

## Three SMAC Schools advance in the State Football Playoffs

Posted by [JeroldMassie](#) On 11/15/2018

**Lexington Park, MD** - Six teams entered the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) playoffs from the Southern Maryland Athletic Conference (SMAC) this year and following the first week, only three remain. SMAC was able to send Lackey, Westlake, Northern and Huntingtown (all 7-3), St. Charles (8-2) and North Point (10-0) to the postseason. Lackey represented SMAC in the 1A South region, Westlake in the 2A South, Northern, Huntingtown, and St. Charles in the 3A South and North Point in the 4A East.

Beginning with the smaller teams, Lackey and Westlake both entered the playoffs as the second seed in their respective class/region and both were upset in close games. Lackey fell behind traveling Frederick Douglas following a pick-six by Douglas' Amandre Payton (Sr.) who had two interceptions in the game. The Eagles missed the extra point and took a 6-0 lead into the half. Douglas was able to score once more in the 4th quarter after kicking a field goal. Down 9-0, Lackey needed to get something going offensively to stay in the game. With 4:08 left in the game, the Chargers scored on a 27-yard touchdown pass from Robert Middleton (Sr.) to Linn Jordan (Sr.), cutting the Eagles' lead to just three. Unfortunately, Douglas' defense proved to be too much, halting Lackey's comeback attempt. Lackey was unable to repeat last year's 1A South Region title and lost 9-6 to visiting Frederick Douglas.

Westlake and River Hill competed in the first round of the 2A South playoffs in what culminated into a defensive battle. No points were scored until the fourth quarter of play, despite opportunities to score for both teams. The Wolverines turned the ball over on downs at the Hawks' 12-yard-line with 3-minutes remaining in the game. River Hill was able to score the game's only points on a 27-yard field goal in the 4th quarter, going on to win 3-0. Westlake finished the season 8-3 and captured the SMAC Chesapeake Division title, losing in the first round of the playoffs for the second year in a row.

The larger schools competed well in the first round, with only one of the four larger SMAC teams losing. North Point faced Arundel High School in the first round for the second year in a row. Last year the Eagles crafted a fourth-quarter comeback to defeat the Wildcats by one point, 19-20. North Point went on to win the 4A East region and hopes to advance further this year. Friday night went much better for the Eagles, as North Point dominated the contest from start to finish. Lead by a 281 all-purpose yards-effort by senior Malik Lawrence, which included a 100-plus yard interception return for a touchdown; North Point routed Arundel 43-13. Running back Corey Johnson (Jr.) was also a significant contributor to the win, rushing for 98 yards on 23 carries. The Eagles will face South River, which upset undefeated Broadneck, in the Regional Championship game.

Three of the four teams in the 3A South Playoff Region were SMAC schools, and following the Huntingtown win on Saturday, SMAC is guaranteed to send at least one team to the State Semifinals. Huntingtown has had a dominant defense all season but their offense put up 28 points during the playoff contest, leading to a 28-13 win. The Hurricanes scored 21-plus points only three other times this season. The other 3A South matchup pitted Northern against St. Charles. When these two teams met up in the regular season, it was a low scoring affair that St. Charles was able to win 12-0. Both teams had strong defenses throughout the season, and Friday's low scoring game was no exception. Northern scored first on a 1-yard quarterback sneak by Zach Crouse (Fr.). St. Charles quickly answered with a 95-yard pass from Kameron Blount (Sr.) to Klayton Batten (Jr.) followed by a Blount rushing touchdown, tying the score at 7-7. The score remained knotted through regulation, leading to overtime. St. Charles started with the ball and scored on their first play from the 10-yard-line after Jevon Hamilton (Sr.) ran it in on a quarterback keeper. After the extra point, St. Charles took a 14-7 lead and felt confident after stuffing Northern on their first three plays. Faced with a 4th down and 10, Northern's Crouse found Luke Woodridge in the end zone for a touchdown. Down by one with the option to try to tie the game by kicking the ball or to go for two and the win, Northern's Head Coach Steve Crouse was no doubt reflecting on the blocked punt and field goal from earlier in the contest. Crouse elected to go for two and his son, Zach, was able to find Rex Flemming (Jr.) for the conversion and the win. A dog pile ensued, and joy overwhelmed many Northern players. Conversely, several St. Charles players collapsed to the ground, being consoled by teammates, players, and coaches from both teams.

Friday will have a rematch of the intense Northern/Huntingtown rivalry game. The Hurricanes were able to travel to Northern in week nine and win 14-0. This time around Huntingtown will be playing at home in what is possibly the most important game in the rivalry's history. The winner will capture the 3A South Regional title and advance to the State Semifinals.

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