

THANKSGIVING HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW



Quarterback Billy Conners (above) has passed for 1,241 yards and 15 touchdowns this season to lead coach Gamp Pellegri's Malvern Prep squad.



JOSEPH KACZMAREK / For the Daily News

# Football feast with lots of stuffing

Malvern Prep, St. Joseph's Prep meet amid interesting story lines

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**B**Y TOMORROW we'll know whether the appropriate sentence ends with a question mark or an exclamation point.

As in... Is this still coach Gaspare "Gamp" Pellegri's best-ever Malvern Prep football team? This is his best-ever football team!

The Friars will provide half the answer for their coach, of course. Allowing them to feel great or somewhat (very?) unfulfilled will be St. Joseph's Prep, their opponent for a 10:30 a.m. clash at Villanova Stadium that is expected to draw if not a full house, something close to it.

The storylines are numerous. Pellegri, concluding his 31st season as Malvern's coach, from 1970-77 was the boss at SJ Prep and one of his All-Catholic line-men was the guy, Gil Brooks, who now steers the Hawks.

Just last year, Malvern roared to a 9-0 record and then was sliced and diced by the Hawks, 33-6, in tomorrow's venue.

There's also the save-face angle, both for the Prep and its league.

Though the Hawks have been the Catholic League's glamour program, by far, of this decade, they were dumped by La Salle in a AAAA semifinal. Then, La Salle fell last week in the AAAA City Title to George Washington, of the Public League.

In its history as an Inter-Ac member, Malvern has fashioned five perfect seasons — 9-0 in '72 and 10-0 in '74 under Jack "Shark" McQuinn; 10-0 in '80 and '85 and 9-0 in 2001 under Pellegri.

This group's average score has been 43-10. Quarterback Billy Conners, committed to Duke for lacrosse, has posted ridiculously impressive passing numbers: 55-for-73 for 1,241 yards and 15 touchdowns. That's a completion rate of 75.3 percent, a yards-per-attempt norm of 17 and a TD every five throws.

Wideout Joe Price has frolicked to 767 yards and 10 TDs on 29 catches, and the primary rushers, James Connelly and Neil Willis, have combined for 1,432 and 22 scores.

The Prep answers with its own two-headed rushing monster: Mike Yeager and Gar-

rett Compton have combined for 1,954 yards and 20 scores. Temple-bound quarterback Mark Ghililato has produced 1,184 yards of rushing and passing along with 10 scores.

The one downside here is that neither team has played since Nov. 8. Expect the rust to be shed rather quickly, though.

Elsewhere, you couldn't go wrong deciding to check out North Catholic at Frankford, the granddaddy of the city's holiday rivalries (79th meeting).

Like always, Frankford hoped to win a championship. Didn't work out. North Catholic annexed the CL's first AAA crown. Didn't work out. A win tomorrow would be much more than a booky prize.

Also, Ss. Neumann-Goretti and Southern are back for another whirl. The series, started in 1994, last year experienced its second cancellation of this decade when the schools could not agree on a site (petty, right?) with the Super Site under construction. Numbers problems had caused Southern to forfeit in '01. ★

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