

# **East St. Louis Set To Meet Oak Lawn Richards In IHSA Class 6A Football Quarterfinals On Saturday, Flyers Seeking Second Title In Last Four Years**

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**EAST ST. LOUIS** - The highly-regarded East St. Louis Senior High School football team continues its quest for a second IHSA state championship in the last four years, and ninth overall, when the Flyers host Oak Lawn Richards of suburban Chicago in a

Class 6A quarterfinal game Saturday afternoon at Clyde C. Jordan Stadium. The kickoff is set for 3 p.m.

The Flyers, who last won a championship in 2016 in Class 7A, is seeking their third championship under head coach Darren Sunkett, who coached East Side to Class 7A titles in 2008 and 2016. East Side is currently 11-0, having won the Southwestern Conference championship and winning their first two playoff games handily, defeating Chicago Morgan Park 44-0 in the first round, and Rock Island on the road in the second round 70-28.

The Bulldogs come into the matchup at 10-1, winning in the opening round over Washington 20-16, and Peoria Central 42-34 in last week's second round game.

The Flyers have one of the state's, and nation's, most exciting teams, with several NCAA Division-I recruits on their roster. The offense is one that can strike anywhere, at any time, and they're led by junior quarterback Tyler Macon, who's 162-of-247 passing, according to stats from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, for 3,320 yards and 32 touchdowns, while being intercepted only seven times. Macon has also ran 608 yards and 13 touchdowns on the season..

Senior running back DaMonta Witherspoon is the team's leading rushing, running for 1,407 yards and 27 touchdowns, while Jaden Hale has rushed for 150 yards and two touchdowns, Jaylen Reed for 113 yards, Dominic Lovett 102 yard and a touchdown, and DeAndre Lawrence has run for 78 yards, but has four touchdowns on the season.

East Side's passing game is also very potent, and Macon has plenty of weapons at his disposal. Lovett leads the team with 53 catches for 1,177 yards and 12 touchdowns, Lawaun Powell, Jr. has 35 receptions for 574 yards and three scores, Keontez Lewis had caught 30 balls for 643 yards and eight touchdowns, Antonio Johnson had made 27 catches for 668 yards and seven touchdowns, Witherspoon has caught 11 passes for 189 yards and a touchdown, and Kenneth Cotton has seven receptions for 79 yards and a score.

The Flyers defense is just as strong, and is capable of coming up with the big stop or key turnover. Jemarionte Burgess has the most takeaways for East Side with a total of seven, recovering four fumbles to go with three interceptions, while Cameron Lovett has recovered two fumbles and Kendrick Scarbrough has also had a fumble recovery, going along with 114 total tackles and 14 sacks. Kevon Billingsley has six sacks on the season, with Derrion Perkins and Darius Walker having four sacks, Jalen Byrd and Jamal Molton have three each, and Jireh Mays, Powell and Gamere Sophire have two sacks apiece.

In addition, Reed has three interceptions in the defensive backfield, while Dylan Appleton have two picks each, and Romel Hall, McCaleb Rich and Walker each have an interception.

The winner of the Bulldogs-Flyers game advances to the semifinals, which will be against the winner of the quarterfinal match between New Lenox Providence Catholic and Chatham Glenwood. The Titans and Celtics will meet in New Lenox Saturday at 2 p. m., with the semifinal matchup being played next weekend, Nov. 22-23. The Class 6A final is set for Saturday, Nov. 30 at Northern Illinois University's Huskie Stadium in DeKalb, with the kickoff coming at 1 p.m.