**Week 14: Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings for November 24, 2021**

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CATHOLIC ATHLETES FOR CHRIST

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — There was finally a shift in the Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School football rankings presented by Global Football. Four teams were dropped and 20 teams saw movement as everyone has a taste of playoff football.

Last week, the CAC Top 25 took a late season bye week but that means there’s more to catchup for the third week in November.

Let’s start with what’s new, meaning the four newbies (actually two) to the CAC Top 25.

No. 20 Central Catholic (Portland, Ore.) is undefeated and two wins away from the Class 6A state championship. Standing in the Rams’ way is Oregon powerhouse Jesuit in the semifinals on Friday.

No. 21 Iona Prep (New Rochelle, N.Y.) re-enters after nearly three months. The Gaels (10-1) won New York City Catholic High School Football League Class AAA championship for the first time since 2008. The Gaels host St. Francis (Athol Springs) Saturday for the Catholic state AAA crown.

No. 22 Archbishop Moeller (Cincinnati, Ohio) is back after capturing the Ohio Division I, Region 4 championship. That’s considered one of the top area titles (outside of a state title) in the nation. No. 24 St. Xavier (Cincinnati) is in that region and even in the same league as the Crusaders (11-3), who face Springfield Friday in the semifinals.

No. 23 Calvert Hall College (Towson, Md.) enter on the heels of a Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association A Conference championship.

Besides the four additions, the CAC 25 features four champions and three teams who are done for the term. Only top-ranked Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.) remained in the same position from last time. There were 20 teams that moved, including 17 that elevated. The biggest mover was No. 16 De La Salle (Concord, Calif.) that climbed nine spots after winning its 29th straight sectional title in the North Coast Section. No. 18 St. Joseph’s Prep (Philadelphia, Pa.) is up six.

Taking the biggest hit was No. 25 Central Catholic (Pittsburgh, Pa.) dipping seven and No. 24 St. Xavier (Cincinnati, Ohio) fell five slots.

That wraps up the latest from the CAC Top 25. So, we mentioned it’s a thankful time and here’s what is shaking.

Before we reveal the updated CAC Top 25, we’ll revisit the weekly feature called the Triple Option, however this week there’s an added twist.

The Triple Option identifies five student-athletes, two coaches and state playoff games worthy noting this week. This week we’ve highlighted five more Thanksgiving games from Boston to Baltimore. More is better!

The players range from an edge rusher on the nation’s No. 1 team to wide receiver from Washington (D.C.) and Baltimore to a running back from Indianapolis to a special defensive unit from Long Island.

The coaches are from California and Maryland. One is chasing a championship and the other won one and has a Thanksgiving Day game to boot.

Additionally, we’ve also selected state finals (two each) from Illinois to Indiana to New Jersey.

**Triple Option**

**Players of the Week:** Linebacker David Bailey of No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.); wide receiver D.J. Linkins of No. St. John’s College (Washington, D.C.); wide receiver Donnie Lewis of No. 23 Calvert Hall College (Towson, Md.); running back Carson Johnson of No. 15 Cathedral (Indianapolis) and the Holy Trinity (Hicksville, N.Y.) defense.

\*It’s rare when a defense player is a CAC player of the week candidate but he earned it in Mater Dei’s thrilling 21-16 win at nationally ranked Corona Centennial in the California Interscholastic League-Southern Section Division 1 semifinals. At 6-feet-3, 220 pounds, Bailey is a highly-rated edge rusher (or OLB). He’s quick on his feet and can deliver in the clutch. Mater Dei’s is rarely involved in five-point games (average margin of victory is 34 points). Bailey had a sack, forced a fumble that was recovered by his team and helped key a goal-line stand that jumped-started the offense that scored two touchdowns for a 21-9 lead.

“David Bailey took it over in the second half and did what a great player should do,” coach Bruce Rollinson told the *Los Angeles Times.* Bailey has interest from USC, California, Stanford, UCLA and Oregon--all from the Pac-12.

