

The Northeast Football Conference

ASA - Lackawanna - Monroe

Aug. 28, 2017- The 21st Northeast Football Conference season opens Saturday with all three members in action.

This week: Lackawanna, the two-time defending conference champion, finds itself ranked fifth in the NJCAA preseason poll. The Falcons play Gattaca at 7 p.m. Saturday in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

ASA hosts the New Jersey Warriors at 1 p.m. while Monroe is at Hocking for a noon kickoff.

Rankings: Lackawanna's appearance in the poll now means a NEFC team has been ranked in the last 177 NJCAA polls. The streak dates to Oct. 21, 2003. A NEFC team has been ranked 344 times since the start of the 2002 season.

The Falcons' ranking matches the highest by a NEFC member. Nassau was No. 5 in 2015. Overall, Lackawanna's highest ranking was No. 4, Sept. 20 and Sept. 27, 2016.

Other rankings: Lackawanna and ASA are both in the top 10 of JCgridiron.com's Dirty 30 preseason rankings. Lackawanna is seventh while the Avengers are 10th.

Duda notes: Lackawanna head coach Mark Duda ranks second among active coaches with 159 wins. The win total ranks 15th all-time.

Duda's 67.7 percent winning percentage ranks eighth among active coaches and 32nd all-time.

Duda was named the American Football Network's JUCO Coach of the Year in 2016.

NJCAA notes: ASA and Lackawanna are No. 15 and 16, respectively, in the NJCAA's final ranking for the 2010 decade. The compilation is based off points awarded for ranking in the final poll.

In 2016, Lackawanna won its sixth conference title overall.

Top players: The Northeast Football Conference had five individuals listed in 247sports.com's Aug. 27 report of the nation's top 50 junior college recruits. They are:

- No. 6, Badara Traore, 6-8, 315, OT, ASA;
- No. 15, TJ Bradley, 6-8, 290, OT, Lackawanna;
- No. 19, Thomas Lopez, 6-5, 280, OT, ASA;
- No. 36, Chase Brown, 6-5, 315, OT, Lackawanna; and
- No. 50, Malik Besseck 6-5, 280, OT, ASA

Tart-Spencer, Bradley, Brown, Lopez, Traore and Monroe linebacker Fokam Parfait were listed among ESPN's top 2017 junior college recruits.

Moving on: The past three Lackawanna quarterbacks look to be the starting quarterbacks at their new schools. David Pindell, the 2016 NEFC Offensive Player of the Year, will be starting at the University of Connecticut. Andrew Ford, a first-team all-NEFC selection in 2015, will start for the University of Massachusetts; and Faustino Saucedo, a third-team all-conference pick in 2014, is in the running for the starting position at Pace.

In addition, Bryan Schor, who attended Lackawanna in 2013-14, will lead James Madison University, the reigning NCAA FCS National Champions.

NFL Draft recap: The Philadelphia Eagles selected cornerback Rasul Douglas with the 99th pick. Douglas, who finished tied for the FBS lead in interceptions in 2016 while playing at West Virginia, was the 2014 Northeast Football Conference Defensive Player of the Year while playing for Nassau. Douglas was a first-team NJCAA All-America in 2014.

Former ASA running back Joe Williams (University of Utah) was the 121st overall selection by the San Francisco 49ers and former Lackawanna offensive lineman Jermaine Eluemunor (Texas A&M) was the 159th pick, joining former Lackawanna stars Jarrel Broxton and Lorenzo Taliaferro at Baltimore. Williams was a first-team All-NEFC choice in 2014 and a second-team NJCAA All-America that year. Eluemunor was a second-team All-NEFC selection in 2013.

Team notes: Lackawanna led the nation in 2016 in rushing defense, allowing only 33.5 yards per game. Falcons' linebacker Shane Shuback's six fumble recoveries also led the nation last season.

Misc.: The NEFC has had a member appear in 19 bowl games since 1997, including three teams in 2012 ... The NEFC has had 14 individuals, including two in 2015, chosen as NJCAA Player of the Week since the start of the 2011 season. The conference had four players chosen in 2012 and three in both the 2013 and 2014 campaigns.

Next week: Every NEFC member hits the road, starting with Monroe at Nassau Sept. 8. Lackawanna is at Hudson Valley Sept. 9 while ASA plays at Wagner JV Sept. 10.