

Playoffs getting closer, Week 8 features some key football contests

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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It's coming down to crunch time for some area football teams in Week 8 of the high school football season. Some teams have already clinched spots in the IHSA football playoffs having won six games or clinched their conference championships, some teams are on the verge of clinching spots and others are facing must-win games to keep their playoff hopes alive with one game to go in the season.

The 256 teams that will reach the postseason and go on with a chance to win a state championship will be announced beginning at 8 p.m. Oct. 22 in a live event that will be streamed on the IHSA web site (IHSA.tv) via Comcast SportsNet Chicago, who owns the rights for several IHSA sports.

Here's a look at this week's games, with kickoff times set for 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

In the Southwestern Conference, Edwardsville travels to Public School Stadium in Alton to take on the Redbirds; the Tigers enter the game at 6-1 overall, 4-1 in the league after defeating Belleville West last week 30-7 while the Redbirds go into the contest at 0-7, 0-5 in the SWC after dropping a 41-27 decision to Granite City on the road last week. The Warriors, with their playoff hopes still alive at 4-3 overall, 3-2 in the SWC, are at Belleville West; the Warriors close out the regular season at Edwardsville next week while the Redbirds are at West in their regular-season finale. Other SWC games this week have Collinsville going to East St. Louis and Belleville East heading to O'Fallon.

In the Mississippi Valley Conference, Civic Memorial can qualify for the playoffs with a sixth win as the Eagles, who upended Waterloo 20-15 last week, host Triad in their home and league finale; CM is 5-2 overall, 3-1 in the MVC going into the game while the Knights stand at 5-2 overall, 2-2 in the league. The Eagles are at Taylorville next week while Triad is at Belleville Althoff. Jersey closes out their league slate at home against Highland, who clinched the MVC title last week with a 24-0 win over Triad; the Panthers stand at 2-5 overall, 1-3 in the league after winning a 63-51 shootout over Mascoutah last week. Jersey closes out the season at Columbia next week.

Marquette Catholic stands atop the Prairie State Conference after the Explorers' 48-0 win over Metro East Lutheran-Madison last week in Madison and East Alton-Wood River's 13-6 win over previously undefeated (in the PSC) Kincaid South Fork. Marquette goes into Saturday night's 7 p.m. league game against Mount Olive standing at 5-2 overall, 5-0 in the league with a chance to clinch a playoff spot; the Wildcats, 3-4 overall and 3-2 in the league, defeated Nokomis 36-26 last week. EAWR goes into their contest at Nokomis with a shot at the playoffs, standing at 4-3 overall and 3-2 in the league; they close out the regular season next week at Mount Olive, 3-4 overall and 3-2 in the PSC, while Marquette closes the season out at South Fork next week with no worse than a share of the league title on the line depending on this week's outcomes.

MEL-Madison, who stand at 0-7 overall and 0-5 in the PSC, is at Pawnee, who downed Bunker Hill 76-31 last week to stand at 5-2 overall, 3-2 in the league, while the Minutemen (2-5 overall, 0-5 in the league) are at South Fork. The Knights and

Minutemen clash next week in Bunker Hill to close out the season while Pawnee closes out at Nokomis.

The South Central Conference has Piasa Southwestern, standing at 3-4 overall and in the league, hosting Carlinville (6-1 overall and league) while Roxana (1-6 overall and SCC) playing Staunton (1-6 overall and league) at Charlie Raich Field. The Piasa Birds and Shells clash in a regional rivalry game in Roxana next week to close out the regular season. Elsewhere, Pana (7-0 overall and league) hosts Vandalia (5-2 overall and league), Gillespie (2-5 overall and league) travels to Greenville (4-3 overall and league) and Hillsboro (5-2 overall and league) is at Litchfield (0-7 overall and league) with a chance to clinch a playoff spot.

In the Western Illinois Valley South, Carrollton, coming off a 34-6 win over Hardin-Calhoun, is at 4-3 Beardstown; the Hawks enter the game at 4-3 overall with their WIVC South season complete. The Warriors, who are 5-2 overall, host Jacksonville Routt (0-7) in their home finale; Calhoun is at Brown County to close out the regular season next week while the Hawks entertain Concord Triopia next week. Other games involving league teams this week has Greenfield visiting the Trojans, Pleasant Hill hosting Camp Point Central and North Greene at home against Brown County.