\*Linkins helped spearhead St. John’s Cadets (11-0) to 30-14 victory over Good Counsel (Olney, Md.) in the Washington Catholic Athletic Association Capital championship on Sunday night in Landover, Md. It was their first WCAC chip since 2017. Linkins played a huge role in SJC’s first four possessions, grabbing two touchdowns from quarterback Wyatt Hagan and the Cadets raced to a 16-point lead at halftime Linkins finished with four receptions for 113 yards (28.3 yards per catch). According to a recruiting website, the 6-feet-3-inch Linkins has interest from Florida International, Pittsburgh, Marshall and Illinois,

\*At 5-feet-8, 160 pounds, Lewis is the “big man” on the Calvert Hall campus this week. Lewis scored both TDs when the Cardinals bounced McDonogh School (Owings Mills), 14-8 in the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association A Conference final. When the title was on the line, Lewis gave The Hall a 7-0 with an 83-yard scoring catch-and-run in the second quarter. The junior receiver added another one minutes later from 34 yards for a 14-0 lead at the break.

\*Johnson was a revelation when Cathedral Fighting Irish (13-1) returned to the Indiana Class 5A final during a 52-13 thrashing of New Albany in the semistates in Indianapolis. Johnson, who for the first time this season became the team’s feature runner due to injury, had a career-high 232 yards and an 11-yard TD in the first quarter on 23 carries, as the Irish jumped to a 28-7 lead. It’s Cathedral’s 16th appearance at states and a chance to repeat for the first since a 2010-14 stretch that produced five titles.

\*On Long Island, apparently Holy Trinity (10-0) embraces the sporting adage that defense wins championships. The Titans’ stingy defense was on display last Saturday during 21-10 victory over St. John the Baptist (West Islip) in the New York City High School Football League Class AA-1 final. In 10 games, the Titans unit allowed only 43 points with six shutouts, including one in the semifinals. Against SJB the turning points might have been in the second quarter with a goal-line stand that saw the defense deny three shots to cross the line from feet away. It was the team’s first NYCHSFL title since 2008. Junior Dylan Braithwaite (five tackles and an interception) earned Defensive MVP honors.

**Coaches of the Week:** Josh Ward of No. 23 Calvert Hall College (Towson, Md.) and Troy Thomas of No. 5 Servite (Anaheim, Calif.).

In Maryland, Ward delivered a championship a year after he was hired as head coach at his alma mater (CHC Class of 2004) when the Calvert Hall Cardinals (9-2) defeated McDonogh School (Owings Mills), 14-8, winning the MIAA A Conference championship for the first time since 2010 and the second in the MIAA era.

Since 1899, the Cardinals have captured 10 league titles but Ward leaned on his defense in the second half after building a 14-0 lead at halftime.

Ward stressed a family-like atmosphere and never give up. His team easily could have a few weeks ago in a 23-point loss to then-unbeaten Archbishop Spalding (Severn) in the regular season but refocused and eventually won the prize.

In southern California, Thomas has Servite (10-2) on the precipice of the program’s first CIF-Southern Section title since 2010. Last Friday, the Friars ran away from then-No. 2 St. John Bosco, 40-21, the CIF-Southern Section Division 1 semifinals. It was Thomas’ 100th coaching victory.

The Friars have a second crack at blood rivals and top-ranked Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.) Friday in the Division 1 final. Thomas coached the Friars to a pair of sectionals titles. He left for Crespi (Encino) and was fired after the 2017 season and returned to Servite, where he has built the program into a state contender and nationally recognized again.

**Games of the Week (All times are local and subject to change):** Since it’s Thanksgiving, we’re feeling bountiful and will add five games that are slated for Thursday morning and one on Wednesday evening with all kicking off in the Northeast.

**Thanksgiving Specials**

**Catholic Memorial (West Roxbury, Mass.) at Boston College High (Boston, Mass.), 10:30 a.m.:** CM (11-0) is the Boston area’s top-ranked team and have a Division II Super Bowl (or championship game) the following week. BC is 1-9 and playing for pride.

**Fairfield (Conn.) Prep vs. West Haven (Conn.), Wednesday, 7 p.m.:** The Nutmeg State matchup of 8-1 teams gets a jump on the rest of the slate of Thursday games. The schools are 25 miles apart up I-95.

**Fordham Prep (Bronx, N.Y.) vs. Xavier (Manhattan, N.Y.), 10 a.m.:** It’s the New York City Jesuit Bowl on Thursday morning at Coffey Field from the campus of Fordham University.

**Cardinal Hayes (Bronx, N.Y.) at Mount St. Michael (Bronx, N.Y.), 10:30 p.m.:** Just over five miles up the Bronx River Parkway is another Bronx Tale unfolding. Hayes is 4-6 and the Mount is 2-7. Throw away the records because this closing time for the schedule.

