

FOOTBALL PLAYOFF TIME: Eight area football teams reach 44th edition of IHSA playoffs

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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Eight of the area's football teams heard their names called Saturday night as the teams who will be taking part in the 44th IHSA Football Championship and the opening-round pairings for this weekend were announced Saturday night by the Illinois High School Association.

There will be at least one team in all but one class (6A) taking part in the tournaments that will end Thanksgiving weekend at Husky Stadium in DeKalb on the Northern Illinois University campus as eight state champions are determined. Times and dates for the first-round games will be announced at 3 pm. Monday by the IHSA web site.

Edwardsville will be the area's lone representative in Class 8A, where they will travel to the Chicago area to meet Huntley; the 6-3 Tigers were given the 26th seed in the playoffs, while the Red Raiders were awarded the No. 7 seed. Undefeated Frankfort Lincoln-Way East was named the top seed in the class.

Alton (5-4), making its first postseason appearance since 2006, was given the 28 seed in Class 7A and will travel to the city of Chicago to meet the fifth-seeded Lincoln Park Lions in the opening round. Rock ton Monongahela got the top seed in the 7A postseason, while Belleville West (at Buffalo Grove) and defending champion East St. Louis (at home against Illiberality) also made the field of 32 in the class.

No teams were named in Class 6A, but Triad got the No. 2 seed in the southern half of the Class 5A bracket; they'll host Peoria Richwoods in the opening round. Dunlap was given the top seed in the southern half of the bracket, while Chicago Wendell Phillips was named the No. 1 seed in the northern portion of the bracket.

The Mississippi Valley Conference's Highland was named the No. 2 seed in the southern half of the 4A bracket and will host Quincy Note Dame in the first round, while in Class 3A, both the Prairie State Conference's Marquette Catholic (8-1) and East Alton-Wood River (7-2) will have to hit the road for their opening games; the ninth-seeded Explorers head to east-central Illinois for a clash with Newton of the Little Illinois Conference, while the 12th-seeded Oilers head to Carlinville for a rematch of last year's opening round against the South Central Conference's Cavaliers.

South Mac, the first-year coop between Bunker Hill and Mount Olive, finished 5-4 in the PSC and reached the Class 2A bracket as the No. 14 southern seed; the Chargers will travel to Downs Ti-Valley (8-1), who earned the No. 3 southern seed in the class. In Class 1A, the WIVC South's Carrollton and Hardin-Calhoun both reached the postseason, the 8-1 Hawks getting the No. 4 southern seed, where they will have a home match up against the No. 13 seed, 6-3 Madison, who is fielding a team on its own for the first time in 25 years this year after having a coop with Metro East Lutheran the previous two years; the Trojan program had been disbanded in 1992 before returning this season.

The 6-3 Warriors were named the No. 12 seed in the southern portion of the 1A bracket and will visit Camp Point Central (7-2) who was named the No. 5 seed in the southern 1A bracket.