**Week 16: Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings for December 8, 2021**

By CHRISTOPHER LAWLOR

NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

CATHOLIC ATHLETES FOR CHRIST

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The high school football season is down to two weekends.

That’s it.

Teams from the Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School football rankings presented by Global Football, will be putting it all on the line. This weekend, championships will be played in Connecticut, Florida, California, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona and Delaware.

The top-13 teams remained the same and a total of 16 teams stayed put from the previous ranking. Six teams moved up two spots and one advanced one. No. 21 De La Salle (Concord, Calif.) fell seven slots after an upset loss. So far, 12 teams from the CAC Top 25 have won state or conference postseason titles.

No. 22 St. Xavier (Louisville, Ky.) joins the CAC Top 25 after annexing the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Class 6A state championship.

We’re also hearing two teams from the CAC Top 25 rankings will be selected to play in the GEICO High School Bowl Series to be played on Dec. 17 and 18 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Games will be televised by ESPN. The only hint is one is from the Middle Atlantic and another from the Nevada will host the two games.

Before we reveal the updated CAC Top 25, we’ll revisit the weekly feature called the Triple Option, which identifies a student-athlete, two coaches and state playoff games worth noting.

The player is from the East Coast. This week’s coaches completed championship seasons in Louisiana and Oregon. As for the top games, it’s championship games from California, North Carolina and Connecticut.

**Triple Option**

**Player of the Week:** Quarterback Samaj Jones of No. 15 St. Joseph’s Prep (Philadelphia, Pa.). When the Hawks started preseason training in the August heat, it was supposed to be a rebuilding year. Some call these type seasons starting over but in the City of Brotherly Love, it’s known as reloading.

The Hawks (11-2) are headed back to the PIAA Class 6A state championship game after pummeling Garnett Valley (Glen Mills), 49-13, last weekend in the semifinals.

The sophomore signal caller accounted for all seven touchdowns as the Hawks are within touching distance of a fourth straight state crown. Last week, Semaj ran for scores from 5, 4, 4 and 1 yards and threw for TDs from 37, 30 and 16 yards.

The Hawks face unbeaten Mount Lebanon (Pittsburgh) Saturday in the Class 6A final Saturday night in Hershey.

**Coaches of the Week:** David Simoneaux Jr. of No. 9 Catholic (Baton Rouge, La.) and Steve Pyne of No. 17 Central Catholic (Portland, Ore.).

In Louisiana, Simoneaux was again a big-game coach as the Bears (12-1) won the Louisiana High School Athletic Association Division I state championship after holding off then-No. 16 Jesuit (New Orleans), 14-10, in the final. There was no scoring in the second half but the Bears unleashed two time-consuming drives of 28 plays in the final quarter to keep the ball away from the Blue Jays.

In Oregon, the Central Catholic Rams (14-0) ran the table and capped off the historic season with a 44-14 victory over Tualatin in the Class 6A state final. The Rams were clearly the best in Oregon and separated themselves from the pack with speed, size and an unmatched football IQ. The playoffs were a cakewalk winning by 49, 31, 42 and 30 points.

Central Catholic has won six titles, the last coming in 2019. Pyne is 172-52 since 2003 and 108-13 (.892 winning percentage) in the Mount Hood Conference.

**Games of the Week (All times are local and subject to change):** The menu features three state championship games to be contested on Saturday.

**Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Class LL, Saturday 3 p.m.:** In the Nutmeg State, it’s top-seeded Fairfield Prep (11-1) facing Darien (11-1) at McDougall Stadium in Trumbull for the state’s largest classification title.

**North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 4A, Saturday, 7 p.m.:** The large-school championship is on the line when Cardinal Gibbons (Raleigh) faces Chambers (Charlotte) at North Carolina State’s Carter Finley Stadium in Raleigh. The Cardinal Gibbons Crusaders are 13-2.

**California Interscholastic Federation Open Division, Saturday, 8 p.m.: The** state final pits No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana) against No. 20 Serra (San Mateo) at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo. The Monarchs (11-0) are going for another perfect season.

# 2021 CAC Honor Roll

# The Catholic Athletes for Christ Honor Roll continues to tabulate the winners.

# 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 list small-player football state champions, too.]

# We checked in last weekend with champions from 22 states and the District of Columbia with 11 teams adding hardware to their trophy cases. The tote board is currently 37 trophies:

# District of Columbia: Archbishop Carroll (Washington), Class AA.

# Hawaii: Saint Louis (Honolulu), Interscholastic League of Honolulu Open Division.

# Indiana: Cathedral (Indianapolis), Class 5A; Andrean (Merrillville), Class 2A.

# Illinois: Joliet Catholic Academy, Class 4A; Fenwick (Oak Park), Class 5A

# Kansas: St. James Academy (Lenexa), Class 4A.

# Kentucky: St. Xavier (Louisville), Class 6A.

# Louisiana: Catholic (Baton Rouge), Division I; St. Charles Catholic (Laplace), Division III.

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

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

Massachusetts: Catholic Memorial (West Roxbury), Division 2.

