

Prep-McDowell basketball round one goes to Ramblers

On January 26, the much anticipated first matchup of Cathedral Prep and McDowell basketball was battled on McDowell's own hardwood. Despite the lofty expectations the Trojans had heading into this game, it was the Ramblers who prevailed. With the final score being 56-39, Prep didn't merely "hang on" to this one, they dominated.

Sophomore Alphonso Pickens led the way in scoring for the Ramblers with 13, while seniors Aaron McBride and Adam Upperman added 12 points apiece. Star freshman Liam Galla dominated the boards, racking up 8 rebounds along with McBride. Prep held the nationally ranked McDowell freshman William Jeffress to 15 points to hold off the Trojans. Although Prep was drastically overlooked in this one, they found a way to dominate from start to finish.

"It's a really rewarding feeling to have all the hard work and preparation pay off" said Upperman. Along with the schemes and halftime adjustments that come with every intense basketball game, Prep and McDowell always have a little more to offer to the crowd. Both cheering sections were wide awake for this one. Upon conclusion of the game, the Rambler's Sixth Man stormed McDowell's court and added insult to injury. McDowell graduate and current Steelers running back, James Connor, also was in attendance and even stayed after the game to take pictures with fans.

The Prep McDowell rivalry is truly the best Erie has to offer. It features passion, resilience, and a lot of funny cheers. Prep is set to host the Trojans later this month and it should be an even better one as McDowell has it circled on the calendar and is out for revenge.

MaxPreps honors Rambler championship football team

Early last week, Cathedral Prep students heard word of an assembly that would take place in the auditorium immediately following 2nd period. As moans and sighs radiated through the halls (as the assumption was that the student body would be reprimanded for behavior, dress code, or something else), faces of shock and excitement were put on full display when they finally arrived.

The leading American high school sports website, [MaxPreps](#), was prepared to offer the Rambler football team with high honors. While on their national Tour of Champions, they decided to stop by 225 West 9th Street last Monday. The event was sponsored by the Army National Guard and is only awarded to the top 50 football schools in the United States of America according to their rankings. It was truly a special ceremony for a very special group of people that none will soon forget.

“This team exemplifies courage, hard work, and character,” said Sergeant First Class Ryan Bisson. “Values the Army National Guard promotes and encourages.”

Cathedral Prep also finished the season ranked in 3rd nationally in the Catholic Athletes for Christ rankings, and head coach Mike Mischler earned the Catholic Athletes For Christ Top 25 Coach of the Year honors.

This all, of course, tops off perfect back-to-back seasons for the Ramblers, winning the Pennsylvania 4A state championship both times. Mischler has five current seniors committed to playing Division I football, including the likes of Penn State, Notre Dame, Iowa, Navy, and Ohio. Many more national

letters of intent will possibly be signed by fellow members of this special senior class as Mischler has made that a staple of his program.

“This speaks to the accomplishments of not only our players and my staff, but to the whole community,” said Mischler. Cathedral Prep feels truly honored with the awards and recognition given to them by *MaxPreps* and the Army National Guard, and their gratitude reigns within each and every one of the player’s hearts.

Star wide receiver Tyler Oedekoven said, “Only 50 schools in the country get this, so it’s a tremendous honor just to be one of those names.”

Erie buzzing in reaction to proposed ordinance

As of Wednesday, Jan. 17, Erie City Council voted to make 30 grams or less of marijuana a summary offense rather than a misdemeanor. As the marijuana legalization train continues to sweep its way through the Eastern front of the country, Erie is already following in the footsteps of other major cities in Pennsylvania with the implication of this law. The decriminalization of marijuana possession continues, and this newly agreed-upon ordinance furthers that notion...to an extent.

The ordinance stipulates that this law is not in effect in *all* cases. For example, if an individual also is tied to a felony or multiple misdemeanors, the court also could tack on a possession charge if found to be the case, regardless of the amount. There are also strict stipulations pertaining to this highly publicized legislation that many are unaware it

contains. Possession of marijuana will now result in a \$25 fine while any smoking usage of it in public will result in a \$100 fine. Again, keep in mind that every case could fluctuate and be viewed as subjective in a court of law.

The primary goal in mind with the implementation of this is that it will allow for police forces to garner more attention to critical issues while also allowing nonviolent offenders an opportunity to move forward with their lives. A summary offense will not affect employment, federal financial aid for college, or military admittance, unlike a misdemeanor offense otherwise would. It will most likely be treated like a traffic violation more or less moving forward.

This brand new law has gained the approval of Mayor Joe Schember as well as many city representatives including Councilman Bob Merski, who said, "Decriminalization does not mean that it's a free-for-all. It is still a crime." He explained how he feels this is an improvement from previous legislation in place saying, "What it means is that it's become a civil offense instead of a criminal offense. What ends up happening is something you did at 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 [years old], ends up affecting you for the rest of your life. What we want is for these people to pay their debt to society, and move on with their lives."

2017-18 CY0 Preseason Guide

(Most teams have played three games at this point, but since this article was primarily written prior to the season, the title and content reflects the authors' preseason predictions.)

#7 St. Pete's

Matching last season's success will be hard to come by, considering St. Pete's brings in a brand new coaching staff and returns only one senior. However, this team is the future of CYO basketball and is just going to have to trust the process. They have gone in a completely different direction from the sidelines and will look much different out on the court. Let's see what the youngsters can muster up this year.

Back court: Dominic MacArthur will be given all he can handle as the centerpiece of this rebuilding program. The former JV Prep player looks to lead his young team and steer them in the right direction. Fellow junior Elijah Lyons brings experience to the team and figures to be a key part of the back court rotation. If this were a singing competition, Lyons would have the championship trophy already given to him. Let's hope he can sing his way to at least a few wins this year. Matt DeMarco also has a chance to make an impact. Better known for being a 2x state champ on the tennis court, he is athletic and skilled enough to make a difference right away. Lastly, Jimmy Lynch looks to make an impact on the defensive side of the ball using his athleticism.

Front court: Both Tim Klebanski and Matt Berry will be charged with holding down the paint this year for the Dukes. Skill isn't exactly a word to describe their games, but the energy, toughness, tenacity, and confidence they bring to each and every game shows up. Both lack in height, so it will be a major challenge for them to get involved in the games. Joe DeMarco will team up with his brother, bringing leadership as the lone senior.

