

Akron-area OHSAA playoffs breakdowns, predictions in Ohio high school football

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It's [the second round of the OHSAA state playoffs](#) for Ohio [high school football](#), and the competition is only going to get more intense as we go forward.

Thirteen [Greater Akron](#) teams are in action this week, with all games set to kick off at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7.

Keep reading to see who the Beacon Journal staff thinks will prevail in regional quarterfinal games Friday night.

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Friday's OHSAA football playoff predictions, breakdowns

Division II, Region 5

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No. 9 Boardman (6-5) at No. 1 [Hoban](#) (8-1)

What to know: Hoban is in the playoffs for the 11th year in a row and 21st time overall. Hoban won Division III state championships in 2015 and 2016 and Division II state championships in 2017, 2018 and 2020. The Knights were Division II state runners-up in 2021, 2022, 2023, and also made a Division II state semifinal appearance in 2002 and Division II state semifinals appearances in 2008 and 2024. ... Boardman is in the playoffs for the 14th time overall. The Spartans were state runners-up in 1987 and were state semifinalists in 1995. ... Payton Cook is expected to start once again at QB with [Eastern Michigan](#) recruit Nick Kinsey and Israel "Major" Cribbs dealing with injuries. Cook, a

Louisville recruit as a WR, is 8-of-12 passing for 103 yards and a touchdown. Cook also has 18 catches for 248 yards and two TDs, and has run for 57 yards and a TD on 14 carries. ... RB-LB Brayton Feister has run for 795 yards and 13 touchdowns on 92 carries, and has 96 tackles (32 for loss), nine sacks, two defensive TDs, two interceptions and four forced fumbles. ... Hoban also features OL Sam Greer (Ohio State recruit), DB-WR-KR-PR Elbert "Rock" Hill IV (USC recruit), DL Ace Brown (Colorado State recruit), WR-DBs Jackson Callaway and John Johnson, RB Jance Henry, LBs Patrick Kinsell and Brydon Feister, DBs Kahlil Diming and Jaiden Daniels, DL Devanaire Riley and K Jeremy Hammel. ... Hill has 37 tackles (five for loss), nine interceptions, 32 pass break ups, one blocked punt, two kickoff return TDs and one punt return TD. ... Henry has run for 753 yards and six TDs on 110 carries. ... Callaway has 16 catches for 277 yards and two TDs. ... Kinsell has 51 tackles (20 for loss), 10 sacks and two forced fumbles. ... Brydon Feister has 86 tackles (19 for loss), four sacks and an interception. ... Brown has 38 tackles (19 for loss), nine sacks and recovered three fumbles. ... Diming has 46 tackles, two sacks, an interception and 22 pass breakups. ... Daniels has 18 tackles, three interceptions and 20 pass break ups. ... Riley has 33 tackles, eight sacks, forced two fumbles and recovered two fumbles. ... Hammel has made 33 of 34 PATs and 9 of 13 field goals. ... Boardman's top players are QB-S Vincent Butto, RB-LB Ryan Smith, FB-LB Frank Butto, RB/WR Alex Battaglia, RB-KR Ryan Mitchell, LB Victor DiMargio, DL Abdel Abueenaj, DB Ray Vodhanel, DB-KR Jerry Smith, S-PR Aiden Moore, DLs Khaled Mohammed, James Mitchell and Brandon Shaw and K Oswaldo Salinas. ... Vincent Butto has run for 952 yards and 14 TDs on 176 carries, and completed 43 of 93 passes for 58 yards with eight TDs and five INTs. ... Smith has run for 573 yards and seven TDs on 116 carries. ... Mitchell has run for 393 yards and two TDs on 67 carries. ... Frank Butto has two rushing TDs and two receiving TDs. ... Salinas has made 33 PATs and two FGs.

Who will win: Hoban 35-17

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 5 Hudson or No. 4 Lake

No. 5 Hudson (9-2) at No. 4 Lake (7-3)

What to watch: These two teams are familiar with each other, having scrimmaged each of the last four seasons. The last time they faced each other in a game that counted, Hudson beat visiting Lake 48-10 in Week 2 of the 2014 season. The Explorers own a 5-1 advantage on Lake in the all-time series. ... Lake lost three of its last four regular-season games — by a combined 13 points — after a 6-0 start. Each of the Blue Streaks' last five games have been decided by a single score. ... They'll have Ty DeGeorge, who is another week stronger and healthier after a Round 1 bye. After missing six weeks because of a

