**Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings; Oct. 6, 2021, #6**

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CATHOLIC ATHLETES FOR CHRIST

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.) took care of business last weekend in emphatic fashion. The Monarchs are now the No. 1 team in the Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School football rankings presented by Global Football.

Mater Dei showed for the time being it is the top prep football team in the land after beating then-No. 1 St. John Bosco (Bellflower, Calif.) by 21 points in a Trinity League game. It’s too early to declare the Monarchs the CAC Top 25 National Champions because there’s a plenty of games to be played. If Mater Dei is that good, it needs to beat No. 4 Servite (Anaheim, Calif.) in a league matchup later this month.

Three from the Trinity League are ranked in the top-4.

And when the California Interscholastic Federation-Southern Section playoffs start in November both St. John Bosco and Servite will be waiting. That goes for Corona (Calif.) Centennial a public school from the Inland Empire.

Yes, that’s the gist of it for now. The new No. 2 Bergen Catholic (Oradell, N.J.) plays the top schedule in the nation and is waiting for Mater Dei to trip up. The Crusaders have a bear of a schedule remaining but are more than worthy of inheriting the top spot.

No. 23 La Salle College High (Wyndmoor, Pa.) is the lone entrant into the CAC 25. The Explorers won for the sixth time in as many games, stopping No. 25 St. Joseph’s Prep (Philadelphia), 28-21, in a Philadelphia Catholic League Red Division thriller before 10,000 at Franklin Field on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. With the setback, the Hawks dipped 18 places. There’s always a strong possibility the rivals will meet again in the Class AAAAAA District 12 playoffs in November. This week, La Salle is the new No. 1 in PIAA 6A.

Because of a few upsets, six teams moved up three rungs; eight advanced two apiece and three hopped up one. Besides St. Joseph’s, the big losers were No. 12 St. Xavier (Cincinnati, Ohio), which dropped nine slots and No. 14 St. Peter’s Prep (Jersey City, N.J.) down eight places.

That’s a summary of another week in the CAC Top 25 rankings. We’re looking forward to this weekend and now that we’re in October, the regular season is winding down with the playoffs on the horizon.

It’s time for the Triple Option section and then a few notes before revealing the latest CAC Top 25 rankings.

**Triple Option**

The Triple Option identifies a student-athlete, coach and the upcoming weekend’s must-see games. First, there’s a precocious sophomore from southern California that had the game of his young career against a national powerhouse. In Cleveland, the top rivalry was played and the winning coach and his staff are pretty darn special. Finally, there are six games from Washington to Maryland to Missouri to Florida that piqued our interest from the CAC 25, including several rivalry games.

**Player of the Week:** Quarterback Elijah Brown of No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.). When sophomore shows the poise of an underclassman or even someone who is a future major college quarterback, you take notice. That’s exactly what Brown did last Friday against previous top-ranked St. John Bosco (Bellflower, Calif.). In what has become an annual rivalry that is unmatched with the college talent (a total of 60 players held major college offers that night), Brown carved up an archrival for five touchdowns in a 42-21 win over the Braves before a packed house of 6,000.

With the score tied at 21by halftime, Brown fired TDs passes in the third quarter to Cooper Barkate (31 yards) and Jack Ressler (19 yards) for a 35-21 lead. A fourth quarter TD run from 29 yards by Ajon Bryant wrapped up the Monarchs (4-0) victory. Brown completed 13-of-18 passes for 263 yards and the five scores. Last spring Mater Dei played a spring season and won the Trinity League crown. In a 34-17 win, Brown threw for four TDs as a freshman starter.

Brown (6 feet 2 inches, 180 pounds) has offers from Pittsburgh, Utah, USC and Arizona. That’s going to change in a hurry.

**Coach of the Week:** Tom Lombardo of No. 5 St. Edward (Lakewood, Ohio). If you live along the shores of Lake Erie, high school football is a religion and one of the annual games that defines the intensity and the passion is St. Edward vs. St. Ignatius (Cleveland). Last Saturday, coach Lombardo’s team pulled out a 19-14 win on a rainy night.

The defense allowed only 191 yards, allowing a long TD pass and a score off a blocked punt. The game plan was executed to near perfection, shutting down their rivals.

The Eagles (6-0) needed to recover an onside kick in the final seconds to secure their fourth straight win over the Wildcats.

“We talked about it all week,” Lombardo told *The [Cleveland] Plain Dealer*. “I think it’s really important and a really cool thing. It’s been such a great rivalry.”