Analysis: Ms. Lion will be taking over the reigns as head coach this year assisted by new Prep gym teacher, Mr. Schreffler. Schreffler is most known for losing in the intramural 3-on-3 tournament just a few months back, and he may seek some vengeance on those players. Too bad it will be hard to come by with this team. It will be interesting to see what direction Lion takes this extremely young and talent-

lacking squad. If CY0 had a tennis team, these guys would be incredible, but this is basketball, so good luck Saint Pete's. Again, be patient. It's gonna be a tough go around for Dukes fans. But, there's always next year...right?

#6 St. Luke's

St. Luke's renaissance begins this season. After not having a squad last year, the Crusaders look to march their way onto the scene. They bring in many new faces from years past and no one really knows what to expect from this group. It is reassuring to see the team re-emerge in the league, showing the growing interest in CY0. It is still a relatively young squad, but all in all, they should still be competitive come game time.

Back court: Anthony Gulick (probably the best player ever) will team up with former Prep JV players Stan Kinecki and Alex Ruler to form the back court. This should easily be the most productive unit of this team considering how amazing Gulick truly is. They will be paired with Dante McLauren as well (not quite Gulick but he has some skills that could surprise people.) Joey Nicolio is a nice addition from Collegiate Academy as well and he has the ability to score in bunches (much like Gulick does whenever he is on the court.) Additionally, senior Max Malinowski looks to play a big role in the rotation. It's been quite a long time since we've heard such an unproven group talk themselves up so much in the preseason. But, confidence is not the issue. Pure talent may be though. No one knows much about this back court other than the self-hyped Gulick.

Front court: Depth will be an issue here all year long. Center Anthony Roth comes to town from Mercyhurst where he formerly played basketball. He's a big presence, but stamina may be a lingering problem for this big man. The same could be said for junior Logan Brandel. Both front court pieces have size, and Roth has potential, experience, and ability, but mobility may

be a problem. Expect the Crusaders to play a lot of small ball and really try to only keep one of their bigs on the floor at a time. Andy Samuels may emerge as a key piece as well as he brings size, physicality, strength, and athleticism. They may have the largest front court in the league, but teams tend to be going smaller these days, and Gulick may even have to play some center. Gulick at center shouldn't be problem for him, however. Think of it much like Magic Johnson starting for the injured Kareem in the NBA Finals.

Analysis: This is yet another team that looks primed for the future. They should be competitive this year, but don't expect a big number in the win column. They have plenty of young talent that needs to be refined before being considered as a contender. A lot depends on their big guys and how they can move with the pace of their guards. The Crusaders need to play to their strengths if they hope to win anything this year. Don't expect anything more than a middle-of-the-pack finish from St. Luke's...not this year at least.

#5 St. James

Who's on this team? Saint James seems to be the San Antonio Spurs of CY0. No matter what the roster looks like, never count them out. St. James has a winning formula. Put pressure on the offense and be disciplined against defenses. Every year the Panthers are contenders, and this season is no different. They lost some key pieces from last year's dominant squad, but they have enough coming back to still make a run at the championship. They may not boast much depth, but St. James knows how to play together and really make their opponent's nights difficult.

Back court: As Joe Campbell goes, so go the Panthers. He is a consensus First Team All-CY0 this season and is the engine that drives this team. Campbell is the leader and knows how to flat out win. His killer dance moves might lead to a few travels here and there, but he should have a great year. He

finishes strong in the paint, can really stroke it from outside, has nice touch, and can run the offense. Christian Babo (who?) looks to make an impact next to Campbell as well. The Harborcreek track and field star has taken his athleticism to the gym and hopes to ignite St. James' transition attack. Both Alex and Carter Clement, along with Cayden Lombard will be relied on for bench production.

Front court: Not only does St. James boast talent from the guards, but big men Linden Hoover (who?) and Ryan Krusiewski are big time players. Krusiewski is a huge body down low and flashes of his brute strength from football can be seen on the court. He's skilled around the basket and has a knack for the offensive glass. Hoover is longer and much more versatile. He can shoot it but also uses his length and height to have his way in the paint and on defense. Joe Campbell's younger brother, John, looks to make an impact as well. It's going to be quite a difficult task following in the footsteps of Joe, but he'll give it a shot.

Analysis: Look for the Panthers to be competitive night in and night out. They are extremely well-coached and a disciplined club. The biggest "if" is depth. If a starter gets in foul trouble, the offense's upside takes a huge dip. They need one or two steady contributors to come off the bench. Regardless, everyone hates playing St. James due to their tiny court, long commute, pressure defense, athleticism, offensive versatility, and patience. We don't see that changing anytime soon. They can only hope to not crumble like they did last year against Saint Jude's.

#4 St. George

Unfortunately, we are contractually obligated to cover St. George this year. St. George is easily one of the deepest teams in the league and has plenty of talent, like always. They lost major contributors Trey Dietrick and Charlie Lichtenwalter to graduation, but they return plenty of talent,

along with highly touted transfers to overshadow the losses. If everyone gets on the same page sooner rather than later, we're talking about a tough out come playoff time.

Back court: Again, we are legally bound to talk about the Lancers this year. But, they return John Lupo, Mike Bevan, Paul "Fats" Causgrove, and Mike Rahner. Lupo should have the ball in his hands most of the time, but Bevan is in the conversation for being the best shooter in all of CY0.

Rahner could be a breakout candidate. After showing flashes of athleticism, shooting range, and guard skills, he could be in for minutes off the bench. Add in Fats Causgrove for more depth, and this is a very formidable back line.

Transfer and All-State kicker Anthony Lupo will be among the starters this year. Despite being short in stature, he is tough, strong, competitive, and a menace on defense.

Front court: Yes, we still have to write about their forwards. We apologize. For the first time in a while, the Lancers will be reliant on their front court. Despite no player standing even 6'0", this should be one of the best units in the league.

