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Playoff Extravaganza

By Byron Stankus

Congratulations to all 16 IHSLA teams that made the playoff. Folks, this looks like a very competitive playoff bracket. This year was one of the best years for Indiana High School lacrosse. I believe there was more parity this year from top to bottom than any other year in memory. There were tons of close games, several upsets and a constant shuffling of the top 20 teams. Excellent, very excellent. This brings us some intriguing matchups for the playoffs. So let's delve right in!

First Round:

#1 Carmel Vs. #16 Castle: Although they have not played this year, Carmel is the heavy favorite against the athletic Knights from Evansville.

#8 Westfield Vs. #9 Zionsville: These two teams met April 18, with Westfield winning an 11-10 game. This was one of the key wins that have laid the groundwork for the Shamrock's coach Troy Dinkel to be considered for coach of the year. But don't count out the revenge factor in this game. This one could go either way. I wouldn't dare pick a favorite in this game.

#4 Culver Vs. #13 Marian: These two teams have not met this year. Culver should be a favorite against the upstart Marian Knights and their potential coach of the Year Shawn Bays.

#5 Guerin Catholic Vs. #12 Bishop Chatard: These two teams played early in the season with the March 6 victory going to Guerin 7-3. But the Chatard Trojans have improved as the year progressed. And with the Golden Eagles coming off a surprising loss on May 18, to Crown Point 7-6 in overtime, this game may be ripe for an upset.

#2 Cathedral Vs. #15 Penn: Another two teams who have not played this year. Penn started out strong with a couple of solid wins early in the season but fell as of late to #15. Expect a win from the Cathedral Irish.

#7 St. Joseph's Vs. #10 Crown Point: On April 11, the St. Joseph's Indians defeated the Crown Point Bulldogs 13-7. But that was a long time ago. The Indians just recently beat Brebeuf Jesuit 13-9 on May 12 and are feeling very strong. But Crown Point is on the upswing too with recent wins versus Guerin Catholic, 7-6 in overtime and Zionsville 8-6. Those wins make a strong case for Joe Laird as coach of the year, as well. This looks to be another strong rematch that could go either way.

#3 Hamilton Southeastern Vs. #14 Noblesville: These two met on April 18 with HSE winning 16-4. But this is a bit of a rivalry, so there is a chance that this may be closer this time around.

#6 Brebeuf Jesuit Vs. #11 Heritage Christian: The last time these two met, on May 8, the Brebeuf Braves scored three quick goals to start the 4th quarter to put the Heritage Eagles away and win 11-7. But in this go-round it may not be that close. Brebeuf is coming off a confidence boosting loss 10-9 in overtime to #4 Culver. That may be too much for the walking wounded at Heritage Christian who is on their 3rd Goalie this year, lost 4 of their top players from injury and are down to playing 14 players in their varsity games. Brebeuf Jesuit may be a spoiler moving forward.

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