broken ankle, the versatile junior returned in a Week 10 overtime loss at Green. He rushed for nine yards on four carries, caught one pass for two yards, returned two kickoffs for 42 yards and made three tackles. DeGeorge scored nine touchdowns and threw for one in Lake's first two games of the season before going down early in Week 3. ... Hudson's two losses came to undefeated teams Highland (32-0 in Week 2) and Wadsworth (35-17 in Week 7). The Explorers have posted six shutouts this season, including one last week in a 27-0 Round 1 win vs. Willoughby South. Anthony Paolucci and Kyler Boyle have three interceptions each in Hudson's 3-3 stack defense. ... Lake senior RB Davis Matson is 67 yards from 1,000 rushing for the season. He has a team-high 13 touchdowns overall. Senior QB Alex Quior has passed for 1,651 yards, 14 TDs and seven interceptions while running for another 384 yards and five TDs. Chase Fuller has a team-high five TD receptions and has three interceptions. Cal Pierce and Brady Sommers each have four picks for Lake. ... Senior LBs Grady Widner (78) and Kyle Hammer (73) are Lake's leading tacklers. Senior DE Gavin Salzwimmer is coming off a 14-tackle game in Week 10. Lake lost DL Zach Kutzera, its leader in TFLs with 11, to a season-ending knee injury in Week 10. ... Hudson junior QB Hayden Lipinski has thrown for 1,514 yards, 18 TDs and four interceptions. The Explorers like to spread the ball around, with six different players having at least 115 receiving yards and none having more than 335. The lefty Lipinski threw for two TDs and ran for one last week. Reno Ferri leads the Explorers on the ground with 825 yards at 6.0 a carry and six TDs. Ferri rushed for 112 yards and a TD on 13 carries last week. Chris Horner has nine rushing TDs and 12 TDs overall. ... Lake is a combined 6-3 in its three previous postseasons.

Who will win: Lake 21-20

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 Hoban or No. 9 Boardman

No. 7 Nordonia (8-3) at No. 2 Walsh Jesuit (8-1)

What to know: [Walsh Jesuit](#) is 14-1 in its all-time series against [Nordonia](#), but the two teams haven't met since 1999, when Walsh rolled 35-14 in a first-round playoff game. Nordonia's lone win over Walsh occurred in 1990, when Nordonia prevailed 13-7. ... Last week, Walsh had a Round 1 bye while [Nordonia defeated Twinsburg 27-24](#) to advance to Round 2. ... Walsh's offense is led by junior QB David Ternosky (90-of-150 passing, 1,178 yards, 15 TDs, six interceptions), senior RB Marty Tobin (107 carries, 1,071 yards, 10 TDs) and senior WR [Milan Parris](#) (39 catches, 621 yards, nine TDs). Parris recently flipped his college football commitment from Iowa State to the Miami Hurricanes. Junior DL Dario Jeras (five sacks, 11 tackles for loss), senior LB Caden Carter (two INTs), junior DB Ben Biel (two INTs) and senior DB James "Jay" Brewer III (two INTs) are playmakers for the

Walsh defense. ... Last week, senior RB Connor Whapham rushed 32 times for 200 yards and a TD, and senior Riley Edgehouse made the game-winning 30-yard field goal with 4:24 left in [Nordonia's postseason triumph over Twinsburg](#). In nine games during the regular season, Whapham had 775 yards and nine TDs on 138 carries. Nordonia junior QB Steven Fakult went 7-of-19 passing for 109 yards and one TD and rushed six times for 68 yards and a TD last week after going 172-of-292 passing for 2,768 yards and 25 TDs with four INTs in 10 regular-season games. Last week, Nordonia junior WR Dominick Jackson had three catches for 67 yards, including a 44-yard TD. He compiled 42 receptions for 823 yards and 11 TDs in 10 regular-season games. As a DB, he has a team-high three interceptions and six passes defended.

Who will win: Walsh 28-24

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 11 Green or No. 3 Fitch

No. 11 [Green](#) (6-5) at No. 3 Austintown Fitch (8-1)

What to watch: Green has beaten the No. 4 and No. 6 seeds (Lake and Garfield Heights) in Region 5 the last two weeks. Now the Bulldogs will go after No. 3. They roll into this regional quarterfinal on a five-game winning streak. Fitch has not lost since Week 1, beating Federal League teams Jackson (41-3 in Week 2) and Perry (14-7 in Week 7) along the way. The Falcons haven't allowed more than 14 points since a 28-14 loss to Hudson in the opener. ... Kam Worner and Dario Lombardi had 6.5 tackles as Green limited Garfield Heights to its fewest points of the season last week in a 21-6 win. LB Evan Reed had an interception and 2.5 tackles for loss. ... Fitch is led by the rushing duo of Deon'Dray Richard and Junie Higgs. DeAndre Reed, a 6-foot-4 tight end, caught two TDs in the Falcons' 35-0 win at Warren Harding in Week 10. One of them was from Fitch QB Colin Kalaher and the other was on a fake punt from Brady Evans. Evans, Fitch's all-time leading receiver, caught 11 passes for 106 yards. ... Reed has accumulated more than 1,000 yards from scrimmage this season and has scored 18 touchdowns overall — 11 of them during Green's winning streak. QB Tyson Hunka has thrown 21 TD passes, three of them in last week's win. ... Fitch has won 15 consecutive games against current members of the Federal League, a streak that stretches back to its final season as an actual Federal League member in 2011.