It all starts with senior Nick Wisinski and the energy he brings to each and every game. He's penciled in as our Defensive Player of the Year and rightfully so. He is the best defender and can do it out on the perimeter or go to battle with big guys inside. He gets the job done and also makes plays on the offensive end. Wisinski will fight night in and night out and is a coach's dream and opponent's nightmare. Hopefully he will not foul out often. If he can control his emotions, we may be looking at the most valuable piece to this team.

A teammate of Wisinski's on the football field as well, Matt Lupo, will be wearing a basketball uniform for the first time since freshman year with Prep. St. George is lacking that go-to scorer, and Lupo may be the one to fill that void. He is

very strong but needs to get acclimated to basketball once again. Seniors Noah Noble and Matt Zupan will finish off the front court. Noble will get the starting edge. He is extremely versatile and will throw up a lot of 3s. Noble will also be in charge of keeping the rest of the team in check. Saint George is full of players who have been known to be a little hot-headed, but Noble should be able to keep them together. He's worked on diversifying his game. Standout Prep soccer player, Matt Zupan, will look to build off a successful grade school basketball career with the Lancers. Zupan is without a doubt the best player to ever touch a ball for Saint George, and many expect him to eventually take his talents to the big leagues. It's truly amazing how unstoppable he is.

Analysis: Last paragraph, I promise. Does this team look familiar to you? If it does, that's because five of the seven best players return from the 8th grade team that made the run to states in 2014 for the Lancers. That team lacked true size, too. So maybe all these concerns are irrelevant considering they've gotten it done with this group before. Or, maybe some things have changed since then. Saint George will continue to stick with their grit and grind style of play that they have made so popular within their organization for so long. Anthony Lupo will be a pest on the perimeter, and when Nick Wisinski isn't posting pictures of his girlfriend on Snapchat, he plans to make the paint a no fly zone. If John Lupo can step into the premier guard role and Matt Lupo shows flashes of his former basketball prowess, this team can compete with anyone in the state.

#3 Blessed Sacrament

After a season plagued by inconsistency, the Bulldogs seem to finally have all the pieces in place. Much of the pressure will fall on young head coach Tyler Smith. The talent is there for this year to be a big one, but it is contingent on how well the players mold around a new centerpiece and also how they react to playing within a disciplined offensive system.

Back court: Senior Alex Welz started at point guard his freshman year before joining Prep's JV team the following season. Alex came back and is hungrier now more than ever to steer his team to success. He will look to be the steadying force and leader behind the Bulldogs this year.

Joining him in the back court will be former McWho JV starter Tyler Ackman. Ackman is one of the league's best shooters who, when hot, can throw 30 points on the board. He will get his work exclusively from the off-ball guard spot. Look for coach Smith to draw plays up for him when he gets going. Alex Baldi is an athletic combo guard who will provide immediate depth and competitiveness off the bench for BS. He is a welcome addition to what's been a depleted bench the last couple of seasons. We can just hope that everyone keeps their girls far away from this kid.

Front court: The most notable newcomer is Adam Malesiewski. Malesiewski played JV basketball at Prep as a freshman and then suited up for varsity as a Sophomore. He is the best isolation scorer in CYO basketball and is a game changer for BS. This adds a much needed scoring punch to the Bulldog's repertoire and gives them a true monster on the front end who can also initiate the offense.

Although the starting front court may not be the largest in pure size, it more than makes up for it with brute strength, muscle, and heart. Seniors Hunter Orlando and Ryan Sargent make up arguably the best rebounding tandem in the league. Orlando may very well be the best rebounder in the league but is still raw in other parts of his game. Abba will give Orlando all the strength he will need every game. With Sargent at the 5, he is athletic enough to take advantage of mismatches with true, traditional bigs. If he can be more consistent, the Bulldogs have another matchup nightmare on their hands.

Senior John MacKenzie will shore up the bigs and bring

exceptional size at 6'5". If he builds off of his rapidly improving post game that was so impressive down the stretch last year, look out. John's political outtakes may be too much for opposing defenses to handle, and they could lead to easy buckets for the big fella.

Analysis: With so much returning talent coming back, along with one of the two best newcomers joining them, BS is in good shape to turn some heads this year. If Welz or Sargent can step up as a consistent, reliable number two option behind Malesiewski, they could be lethal. The Bulldogs also need to ensure they play smart, disciplined basketball and remain unselfish. If they do all those things, and coach Smith gets the most out of his players, we're talking about a championship caliber team...if they're legal.

#2 St. Jude's

Fresh off a ticket to the big dance in Allentown last season, St. Jude's may be even better this year. Returning all but one starter, the "Jude's Dudes" envision an even more impressive finish this year. They also brought in a big time transfer. However, they won't be sneaking up on anyone this time around. Losing leading scorer Collin Williams to graduation shouldn't leave any fans panicking, as Jude's Dudes have plenty left over to threaten for a state title once again.

Back court: James Proper returns as the assumed leader in the back court. Although he is one of the taller players in the league, Proper can play positions 1-5 and has our vote for most versatile player. Proper has the potential to be a dominant player in the league again after an impressive season last year. Let's just hope he spends half as much time on the court as he does on his hair. He is freakishly long and will be disrupting many smaller guards out on the perimeter this year. Coming off a PCL tear, it was believed that senior Henry Fessler would still be up to the task of playing for the Dudes. Unfortunately, it just didn't work out, as Fessler's

knee couldn't hold up. Hopefully he recovers well from injury and continues to be the Dudes' biggest supporter.

Sophomore Collin Johnson is another huge pickup for this team, as he plans to live in his brother's footsteps and become a major part of the Saint Jude's basketball program. Juniors Dave Clark and Matt Zimmerman will team up with seniors Matt Leggiero and John Hagerty to provide depth behind Proper. Dave Clark is known for missing out on big opportunities. All are very capable shooters (even Dave). Of them, Clark seems to have the early edge for minutes right away.

Front court: This is the strength of the St. Jude. Good luck grinding down low with the likes of Nick Carneval, Tommy Agresti, Jared Heidt, and Sean McEney.

Carneval, another new arrival, will be the largest player in the league and was a top player on the Prep freshmen team three years ago. When Nick Carneval isn't breaking a leg on stage, he plans to be breaking ankles on the court. He will be teamed up with Tommy Agresti. Agresti just finds ways to beat his opponents in ways that make the refs look at each other and shrug their shoulders, but he simultaneously makes opposing coaches break their clipboards in half. He does everything on the court.