**No. 23 Calvert Hall College (Towson, Md.) vs. Loyola Blakefield (Towson, Md.), 10 a.m.:** It known as the Turkey Bowl and it’s a Baltimore tradition. Even more of a tradition is the venue of Johnny Unitas Stadium on the campus of Towson University. This will be the 101st edition of the game. Calvert won the MIAA A Conference championship over the weekend.

Okay, here are six championship games from three states that are must-see.

**Indiana High School Athletic Association championships, Friday and Saturday:** Two days of football (three each day) will be played inside Lucas Oil Stadium in downtown Indianapolis. First, No. 15 Cathedral (Indianapolis) meets Zionsville Friday at 7 p.m. for the Class 5A title. The Fighting Irish (13-1) is going for the repeat. Zionsville is 9-5. On Saturday, the noon kickoff has Andrean (East Chicago) and Mater Dei Memorial (Evansville) tangling for the Class 2A title.

**New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association championships, Friday and Saturday:** The Garden State Non-Public (or Catholic championships) feature brothers Vito and Nick Campanile going for separate titles on both days at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford. On Friday, DePaul Catholic (Wayne) plays Red Bank Catholic at 7 p.m., with the Non-Public B crown on the line. Nick is the Spartans’ first-year head coach and has a 9-2 record in the state’s best league.

Saturday’s main event kicks off at 2 p.m., with Vito’s No. 2 Bergen Catholic Crusaders (11-0) of Oradell facing archrivals Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey). Both are all-male schools from Bergen County. BC won the regular-season matchup, 17-0. That means nothing this weekend.

**Illinois High School Association championships, Friday and Saturday:** There are eight state title games to be played at Huskie Stadium on the campus of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb but we’re concerned with only two. Friday’s Class 4A clash pit No. 19 Joliet Catholic Academy against Sacred Heart-Griffin (Springfield) at 7 p.m. The next day it will be St. Rita (Chicago) playing Wheaton North for the Class 7A chip at 4 p.m.

# 2021 CAC Honor Roll

# The Catholic Athletes for Christ is back and off to a good start.

# As the state/conference champions are crowned, the CAC Top Fall 25 will recognize as many of the schools that qualify for our rankings in this section. To qualify a Roman Catholic operated school with an 11-man football must have won a state sanctioned championship or a postseason tournament that would equate to winning a championship. States are listed alphabetically. Please email us if we missed your school. [Note: We also list small-player football state champions, too.]

# We check in this weekend with champions from six states and the District of Columbia with 13 teams adding hardware to their trophy cases.

Maine: Cheverus (Portland), 8-man Large.

Maryland: Calvert Hall College (Towson), MIAA A Conference.

Nevada: Bishop Gorman (Las Vegas), Class 5A.

New York: St Francis, Athol Springs, Monsignor Martin Association Class A; St. Mary’s (Lancaster), MMA Class B.; Iona Prep (New Rochelle), NYCHSFL Class AAA; Chaminade (Mineola), Class AA-1; Holy Trinity (Hicksville), AA-2.

South Dakota: St. Mary (Dell Rapids), Class 9B.

Washington Catholic Athletic Conference: St. Mary Ryken (Leonardtown, Md.), WCAC Metro; St. John’s College (Washington, D.C.), WCAC Capital.

Wisconsin: Catholic Memorial (Waukesha), Division 4; Aquinas (La Crosse), Division 5.

If we fumbled and did not mention your school, give us a nudge.

Now that another holiday season is upon us, reward school and think about this offer from Global Football.

So, you don’t have to have Irish ancestry to enjoy a trip to Emerald Island … with American football as a bonus next summer.

You ask might ask how? If you like high school and college football here’s your opportunity.

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

So, here’s what you need to know.

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 a 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 schools 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. We can’t thank you enough and can’t do it without you.

The CAC Top 25 rankings will return on December 1.

We wish you and your family a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving to you, your family and your friends. Travel safe and support the local small businesses in your area. They’ve been hit hard in the last year and need the business loyalty of neighbors.

Speaking of neighbors, we’d like to extend Season’s Greetings to our friends celebrating Hanukkah. That starts Monday November 29. It’s eight days and commonly referred to as Festival of Lights. Say “Hanukkah Sameach!” (Happy Hanukkah) or simply “Chag Sameach!” (Happy Holiday) to your friends. All the best during that celebration.

