

FOOTBALL

Wadsworth football vs. Highland High School. Hornets rally to stun Grizzlies



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Key Points

Highland stormed back to hand Wadsworth its first loss in a key Suburban League National Conference game.

Highland rallied from a 28-10 fourth-quarter deficit to beat Wadsworth.

MEDINA — Sophomore Colton Wadle threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to senior Jake Weber as time expired to lift host [Highland](#) (8-1, 6-0) to a win over [Wadsworth](#) (8-1, 5-1) in the rain in [Week 9](#) of the [2026 high school football season](#).

"I just knew we wanted to take a shot and knew he was the man to get it done," Wadle said.

The [Hornets](#) clinched at least a share of the Suburban League National Conference championship, moved to No. 1 in the Division II, Region 5 computer rankings, clinched a top-four seed in the playoffs that comes with a bye and a home game and snapped the [Grizzlies'](#) 18-game regular-season win streak.

Wadsworth fell to No. 5 in Division II, Region 5 behind Highland, Walsh Jesuit, Nordonía and Mayfield. The Grizzlies have clinched a top-eight playoff spot and could earn a top-four seed with a Week 10 win. Highland is at Hudson next week and Wadsworth hosts Nordonía.

Wadle's game-winning TD pass to Weber was on a 4th-down play that started with two seconds on the clock. Wadle ran to his right and threw the ball to Weber, who dove to his left and caught the ball in the end zone. The TD set off a wild celebration on the field. Hornets players and coaches celebrated for several minutes with family and friends and then danced together in the locker room to "Just Dance," a song by Lady Gaga and Colby O'Donis that came out in 2008 before most of the players were alive.

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"I have all my faith in Wadle and I have my entire faith in the entire team for that matter," Weber said. "I just knew that he was going to give me a shot and I was just trying to get open to make it happen. After the fact, I don't even know what I was doing. I was running all over the place. I am happy to clinch at least a share in the league."

Wadle and Weber connected on a 27-yard TD pass with 4:28 to go in the first quarter and Jonah Kowza made his first of two PATs. Wadsworth outscored Highland 21-3 in the second quarter as Jude Haller ran for a 3-yard TD, Brysen Hall threw a 21-yard TD pass to Jay'len King and Braydan Todd ran for a 15-yard TD. Kowza made a 27-yard field goal in the second quarter.

Wadsworth led 21-10 at halftime and extended its lead to 28-10 with 5:49 left in the third quarter when Hall threw a 10-yard TD pass to Kolbey Ostervich and Braxton Wagner made his fourth PAT.

"We just kept fighting," Highland coach Mike Gibbons said. "Things didn't go our way early on. We faced a deficit at halftime and really just challenged the guys at halftime like 'Hey, it's pouring rain and Wadsworth, it looks like they are in a 7-on-7 right now. We were able to dial up some pressure, get after the quarterback and forced some huge turnovers there in the second half. Offensively, we made some big plays and were able to

come out with a big win."

Highland seniors Ben Radigan and Evan Foust and sophomore Isaac Demming each recorded an interception in the second half.

"We went into halftime and we were done," said Radigan, who also had two catches for 40 yards. "A big thing that we emphasized was getting turnovers and we came out and we got three of them. That was huge."

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The Hornets scored the final 19 points of the game, all in the fourth quarter, as Wadle ran for two TDs from 1 and 12 yards out and threw the game-winning TD pass to Weber. Demming's interception came with 2:58 remaining and gave Highland the ball on the Wadsworth 40-yard line to set up the final TD.

"The quarterback rolls out and I follow his eyes," Demming said. "The ball comes my way, hands go up, catch the ball and I just run."

Wadle finished 15-of-24 passing for 176 yards, and ran for 72 yards on 13 carries. Weber had eight catches for 106 yards. Anthony DePompei ran for 83 yards on 14 carries, had two catches for 11 yards and completed a 25-yard pass to Weber. Colton Winston ran for 45 yards on 10 carries.

"The keys were teamwork and coming back and working together," said Foust, who also had a catch for 27 yards.

Hall finished 19-of-36 passing for 238 yards, and ran for 72 yards on nine carries. King had eight catches for 113 yards. Kyle Schmeltzer had four catches for 51 yards and Ostervich added three catches for 25 yards. Haller ran for 20 yards on five carries.

"Anytime you can pick that quarterback off three times, that is a huge compliment to the defense and our guys going to attack the ball," Gibbons said. "Colton Wadle, I think people are starting to learn who this kid is. He

is a sophomore. He is 6-foot-5 and 210 pounds. He has got a phenomenal arm. The sky is the limit for him. He is continuing to get better week in and week out. I am proud of his growth and his maturity.