The victory also meant the Eagles could become Ohio’s newly minted No. 1 team in Division I. No. 13 St. Xavier (Cincinnati) lost to Trinity (Louisville, Ky.), 33-32, opening the door. The Eagles enter their bye week and close out the campaign with Moeller (Cincinnati) on Oct. 16 and at Archbishop Hoban (Akron) on Oct. 22 before entering the Region 1 playoffs (Oct. 29-30).

**Games of the Week (All times are local and subject to change):** This weekend three of the five selected games feature CAC Top 25 teams meeting formidable opponents, including from New Jersey where both teams are ranked. In New Orleans, things are getting closer to normal after a natural disaster earlier this month while in Kentucky a prominent rivalry is renewed. There are also games from Oregon and Pennsylvania that will keep the CAC 25 on notice. Gazing at the future schedules the first weekend in October has several key fixtures on tap.

**St. Augustine Prep (Richland, N.J.) at Holy Spirit (Absecon, N.J.), Friday 6 p.m.:** Two of South Jersey’s top teams hook up near Atlantic City. Holy Spirit (3-2) lost last week to one of the top public school teams. The Hermits are 5-1 and have won three of the last five meetings.

**Christian Brothers College High (St. Louis, Mo.) at Chaminade College Prep (St. Louis), Friday, 6 p.m.:** The CBC Cadets (5-1) lost their first game but have peeled off five straight and average 50 points per game. Chaminade (3-3) would love to spoil CBC’s perfect in the Metro Catholic Conference. The Red Devils have scored 64 and 73 points in the last two outings.

**Gonzaga (Washington, D.C.) at No. 22 DeMatha Catholic (Hyattsville, Md.), Friday, 7 p.m.:** One of the top all-male school rivalries anywhere and this one kicks off the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference. DeMatha (4-1) is flexing its defensive muscles with shutouts in the last two games. Gonzaga is 4-2. The game is slated for the Prince George’s Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Md.

**No. 7 Cathedral (Indianapolis, Ind.) at Brebeuf Jesuit (Indianapolis), Friday, 7 p.m.:** The fans will flock to northwest Indianapolis for a rivalry game that will give both teams a taste of the upcoming postseason. The Cathedral Fighting Irish (7-0) are Indiana’s top-ranked Class 5A team with sophomore QB Danny O’Neill as the engineer that drives the machine. Brebeuf Jesuit (6-1) is ranked second in Class 3A.

**No. 9 Jesuit (Tampa, Fla.) at Clearwater (Fla.) Central Catholic, Friday, 7:30 p.m.:** The Jesuit Tigers (5-0), No. 1 in Class 6A, will be fresh after their bye week and feature weapons in Wake Forest-bound WR Jadyn Girard and RB Joquez Smith. CCC (4-1) lost opening night but are red hot and ranked No. 5 in Florida Class 3A.

**Eastside Catholic (Sammamish, Wash.) vs. O’Dea (Seattle), Friday, 7 p.m.:** West Seattle Stadium will be packed for one of the Pacific Northwest’s top Catholic schoolboy rivalries. The winner is in line to capture the 3A Metro-Mountain title. O’Dea is 4-1 and EC checks in at 3-0.

Here’s another announcement from the 2022 All-American Bowl.

It was recently announced the head coaches for the 2022 All-American Bowl will be. Coach Tim Roken of No. 25 St. Joseph’s Prep and Coach David White of Blue Springs (Mo.) have been selected to coach the East and West squads, respectively.

Roken helped lead the Hawks to a PIAA Class AAAAAA state championships in 2019 and 2020. Prior to being named the head coach he served as the offensive coordinator for St. Joseph teams that won four state championship titles. Roken served as the offensive coordinator during the 2015 All-American Bowl.

“The All-American Bowl has established a great tradition that I have been blessed to be a part of in different roles in the past,” Roken said. “I am honored to now be selected to represent our program, school, and community as the head coach in such a prestigious game.”

The coaches will lead their teams consisting of the best 100 senior high school football players at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas in January.

Additionally, Kaleb Brown, a wide receiver from St. Rita (Chicago, Ill.), was named to participate in the All-American Bowl. The Ohio State recruit and five others will appear tonight at 8 p.m. ET on the NBC Sports YouTube channel in the fourth installment of a 15-episode weekly digital series.

