

It will be No. 1 vs. No. 2 in all five classes at the Superdome

Written by Jerry Byrd

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As far as the Louisiana High School Athletic Association is concerned, the first four rounds of the 2012 state football playoffs have been a waste of time.

In all five classes, the finalists are the teams that were seeded No. 1 and No. 2.

That means the only finalists from this area are the usual suspects: Evangel in Class 2A and Haynesville in Class A.

Evangel, the No. 2 seed in Class 2A, will play No. 1 seed John Curtis.

Haynesville, the No. 2 seed in Class A, will play No. 1 seed Ouachita Christian of Monroe.

The only other North Louisiana team still playing football is Neville (Monroe), the No. 1 seed in Class 4A. The Tigers play No. 2 seed Edna Karr in the Superdome.

The bottom line: Nobody seeded lower than No. 2 is going to the Dome in any class. So, there will be no big surprises, regardless of what happens.

I don't recall another year in which no team seeded lower than No. 2 made it to the Superdome.

The Louisiana High School Athletic Association moved championship games to the Superdome in 1981. Before that, championship games were played on the home field of one of the finalists.

When Haughton won the Class 3A championship in 1977 (when it was the second highest class), the Bucs beat Vandebilt Catholic 21-0 at Houma in their final game. When Haughton reached the finals again a year later, the Bucs dropped a 12-7 decision to Lutcher fat Haughton. Linebacker Bobby Stroger, who later played at Texas A&M, was an All-State linebacker on both of those teams. Defensive end David Grappe was selected Outstanding Defensive Player on the 1977 All-State team. Other Haughton players on the 1977 All-State team were offensive guard David Pope and defensive back Everett Williams, who also made the 1978 All-State team.

Both the 1977 Haughton state champions and the 1978 runnersup were coached by Bobby Ray McHalfey.

The last Bossier Parish school that won a state football championship before the 1977 Haughton Bucs was was the 1967 Airline Vikings, who upset Holy Cross (New Orleans) 20-7 for the Class 3A title (then the top class) at Shreveport's State Fair Stadium, which is now Independence Stadium.

Halfback Eric Kilpatrick was the only All-Stater on that Airline team, coached by Jack Gray. Holy Cross had seven All-Staters. John Kalbacher of Holy Cross was selected Coach of the Year by the Louisiana Sports Writers' Association, but that was done a week before the championship game. If we had voted after the game, I suspect that Gray would've won that award in a breeze.

Neville football coach Charlie Brown was the subject of a recent story in the New York Times, written by Jere Longman. Much of the story centers around the 1972 state playoffs, when Brown's Neville team had to play three games in eight days — scoring shutout wins in all three games.

It started when Neville and Brother Martin battled to a scoreless tie in a semifinal playoff game. Both teams had nine first downs and one penetration of the opponents' 20-yard line, which were the only tie-breaking criteria the Louisiana High School Athletic Association had.

The referee made a call to LHSAA commissioner Frank Spruiell, who suggested a coin flip. But the coaches wouldn't agree to that. The final solution was to re-schedule the game the following Tuesday night at Alexandria. Neville won the rematch, 8-0, and three days later the Tigers won the championship with a 6-0 victory over Airline on a rain-soaked Neville field that rendered

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Airline's offense (built around the passing of Viking quarterback Steve Haynes) ineffective. The story might've had a different ending if they had played that game in the Dome.

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