

St. Joe's Prep, Malvern set Thanksgiving game

Since La Salle knocked St. Joseph's Prep out of the PIAA football playoffs on Saturday, the Hawks find themselves available to play unbeaten Malvern Prep in a nonleague game on Thanksgiving. So, the teams will meet.

The Prep, 8-3 this season and ranked ninth in The Inquirer's Top 10, may have had a state playoff game that weekend had it won Saturday and this weekend.

Malvern, 9-0 and ranked second by The Inquirer, is not part of the PIAA and was finished for the season.

The teams will play at 10:30 a.m., at Villanova. The Prep won last year's Thanksgiving meeting, 33-6.

This season, Malvern coach Gamp Pellegrini is shooting for a fourth undefeated season. The Friars went 10-0 in 1980 and 1995, and 9-0 in 2001.

Gilbert Brooks "and I are good friends," Pellegrini said of the St. Joe's coach. "It makes for a nice friendship-type of game. You know the teams respect each other.

"His motivation is to knock off an undefeated team. Our motivation is to beat a really good football team and finish undefeated."

Malvern is having a banner season. It has outscored its opponents by 390-88, and ranks among the most talented teams in Pellegrini's 31 seasons.

"This team is right up there with the best, if not the best," Pellegrini said. "We've had six games go to the mercy rule. After our win against Chestnut Hill Academy, when we thought that was the end to our season, I told the kids I thought they were my best team."

— Rick O'Brien

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