Michigan: De La Salle Collegiate (Warren, Mich.), Division 2; Grand Rapids Catholic Central, Division 5; Lansing Catholic, Division 6.

Missouri: Christian Brothers College (St. Louis), Class 6; St. Mary’s (St. Louis), Class 3.

Nebraska: Archbishop Bergan (Fremont), Class C2.

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

New Jersey: Red Bank Catholic, Non-Public B; Bergen Catholic (Oradell), Non-Public A.

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, NYCHSAA Class AAA; Chaminade (Mineola), Class AA-1; Holy Trinity (Hicksville), AA-2; Christian Brothers Academy (Syracuse), Class A.

Ohio: St. Edward (Lakewood), Division I.

Oregon: Central Catholic (Portland), Class 6A.

Rhode Island: Bishop Hendricken (Warwick), State Championship Bracket.

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

Texas: St. Paul (Shriner), TAPPS Division IV.

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 dropped the ball and did not mention your school in the 2021 CAC Honor Roll, give us a nudge.

One final thought and it’s a weekly reminder from our friends at Global Football.

Now that another holiday season is here, 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.

If you like traveling and 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 are the details.

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).

Plan ahead, the Emerald Island trip will be here quicker than before!

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 22 for the final time this season. Consider the CAC Top 25 final rankings an early Christmas present.

Stay safe and get out and attend a high school game in your state. There’s full complement of title games in the aforementioned states for the next two weekends.

Until then, God Bless. — *Christopher Lawlor*

**Catholic Athletes for Christ Top 25 High School Football Rankings, Dec. 8, 2021**

**1. Mater Dei, Santa Ana, Calif. (11-0)**

**Previous rank:** 1.

**In the Huddle:** Idle. The Monarchs play No. 20 Serra (San Mateo) Saturday in the CIF Open Division Bowl Game at Saddleback College in nearby Mission Viejo.

**2. Bergen Catholic, Oradell, N.J. (12-0)\***

**Previous rank:** 2.

**In the Huddle:** Won Non-Public A championship. Season complete

**3. Jesuit, Tampa, Fla. (14-0)**

**Previous rank:** 3.

**In the Huddle:** The Tigers made history last weekend in trouncing state powerhouse Northwestern (Miami), 37-12, in the Class 6A semifinals. The Tigers are in the championship game and seek a first title since 1968. They’ll have to wait until next week when they play Pine Forest (Pensacola) on Dec. 18 in the Class 6A final to be played at DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale.

**4. St. Thomas Aquinas, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (13-1)**

**Previous rank:** 4.

**In the Huddle:** The Raiders defeated Buchholz (Gainesville), 45-7, in Class 7A semifinals. They will have this weekend off in preparation for the Class 7A final against Tampa Bay Tech (Tampa) on Dec. 17 in the Class 7A final to be played at nearby DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale.

**5. Servite, Anaheim, Calif. (10-3)**

**Previous rank:** 5.

**In the Huddle:** Season complete.

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

**Previous rank:** 6.

**In the Huddle:** Season complete.

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

**Previous rank:** 7.

**In the Huddle:** Season complete.

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

**Previous rank:** 8.

**In the Huddle:** Won the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Capital championship. Season complete but the Cadets will be playing in the GEICO High School Bowl Series next weekend in Nevada.

**9. Catholic, Baton Rouge, La. (12-1)\***

**Previous rank:** 9.

**In the Huddle:** Won a second straight LHSAA Division I state championship, edging then-No. 16 Jesuit (New Orleans), 14-10, I the final. Joshua Robertson recovered a high snap on a punt in the end zone to give the Bears a 7-0 lead. RB Taelon Nicholas was named team’s MVP, carrying 25 times carries for 109 yards and QB Daniel Beale threw for 90 yards and a score to WR Daniel Harden. Season complete.

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

**Previous rank:** 10.

**In the Huddle:** The Lions crushed Florida State University High (Tallahassee), 38-3, in the Class 3A state semifinals. C-M advanced to the 3A final for the fifth straight year and go for their fourth during the stretch. Next is Berkeley Prep (Tampa) in the Class 3A final Thursday at Gene Cox Stadium in Tallahassee.

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

**Previous rank:** 11.

**In the Huddle:** Won Class 5A state championship. Season is complete but an appearance in the GEICO Bowl Series appears to be alive.

**12. St. Edward, Lakewood, Ohio (15-1)\***

**Previous rank:** 12.

**In the Huddle:** Won Division I state championship, defeating Springfield, 23-13, in the final. It was the program’s fifth state title since 2010 and the first since 2018. RB Danny Enovitch ran for a 17-yard TD for a 7-0 lead in the first quarter. Enovitch rushed for a game-high 210 yards and two scores and the Eagles were clutch when it mattered most converting on 9 of 13 attempts on third down. Season complete.