Stay safe and get out and attend a high school game in your state. After this weekend that number of states will dwindle to a few.

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

**Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings, Nov. 24, 2021**

**1. Mater Dei, Santa Ana, Calif. (10-0)**

**Previous rank:** 1.

**In the Huddle:** The Monarchs had their biggest challenge of the season and passed the test … barely. Last Friday, they topped nationally ranked and unbeaten Corona Centennial, 21-16 in CIF-Southern Section, Division 1 semifinals. The great teams find a way to win facing adversity. Centennial entered the game with a perfect record in 11 games. In the quarterfinals, coach Bruce Rollinson’s team bombed Norco, 49-14, on Nov. 12. Sophomore Elijah Brown’s six TD passes were more than enough to subdue an Inland Empire squad looking to spring an upset. The Monarchs have a huge challenge this weekend with a CAC Top 25 team when they meet archrivals No. 5 Servite (Anaheim) Friday in CIF-Southern Section, Division 1 final to be played at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Long Beach.

**2. Bergen Catholic, Oradell, N.J. (11-0)**

**Previous rank:** 3.

**In the Huddle:** The Crusaders drilled St. Peter’s Prep (Jersey City), 35-10, in the Non-Public A semifinals. Princeton-bound RB Ryan Butler helped seal the win with two rushing scores in the second half and became the school’s second player to surpass 3,000 career rushing yards. In the quarterfinals on Nov. 13, the Crusaders stopped Donovan Catholic (Toms River), 35-7. Butler scored three rushing TDs and caught one from Notre Dame-commit QB Steve Angeli, who ran for a 1-yard score in the opening quarter. The season finale is Saturday afternoon against archrivals Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey) in Non-Public A championship game to be played at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford. BC has not won a state title since 2017.

**3. Jesuit, Tampa, Fla. (12-0)**

**Previous rank:** 5.

**In the Huddle:** Defeated Braden River (Bradenton), 49-9, in the Class 6A, Region 3 semifinals. A week earlier, the Tigers bounced Boca Ciega (Gulfport), 50-0, in the Region 3 quarterfinals. Caleb Williams had a 99-yard, pick-six to make it 42-0 at halftime. QB Luke Knight threw four TD passes in the first half, including three to junior WR Jarriett Buie. Friday, they face local rivals Hillsborough (Tampa) for the Region 3 crown.

**4. St. Thomas Aquinas, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (11-1)**

**Previous rank:** 6.

**In the Huddle:** The Raiders swept their first two postseason assignments. Last Friday, they easily handled Miramar, 42-12, in Class 7A, Region 4 semifinals. On Nov. 12, the Raiders overwhelmed Atlantic (Delray Beach), 43-7, in the Region 4 quarterfinals. The Raiders rolled to a 29-0 lead at the intermission. RB Anthony Hankerson ran for 124 yards and three TDs and QB Zion Turner added two rushing scores to pace the offense. Next is Homestead Friday in the Region 4 final.

**5. Servite, Anaheim, Calif. (10-2)**

**Previous rank:** 7.

**In the Huddle:** The Friars made history last weekend when they beat then-No. 2 St. John Bosco (Bellflower), 40-21, in the CIF-Southern Section, Division 1 semifinals. Arizona-bound QB Noah Fifita rushed for 139 yards and three TDs on 20 carries. RB/S Houston Thomas’ 71-yard TD late in the third quarter gave the Friars the lead for good at 27-21. Thomas picked off a pass on Bosco’s next possession that led to Ethan Scafidi’s 3-yard scoring run. Fifita’s 1-yard run closed out the scoring with 5:53 left. It was the Friars’ first win over their Trinity League rivals since October 2011. Coach Troy Thomas collected his 100th career win. On Nov. 19, the Friars

defeated Santa Margarita (Rancho Santa Margarita), 34-3, in the CIF-Southern Section, Division 1 quarterfinals. Just when the Friars were getting a serious challenge in the fourth quarter, Oregon-bound WR Tetairoa McMillan stepped up three interceptions, including a pick-six to keep an arm’s length distance from their plucky Trinity League rivals. Fifita hit on 17-of-30 passes for 182 yards with a TD. It’s down to this: Friday vs. No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana) in the CIF-Southern Section Division 1 final to be played at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Long Beach. Must-see schoolboy football!