Heidt is the ultimate glue guy. He rebounds at a high rate, defends well, and hustles. Lastly, McEney shows up in the big moments but also contributes in more ways than what the box score may indicate. Perhaps the most interesting depth piece will be Nick Maloney. Maloney is a tough scrapper who will look to get reserve minutes along with Albert Caldwell, who brings size. Maloney is a rock defensively, but offense may be an issue as he has trouble catching the ball.

Analysis: This team has all the looks of repeating as CYO regional champions. But they shouldn't feel overconfident just yet as the rest of the league is significantly improved as

well. And, they didn't exactly cruise to the tournament either. They had some hard fought games, and a lot of breaks went their way last season. However, they bring back their core and also hauled in two big time transfers. Everyone knows their role on this squad and plays within themselves. Time will tell how they hold up in the vastly improved league, but the door is open for another trip to the state tournament.

#1 OLP

Initially, expectations were set relatively low for the OLP Crusaders, a perennial powerhouse, coming into this season. Then, former Prep basketball players started pouring into the gym, and we may be looking at a very dangerous team now. Along with a couple holdovers from years past, OLP will need the newcomers to jell and figure out how to play together quickly. We should be in for a fun ride this year, so get ready for some exciting basketball.

Back court: This unit looks to bring the swagger back to OLP basketball. The Crusaders boast arguably the best back court in CY0 this year. Newcomers Ethan Rys and Marcus Lewkowicz both opted to join OLP rather than play for Prep this season. They are poised to become the class of CY0 guard play and hope it leads to a successful season. They will be joined by sharpshooter Drew Bleggi and former McWho JV starter Quinn Baird. Baird is a solid all-around player who looks to log big minutes off the bench. Senior Joe Coppola adds depth to a loaded back court.

Front court: As stacked as the guards are, OLP has the personnel to have a perfect compliment to them down low. Senior Alex Douds will be the best player in CY0 this season. He is a dynamic scorer who boasts quickness, length, shooting prowess, finishing touch around the rim, and high volume scoring ability. He will be nearly impossible to stop from the moment he takes the floor.

Hogging up the paint will be a committee of three capable big men. The first opportunity will most likely go to Chris Smith. More known for his play on the football field, Smith is a large body who is able to provide energy and toughness. Nolan Tupek provides additional interior beef while Senior Rob Harris plays with more finesse. He has a nice shooting touch and is very mobile for his size.

Analysis: If what they say is true, that guards really do win games, then this squad should be in for one heck of a season. Filter in our Player of the Year, Alex Douds, and this is easily the most explosive team in the league. If the newcomers all blend well together and play team basketball, look out. The big guys are tough, each bringing their own unique skill set to the table to. It all comes down to chemistry. If this group can put it all together, there really isn't an identifiable weakness here. This OLP squad looks incredible on paper, but many believe they will not mesh well on the court. Locker room problems are bound to arise, and no one seems to have stepped up as a leader for this club. Sorry OLP, but Joe Mischler can't save you this time.

Preseason Accolades

Player of the Year: Alex Douds

Douds is a new player to CYO with an all around skill set that will fit perfectly in the modern game. With his size, length, and skill, along with his silky three ball, he has all the makings to be the best player in the league.

Honorable Mentions: Adam Malesiewski, Tommy Agresti

Rookie of the Year: Adam Malesiewski

Malesiewski is maybe the most dynamic scoring weapon in the game. He can do it from all three levels but prefers to stay in the box. Although not our vote for Player of the Year, he will certainly be in the conversation.

Honorable mentions: Marcus Lewkowicz, Chris Smith

Best Shooter: Drew Bleggi

Bleggi has a deadly three point shot that has progressed every season. After coming off of a strong performance behind the line last season, Bleggi has the ability to make a statement this season.

Honorable Mentions: John Lupo, Alex Douds

Best Rebounder: Hunter Orlando

Through the power of Abba and Ceen, Orlando is a monster on the glass. With his unorthodox rebounding methods and brute strength, Orlando will be the physical presence Blessed Sacrament has been boasting for years now.

Honorable Mentions: Tommy Agresti, Nick Wisinski

Best Defender: Nick Wisinski

This seemed like the obvious choice here. Wisinski has been cooped up behind Mischler for too long as the backup quarterback, and he plans to take his frustrations out on the basketball court. With his unpredictable temperament and knack for pestering opposing players, Wisinski will rule the league on defense for Saint George.

Honorable Mentions: Anthony Lupo, Tommy Agresti

Most Versatile: James Proper

Proper has everything you want in a modern day point-forward. His court vision is one of the best we have ever seen, and he can score from anywhere on the court. With his height and long wingspan, Proper can play all five positions on the floor.

Honorable Mentions: Alex Douds, Joe Campbell

Top NBA Prospect: Nick Maloney

Anyone who has ever seen an NBA game should know this one. Maloney has everything it takes to play at the next level. He is an athletic rim protector who can draw fouls like no other with his impressive flopping ability. Expect to see Maloney in the top five come next draft.

Honorable Mentions: John MacKenzie, Anthony Gulick

Most Entertaining: Tommy Agresti

Agresti is a wizard on the court. Blink and he's at the rim. He has blazing speed, and with his peculiar shot selection and unusual play style, he never fails to amaze. Agresti will constantly excite crowds.

Honorable Mentions: Joe Campbell, Anthony Lupo

Coach of the Year: Matt Squeglia

After an incredible underdog story last year, Squiggs is poised for another run as the top coach. He is a player favorite and inspires his team to have fun. Squiggs is a coach every team wishes they had.

Honorable Mentions: Ms. Lion, Tyler Smith, Not Daryl

Superlatives

Preseason All-CY0 1st Team

Alex Douds can score at all 3 levels with the best of them. His length causes problems on defensive end.

Joe Campbell is the most important player to his team. He does all the little things right both on and off the court and is the ultimate hustler.

Adam Malesiewski is an elite iso scorer and may be BS's missing piece.

