

A dozen that you must not miss

COMMENTARY

BY KEVIN MALONEY
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

As we prepare for the high school football season to get underway this weekend, here's one man's list of the top 12 games you should circle on the schedule.

Lawrence at WW-P South, Saturday, Sept. 12, 2 p.m. — You can look at the fact that this game is being played on the first weekend of the season in one of two ways. One, it's a heck of a way to open the season. Or, two, you could easily make the case that this game should be played later when both teams are in midseason form and could use it to prepare for the NJSIAA playoffs — where both squads should be headed.

I know preparing the schedule is a thankless job, but can we please push this game to later in the season next year?

Princeton at Nottingham, Saturday, Sept. 12, noon — This game has ultimately decided who would eventually capture the Colonial Valley Conference's Valley Division crown in each of the last two seasons. Again, it's a shame the game is being played right before the WW-P South/Lawrence game and that's it's being played on the first weekend of the season.

Lawrence at Nottingham,

Thursday, Sept. 17, 3 p.m. — It will be a great test for both squads as they come off tough first-week contests. You can bet that Nottingham head coach Jon Adams will spend the week reminding his team that it has lost four straight to the Cards by a combined score of 149-28.

Robbinsville at Florence, Friday, Sept. 18, 7 p.m. — What's not to like when up-and-coming Robbinsville makes the trek down to the field which should be known as Joseph Frappolli Stadium to take on perennial Group I Central power Florence?

Nottingham at Notre Dame, Friday, Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. — Notre Dame has won five of the last six games between the schools, but the last four, including Nottingham's last win in '05, have been decided by an average of eight points per game.

Notre Dame at Lawrence, Saturday, Oct. 3, 1 p.m. — Situated just a few blocks from one another, it's always interesting when these schools battle with town bragging rights on the line.

Hamilton at WW-P South, Saturday, Oct. 3, 2 p.m. — WW-P South overcame a 14-point fourth-quarter deficit a year ago that catapulted the Pirates to a fourth straight playoff berth while the loss kept the Hornets from the postseason.

WW-P South at Notre Dame, Friday, Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m. — WW-P South beat Notre Dame, 44-23,

at home a year ago. Will playing under the lights at Msgr. Walter E. Nolan Field give the Irish an advantage over the Pirates, who are accustomed to playing on Saturday afternoons?

Nottingham at Hamilton, Saturday, Oct. 10, 2 p.m. — This has been the real championship of Hamilton Township the last few years. Perhaps in a bid to increase attendance, the schools might consider playing the game under the lights at another Hamilton Township school, Trenton Catholic Academy, on a Friday night.

Hopewell at Princeton, Saturday, Oct. 17, 1 p.m. — This could be a make-or-break game for two teams that have designs on the postseason with the NJSIAA qualification deadline looming.

Notre Dame at Princeton, Saturday, Oct. 31, 1 p.m. — If Chappy Moore is to be believed that the Irish will run the football this year, it should be a contest featuring two of the league's top rushing offenses.

WW-P South at Princeton, Saturday, Nov. 7, 2 p.m. — If both teams are headed to the playoffs, this game could lose its luster as some key players could see minimal time or sit out the contest entirely. By the end of the season, however, it could be a matchup of the CVC's top two teams with bragging rights on the line.

Area honorees: Montgomery's

J.T. Tartacoff (defensive back) was the lone Times-area player to be named to the MaxPreps First Team All-State preseason squad, but seven other locals also managed to make the list.

WW-P South's Jack Dennehy (wide receiver) and Hamilton's Frank Quartucci (offensive line) were named to the second-team offense, while WW-P South's Zach Hundertmark (defensive line) was named to the second-team defense.

Princeton's Trevor Barsamian (running back) and Skye Ettin (defensive back), Trenton's Teddy Fully (running back) and Notre Dame's Ransford Quarrie (running back) were named to MaxPrep's All-State watch list.

Information, please: If you missed any of the CVC or prep previews or capsules, you can go to <http://highschoolsports.nj.com/football/> for all the info.

Radio Nowhere: Tonight will be the first 12th Man Touchdown Club dinner of the season honoring the team captains from the 19 CVC and prep schools. Throughout the season, you can tune in to the 12th Man Touchdown Club radio show as host Dan Wing is joined by myself and George O'Gorman from 7-8 p.m. on 1350 WHWH.

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