The Game

It's football season in Columbus, Ohio, so when most people mention **"The Game"** at this time of year, they are often referring to the annual fall football match-up between The Ohio State University Buckeyes and the University of Michigan Wolverines. However, in the realm of high school football, **"The Game"** stands for the rivalry that has developed over the years between the Bishop Watterson Eagles and the Stallions of St. Francis DeSales. This annual meeting is an intense high school football contest between two of Columbus's parochial powerhouses where these neighborhood schools, located a mere 2.8 miles apart, battle it out each year on the gridiron.

It wasn't always the rivalry that it is today, though. As everyone knows, to have a rivalry both teams have to win, the games have to be intense, and there also has to be a lot of emotion and passion behind both teams. For the first 15 years -- from 1963 through 1977 -- Watterson won 13 games while only losing 1 – one game ended in a tie; conversely, from 1978 through 2025 the Eagles and Stallions have played 56 times with Watterson winning 27 times and DeSales 29 times. So, I guess you could say the rivalry really had its inception in 1978 and 1979 when DeSales won back to back games and brought not only the intensity, but also the emotion and passion to ignite the rivalry.

The teams have played a total of 71 games from 1963 through 2025 with Watterson holding a 10 game advantage – 40 wins versus 30 losses and 1 tie – the 10 game lead, therefore, is the result of those early games played during the first 15 years. The schools have met twice in the same season seven times as qualifiers for the state playoffs with Watterson winning five of those contests. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 affected all the Ohio high school football schedules, therefore, Watterson and DeSales played twice in the regular season – both games going into overtime to determine the winner – DeSales won the first overtime game 28 to 22 while Watterson won the second game in double overtime 35 to 34.

Watterson has had two 9 game winning streaks during this 63 year span while the most consecutive wins that DeSales has been able to put together is two 5 game winning streaks. However, since 2007, DeSales has won 15 of the 23 games played.

Watterson has scored 1,305 points [a 18.4 point per game average] while DeSales has scored 977 points [a 13.8 point per game average]. Watterson's biggest margin of victory was in 1966, a 52 to 0 blowout while, in 1994, DeSales crushed the Eagles 41 to 6. That 35 point margin of victory for the Stallions being the only regular season loss for Watterson that year – the Eagles had a total of 83 points scored on them in 1994 during the regular season with the 41 points that DeSales scored accounting for almost half scored against the Eagles.

DeSales has posted 3 shutouts over the years [1982, 1990 & 1995] while Watterson has shut out the Stallions 9 times [1966, 1970, 1972, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1984, 1989 & 2004] – 35 games have been decided by 7 points or less.

Both schools are rich in tradition and the respect that each team has for the other is evident in the way the games are played – hard hitting but clean. Here's to another intense and passionate game for the Eagles and the Stallions!

Oh, and Go Eagles!

Francis Doyle

Mr. Bishop Watterson Football
BWHS Class of 1962

YEARS	WHS	SFD	TIE
1963 to 1969	**5**	**1**	**1**
1970 to 1979	**8**	**2**	**0**
1980 to 1989	**6**	**4**	**0**
1990 to 1999	**4**	**7**	**0**
2000 to 2009	**9**	**6**	**0**
2010 to 2019	**4**	**7**	**0**
2020 to 2029	**4**	**3**	**0**
TOTAL	**40**	**30**	**1**