Tommy Agresti's play is defined by three words: somehow, some

way.

James Proper is a long, lanky senior who may be the most versatile player in CY0.

All-CY0 2nd Team

Hunter Orlando may very well be best rebounder in the league.

John Lupo will most likely be best player on an always competitive Lancer squad.

Nick Wisinski potentially makes the most all-around, individual defensive impact. Think Draymond Green.

Marcus Lewkowicz may be heavy contributor in the best offense in the league.

Alex Welz looks to bring consistency back to the Dog Pound and set talented teammates up.

All-CY0 3rd Team

Ryan Sargent had a few huge games last year. His shot consistency is key.

Sean McEnery is a clutch stretch 4 who played a crucial role down stretch en route to last year's state tournament appearance.

Anthony Lupo is a pesky guard who will get in opponents' heads and play hard.

Ethan Rys is a gifted guard who will look to be more of a team player with so many weapons surrounding him.

Matt Lupo looks to follow up a stellar Prep football career with a strong showing on the court.

Rambler Repeat: Prep football wins second straight state title

“I think they are probably the best team in the state in any class,” said Thomas Jefferson’s head coach Bill Cherpak. “When you lose to a better team, what can you say [but] they were the better team.” Cooper Lutz, star Berks Catholic running back, printed out a picture of Matt Bauer hoisting the state championship trophy in the air last season and hung it over his bed so he could remind himself that the trophy belongs to *him* this year. Imhotep Charter’s head coach, Nick Lincoln, said, “I think we’re going in as the underdog, but we’ve faced some adversity, which might give us an advantage.” At each stage of this unheralded playoff run, Prep has left their critics speechless. “We had a target on our backs all year and we were made well aware of that,” said senior Terry Roberts.

The Ramblers left Hershey Park undefeated...again. In fact, this senior class has more state championship titles than overall losses. Led by the senior core of Joe Mischler, Matt Bauer, Terry Roberts, Juice Scruggs, and Tyler Oedekoven, this team made much more than just lifelong memories and an honorable school legacy, they made history.



With the 12th man making themselves known in Hershey, the Ramblers' cheering section was well alive for the state championship. Despite the bitter cold weather, students, teachers, faculty, families, and alumni made sure to support Prep

and got out to the biggest game of the season. Buses of Prep and Villa students and teachers flooded the gates and made their way inside the stadium. The taste of victory suddenly was in reach, and the Ramblers were licking their chops.

They were up against a daunting task, however. Imhotep boasts three of the top five 2019 recruits in the state of Pennsylvania, including the #1 player Omar Speights, along with Tykee Smith, and Yusuf Terry, according to 247sports. They are a perennial Philadelphia powerhouse in both football and basketball. The 40-3 beat down of the Ramblers that Imhotep was able to enjoy two seasons ago would long be short-lived. But they will undoubtedly be a force for years to come.

Imhotep's star Penn State commit, Isheem Young, was ineligible to play due to legal issues he ran into. However, Prep also was without star defensive back/wide receiver Navy commit Anthony Bolden, co-team captain defensive back/wide receiver Henry Fessler, and another co-team captain Ian Malesiewski due to injuries. Both teams suffered major losses and were looking for production elsewhere. "Like I said before, the kids have to take a next-man-up approach, rally around each other, and play as hard as possible." said Lincoln.

Prep lost the toss and was forced to receive the opening kick. Neither team was able to generate a score on their first possession. That all changed after Mischler hooked up with Terry Roberts for 64 yards on a big catch and run. Then, junior Billy Lucas rumbled his way into the end zone from 2 yards out to put the Ramblers on the board first. Lucas' score

came just a week after exploding for 268 rushing yards and 5 touchdowns to break a school record.

Imhotep gained some momentum in the second quarter playing bully-ball in their run dominant offense. Tykee Smith finished off a solid drive for the Panthers to even the score up. After an onside kick recovery, it was Carl Jones who punched it in from 5 yards out and gave Imhotep their first lead of the night. With 55 seconds remaining in the first half, the Ramblers answered back with a 17-yard strike from Mischler to Roberts in the end zone. Shortly after a fumble recovery by Matty Bo Bauer, Anthony Lupo nailed a 37-yard field goal as time expired in the second quarter.

It was a back-and-forth affair through the first 24 minutes of action, and both sides knew that much still had to be done to walk out as champions. Fresh out of the half, it was the Ramblers who recovered the onside kick and quickly converted it into 7 points thanks to another Lucas run. In the midst of another long, tiring Imhotep drive, Kareem Carson recovered a fumble to give possession back to Prep. Mischler ran it in himself after finding Oedekoven for a 74-yard bomb to set it up in the red zone.

Sutton Christian found the end zone connecting with his big receiver Yusuf Terry to open up the last quarter of play. As the Ramblers made their way down the field, it was Billy Lucas yet again with a 6-yard touchdown to seal the perfect season for Cathedral Prep. The final score was 38-28 with the Ramblers showing why they are the best in the state. Lucas led the way with 99 yards and 3 touchdowns on the ground while Mischler completed 8 of 13 passes for 199 yards with both a passing and running score. Terry Roberts broke the 100-yard mark receiving, finding the end zone as well. On defense Hunter Orlando had Prep's only registered sack and Orlando also tied with Bauer for the game high in total tackles. It seemed like Prep was in control from start to finish and never lost their poise or confidence. Although this year's team may

be the most star-laden in school history, many role players and lesser known individuals really stepped up and were stars in their own right on that special Thursday night in Hershey. Bauer spoke on the reasoning behind that and said, "We were one unit together as brothers, which allowed our dreams to come true."

Cathedral Prep was featured on Sunday Night Football in Pittsburgh and also rounded out the top 25 list in the High School Football America Poll.

Many wonder what makes this year's team different from the great ones in years past. After facing Prep in the first round, coach Bill Cherpak seems to have the answer, back-to-back Pennsylvania 4A player of the year and Ohio University recruit Joe Mischler. "He's the difference; there's no doubt. He's such a great player. Without him, that's a much, much different team. He's really that good. When we had him tied up, he ran for it. We had coverage, he ran it. We tried to spy him, and that didn't work. He's just a really, really good quarterback."

