank: 6.

In the Huddle: Determination and a week off were keys during a 38-6 thrashing of Deerfield Beach. The Raiders, who lost in their last game before the bye week, came out with a chip on their shoulder, scored on their first offensive play and rolled to victory over a Florida Class 8A powerhouse. That particular play involved trickery as QB Curt Casteel pitched to WR Xavier Restrepo, who then fired a 50-yard scoring strike to Marcus Rosemy. Sheer genius! The Raiders are back at it Friday with Fort Lauderdale High.

7. St. Frances Academy, Baltimore, Md. (3-0)

Previous rank: 7.

In the Huddle: Defeated Clarkson Football North (Mississauga, Ontario), 64-6. Next is Friday meeting with Canada Prep Football (St. Catharines, Ontario).

8. St. Joseph's Prep, Philadelphia, Pa. (4-0)

Previous rank: 9.

In the Huddle: The Philadelphia Catholic League Red Division title is within grasp after a 48-7 pasting of rivals Roman Catholic (Philadelphia). Sophomore QB Kyle McCord tossed for two TDs and RB Joshua Barlow ran for a season-high 103 yards and two scores. The Hawks won't have time to rest on their laurels with Saturday's showdown at Archbishop Wood (Warminster, Pa.).

9. Saint Louis, Honolulu, Hawaii (7-0)

Previous rank: 10.

In the Huddle: The Crusaders routed Farrington (Honolulu), 72-6. In less than two quarters, QB Jayden de Laura completed 13 of 17 passes for 254 yards and two TDs. De Laura has thrown for 1,378 yards and 13 scores this season. The defense allowed only four net yards. The Crusaders close out the regular against a crosstown rivals Kamehameha School (Honolulu) Friday at Aloha Stadium.

10. JSerra Catholic, San Juan Capistrano, Calif. (6-1)

Previous rank: 16.

In the Huddle: The Lions exploded for 28 points in the second quarter during a 49-6 victory over Servite (Anaheim). QB Caden Bell hit on 14 of 16 passes for 266 yards and five scores, including two apiece to Tarik Lockett and Munir McClain. Coach Pat Harlow's team has another tall assignment Friday with Orange Lutheran in Trinity League action.

11. DeMatha Catholic, Hyattsville, Md. (4-1)

Previous rank: 11.

In the Huddle: Idle. The Stags open the WCAC schedule with archrivals No. 16 Gonzaga (Washington) on Friday night at Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex. If you think that was easy, guess again. Coach Elijah Brooks' team then follows that game up with CAC Top 25 entrants Good Counsel (Olney, Md.) and St. John's College (Washington).

12. Bergen Catholic, Oradell, N.J. (5-1)

Previous rank: 12.

In the Huddle: Anthony Corbin intercepted a pass in the fourth quarter, setting up his 10-yard TD from the Wildcat formation and the Crusaders beat then-No. 18 St. Joseph Regional (Montvale), 24-20. BC trailed 20-10 in the third quarter. The Crusaders return home Saturday for Pope John XXIII (Sparta).

13. Blessed Trinity, Roswell, Ga. (6-0)

Previous rank: 13.

In the Huddle: Coach Tim McFarlin's squad didn't miss a beat coming off a bye week in defeating Denmark (Alpharetta), 47-6. Ohio State-bound RB-LB Steele Chambers (152 yards on 11 attempts) and Carson Harof rushed for two TDs apiece and QB Jake Smith completed nine passes for 189 yards and a score. The Titans travel to undefeated Flowery Branch on Friday.

14. Covington Catholic, Park Hills, Ky. (7-0)

Previous rank: 14.

In the Huddle: QB Caleb Jacob passed for 385 yards and three TDs and RB Casey McGinness carried 26 times for 158 yards and two scores in a 52-36 win at Bishop Chatard (Indianapolis, Ind.). The Colonels took control in the second quarter, scoring 24 points. Kentucky's top-ranked Class 5A team plays at Highlands (Fort Mitchell, Ky.) Friday.

15. Good Counsel, Olney, Md. (5-1)

Previous rank: 25.

In the Huddle: Defeated then-No. 8 Gonzaga (Washington, D.C.), 38-31. Backup DB Justin Jackson entered the game in the third quarter and proceeded to intercept two passes, including one for a pick-six. RB Sy'Veon Wilkerson rushed for 262 yards and clinched it with a late 67-yard TD sprint. The Falcons continue to run the gauntlet at No. 3 St. John's College (Washington, D.C.) Friday.

16. Gonzaga, Washington, D.C. (6-1)

Previous rank: 8.

In the Huddle: Let it be said that life in the WCAC is not easy. Few saw this one coming but the Eagles were upended by then-No. 25 Good Counsel (Olney, Md.), 38-31. WR John Marshall caught two TD passes in the first half but it wasn't enough. The Eagles face No. 11 DeMatha (Hyattsville, Md.).

17. McGill-Toolen, Mobile, Ala. (5-1)

Previous rank: 15.

In the Huddle: The Yellow Jackets posted their fifth shutout of the campaign and defeated Foley, 44-0. Sawyer Bradley had a 10-yard TD run and a pick-six later for a 21-0 lead in the first quarter. Next is a trip to Theodore on Friday.