"Our offensive linemen Jacob Cirino, Nolan Farley, Spencer Marquis, Wyatt Sitz and Ethan McCarthy were terrific. Lukas Grillis has been awesome the whole year defensively. He has 15 sacks this year. He was active tonight. Evan Foust, Nathan Capotosto and Jake Weber have also been really good for us."

Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. Follow along for live updates from the Wadsworth vs. Highland matchup:

Highland wins 29-28 over Wadsworth as time expires in the fourth quarter

Highland wins 29-28 over Wadsworth when Colton Wadle throws a 6-yard touchdown pass to Jake Weber as time expires.

Highland has the ball after recording a third interception with 2:58 to go in the fourth quarter

Highland has the ball after recording a third interception with 2:58 to go in the fourth quarter. Isaac Demming with the most recent interception.

Ben Radigan and Evan Foust had the first two interceptions for Highland.

Highland trims Wadsworth's lead to 28-23 with 6:47 to go in the fourth quarter

Highland trims Wadsworth's lead to 28-23 with 6:47 to go in the fourth quarter. Colton Wadle with a 12-yard touchdown run. The Hornets attempt a two-point conversion and the pass is incomplete. The drive included Anthony DePompei's 25-yard pass to Jake Weber, Colton Winston's 16-yard run, Wadle's 16-yard pass to Weber and DePompei's 7-yard run.

Highland trims Wadsworth's lead to 28-17 with 11:50 to go in the fourth quarter

Highland trims Wadsworth's lead to 28-17 with 11:50 to play. Colton Wadle with a 1-yard touchdown run and Jonah Kowza kicks the PAT. The drive included Wadle going 4 of 4 passing for 32 yards. Jake Weber caught all four passes for 32 yards. Wadle also ran for 21 yards on three carries.

Wadsworth leads Highland 28-10 at the end of the third quarter

Wadsworth leads Highland 28-10 at the end of the third quarter. Highland is driving and has the ball on the Wadsworth 1-yard line to start the fourth quarter.

Wadsworth leads Highland 28-10 with 5:49 to go in the third quarter

Wadsworth leads Highland 28-10 with 5:49 to go in the third quarter. Brysen Hall throws a 10-yard touchdown pass to Kolbey Ostervich and Braxton Wagner kicks the PAT. The drive included a Hall 9-yard pass to Jay'len King, a Hall 12-yard pass to Kyle Schmeltzer, a 15-yard pass to Alex Porter and two carries for 16 yards by Hall.

Wadsworth leads Highland 21-10 at halftime

Wadsworth leads Highland 21-10 at halftime.

Wadsworth leads Highland 21-10 with 26 seconds to go in the second quarter

Wadsworth leads Highland 21-10 with 26 seconds to go in the second quarter. Braydan Todd with a 15-yard touchdown run and Braxton Wagner kicks the PAT during a downpour of rain. The drive included Hall running for 8 yards on two carries and completing two passes to Kolbey Ostervich for 15 yards. Todd also had a 5-yard carry.

Wadsworth leads Highland 14-10 with 4:12 to go in the second quarter

Wadsworth leads Highland 14-10 with 4:12 to go in the second quarter. Brysen Hall throws a 21-yard touchdown pass to Jay'len King and Braxton Wagner kicks the PAT during a downpour of rain. The drive included a Hall 10-yard pass to Donny Bettis, a Hall 14-yard pass to Kyle Schmeltzer and a Hall 19-yard run.

Highland leads Wadsworth 10-7 with 6:21 to go in the second quarter

Highland leads Wadsworth 10-7 with 6:21 to go in the second quarter. Jonah Kowza kicks a 27-yard field goal. The drive included a Colton Wadle 36-yard pass to Ben Radigan and a 9-yard run by Wadle.

Wadsworth and Highland tied at 7-7 with 10:58 to go in the second quarter

Wadsworth and Highland tied at 7-7 with 10:58 to go in the second quarter. Jude Haller with a 3-yard touchdown run and Braxton Wagner kicks the PAT. The drive included a 9-yard run by Haller, two passes by Brysen Hall to Jay'len King that covered 17 yards, an 11-yard pass by Hall to Alex Porter and two runs by Hall that accounted for 17 yards.

Highland leads Wadsworth 7-0 at the end of the first quarter

Highland leads Wadsworth 7-0 at the end of the first quarter. Wadsworth is driving and will have the ball on the Highland 24-yard line when the second quarter starts. Brysen Hall, Jude Haller and Jay'len King making plays on the drive for Wadsworth.