Along with Mischler, this year's Ramblers featured five other all-state players including Notre Dame-bound linebacker Matty Bo Bauer, Iowa-bound defensive back Terry Roberts, record breaking wide receiver Tyler Oedekoven, Penn State-bound offensive lineman Juicy Scruggs, and running back/linebacker/defensive back Billy Lucas was included as the lone junior. Bauer also was named recognized on the USA Today All-USA team.

"The past four years of playing football at Cathedral Prep have exceeded any and all expectations. Growing up I always dreamed of being a Rambler, more specifically a Rambler football player. Never once did I expect things to end up in the picture perfect way that they have. What this team has accomplished over the past few years is something no other Prep football team is able to say. It's forever history, and

that is something to be proud of. The friendships and bonds I have made through four short years of Prep football is remarkable. It's truly something great to be apart of. Unfortunately, words cannot describe how much it means to me," said Joe.

Coach Mike Mischler returned to Erie with his 4th state championship and his second consecutive. Mischler has built a consistent winner out of the program and has a championshi caliber staff to go along with him. "To be able to play for him is an experience I wish I could relive, even if it were just one more game. He's been my coach, my idol, my dad and my best friend, and I cherish every moment with him, not just on the field but off as well," said Joe. It is obvious what Coach Mischler means to not only the program but also to the school and community.

Prep football has made Erie proud yet again. They have made Western Pennsylvania proud. This team has singlehandedly put Erie football back on the map as a serious contender statewide. They did something twice that people couldn't imagine anyone from this area doing once. An Erie football team went head-to-head with a Philadelphia powerhouse and took them down. A reference to David and Goliath has been used here before, but I wouldn't bet against those boys over on West 9th Street regardless of who they're matched up against. Prep should no longer be viewed as the "underdog" to anyone. So, perhaps it's time to rethink who's really David and who's really Goliath.

2017-18 Cathedral Prep Basketball Preview

Returning to another season on the sidelines for the Ramblers, coach Mark Majewski will have his hands full this year. With a much younger group than usual, the emergence of Erie High, and some key additions for McDowell, the competition will give Prep all they can handle. However, confidence is not lacking on West 9th Street. Although talent may be high, experience is low. Can the Ramblers overcome the odds, or will they crumble under the pressure?

Backcourt: The keys to the offense will be handed to senior Aaron McBride. The hope is that McBride is next in the long line of great Prep point guards. Last year, he was forced to play second fiddle to Jaryn Simpson, who now plays for Edinboro University. McBride has basketball in his blood as his sister, Kayla, is a WNBA All-Star. If there is any experience shortage in the backcourt, it is more than made up for with McBride. "As a leader, I motivate my teammates to be the best version of themselves in basketball, but more importantly to be great young men."

The off guard spot will be manned by a committee of sophomore Alfonso Pickens, freshman Michael Lucarotti, junior Isiah Crosby, versatile sophomore Quentin Santillan, and hard-working junior Caden Elwell. Both Pickens and Crosby have the ability to slide over to point guard to spell McBride. The presumptive sixth man, Tommy Russo, will bring defensive tenacity and experience off the bench.

Senior Adam Upperman may very well be Prep's best overall player. He uses his length, quickness, and athleticism to get to the rim and be a disruptive presence on defense. He's worked extremely hard to improve his jump shot and if the four 3s to open the season against North Allegheny is any

indication, it's paid off.

Frontcourt: The biggest offseason get for the Ramblers was 6'6" 285-pound center, Josh Charlery. Charlery formerly played for the U.S. Virgin Islands national team and is a big, physical presence Prep needs. If he can stay on the floor for longer periods of time, he will be invaluable to the success of the team this year. Joining him down low as soon as next week will be Joe Mischler. Fresh off back-to-back football state championships as the starting quarterback, Mischler needs some time to get back into basketball form and looks to add a level of intensity to the team.

Also looking to get some time in the rotation are athletic junior Sam Knox, sophomore Vincent Pisano, impressive freshman Liam Galla, and hustler Joe Corsale.

Final Analysis: This is the youngest Prep team in recent memory, but don't directly link youth with disappointment. This team also boasts more depth than it typically has in years past. There are many able bodies ready to battle for playing time right away, and they won't go down without a fight. If the senior core of Upperman, McBride, and Charlery set the tone for the team early and a couple of the young guys step up to play important roles, this could be as balanced and unpredictable a team as they come. Regardless of the results this year, the program is definitely heading in the right direction and looks to be a force for years to come. But, don't ever rule the Ramblers out—they've proven their doubters wrong once or twice before.

Student Profile: Daanish Bhatti

Although Cathedral Prep may not be able to boast the largest debate program around, it certainly has brought out the best in many of its students, such as Daanish Bhatti. What started out as being a surprising schedule change became a unique passion for Daanish.

On the second day of his sophomore year, Daanish's parents switched his schedule without him knowing. The outlying class that Daanish was then forced to take was debate. At first, he hated it. "My first debate was actually against McDowell's varsity team, and me and my partner were clueless and ended up getting crushed. So, after that being my first real experience, I really didn't like it and couldn't wait to get out of the class," he said.

The interesting aspect in all of this, as Daanish explained, was that he usually doesn't struggle that much in anything, despite it being a brand new concept to him. He embraced the challenge, and the more time and effort he poured into it, he not only saw brightening results, but a newfound passion.

Prep has returned three debate coaches (who happen to be Prep alumni) in order to mentor the current debaters along with Mr. Pituch, who is still ultimately the head of the program. Daanish spoke of his coaching, saying, "They know what it's like to graduate from the school and translate their debate skills to other facets of the world. So, being able to talk to them about that sort of stuff is really cool."

Another favorite aspect of debate for Daanish is traveling. He loves being able to compete in all different parts of the country, such as Michigan and Kentucky, to visit prominent universities, and to experience more memories with his

teammates right by his side.

Another great memory Daanish had was Debate Camp at Northwestern University. He said he met some of the smartest, most intelligent people he's ever gotten a chance to know. In addition to just meeting them, he actually had the opportunity to even catch up with some of them at different tournaments throughout the country. This speaks to how universal and valued debate is. Daanish's largest accomplishment to date was being ranked as part of the top 32 teams of the CFL's (Catholic Forensic League) national tournament.

