

St. Frances Academy big part of A Conference football shake-up

By Catholic Review Staff

Midway through the 2016 season, football in the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association A Conference has taken on a unfamiliar look.

Archbishop Spalding, Mount St. Joseph and St. Frances Academy sit in the top half of the standings. Traditional powers Calvert Hall, Loyola Blakefield and Gilman reside at the bottom.

The reversal was most apparent Oct. 7, when St. Frances Academy stormed back from a 10-0 deficit to record a 26-10 victory at Gilman. The defending champion Greyhounds had a perfect conference record last season, but head coach Biff Poggi resigned and most of his staff moved to St. Frances Academy, which was also bolstered by a number of transfers.



St. Frances Academy's offensive line makes an opening for Osman Savage during a 26-10 victory at Gilman High School in Baltimore Oct. 7. (Kevin J. Parks/CR Staff)

The Panthers, who added the sport in 2008, lack a home field and have played their last three games at Morgan State University. Henry Russell, the Panthers' first-year head coach, and his reworked roster face a major test Oct. 14, when they visit McDonogh, No. 1 in the Sun rankings, for a 7 p.m. kickoff.

Spalding, meanwhile, is the second-ranked team in the area. Under fourth-year coach Kyle Schmitt, the Cavaliers are 5-1 overall and 2-0 in the A Conference, where they have outscored Calvert Hall and Loyola Blakefield by a combined 105-38.

The Cavaliers' only loss was to Olney's Our Lady of Good Counsel, a Washington Catholic Athletic Conference power that has also produced the only blemish on Mount St. Joseph's record. The Gaels, No. 3 in the Sun rankings, are 5-1 overall and 1-0 in the conference under second-year coach Rick Holzer.

Between Oct. 28 and Nov. 11, Archbishop Spalding, Mount St. Joseph and St. Frances Academy all play one another.

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