Highland leads Wadsworth 7-0 with 4:28 to go in the first quarter

Highland leads Wadsworth 7-0 with 4:28 to go in the first quarter. Colton

Wadle throws a 27-yard touchdown pass to Jake Weber and Jonah Kowza kicks the PAT. The drive included a 27-yard pass from Wadle to Evan Foust and a 7-yard run by Wadle.

What to know about the Wadsworth football team

Undefeated [Wadsworth](#) topped [Hudson 24-22](#) last week. Wadsworth was led by Brysen Hall (26-of-38 passing, 228 yards, two TDs), Kolbey Ostervich (seven catches, 90 yards, two TDs) and Jude Haller (22 carries, 80 yards, TD). Braxton Wagner made a 25-yard field goal and all three of his PATs. Karim Alnajjar and Brandon Dishauzi each recovered a fumble and Brayden Todd recorded an interception.

The win extended Wadsworth's regular-season winning streak to 18 games.

"Offensively, we have been really efficient in the throw game," Wadsworth coach Justin Todd said. "[Junior quarterback] Brysen Hall is completing nearly 70% of his passes. We have a number of guys who catch the ball. Obviously, everything starts with Jay'len King, but the amount of guys who have caught the football in meaningful games this year is more than any I have had in my career. I was just looking at the stats today and I didn't even realize that we have double-digit guys that have caught the football, which is wild. ... We have very versatile players."

Jay'len King, Kolbey Ostervich, Kyle Schmeltzer, Alex Porter, Jude Haller, Braydan Todd, Noah Nixon, Donny Bettis and Reid Close are key receivers. Haller and Todd are also the primary running backs. Aiden Meisterics, Carter Raymond and Anderson Tetzels lead Wadsworth's offensive line. Braydan Todd is Justin Todd's son.

"Defensively, this is probably the most tenacious group that we have had," Justin Todd said. "We are undersized. We are not overly big. Nathan Shipley is our biggest defensive lineman, and he is 270 pounds at nose guard. We have smaller defensive ends that are really tough. We put Carter and Anderson in the game for more of a big package. We are all

underclassmen in the secondary. We have got a sophomore [Bryson Bupp] and a senior [Luke Kinser] starting at linebacker. Luke Kinser has really come on strong. He moved into our district over the summer [from Orrville]. He is playing really high-level football. ... We are very scrappy."

Wadsworth's leading tacklers are Braydan Todd at safety, Haller at safety-linebacker and Kinser at linebacker. Braden Sterpka is the Grizzlies leader in sacks.

"I have been so impressed with how sound they are," Justin Todd said of [Highland](#). "You can tell that they are clearly well coached. They do a great job program-wide with their system. They are really sound in what they do. It is fun to watch. If you are a football purist, you like watching them because they don't make mistakes."

What to know about the Highland football team

Highland beat Solon 51-7 last week for its seventh win in a row. Anthony DePompei ran for two TDs and Colton Winston, Evan Foust and Joey Oriti added scores on the ground. Jake Weber had a punt return for a touchdown, Ben Radigan added a pick six and Jonah Kowza booted a 32-yard field goal.

"We continue to get better every single week," Highland coach Mike Gibbons said. "That is always positive to see. Obviously, we have a huge test with Wadsworth this week. They are a very well-coached team and they play hard. I think this is going to be a great game. I am happy with the progress we have made.

"... Offensively, we have been able to spread the ball around to a lot of different guys. Unfortunately, our senior quarterback [Johnny Prucha] got hurt in the Strongsville game in Week 2. Then we had sophomore Colton Wadle come in. He is 6-foot-5 and 210 pounds. He has got a 77% completion percentage and he has thrown for over 1,000 yards in about six games that he has really played. That jumps out at you right away."

Highland's offense also features linemen Spencer Marquis and Wyatt Sitz, running backs Evan Foust, Colton Winston and Levi Clark and receivers Jake Weber, Anthony DePompei and Ben Radigan.

"Evan Foust led the team in tackles as a sophomore and junior, and then again as a senior right now," Gibbons said. "The kid is all over the place. He is a tremendous linebacker. He is the heartbeat of our team this year. Jake Weber at corner is doing an excellent job for us. Lukas Grillis at defensive end, he has got 15 sacks this season. He is playing at a very, very high level. Nathan Capotosto at will linebacker and Nate Painter at rover/safety are also playing really well. Jonah Kowza is awesome. Jonah is rated as one of the top kickers in the state of Ohio and in the country. I have never had a kicker like this. He is good from all over the place."