Okay, we’re done for another week for the Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 rankings but here’s our weekly reminder from Global Football for an international football event in 2022.

Ever been to Ireland … the Emerald Island?

Here’s your chance next summer.

In the showcase game, Northwestern plays Nebraska as part of the Aer Lingus College Football Series on Aug. 27, 2022, at Aviva Stadium in Dublin, Ireland. In conjunction with the 2022 Big Ten Conference opening game is the fifth ***High School Football Showcase*** is organized by Global Football.

Listen up. High school football athletic directors and coaches are invited to travel overseas with their teams for a competitive game against an American opponent. Schools are encouraged to bring their high school bands, cheerleaders and teams from other sports such as field hockey, rugby and lacrosse. It will be memorable trip and cultural experience.

For more information contact Patrick Steenberge (817) 219-7274 or email him Patrick@globalfootball.com. Also visit this site for additional details, [2022 Kildare High School Showcase PPT](http://www.globalfootball.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2022-Kildare-High-School-Showcase-PPT.pdf).

It’s never too early to plan for the future and some already have.

We encourage fans, players, parents and coaches to follow the CAC Top 25 through social media at [www.Facebook.com/CACTop25](http://www.Facebook.com/CACTop25) and on Twitter @CACTop25. If there is a team, coach, player or story idea that we may have overlooked, we need to hear from you. Our readers are our greatest resource. Thank you.

The CAC Top 25 rankings will return on Oct. 13. In the meantime, have a good Columbus Day on Oct. 11.

Until next week, God Bless. — *Christopher Lawlor*

**Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings, Oct. 6, 2021**

**1. Mater Dei, Santa Ana, Calif. (4-0)**

**Previous rank:** 2.

**In the Huddle:** The Monarchs defeated then- No. 1 St. John Bosco (Bellflower), 42-21. Sophomore QB Elijah Brown tossed five touchdowns for the Monarchs, who scored three times in the second half to break a 21-21 halftime deadlock. In the third, Brown passed 31 yards to Cooper Barkate and 19 yards to Jack Ressler for a 35-21 lead. Ajon Bryant sped 29 yards in the fourth quarter to close out the scoring. Next is Orange (Calif.) Lutheran on Friday.

**2. Bergen Catholic, Oradell, N.J. (5-0)**

**Previous rank:** 3.

**In the Huddle:** Defeated Pope John XXIII (Sparta), 41-0. RB Saaed St. Fleur scored on runs of 2 and 5 yards as the Crusaders jumped to a 21-0 lead after one quarter. Up next is a Friday date at Paramus Catholic.

**3. St. John Bosco, Bellflower, Calif. (5-1)**

**Previous rank:** 1.

**In the Huddle:** Lost to No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana), 42-21. The game was tied 21-all at halftime. WR Chedon James caught a 22-yard TD pass in the second quarter for a temporary 21-14 lead. The Braves will look to rebound Friday at JSerra (San Juan Capistrano) which will be played at Saddleback College.

**4. Servite, Anaheim, Calif. (6-0)**

**Previous rank:** 5.

**In the Huddle:** Stopped Orange (Calif.) Lutheran, 56-12. Arizona-bound QB Noah Fifita completed 19-of-21 passes for 403 yards and five TDs. WR Tetairoa McMillan caught nine passes for 218 yards and four scores. The Friars play Santa Margarita (Rancho Santa Margarita) on Thursday.

**5. St. Edward, Lakewood, Ohio (6-0)**

**Previous rank:** 8.

**In the Huddle:** The Eagles survived a late rally by archrivals St. Ignatius (Lakewood), 19-14. Rayshawn Manning Jr., who caught a TD pass in the second quarter, recovered an onside kick in the waning seconds to preserve a fourth straight win in the rivalry. Jack Riley added a 30-yard pick-six for the Eagles. Next is Moeller (Cincinnati) on Oct. 16.

**6. Catholic, Baton Rouge, La. (5-0)**

**Previous rank:** 9.

**In the Huddle:** The Bears remained perfect in beating Lafayette Christian, 38-17. This weekend the Bears host East Ascension (Gonzales).

**7. Cathedral, Indianapolis, Ind. (7-0)**

**Previous rank:** 10.

**In the Huddle:** The Fighting Irish continued to roll, beating La Salle (Cincinnati, Ohio), 35-7. Sophomore QB Danny O’Neill had the hot hand, completing 23 of 38 passes for 347 yards and four TDs. The regular season is down to two games as the Irish are off to 6-1 Brebeuf Jesuit (Indianapolis) Friday in a crosstown rivalry.

