

State football playoff pairings announced: Edwardsville, Marquette Catholic host opening games

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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The waiting is over, and area teams will begin their quest for an IHSA football championship next weekend.

On Saturday evening, **Edwardsville, Marquette Catholic, Carrollton, Hardin-Calhoun, East Alton-Wood River, Civic Memorial and Greenfield-Northwestern** learned who their first-round opponents were and where they will be for this weekend's opening-round games.

The road to the state championship in all eight classes ends Thanksgiving weekend at the University of Illinois' Memorial Stadium in Urbana-Champaign.

Here's a look at the six teams, what class they will be in and where they will be for the first round. Times and dates for the games will be announced by the IHSA Monday afternoon.

CLASS 1A: Carrollton was awarded the No. 9 seed in the southern portion of the Class 1A bracket against Camp Point Central, who was appointed the No. 8 seed and will host the first-round clash. **Hardin-Calhoun** was awarded the No. 12 seed and will travel to No. 5 seed Arcola to face the Purple Riders in the opening round. **Greenfield Northwestern** will meet Brown County in a Class 1A first-round match.

The Hawks and Warriors both go into their games with 6-3 records; Camp Point and Arcola are both 7-2. With a win, Carrolton would take on the Oblong-Tuscola winner in the second round, while the Warriors would face the Bridgeport Red Hill-Decatur Lutheran winner.

Of note in this bracket was that Arcola could face Tuscola in the renewal of east-central Illinois' traditional Cola Wars game should both get to the quarterfinals.

CLASS 3A: East Alton-Wood River qualified for their first postseason in 10 years by going 6-3 on the year and was awarded the No. 13 seed in the southern half of the bracket; the Oilers will travel to South Central Conference champions **Carlinville** for their first-round match

The Cavaliers won the SCC with an 8-1 mark and were given the No. 4 seed in that half of the bracket. An Oiler win would send them to a second-round contest against the Hillsboro-Williamsville winner.

CLASS 4A: Marquette Catholic's 7-2 mark, including a 7-0 record in the Prairie State Conference, was good enough to give the Explorers a No. 8 seed in the southern half of the Class 4A bracket; they'll host ninth-seeded Taylorville, also 7-2, of the Apollo Conference in the first round. Should the Explorers win, they will face the Belleville Althoff-Carterville winner in the second round.

Civic Memorial, who made it to the postseason with a 5-4 record, was given the No. 12 seed in the southern half of the bracket and will travel to fifth-seeded Rochester (8-1) for their first-round contest; an Eaglea win would send them to the Olney Richland County-Mount Zion winner in the second round.

CLASS 8A: Edwardsville's 8-1 mark gave them the No. 12 seed in Class 8A (Classes 7A and 8A are seeded from 1-32 without regard to geography); the Tigers will meet 21st-seeded **Oak Park-River Forest** of the Chicago area at Tiger Stadium for the first round. Should the Tigers win, they would take on the Joliet West-Oswego winner in the second round.

Other teams that take on area schools who reached the postseason look like this:

The PSC's Pawnee, the No. 7 seed, drew 10th-seeded Athens for the first round; in Class 3A, Pana of the SCC will meet up with Marshall, while the SCC's Hillsboro will take on Williamsville in the opening round, while the SCC's Vandalia was given the No. 7 southern seed and will host Tolono Unity in the first round; in Class 4A, Greenville of the SCC will meet up with Columbia in the opening round, while in a notable first-round match, Breese Central will meet up with Breese Mater Dei in what's being billed

as Milk Bowl II; the two teams clash each season in what's become known as the Milk Bowl, one of the most anticipated regular-season games in the Metro East area each year.

In Class 5A, three Mississippi Valley Conference teams were placed in the bottom half of the southern bracket; Waterloo will travel to MVC rival Highland, with Waterloo getting the 15 seed and Highland the 2 seed; Triad was awarded the 11 seed and will travel to traditional central Illinois power Geneseo for a first-round contest. In Class 7A, East St. Louis was given the No. 2 seed at 9-0 and will host New Lenox Lincoln-Way West in the first round, while Belleville West got in the postseason at 5-4 and was given the No. 27 seed; they'll travel to No. 6 Normal Community for their first-round contest. O'Fallon joins Edwardsville in the Class 8A bracket as the No. 32 seed and will meet top-seeded Wilmette Loyola Academy in the first round on the road.