**6. St. John Bosco, Bellflower, Calif. (10-2)**

**Previous rank:** 2.

**In the Huddle:** The Braves lost to then-No. 7 Servite (Anaheim), 40-21, in the CIF-Southern Section Division semifinals. The Braves had two costly turnovers in the fourth quarter that led to 13 points to break away from a 27-21 scoreline. Servite scored the game’s final 20 points. Season complete.

**7. St. Frances Academy, Baltimore, Md. (8-1)**

**Previous rank:** 8.

**In the Huddle:** The Panthers closed out their season with an impressive 34-24 victory over nationally ranked IMG Academy (Bradenton, Fla.) in a showdown meeting on the Florida Gulf Coast. The win halted IMG’s win streak at 19 games. IMG, which trailed 26-3 in the second half pulled with two points (26-24), but a late TD and two-point conversion put away the team’s eighth win. Season complete.

**8. St. John’s College, Washington, D.C. (11-0)\***

**Previous rank:** 9.

**In the Huddle:** The Cadets won the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Capital championship, defeating Good Counsel (Olney, Md.), 30-14, in the final. QB Wyatt Hagan fired TD passes to D.J. Linkins, Sean Williams and Asa Greg in the first half to propel the Cadets. It was the first WCAC title since 2017. Season is complete.

**9. Catholic, Baton Rouge, La. (10-1)**

**Previous rank:** 11.

**In the Huddle:** They’re down to the final two weeks in the LHSAA Division I playoffs and the Bears survived a scare during a 42-35 shootout win over St. Augustine (New Orleans) in the quarterfinal. Now they Bears play St. Paul’s (Covington) Friday in the semifinals. The winner gets Jesuit (New Orleans) or No. 14 Brother Martin (New Orleans) on Dec. 4 in the Division I final in New Orleans.

**10. Chaminade-Madonna College Prep, Hollywood, Fla. (8-1)**

**Previous rank:** 12.

**In the Huddle:** The Lions opened their Class 3A title defense, pummeling Edison (Miami) in the Region 4 semifinals. This Friday they host Cardinal Newman (West Palm Beach) in the Region 4 final.

**11. St. Francis, Mountain View, Calif. (11-0)**

**Previous rank:** 13.

**In the Huddle:** The Lancers pulled away in the fourth quarter to eliminate Menlo-Atherton, 49-28, in the CIF-Central Coast Section Division I semifinals. The game was knotted up at 21 to begin the final quarter. The playoff run continues this weekend with league rivals Serra (San Mateo) in the CIF-Central Coast Section I final with the Lancers looking for a first-ever title in contest to be contested at Westmont High School in Campbell.

**12. Bishop Gorman, Las Vegas (12-1)\***

**Previous rank:** 14.

**In the Huddle:** Won Class 5A state championship, defeating McQueen (Reno), 56-7. The Gaels scored TDs on all even possessions and added a defensive score to capture an 11th title in 13 years. Nevada did not conduct a season in 2020 for COVID-19 reasons. The Gaels piled up 549 yards of offense to 99 for the visiting Lancers. Sophomore QB Micah Alejado tossed scoring passes to Jonathan Brady, Zach Branch and Elija Maleik Pabon. LB Jamih Otis added a scoop-and-scored in the first half when the Gaels took a 42-0 lead. On Nov. 12, they defeated Liberty (Henderson), 35-14, in the Class 5A Southern Region final. Zachariah Branch found the end zone on a 93-yard punt return and 53-yard catch-and-run. Alejado passed for 238 yards and three TDs. The Gaels avenged an overtime loss to Liberty in the 2019 Desert Regional title game. Season is complete.

**13. St. Edward, Lakewood, Ohio (13-1)**

**Previous rank:** 15.

**In the Huddle:** The Eagles moved two wins from a state championship crown. Last weekend, they defeated top-ranked Medina, 41-6, in the Division I, Region 1 final. The Eagles keep the run for a fifth state championship alive with a convincing win over a quality opponent. RB Danny Enovitch ran it in from 1 and 16 yards for a 14-6 lead in the first quarter. WR Ryan Miklich had three TD receptions of 26, 35 and 64 yards from QB Christian Ramos and Josh Gribble added a 25-yard TD run in the fourth quarter to close it out. On Nov. 12, the Eagles ran past Canton McKinley, 42-0, in the Division I, Region 1 semifinals. Enovitch scored three TDs in the second half. The Eagles were up 14 points through one quarter and never looked back. Coach Tom Lombardo recorded his 73rd victory to tie John Gibbons for the most football wins in program history. Up next is Columbus-area power Upper Arlington Friday in the Division I semifinals.

