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For Immediate release

Pride and Pizza on the Line as Belleville Mayor Melham Accepts Friendly Football Bet With Nutley Mayor Tucci

BELLEVILLE, NJ – Nov. 23, 2020 – There will be a lot more than neighborhood bragging rights on the line when the Belleville High School Buccaneers renew their football feud with the Nutley Raiders on Saturday.

At stake will be the Mayor's Cup, a towering trophy that goes to the winner of the longtime rivalry.

And although the game has been in recent years played on Thanksgiving Day, the mayors don't have turkey in mind.

This year, Belleville Mayor Michael Melham and Nutley Mayor Mauro Tucci are gobbling over a friendly side wager, with the mayor of the losing football team buying pizza for the winning mayor.

"I accept Mayor Tucci's challenge, with the losing mayor catering the next council or commission meeting with the winning mayor's choice of pizza," Melham explained. "While we prefer Belleville's own Palermo pie from La Sicilia, Algieri's, Gino's, 3 Guys or Brix, we'll accept a few pies from Ralph's in Nutley, if we must."

This will be the 77th meeting between Belleville and its neighbor to the north. Since the 1980s, many clashes have been held on Thanksgiving Day.

The advent of expanded state playoffs over the past 20 years has brought several longtime Thanksgiving Day rivalry games to an end.

Nutley was victorious the last time the teams met on the holiday, beating Belleville, 49-14, in 2011.

Nutley also won the most recent meeting, in 2018. Belleville wants a healthy heaping of revenge, hold the anchovies.

Kickoff for Saturday's game will be at 1 p.m. at The Oval in Nutley.

“As a reminder to Mayor Tucci, our meetings start at 6 p.m. sharp,” Melham said. “No worries, we will have our own beverages.”

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