**8. Loyola Academy, Wilmette, Ill. (6-0)**

**Previous rank:** 11.

**In the Huddle**: The Ramblers stopped Marist (Chicago), 33-21. QB Jake Stearney carried 14 times for 154 yards and scoring runs of 47 and 27 yards. He also hit on 22-of-36 throws for 202 yards and a 40-yard TD toss to WR Spencer Leadbetter. The Ramblers entertain Providence Catholic (New Lenox) Saturday afternoon.

**9. Jesuit, Tampa, Fla. (5-0)**

**Previous rank:** 12.

**In the Huddle:** Idle. The Tigers are fresh off their bye and head to rivals Central Catholic (Clearwater) Friday.

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

**Previous rank:** 13.

**In the Huddle:** Overwhelmed Cooper City, 69-0. The Raiders posted their first shutout of the season and now travel to South Plantation (Plantation) on Friday.

**11. St Frances Academy, Baltimore, Md. (3-1)**

**Previous rank:** 14.

**In the Huddle:** Defeated De La Salle (Concord, Calif.), 42-28. Leading 14-7 after one quarter, the Panthers scored 21 points in the second for a 35-14 edge. Next is a road game at Academy of the New Church (Bryn Athyn, Pa.) Saturday.

**12. St. Francis, Mountain View, Calif. (4-0)**

**Previous rank:** 15.

**In the Huddle:** The Lancers continue to roll and score points in gobs after thrashing Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep (San Francisco), 37-14. The offense is averaging 39 points per game. This weekend it’s a home game with Valley Christian (San Jose).

**13. St. Xavier, Cincinnati, Ohio (6-1)**

**Previous rank:** 4.

**In the Huddle:** The Bombers were upset by Trinity (Louisville, Ky.), 33-32. The Bombers allowed the winning score with 57 seconds left. QB Brogan McCaughey ran and passed for TDs and RB Charles Kellom carried 24 times for 112 yards and two scores. The Greater Catholic League South title is within grasp but coach Steve Specht’s team must overcome La Salle (Cincinnati) Friday to pull it off.

**14. St. Peter’s Prep, Jersey City, N.J. (5-1)**

**Previous rank:** 6.

**In the Huddle:** After two close calls, the Marauders were shocked at Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey), 28-14.RB Sam Slade rushed 52 yards for a score in the first quarter and Zion Fowler caught a 31-yard TD pass from QB Champ Long. The Jesuit school continues their road slate at St. Joseph Regional (Montvale) on Saturday afternoon.

**15. Brother Martin, New Orleans, La. (3-0)**

**Previous rank:** 17.

**In the Huddle:** . The Crusaders beat St. Augustine (New Orleans), 45-21, in District 9-5A action. The rivalry games resume this weekend at Archbishop Rummel (Metairie).

**16. St. John’s College, Washington, D.C. (5-0)**

**Previous rank:** 18.

**In the Huddle:** Game with Stellar Prep (Hayward, Calif.) was cancelled. League play opens this weekend with Bishop McNamara (Forestville, Md.) visiting.

**17. Central Catholic, Pittsburgh, Pa. (4-1)**

**Previous rank:** 19.

**In the Huddle:** The Vikings exploded for 28 points in the opening quarter and routed Seneca Valley (Harmony), 35-0. Vernon Settles hauled in a 38-yard pass from QB Payton Wehner to open the scoring. RB Gannon Carothers sped 10 yards to make it 14-0, Wehner hit Josh Altman from 33 yards and Robert Fulton returned a fumble 70 yards for a TD. RB Antonio Pitts closed out the scoring on a 4-yard run in the fourth quarter. The action continues Friday at Mount Lebanon (Pittsburgh).

**18. Archbishop Spalding, Severn, Md. (6-0)**

**Previous rank:** 20.

**In the Huddle:** the Cavaliers scored 23 unanswered points before halftime en route to a 37-14 trouncing of Calvert Hall College (Baltimore). This weekend Malvern (Pa.) Prep pays a visit.

**19. Chaminade-Madonna College Prep, Hollywood, Fla. (4-1)**

**Previous rank:** 21.

**In the Huddle:** RB Davion Bailey carried 34 times for 146 yards and scored twice in the second quarter when the tallied 19 points in a 26-23 win over previously unbeaten Seminole (Sanford). The Lions are back at it Saturday traveling to Fort Lauderdale High.

