

Poland gets into Div. III playoffs

The Bulldogs thought their season was over after a loss to Canfield Friday.

VINDICATOR STAFF REPORT

Last Friday night Poland High football coach Mark Brungard was really down in the dumps.

His Bulldogs had just suffered a disappointing 28-10 loss to Metro Athletic Conference rival Canfield and Brungard thought the season was over for his seniors.

Then Saturday several teams who were pushing the Bulldogs for a Division III playoff berth lost and all of a sudden the Bulldogs were back in the playoffs for the first time since 2002.

"It's just great," said Brungard. "I'm so happy for our seniors because they get to play again and I really thought the season was over after Friday's loss."

"This has been our goal all year long, then especially after the league race didn't go like we expected it to," he said. "I'm really excited about the chance we received."

The Bulldogs (7-3) captured the No. 8 seed in Region 11 of Division III and will play the region's No. 1 seed and No. 1-ranked team in the Associated Press poll, Canal Fulton Northwest (10-0), in a 7:30 p.m. matchup in Canal Fulton.

"They were the number one team in the state so they must be a pretty good team," Brungard said. "We know they have a talented offensive line and a great skill quarterback who loves to both run and pass. Really, from what we've seen they are a lot like the top half teams in the Metro Athletic Conference.

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They would compete very well in our league."

The Bulldogs are one of 15 area teams that qualified for the postseason.

They will be joined in Div. III by Lakeview and Hubbard (who are in Region 9) and West Branch (Region 11). The Bulldogs, champions of the Trumbull Athletic Conference, trav-

els to Aurora, while Hubbard visits Rocky River Friday night. West Branch, which lost to Northwest 38-22 in week 8, plays host to New Concord John Glenn.

Four teams also qualified in Div. VI; McDonald will play Warren JFK, likely at Mollenkopf Stadium, Saturday night at 7. Columbiana will visit Mogadore and Leetonia must make a 3 1/2-4-hour trip to western Ohio to face unbeaten Bascom Hopewell-Loudon.

Also Friday night, Howland (10-0), champion of the Metro Athletic Conference, plays host to Madison

(7-3), while Canfield (9-1) plays host to Columbus Marion-Franklin.

In Div. V Friday night, Ursuline will play host to Bedford Chancel, probably at Stambaugh Stadium, while South Range plays host to Kirtland. Also in Div. V, Mathews, a first-time playoff qualifier, visits Gates Mills Gilmour Academy Saturday afternoon.

Also on Saturday, Boardman travels to Euclid and Mooney plays host to Coshocton, probably at Stambaugh Stadium.

Any changes and official sites will be announced today or Tuesday.