18. Columbus, Miami, Fla. (6-1)

Previous rank: 17.

In the Huddle: That long road trip didn't bother the Explorers in a 42-7 victory at Lake Gibson (Lakeland). Next is Miami Beach on Friday in District 14-8A play.

19. DePaul Catholic, Wayne, N.J. (5-1)

Previous ranked: 19.

In the Huddle: QB Ta'Quan Roberson threw for a season-high five TDs, including a pair to Ronnie Hickman, Jr., and Charles Finley in a 52-6 rout of Paramus Catholic. The Spartans face Hudson Catholic (Jersey City) Saturday at Caven Point.

20. Christian Brothers College, St. Louis, Mo. (6-1)

Previous rank: 20.

In the Huddle: The offensive fireworks were at their best last weekend during a 70-28 win over rivals Vianney (St. Louis). RB Bryan Bradford scored three TDs, including two on 39 and 26 yards and QB Brett Gabbert accounted for five TDs, including four in the air.

21. Rockhurst, Kansas City, Mo. (6-1)

Previous rank: 21.

In the huddle: The Hawkleets recorded their second shutout of the season with a 28-0 win over Battle (Columbia). They make the trip west on I-70 for a matchup with No. 20 Christian Brothers College (St. Louis) on Friday.

22. Charlotte (N.C.), Catholic (6-1)

Previous rank: 22.

In the Huddle: After yielding the first score of the game, the Cougars tightened up their defense in a 28-7 win over Sun Valley (Monroe). RB Lamagea McDowell rushed for 133 yards and three TDs and the defense held Sun Valley to 32 points below its season average and less than 200 yards of offense. This weekend coach Mike Brodowicz's squad is off to Piedmont (Monroe).

23. Bishop Gorman, Las Vegas, Nev. (3-3)

Previous rank: 23.

In the Huddle: The Gaels continue to hammer the local opponents. This time they beat Desert Oasis (Las Vegas), 42-7. RB Amod Cianelli carried 11 times for 118 yards and three TDs of 37, 12 and 3 yards. The Gaels jumped out to a 21-0 lead in the first quarter. The schedule resumes Friday with Sierra Vista (Las Vegas).

24. St. Peter's Prep, Jersey City, N.J. (4-2)

Previous rank: 24.

In the Huddle: Navy-bound QB Maasai Maynor's 3-yard TD run in overtime rallied the Marauders in a 26-23 win over Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey). Maynor accounted for all four scores, throwing for 230 yards and two TDs and rushing for 95 yards and two more scores. Next up is Paramus Catholic on Friday.

25. St. Joseph Regional, Montvale, N.J. (4-2)

Previous rank: 18.

In the Huddle: Lost to No. 12 Bergen Catholic (Oradell), 24-20. The Green Knights led 20-10 in the third quarter but the offense stalled. RB Te'Rai Powell rushed for more than 100 yards, with an 87-yard TD in the second quarter. Next is a short road trip to rivals Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey) Friday.

Dropped out: None.

Special Consideration: Marist (Chicago, Ill.); Bishop Chatard (Indianapolis, Ind.); Xavier (Cedar Rapids, Iowa); St. Pius X, (Houston, Texas); Bishop McDevitt (Harrisburg, Pa.); De La Salle Collegiate (Warren, Mich.); Archbishop Moeller (Cincinnati, Ohio); Memorial (Evansville, Ind. Chaminade-Madonna College Prep (Hollywood, Fla.); Clearwater (Fla.) Central Catholic; Salpointe Catholic (Tucson, Ariz.); Central Catholic (Pittsburgh, Pa.); Bishop Dwenger (Fort Wayne, Ind.); Aquinas Institute (Rochester, N.Y.); St. Ignatius (Cleveland, Ohio); Jesuit (Tampa, Fla.); Central Catholic (Toledo, Ohio); Catholic (Baton Rouge, La.); Mount Carmel (Chicago, Ill.); Strake Jesuit (Houston, Texas); Nazareth Academy (LaGrange Park, Ill.); Eastside Catholic (Sammamish, Wash.); Brother Rice (Chicago, Ill.); St. Edward (Lakewood, Ohio); Iona Prep (New Rochelle, N.Y.); Cathedral Prep (Erie, Pa.); Bishop Miege (Shawnee Mission, Kan.); and Xaverian Brothers (Westwood, Mass.).

Includes a forfeit loss

About: The Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings, presented by Siena Heights University and Global Football are released on Wednesdays from September until the conclusion of the high school season in December. Criteria include the quality of the team and its players, strength of schedule, tradition, and quality of the team's league, conference, region or district. The rankings are compiled by Christopher Lawlor, an award-winning writer, who is a voting committee member and advisor for several major national high school events. All Catholic high schools from the United States that feature only four-year players on 11-man teams are eligible for consideration. Catholic Athletes for Christ chapters and presenting sponsors provide input into the weekly rankings, including Global Football Founder & President Patrick Steenberge, who benefited from 16 years of Catholic education at University of Notre Dame, Erie Cathedral Prep and St. Luke's School, Erie, Pa.