**14. Brother Martin, New Orleans, La. (5-5) #**

**Previous rank:** 16.

**In the Huddle:** The Crusaders chalked up two impressive wins in the LHSAA Division I playoffs. In the first round, they stomped rival Archbishop Rummel (Metairie), 38-16, on Nov. 12. Last weekend, Crusaders bested second-seeded C.E. Byrd (Shreveport), 45-14, in the quarterfinals. Next is District 9-5A rival Jesuit (New Orleans) Friday in the semifinals.

**15. Cathedral, Indianapolis, Ind. (13-1)**

**Previous rank:** 17.

**In the Huddle:** The Fighting Irish qualified for the Class 5A state championship, rolling New Albany, 52-13, in the Semistate last Friday. RB Carson Johnson ran for 233 yards and an 11-yard TD scamper on 23 carries. Sophomore QB Danny O’Neil accounted for four scores, throwing for two and running 1 and 2 yards for a pair. The Irish was up 28-7 after one quarter and cruised. In the 5A Regional final, they topped New Palestine, 23-7, on Nov. 19.Next stop is Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Friday night for the Class 5A final against Zionsville.

**16. De La Salle, Concord, Calif. (10-2)**

**Previous rank:** 25.

**In the Huddle:** The Spartans won their 29th consecutive CIF-North Coast Section title, thumping Pittsburg, 42-14, in the Open/Division 1 championship game. De La Salle’s next opponent will be determined for Northern California Region play.

**17. De La Salle Collegiate, Warren, Mich. (12-0)**

**Previous rank:** 19.

**In the Huddle:** The Pilots are back in the Division 2 state championship game, beating Franklin (Livonia), 49-14, in the state semifinals. In the quarterfinal, they stopped Roseville, 45-14. The road to the final will bring the Pilots to Detroit’s Ford Field on Friday afternoon versus Traverse City Central.

**18. St. Joseph’s Prep, Philadelphia (9-2)\***

**Previous rank:** 24.

**In the Huddle:** Crushed Northeast (Philadelphia), 41-6, in the PIAA District 12 final. On Oct. 13 , the Hawks bounced then-No. 23 La Salle College (Wyndmoor, Pa.), 35-7, in the Class 6A Philadelphia Catholic League Red Division championship or District 12 semifinals. The Hawks struck first when QB Dane Picariello fired a TD trike to sophomore WR David Washington and the rout was on. La Salle averted the shutout with a late TD. Next is Freedom (Bethlehem) Friday in the 6A quarterfinals to be played at Cardinal O’Hara High School in Springfield.

**19. Joliet (Ill.) Catholic Academy (13-0)**

**Previous rank:** 21.

In **the Huddle:** The Hilltoppers are headed back to the state championship game after drubbing Richmond (ll.)-Burton, 35-18, in the Class 4A semifinals. Last week, they stopped Genoa-Kingston, 42-7, in the quarterfinals. Next is Sacred Heart-Griffin (Springfield) Friday evening in the Class 4A title game at Northern Illinois University’s Huskie Stadium in DeKalb.

**20. Central Catholic, Portland, Ore. (13-0)**

**Previous rank:** Not ranked.

**In the Huddle:** The Rams debut in the CAC Top 25 after a dominant regular season and three playoff wins in which they scorched opponents on the scoreboard, 160-38. On Nov. 19, they walloped Mountainside (Beaverton)), 48-17, in the Class 6A second round. Last weekend, it was a 63-21 clobbering of Sherwood in the Class 6A quarterfinals. Friday it’ll be home game with Jesuit (Portland) in the Class 6A semifinals.

**21. Iona Prep, New Rochelle, N.Y. (10-1)\***

**Previous rank:** Not ranked.

**In the Huddle:** Won New York City Catholic High School Football League Class AAA championship, thrashing Monsignor Farrell (Staten Island), 49-15. It was the Gaels’ first AAA title since 2008 but they did win the AA crown in 2016. Junior QB Ajani Sheppard, who scored two TDs to set the early tone, was named the game’s Offensive MVP and junior LB Zyian Moultrie-Goddard was the Defensive MVP. In the semifinals, the Gaels recorded a 35-28 double-overtime victory over rival St. Anthony’s (Melville). The Gaels choked away a 21-7 lead in fourth but rallied to win it. Great game and effort from option signal-caller Sheppard. Next is St. Francis (Athol Springs) Saturday in the Catholic High School Athletic Association Class AAA state final at home.