Wadsworth football's returning lettermen (24)

Donny Bettis, WR-DB, 6-2, 180, Sr.

Reid Close, WR-DB, 6-1, 180, Jr.

Nicholas Dean, OL-DL, 6-0, 260, Sr.

Brandon Dishauzi, WR-DB, 5-11, 180, Jr.

Crew Eddy, TE-LB, 6-2, 215, Jr.

Joshua Garcia, OL, 6-2, 295, So.

Carson Glass, OL-DL, 6-0, 215, Jr.

Brysen Hall, QB, 6-1, 205, Jr.

Jude Haller, RB-LB, 6-0, 215, Jr.

Jay'len King, WR-DB, 6-2, 190, Jr.

PJ Megyes, RB-LB, 5-10, 180, Jr.

Aiden Meisterics, OL-DL, 6-0, 225, Sr.

Adam Neville, DB, 6-0, 175, Jr.

Landyn Provance, LB, 6-3, 215, Jr.

Carter Raymond, OL-DL, 6-1, 225, Sr.

Noah Ries, RB-LB, 5-10, 185, Jr.

Kyle Schmeltzer, WR-DB, 5-10, 165, Sr.

Nathan Shipley, OL-DL, 6-0, 275, Sr.

Braden Sterpka, TE-LB, 6-2, 180, Jr.
Anderson Tetzell, OL-DL, 6-3, 275, Sr.
DJ Thompson, DB, 5-11, 170, Jr.
Augustus Titus, OL-DL, 6-2, 215, Sr.
Braydan Todd, WR-DB, 6-0, 185, Jr.
Cole Wilson, TE-DL, 6-2, 215, Jr.

Highland football's returning lettermen (14)

Nathan Capotosto, DE-TE, 6-2, 215, Jr.
Anthony Depompei, WR-DB, 5-9, 165, Sr.
Evan Foust, LB-TE-RB, 6-0, 215, Sr.
Lukas Grillis, DE-TE, 6-2, 225, Jr.
Ryan Haney, LB, 5-10, 185, Sr.
Frankie Iannaggi, WR-DB, 5-9, 165, Sr.
Jonah Kowza, K, 6-1, 185, Sr.
Spencer Marquis, OL-DL, 6-1, 245, Sr.
Ethan McCarthy, OT-DE, 6-1, 230, Sr.
Johnny Prucha, QB, 6-1, 185, Sr.
Ben Radigan, WR-DB, 6-0, 185, Sr.
Wyatt Sitz, OL-DL, 5-11, 265, Sr.
Jake Weber, WR-DB, 5-10, 165, Sr.
Colton Winston, RB-LB, 5-10, 185, Sr.

Wadsworth impact players

Power Four recruit Brysen Hall returns for his junior season as a three-year starter at quarterback. Last season, he was [first-team Division II All-Ohio](#) after he completed 139 of 215 passes for 2,490 yards and 29 touchdowns with just four interceptions. The standout has offers from Pittsburgh, Kent State, Toledo, Miami (Ohio), UConn, USF, Buffalo and Syracuse. ... Calix Lemp (46 receptions, 999 yards, 15 TDs) is catching passes at Air Force but the Grizzlies have a burner in Jay'len King. Add Kyle Schmeltzer, Donny Bettis and Kolbey Ostervich to the mix and the

passing attack is amazing. "I think we've got big bodies that are possession based," Todd said. "We've got shifty dudes on the inside that are a matchup nightmare. In the pass game, we present more problems than we have since 2017." ... That 2017 team was led by Mr. Football Joey Baughman, who rushed 154 times for 1,533 yards and 20 touchdowns and was 219-for-326 passing (.672) for 3,060 yards, 36 touchdowns and three interceptions through the air in 12 games.

Highland impact players

It's a three-headed monster between tight end/H-back/linebacker Evan Foust, lineman Spencer Marquis and kicker Johnah Kowza. ... Foust returns was the Suburban League American Conference Co-Defensive Player of the Year and Division II second-team all-state in 2025. He led the team in tackles (73), tackles for loss (14) and forced fumbles (five). At H-back, he caught 14 passes for 255 yards and four touchdowns. ... Marquis powered an offense that averaged 238.8 yards on the ground. ... Kowza is the secret weapon at kicker. ... Of his four field goals, the SL Specialist of the Year had two of more than 40 yards and logged 43 touchbacks on 63 kickoffs. Kowza is a five-star recruit who is ranked fifth in the nation and No. 1 in Ohio.

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