

Akron Beacon Journal

10 things fans need to know about the 2025 Ohio high school football season

[Brad Bournival](#) Akron Beacon Journal

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The [2024 Greater Akron high school football season](#) ended nine months ago and we're still catching our collective breath.

Here's a hint for you: 2025 could be even better.

With that in mind, here are 10 things to watch this fall:

1. No one is ducking opponents in Week 1

Forget getting your feet wet — Aug. 22 is full of super soakers. Perennial playoff contender Green brings in Division IV state champion Indian Valley, Division II regional finalist [Walsh Jesuit travels to D-III state runner-up Toledo Central Catholic](#), D-II state semifinalist [Hoban welcomes D-V regional semifinalist Canal Winchester Harvest Prep](#), D-II regional quarterfinalist Austintown-Fitch travels to D-II regional semifinalist Hudson and D-II regional finalist Highland goes to Pennsylvania to play McDowell, which has won seven consecutive District 10 6A titles.

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2. Hoban is poised for Week 14 at the very least

We'll start with Ohio State commit Sam Greer, USC pledge Elbert Hill, Louisville commit Payton Cook and Colorado State recruit Ace Brown and then tell you 14 of 22 starters have Division I scholarship offers. Still not enough? The backfield of Jance Henry and Brayton Feister account for 2,882 yards rushing, 39 touchdowns and 41 college offers. Throw in 2,400-yard, 24-touchdown quarterback Nick Kinsey and it's [Knight time](#) all the time in Akron.

3. Greater Akron keeps running, running and running, running

The top 10 returning area running backs last season ran for 7½ miles and 172 touchdowns. We'll save you the math — 10 backs ran for 12,867 yards and scored 1,032 points on the ground in 2024.

The scary thing is Highland's [Casey Myser](#) (2,130 yards, 39 TDs), Hoban's [Brayton Feister](#) (2,194, 26) and Jance Henry (688, 13), Manchester's [Phil Partin](#) (1,961, 32), Wadsworth's [Cooper Gray](#) (1,673, 21) and Gavin Madigan (764 yards, 11), CVCA's Joey Kopec (1,072 yards, 10 TD), Hudson's Reno Ferri (880, 11) and Walsh Jesuit's Marty Tobin (947 yards, nine) and Carlos Smith (558, eight) could all have bigger seasons in 2025.

4. Less means more in the playoffs

The OHSAA took a step in the right direction when it trimmed the fat off the playoffs and made each region a [12-team bracket instead of 16](#). Although the season is still 16 weeks, a 78-7 win by Cincinnati Anderson over Edgewood in Week 11 should be a thing of the past.

5. Who has the best region in the area?

This is always a hot topic.

Division II, Region 5 includes Walsh Jesuit (13-1), Hoban (12-3), Nordonia (10-3) and Austintown-Fitch (9-4) in its top four.

Division II, Region 6 boasts Avon (16-0, state champion), Highland (13-1), Whitehouse Anthony Wayne (12-1) and Wadsworth (11-2) from 2024.

Division III, Region 9 has Youngstown Ursuline (13-2), Gilmour Academy (12-2), CVCA (10-3) and Aurora (11-2) at the top.

Division IV, Region 13 brings Lake Catholic (12-1), Perry (12-2), Streetsboro (12-1) and West Branch (11-1) in its top four and leaves out Glenville (11-4).

6. CVCA's new league is an interesting group

The Royals are out of the Principals Athletic Conference, where they were league champs in 2008, 2011 and 2022. They've joined the North Coast Conference, which includes Lake Catholic (12-1), Padua (8-6), Elyria Catholic (3-7), Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin and Holy Name (3-7). Benedictine (10-3) joins the league in 2027 in football.

7. Walsh Jesuit's passing offense could be the talk this season

The Warriors are more than just Iowa State commit Milan Parris (597 yards receiving, nine TDs). Cambell Lann steps onto the field with offers from Kent State and Toledo and Ohio University commit James Brewer

runs a 4.46 40-yard dash. Add it up and there's speed to burn on Wyoga Lake Road with David Ternosky (1,253 yards passing, 22 TDs on junior varsity last season) at quarterback.

8. You didn't get your quarterback from last season? Try these

Mr. Football finalist [Keller Moten](#) is gone at Walsh, All-Ohioans Gabriel Mansel and [Ben Chesser](#) are gone at Copley and Nordononia and record holder [Dylan Borla](#) has graduated from Highland. But the new group could be phenomenal by year's end.

That's especially true for [Nick Kinsey](#) at Hoban, [Steven Fakult](#) at Nordononia, Trey Kersten at Norton, Arthur Thomas at Buchtel, [Grady Gibb](#) at Highland and David Ternosky at Walsh. Don't be surprised if Hayden Lipinski is making headlines at Hudson as well.

9. Panther Pride is back in full swing in New Franklin

[Manchester](#) was the talk of the town last season when it turned around a 1-9 season in 2023 and went 11-2 in 2024. Expect more of the same with All-Ohioans Phil Partin, Gavin Gindlesperger and Merrik Baker back. Add Jake Livingston and Northwest quarterback transfer Tyler Pappas and the PAC-7 runs through the reigning champion Panthers once again.

10. Wadsworth is ready to roll

We already talked to you about All-Ohioans Cooper Gray and Gavin Madigan. We're far from done. Air Force pledge and hybrid linebacker Calix Lemp (41 receptions, 722 yards, 11 TDs) and linebacker Jacob Earnest (112 tackles, 4½ for loss) put some sauce on this fiery team. Add sophomore quarterback Brysen Hall (142-of-245 passing, 2,118 yards, 22 TDs) and [the Grizzlies](#) are ready to defend their Suburban League National

Conference crown.

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