**22. Archbishop Moeller, Cincinnati, Ohio (11-3)**

**Previous rank:** Not ranked.

**In the Huddle:** The Crusaders have fought their way back into the CAC Top 25 after qualifying for the Ohio Division I, semifinals. QN Noah Geselbracht threw for 130 yards and two scores and RB Jordan Marshall rushed for 123 yards and a TD on 19 carries to put away Lakota West (West Chester), 21-17, to capture the Division I, Region 4 crown. Marshall’s 3-yard TD run with 11:04 left in the contest were the winning points. The Crusaders face Springfield Friday in the semifinals. The winner gets No. 13 St. Edward (Lakewood) or Upper Arlington in the state final.

**23. Calvert Hall College, Towson, Md. (9-2)\***

**Previous rank:** Not ranked.

**In the Huddle:** Won the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association A Conference championship, beating McDonogh (Owings Mills), 14-8, in the final. It was CHC’s first MIAA title since 2010. WR Donnie Lewis caught TD passes of 83 and 36 yards from QB Noah Brannock in the second quarter for a 14-0 lead and the defense did the rest in the second half. Additionally, the Cardinals toppled Mount St. Joseph (Baltimore), 31-26, on Oct. 13 in the semifinals. The season finale is an annual Thanksgiving Day tradition against Loyola Blakefield (Towson) in the Turkey Bowl on Thursday morning at Towson State’s Johnny Unitas Stadium.

**24. St. Xavier, Cincinnati, Ohio (10-3)**

**Previous rank:** 20.

**In the Huddle:** The GCL South champions didn’t have it when they fell to Lakota West (West Chester), 12-2, on Nov. 12 in the OHSAA Division I, Region 4 semifinal. Season complete.

**25. Central Catholic, Pittsburgh, Pa. (9-3)**

**Previous rank:** 18.

**In the Huddle:** The Vikings fell to Mount Lebanon (Pittsburgh), 47-7, in the WPIAL 6A final.

In the semifinals, they beat Seneca Valley, 42-21, on Nov. 13. Season complete.

**Dropped out:** No. 4 Loyola Academy (Wilmette, Ill.); No. 10 Archbishop Spalding (Severn, Md.), No. 22 DeMatha Catholic (Hyattsville, Md.) and No. 23 La Salle College (Wyndmoor, Pa.).

**Special Consideration:** Cathedral Prep (Erie, Pa.); Bishop Alemany (Mission Hills, Calif.); Cardinal Gibbons (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.); Gonzaga Prep (Spokane, Wash.); Marist (Atlanta, Ga.); St. Rita (Chicago, Ill.); Central Catholic (Grand Rapids, Mich.); St. Xavier (Louisville, Ky.); Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey, N.J.); St. Joseph Regional (Montvale, N.J.);Catholic Memorial (West Roxbury, Mass.); DePaul Catholic (Wayne, N.J.); Archbishop Hoban (Akron, Ohio); Catholic Memorial (Waukesha, Wis.)\*; McQuaid Jesuit (Rochester, N.Y.);Serra (San Mateo, Calif.);St Francis (Athol Springs, N.Y.)\*; Eastside Catholic (Sammamish, Wash.);St. Augustine Prep (Richland, N.J**.);** Brebeuf Jesuit (Indianapolis, Ind.); La Salle College (Wyndmoor, Pa.); Benedictine (Cleveland, Ohio); Seton Hall Prep (West Orange, N.J.); Santa Margarita (Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.); St. Thomas Academy (Mendota, Minn.); Good Counsel (Olney, Md.); DeMatha Catholic (Hyattsville, Md.); O’Dea (Seattle); Jesuit (Portland, Ore.); Archbishop Spalding (Severn, Md.); St. Mary Ryken (Leonardtown, Md.)\*; Aquinas (La Crosse, Wis.)\*; St. Joseph (Trumbull, Conn.) and Roncalli (Indianapolis, Ind.).

*# Record includes five forfeits*

*\*Won state or conference postseason championship*

**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.

**-30-**