Along with many others, Daanish believes the skills he's developed through debate will further his academic prowess in college and prepare him better for his career. "Being able to speak and speak fast, having the ability to read and comprehend information quickly, and even simply having persuasion techniques will all be beneficial in whatever field I decide to go into." Daanish went on to say, "I'm not saying that sports aren't important, as I participate in track and field myself, but I feel comfortable saying that you will gain more successful skills from debate than any sport you could possibly be involved in." Daanish has his mind set on long-term goals and is doing everything in his power to prepare himself for the real world.

As far as advice goes, Daanish urges current and future students to get involved with debate and to stay involved. However, he offers one important and hard-to-grasp tip for many: be prepared to lose. He says that debate is an acquired technique that takes time and patience in order to excel in. In fact, Daanish says that it wasn't until this year that he began actually feeling confident in the debate room.

Mr. William Pituch, head of the Debate program, spoke of Daanish's debate career saying, "Daanish joined the program as a sophomore [and] made some huge strides over the last year and over this summer. He attended institutes at Northwestern

the last two summers. He is a hard worker and immerses himself in the material. He is extremely knowledgeable on the topics. He has been an excellent teacher for the younger debaters, getting them prepared, focused, and excited about learning how to debate at a nationally competitive level.”

In Daanish’s opinion, the main reason people tend to stray from speech/debate programs is because they don’t want to do *more* school outside of school, essentially. Debate requires a large amount concentration and research that people just aren’t willing to give a chance. Daanish sure was, though, and his only regret was that he didn’t start soon enough. He now teaches the debate class and has found his new love. So what are you waiting for? Consider taking a debate class in the future, it may be just what you are looking for.

November 5 tornado damages homes, businesses on Erie’s west side



This past Sunday, Erie citizens residing anywhere from 26th and Peninsula to 36th and Washington were struck with a lethal storm. The storm was responsible for the deaths of two Erie men along with much destruction. This was the first time in recent memory that a tornado formed within

city limits and swept through neighborhoods, as well as major roads. The cleanup process quickly began following the damage,

but restoring power to some areas took time.

It all began on the evening of Nov. 5 when a sudden downpour of rain occurred at approximately 5:30 p.m. As the rainfall increased, lightning began striking dangerously close to homes resulting in power outages lasting longer than 24 hours. Trees spilled onto not only



roads but vehicles and houses as well. Many streets were completely taped off by city officials, law enforcement, service workers, tree removal companies, and private contractors in an attempt to restrict as much attention from the most serious cases as possible and to neutralize the damage. Sometime prior to 7:30 p.m., a tornado struck many residential areas.



Erie native Paul Snyder spoke of his experience saying, "All of a sudden, rain started coming down very hard. Then, there was a brief calm before what sounded like a freight train coming through my backyard. The trees in my backyard were almost horizontal to the west and then to the east. You couldn't see anything, and there were papers flying all around inside. During the aftermath, we opened the front door and our tree was up against our house,

and as we looked down the street, it resembled a war zone. I never saw wind with that much force in my life."

Many businesses and non-residential buildings faced similar conditions to Snyder's that night. The Belle Valley Fire Department was severely flooded. The Milcreek Township School District administration's office roof was severely damaged. The Hong Kong restaurant's windows were shattered by wind gusts just to name a few. Large trees were completely uprooted from the ground. A power line even fell



onto a car and set it on fire on the 3400 block of Allegheny Road. To say the least, this storm has sparked a sense of appreciation among those who endured the threatening nature of Nov. 5, an appreciation for what we all take for granted (utilities, city service employees, and their own neighbors). It was amazing to see people in the streets helping each other remove debris, cautioning others of downed power lines, and offering refuge if one's power was out.



Not all can be quite as thankful though. Two men tragically were killed in the basement of their home. Extreme flooding caused the wall to cave in and eventually lead to the death of 2 innocent lives. The families need our help. It is time to see what Erie is made of and how much we care for our neighbors. As if the death to these men didn't carry enough horror, the home was later robbed and stripped of their firearms and electronics. These

were men with families who need a helping hand through their struggles. If interested in contributing to the funeral expenses to further assist the families, please visit <http://gofundme.com/gary-hoffman-funeral-costs> for more information.

2017 Midseason NFL Awards

Through 9 weeks of the 2017-18 NFL regular season, here are my picks for the midseason NFL awards:

Offensive Player Of The Year: The best offensive player through the first half of the season has undoubtedly been **Carson Wentz**. The one-year pro out of FCS North Dakota State is absolutely lighting the NFL on fire and quickly wiping away any remaining doubts due to his lackluster collegiate competition. Wentz has propelled the 8-1 Eagles atop the NFL. Although he withstands a below average rushing attack, inconsistent offensive line play, the absence of an elite receiver, and a lack of depth in his receiving corps every week, he has still found a way to get it done. He leads the NFL in passing touchdowns, is fourth in passing yards, and fourth in quarterback rating despite being sacked the eighth most of all passers in the league. He is able to beat teams through the air with his unique blend of poise, leadership, and accuracy, and he also can beat teams on the ground with his speed and athleticism. He is the future of not only the Eagles but the entire NFL.

Defensive Player Of The Year: Arguably the best free agent signing of the 2017 NFL offseason has been the Jacksonville Jaguars taking a gamble on the 31-year-old **Calais Campbell**. The longtime Cardinal hit the free agent market, and the Jaguars reeled him in. I'm sure they're fairly happy looking back on that decision. Campbell has been a nightmare on the interior of the Jaguars defensive line. This is the defense the front office has been building for years and fans have been eagerly awaiting. Campbell leads the NFL with 11.0 sacks including a 4-sack performance against Houston. There seems to be no shortage of gas left in the tank for veteran. He still

helps plenty in the run game and has been a handful for offensive lines and quarterbacks alike. He is so effective in every facet of the game no matter where he is lined up at. Campbell has been nothing short of dominant during the first half of the season and it finally looks like that ferocious Jacksonville defense is coming to fruition.

