

Quick draw: Chiefs, Wildcats to clash in playoff opener

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BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Canton head [football coach](#) Tim Baechler, half jokingly Monday, said he'd take his team all the way to Alpena if it meant the MHSAA had a more-equitable way of doling out first-round [playoff](#) seedings.

But Baechler and his 7-2 Chiefs found out during the "Selection Sunday" program on [Fox Sports](#) Detroit that they will meet a familiar foe — cross-campus rival Plymouth, the defending Division 1 finalists and owner of an 8-1 record.

[Kickoff](#) will be 7 p.m. Friday at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park. Both teams believe they can go deep into the postseason, but because of the draw that march ends after just one game for either the Chiefs or Wildcats.

"We didn't expect it," Baechler said. "You trust that the state does things geographically like they say. (Livonia) Churchill's 10 minutes from Canton and Plymouth and they're not in our district.

"And the one that really makes you scratch your head is Brighton and Ann Arbor Pioneer, down south with Monroe and Temperance Bedford."

The uber-competitive early matchups mean teams that potentially could make it to Ford Field for the D1 final will be on the sidelines before the regional championship.

"Normally it's that regional championship, that third round playoff game is where the rubber hits the road," Baechler continued.

Meanwhile, he added that it is pretty much a given that Canton and Plymouth will always be in the same district, "so whether you play Week 1 or Week 2, it is what it is."

Plymouth head coach Mike Sawchuk could not be reached for comment.

Both PCEP teams are in Region 2-District 2, along with two 8-1 teams, [Northville](#) and Novi-Detroit Catholic Central. All four teams are ranked in the Top 10.

In Region 2-District 1, teams are Brighton (8-1), Monroe (7-2), Ann Arbor Pioneer (7-2) and Temperance Bedford (6-3).

“Brighton and Pioneer are probably pretty happy with the draw,” Baechler stressed. “I know there’s a big faction of coaches trying to get it — even if it’s in a 50-mile radius — seeded in a bigger realm. You want the best teams playing later on.”

PAYBACK TIME?

Regardless, Baechler said his guys are looking forward to another meeting with Plymouth.

“They’re excited,” Baechler said. “I got a lot of tweets last night” following the selection show.

The Chiefs probably will be looking for some payback from the Wildcats.

In the 2010 playoffs, Plymouth handed the Chiefs their only loss of the entire season in the district finals.

This season, on Oct. 7, Canton let a late 30-21 lead get away as the Wildcats rallied in the final minute for a 31-30 victory.

“It’s basically blocking and tackling better than we did in Week 7,” said Baechler, about the task at hand for his team. “They (Wildcats) are a great team. Both teams played good enough to win.

“I felt we had it in that last minute, but they made three plays in the last minute and we didn’t. All we can do is learn from it.”

tsmith@hometownlife.com | (734) 718-5306