**13. Cathedral, Indianapolis, Ind. (14-1)\***

**Previous rank:** 13.

**In the Huddle:** Won a second consecutive Class 5A state championship. Season complete.

**14. De La Salle Collegiate, Warren, Mich. (13-0)\***

**Previous rank:** 15.

**In the Huddle:** Won the Division 2 state championship. Season complete.

**15. St. Joseph’s Prep, Philadelphia (11-2)\***

**Previous rank:** 17.

**In the Huddle:** Sophomore Samaj Jones accounted for seven TDs, running for four and throwing for three more, when the Hawks routed Garnett Valley (Glen Mills), 49-13, in the PIAA Class 6A state semifinals. Jones ran for scores from 5, 4, 4 and 1 yards and tossed for TD from 37, 30 and 16 yards. The Hawks were up 35-7 at halftime and they go for a fourth consecutive 6A title on Saturday against WPIAL powerhouse Mount Lebanon (Pittsburgh) at Hersheypark Stadium in Hershey.

**16. Joliet (Ill.) Catholic Academy (14-0)\***

**Previous rank:** 18.

**In the Huddle:** Won the Class 4A state championship. Season complete.

**17. Central Catholic, Portland, Ore. (15-0)\***

**Previous rank:** 19.

**In the Huddle:** Won the Class 6A state championship, defeating Tualatin, 44-14, in the final.

The Rams took a 14-7 when RB Elli Bynum scored on a 13-yard run and Timmy Mitchell added a 2-yard scoop-and-score off a fumble to make it 21-7. Sophomore QB Cru Newman, completed 12 of 24 passes for 243 yards and a score and Bynum rushed for 88 yards and two TDs on 13 carries. Season complete.

**18. Christian Brothers College, St. Louis, Mo. (13-1)\***

Previous rank: 20.

In the Huddle: Won Class 6 state championship. Season complete.

**19. Iona Prep, New Rochelle, N.Y. (11-1)\*\***

**Previous rank:** 21.

**In the Huddle:** Won the Catholic High School Athletic Association state championship and

Won New York City Catholic High School Football League Class AAA title. Season complete.

**20. Serra, San Mateo, Calif. (12-1)**

Previous rank: 22.

In the Huddle: Idle. The Padres face top-ranked Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.) for the CIF Open Division Bowl Game Saturday in Mission Viejo.

**21. De La Salle, Concord, Calif. (10-3)**

**Previous rank:** 14.

**In the Huddle:** Upset by Folsom, 28-27, in the CIF-Northern Region Division 1-AA final. Season complete.

**22. St. Xavier, Louisville, Ky. (14-1)\***

**Previous rank:** Not ranked.

**In the Huddle:** Won Class 6A state championship, defeating Male (Louisville), 31-21. The Tigers avenged their lone regular season setback. Season complete.

**23. Archbishop Moeller, Cincinnati, Ohio (11-4)**

**Previous rank:** 23.

**In the Huddle:** Season complete.

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

**Previous rank:** 24.

**In the Huddle:** Season complete.

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

**Previous rank:** 25.

**In the Huddle:** Season complete.

**Dropped out:** No. 16. Jesuit (New Orleans, La.).

**Special Consideration:** Jesuit (New Orleans, La.); Cathedral Catholic (San Diego, Calif.); Cardinal Gibbons (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.); Columbus (Miami, Fla.); Central Catholic (Grand Rapids, Mich.)\*; Benedictine Military School (Savannah, Ga.); Don Bosco Prep (Ramsey, N.J.); Catholic Memorial (West Roxbury, Mass.); Red Bank (N.J.) Catholic\*; Archbishop Hoban (Akron, Ohio); Catholic Memorial (Waukesha, Wis.)\*; McQuaid Jesuit (Rochester, N.Y.); Loyola Academy (Wilmette, Ill.); Loyola Blakefield (Towson, Md.); 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); Santa Margarita (Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.); St. Thomas Academy (Mendota, Minn.); St. Francis (Mountain View, Calif); Good Counsel (Olney, Md.); DeMatha Catholic (Hyattsville, Md.); Jesuit (Portland, Ore.); Marist (Atlanta, Ga.); St. Rita (Chicago, Ill.); Archbishop Spalding (Severn, Md.); St. Mary Ryken (Leonardtown, Md.)\*; Aquinas (La Crosse, Wis.)\*; Lansing (Mich.) Catholic\*; Cathedral Prep (Erie, Pa.);Fenwick (Oak Park, Ill.)\*;St. Joseph Regional (Montvale, N.J.); Brother Martin (New Orleans, La.), Serra (Gardena, Calif.); Bishop Alemany (Mission Hills, Calif.); .); Fairfield (Conn.) Prep; Blessed Trinity Catholic (Roswell, Ga.); and Roncalli (Indianapolis, Ind.).

*\*Won state or conference postseason championship [Teams in some states won more than one postseason title]*

**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-**