**20. Bishop Gorman, Las Vegas (5-1)**

**Previous rank:** 22.

**In the Huddle:** The Gaels’ defense played stoutly in a 51-0 blanking of Canyon Springs (North Las Vegas). It was the second consecutive shutout in league play. This weekend the Gaels visit Legacy (North Las Vegas).

**21. DePaul Catholic, Wayne, N.J. (4-1)**

**Previous rank:** 23.

**In the Huddle:** QB A.J. Rodriguez bulled over from the 1-yard line with 50 seconds left in the third quarter to cap a 13-play, 85-yard drive and the Spartans edged Delbarton (Morristown), 14-7. RB Anthony Almeida tacked on the ensuing two-point conversion to close out the scoring.

**22. DeMatha Catholic, Hyattsville, Md. (4-1)**

**Previous rank:** 24.

**In the Huddle:** For the second straight game, the Stags pitched a shutout in beating Life Christian Academy (Chester, Va.), 14-0. The Washington Catholic Athletic Conference kicks in with archrivals Gonzaga (Washington, D.C.) on Friday night.

**23. La Salle College, Wyndmoor, Pa. (6-0)**

**Previous rank:** Not ranked.

In the Huddle: Defeated then-No. 7 St. Joseph’s Prep (Philadelphia), 28-21, in a Philadelphia Catholic League Red Division showdown. RB Sam Brown’s 82-yard TD run in the third quarter tied the game at 14. Brown gave the Explorers took the lead for the first time grabbing a 5-yard scoring strike from Alan Paturz. In the fourth, Paturz’s scoring run sealed the first win over their league rivals since 2015. The Explorers, No. 1 in the latest PIAA Class AAAAAA rankings, play Roman Catholic (Philadelphia) Saturday.

**24. O’Dea, Seattle, Wash. (3-1)**

**Previous rank:** 25.

**In the Huddle:** Defeated Seattle Prep, 35-13. The contest was knotted at 7 through two quarters before it was 21-10 heading into the fourth quarter. Next is rivals Eastside Catholic (Sammamish) Friday.

**25. St. Joseph’s Prep, Philadelphia (2-2)**

**Previous rank:** 7.

**In the Huddle:** Lost to No. 23 La Salle College High (Wyndmoor, Pa.), 28-21, in a Philadelphia Catholic League Red showdown. The Hawks travel to Middletown (Del.) on Friday.

**Dropped out:** No. 16 De La Salle (Concord, Calif.).

**Special Consideration:** Cardinal Gibbons (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.); Central Catholic (Portland, Ore.); Gonzaga Prep (Spokane, Wash.); Brother Rice (Chicago, Ill.); Central Catholic (Grand Rapids, Mich.); Joliet (Ill.) Catholic; St. John’s Prep (Danvers, Mass.); Iona Prep (New Rochelle, N.Y.).; Canisius (Buffalo, N.Y.); St. Xavier (Louisville, Ky.); Archbishop Hoban (Akron, Ohio); Cathedral Catholic (San Diego, Calif.); De La Salle Collegiate (Warren, Mich.); Roncalli (Indianapolis, Ind.); Saint Louis School (Honolulu, Hawaii); Santa Margarita (Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.); Serra (San Mateo, Calif.); Catholic Memorial (Waukesha, Wis.); Gonzaga (Washington, D.C.); Good Counsel (Olney, Md.); Holy Spirit (Absecon, N.J.).; Marist (Atlanta, Ga.); St. Augustine Prep (Richland, N.J.); Seton Hall Prep (West Orange, N.J.); St. Ignatius (Cleveland, Ohio); Nolan Catholic (Fort Worth, Texas); St. Joseph (Trumbull, Conn.); Cathedral Prep (Erie, Pa.); and Catholic Memorial (West Roxbury, Mass.).

**About:** The Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings, presented by Global Football are released on Wednesdays from late August until the conclusion of the high school season in January. 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, who consults with Patrick Steenberge of Global Football in Granbury, Texas to coordinate the CAC Top 25. All Catholic high schools from the United States that feature only four-year players on 11-man teams are eligible for consideration. Fans are encouraged to follow the CAC Top 25 at [www.Facebook.com/CACTop25](http://www.Facebook.com/CACTop25) and on Twitter @CACTop25.

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