Defensive Comeback Player Of The Year: After registering only a single sack, dealing with injuries, sustaining a 4-game suspension, and only appearing in 9 games last year, **DeMarcus Lawrence** has completely changed the identity of the Dallas pass rush this year. He sits at the number two spot in sacks, trailing only Calais Campbell by 0.5, with 10.5. Lawrence has always been a talented athlete, evidenced by his 8.0 sacks back in 2015. If Dallas can keep him motivated, he could be the future of a scary front seven. The Cowboys have been in desperate search of a defensive player to build that side of the ball around, and it seems they are finally forming a solid young nucleus led by Lawrence. He has been an unstoppable force on the outside and has regularly sought special attention by offenses. Although early, it looks as though the Cowboys finally found their long-awaited bookend on the defensive line, which makes everyone's job a little easier.

Offensive Rookie Of The Year: No rookie has had a more remarkable impact on the game than **Deshaun Watson** in 2017. Watson has had an undeniable role in bringing the Texans to their current win total. The Texans began the season hoping that Tom Savage could manage his way to low scoring victories thanks to Houston's dominant defense. Well, neither of those assumptions turned out to be true. Savage was replaced by Watson opening day, and the defense has dealt with constant injuries. So, how did Watson handle the pressure? He took charge and single-handedly transformed his unit into the number one offense in the league with him under center. Despite only starting in seven games, he has thrown for the second most touchdowns and holds the sixth best QBR in the

NFL. He has been a pure gunslinger and has even produced monster games against top defenses (Tennessee, Kansas City, Seattle). Watson also dominated games on the ground and was the ultimate dual threat before suffering a torn ACL during practice before Week 9.

Defensive Rookie Of The Year: Although T.J. Watt of the Pittsburgh Steelers seems to be the popular pick for DROY and looks the best on paper, **Tre'Davious White** has quietly been the best defensive rookie through the first 9 weeks. After losing Stephon Gilmore in free agency and Ronald Darby in a trade with Philadelphia, the team was forced to put their hope in the rookie LSU product handling number one cornerback duties. White has quickly become a staple of the surprisingly good defense. He is emerging as a legitimate shutdown cover corner. White has recorded 12 pass breakups to go along with an interception, 26 tackles, a forced fumble, and 2 fumble recoveries in the first half of the season. As if his defensive contributions weren't enough, White also has the ability to handle punt return duties as well. Because he was relied upon so heavily from the start in what was supposed to be a rebuilding year for Buffalo, he has risen above all initial expectations. He is largely to thank for Buffalo's under the radar defense and should further develop into a true star on the outside.

Coach Of The Year: Perhaps no team has truly done a 180 quite like the Los Angeles Rams have in 2017. After dragging through another dreadful offensive campaign last year, it looks like the Rams finally have something to work with. Thank you, **Sean McVay**. McVay worked as the offensive coordinator in Washington, guiding Kirk Cousins through the best years of his career. Somehow, somehow, McVay turned what many thought to be a bust (Jared Goff) into an above average NFL starter. He is the youngest head coach in NFL history but continues to prove himself week in and week out. Todd Gurley is experiencing a breakthrough year that reminds fans of his jaw-dropping rookie

season. This Rams offense is firing on all cylinders, averaging an NFL *best* 32.9 point per game, up from an NFL *worst* 14.0 last season. They are competing for the top spot in the NFC West along with the Seattle Seahawks. The defense is still the defense, but McVay's offensive system is flourishing among the players and new look team. McVay looks to have completely transformed this team into a perennial contender for years to come.

Prep-Villa theater perform Peter and the Starcatcher

This past weekend, Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy performed their second show of the year. Just three weeks after *To Kill A Mockingbird*, they kept the shows rolling with *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Unlike the last production, this show was done at Cathedral Prep. This unique comedic play had the crowd laughing all through the night. It proved to be very special and allowed the actors to showcase their versatile, all-around talents.



This unorthodox show is presumptively the prequel to *Peter Pan*. It's extremely complex plot revolves around an abused orphan boy (Dominic Montefiori '18) who is aboard a ship in 1885 while being transported to Queen Victoria of

Britain. He speaks frequently of his hatred for grown-ups. Also aboard the ship is Molly Aster (Mary Grace Kelly '21), a strong-willed, defiant girl who is on a mission to safely

deliver a trunk filled with “starstuff” to the queen. Starstuff is later revealed to be a magical substance that has the ability to give anyone what they want.

On a separate, competing ship is Molly’s father, Lord Aster (James Proper ’18). Unknown to Lord Aster, the ship has been taken over by pirates. The leader is found to be Blackstache (Nick Carneval ’18). Although filled with evil aspirations, Blackstache is very ineffective in getting his way. Blackstache’s ship, the Wasp, begins to pursue the other ship, the Neverland, in hopes of obtaining treasure.

As the ships make contact, the members of each are forced to jump to sea. Some people die, while others make it alive to a nearby island. Natives of the island are at first very violent and ruthless towards the English; however, the children escape. All the while, Blackstache and his right hand man, Smee (Hannah Harvey ’19), are searching for the treasure. The pirates finally meet the children face to face and the orphan boy gives up the treasure to save Molly. As the pirates open the chest, they find that nothing remains in it. Molly explains that the starstuff dissolved into the water. The magical reaction has given the orphan eternal youth, just as he’s always wanted. He is given the name Peter and stays on the island forever. The natives come to appreciate Peter and all ends well.

Peter, portrayed by Dominic Montefiori, spoke of his experience saying, “This show was one of the hardest plays Prep and Villa has put on, but it was so extremely fun because of the imagination needed to create this show.”

Nick Carneval, playing Blackstache, also commented, “It was an awesome opportunity to be able to work with a cast of long time thespians as well as kids who are just getting started. It was unique to be able to portray a cool origin story for the iconic character [Peter Pan] that people, no matter what their age, have known and loved for years.”

As the plot develops, many keen in on the noticeable parallels to *Peter Pan*. This show indirectly explains, in depth, how the story of *Peter Pan* came to be. Many of the cast members acted as props, which added another comedic, unique element to the show. The cast members also made use of improvisational timing and hilarious dialogue. It really showed how the actors and audience members could both reach the same spot in each other's imagination with nothing but the space in between them.