

LLB'S January 2007 Commentary

As with anything else jobs, career, and family comes first. So with the exception of a few blurbs here and there in my rankings I haven't had too much time to discuss the DIII A team season so far. In this commentary I should be able to get some info out to you that you may or may not be aware of or care to hear.

Biggest surprises of the season so far (Team)

I'd have to say there are few surprises out there team wise.

Schuylkill Valley surprised me from the get go as I felt their losses roster wise would be enough to keep them on the bubble as far as qualifying for the postseason. They have wrestled well and have placed themselves in the thick of the Berks County race.

Hamburg's win over Brandywine is another surprise. Could this be a sign that the Bullets aren't that great of a dual team or that we underestimated the Hawks a little? I lean towards the latter at this point.

Delone's demise is somewhat of a shock. The Squires still have solid lightweights it's just that they don't have that middle that they over the past few years. Delone use to force you to win the match in the middle and with some of the names they had that was near impossible. Hefner leaving hurt the program but I think overall some of the roster losses they have had over the past few years have caused some vulnerabilities.

I'd have to think Biglerville's 17-1 mark at this point is a huge surprise. The Cannons did have a reasonable schedule to get started with but with what they were able to do to some of the teams at the Cannon Duals that left an impression on me.

Biggest Surprises of the season so far (Individual)

If you would have told me Derek Schmelyun wouldn't have started from point go this year I would have told you that you were crazy.

However, this just goes to verify Bermudian's depth, especially in the middle. The O'Brien kid is really good and they have some others there that have been pushing for mat time.

Joe Spisak of Boiling Springs has just been dismantling the competition at 103 in his first year and looks like a definite keeper. The Bubblers have been fortunate to benefit from several impact underclassmen and that is most likely the secret behind their top ranking.

The arrival of freshman Dan Thomas and the rest of the Biglerville freshmen and sophomores have led the Cannons to 17-1 start.

Postseason Dual Picture

Right now the participants are a lot more clear than the actual order. There's still work to be done in the York, Berks, and maybe the MPC. Here's just a snap shot and guess at what will or could happen.

Berks (4) – Brandywine has to get a win versus Schuylkill Valley this week. If so they most likely lock up the #2 spot. Hamburg will be the #1 team out of the Berks if they win out and beat Schuylkill Valley next week. Schuylkill Valley can be the #1 if they beat both Brandywine (this week) and Hamburg (next week). The fourth bid looks like it will go to the Oley Valley/Wyomissing/Kutztown winner.

L-L (3) – Pretty much done considering Donegal's December victory over ELCO. Only thing that needs to be determined is #2 & #3. Pequea has already lost to ELCO however could make a mess if their able to upset Donegal. I'd say Donegal, ELCO, & Pequea in that order.

MPC (3) - Boiling Springs is the clear cut #1 (In the division and District). Milton Hershey looks like a solid #2 with Camp Hill #3. So where does that leave Susquenita who won't get a shot at either Camp Hill or Milton Hershey.

Tri-Valley (2) – Probably the easiest of the 5 conferences. Juniata via their win this past Friday is the clear cut #1 with UDA the #2 based on their loss.

York (4) - Probably the most up in the air conference. Biglerville, Bermudian Springs, and Hanover are all unbeaten in conference. Littlestown is most likely the #4 with their win over Delone. The Squires are most likely on the outside looking in but gets a chance to take their yearly swipe at Biglerville this week. The Cannons get Delone, Hanover, and West York this week. If they go 2-1 they are most likely looking at a 3rd place finish. Hanover hits Bermudian in two Thursdays while the Eagles match up with the Cannons in the final Saturday of the regular season. You see we really don't know didly yet in the York yet. Confused anyone???

Question and Answer

Otherwise known as "Q & A" for you boardroom execs I will take a look at some of your questions and do my best to answer them here, basically because "others would like to know too".

What's your take on the new weight process?

I'd say at first it had most coaches scrambling but like anything else it takes some getting use to. I wasn't a big fan a few years ago of random draw, I'm a traditionalist but even though I still like going from 103-285 I've gotten use to matches going off at 119, 140, or 171. If it helps the kids and is a better way of keeping them safe then I say I'm all for it. You have some folks crying "overkill" however you're always going to have those people. Rules are rules and like it or not we're just going to have to live with it.

What's the secret to Boiling Springs success?

Easy, a great deal of talented youth. I told everybody pretty much a couple of years ago to basically look out. The Bubblers have been fortunate to have the guys with talent hit the scene at the right time. Their not as deep as Bermudian but they have the starting 14 everybody wished they had.

With the annual Bermudian Springs/Biglerville Thriller coming up who's your pick?

Bermudian hands down!!! Biglerville is on their way but the Eagles still hold the cards. The only thing I can say is you can see some change in both programs. I think Biglerville is going into a renaissance while Bermudian (while still strong) might be headed into a little less than superman period. The Cannors have a lot to look forward to but it's just not going to happen this year.

How did Hamburg beat Brandywine? Why do you have Brandywine ranked so high?

Hamburg is tough, I really thought they would have their hands full with Brandywine and in all purpose they did. When Brandywine forfeits against a good team that kills them just like everybody else. I still hold Brandywine with high regard and if they can get by Schuylkill Valley and the Panthers get by Hamburg it will open up things for discussion.

At this point Who's #1 when it's all said and done?

Boiling Springs but that's why we wrestle the matches. Bermudian can run with the Bubblers but my biggest concern with the Eagles is how their line-up has changed since day one.

Juniata, Hamburg, and Brandywine are all nice teams but I think they all have an issue or two that will hold them back.

That's it for the mailbag and LLB's January Commentary. I'll try to keep bringing you information and throw another together in early February.

You can always reach me at landlordbob@hotmail.com

Enjoy,

LLB