Who will win: Green 17-16

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 2 Walsh Jesuit or No. 7 Nordonia

Division II, Region 6

No. 8 Brecksville (7-4) at No. 1 Highland (10-0)

What to know: This is 15th playoff appearance and sixth consecutive for the Hornets, who reached the state semifinals in 2013. This is the 13th playoff appearance for the Bees, who beat ninth-seeded Oregon Clay 34-14 in Week 11. ... Brecksville has a solid 102.0 yards passing and 161.8 yards rushing per game. ... Nathan Henegar (95-of-184 passing, 1,016 yards passing, 10 TDs) has solid receivers in Carson Zabkar (31 catches, 385 yards, three TDs) and Max Ritter (20 catches, 188 yards, TD). ... Jacob Eterovich (172 carries, 1,158 yards, 17 TDs) is the bell cow for the Bees. Chris Soeder (nine sacks, six tackles for loss), Trevor Johnson (five sacks, five tackles for loss, fumble recovery, forced fumble), Peter Chemonte (four interceptions) and Leonidas Markovic (four interceptions) pace the defense. ... The Hornets get it done on defense, giving up just 5.2 points per game. Dan Miller (10.5 tackles for loss, three fumble recoveries), Evan Foust (12 tackles for loss), Jameson Gordon (9.5 tackles for loss, three sacks) are strong. Nick Dobkowski (five interceptions), Kallen Whitling (three interceptions), Liam Zielinski (three interceptions) and Cooper Zielinski (two interceptions, two fumble recoveries) aid a defense that allows just 239.9 yards per game. ... Casey Myser (110 carries, 958 yards, 19 TDs), Lucas Gerding (22 catches, 380 yards, four TDs) and Dobkowski (13 catches, 304 yards, three TDs) lead the offense. Grady Gibb (72-of-86 passing, 1,289 yards passing, 18 touchdowns, two interceptions) has a near-perfect quarterback rating (148.6 out of 158.3).

Who will win: Highland 49-7

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 4 North Ridgeville (9-1) or No. 5 Whitehouse Wayne (7-4)

No. 7 Toledo St. Francis (7-4) at No. 2 Wadsworth (10-0)

What to know: This is the 19th playoff appearance and second consecutive for the Knights, who were state runners-up in 1982 and won titles in 1984 and 2002. St. Francis beat No. 10 Valley Forge 33-7 in Week 11. This is the 17th playoff appearance and fourth consecutive for the Grizzlies. ... Wadsworth puts up 457.8 yards of offense per game. Gavin Madigan (94 carries, 1,024 yards, 20 TDs), Cooper Gray (112 carries, 1,021, 16 TDs) are leading Medina County in rushing, but the Grizzlies are more than that. Brysen Hall (100-for-155 passing, 2,086 yards, 25 touchdowns, two interceptions) has a 142.1 quarterback rating. ... Jacob Earnest (80 tackles, 9.5 for loss, interception, defensive TD), Madigan (70 tackles) and Jude Haller (67 tackles) lead the defense. ... This is the 19th playoff appearance and second consecutive for the Knights, who were state runners-up in 1982 and won titles in 1984 and 2002. De Sales beat No. 10 Valley Forge 33-7 in Week 11.

This is the 17th playoff appearance and fourth consecutive for the Grizzlies. ... It's hard to ignore Rutgers commit Jermaine Polk (57 tackles, eight sacks, four fumble recoveries, three forced fumbles) and Tyrelle Lawrence (53 tackles, five sacks) in the middle of a de Sales defensive line that has allowed just 16.4 points per game this season. ... If that's not enough, All-Catholic High School League defensive back Noah Edwards (four interceptions, two defensive touchdowns) keeps receivers honest. ... All-league linebacker Demetrius Loggins (75 tackles) stops the run. ... There's a balanced attack on offense with 2024 first-team All-Ohio running back Eli Beal (149 carries, 939 yards, nine TDs; 15 catches, 300 yards, four TDS) and wide receiver Jayden Houston (40 catches, 547 yards, 12 TDs). KJ Collins-Walker (72-for-96 passing, 969 yards passing, 15 TDs) and Brayden Gonzales (42-for-65 passing, 526 yards passing, two TDs) give different looks at quarterback.

Who will win: Wadsworth 42-14

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 3 Avon (9-1) or No. 6 Olmsted Falls (7-4)

Ohio high school football rankings: [Final USA Today Network Ohio Super 25 Poll for 2025](#)

Division III, Region 9

No. 10 Geneva (9-2) at No. 2 CVCA (9-0)

What to know: CVCA comes off the bye week after its first undefeated regular season in school history. The Royals are in the playoffs for the eighth consecutive year, but 2024 was the first time CVCA had multiple playoff wins in a season. ... The Royals running game has been its trademark all season, as CVCA averages better than 300 rushing yards. ... CVCA has a deep running back corps, although Rutgers recruit Joey Kopec has picked up the load later in the season. Kopec ran for 154 yards and three TDs in CVCA's regular-season finale vs. Elyria Catholic. ... Zac Anderson, Tommy Kopec, Wesley Keeler and Reed Jones all can make an impact from the RB spot. ... QB Charley Levak also adds to CVCA's running game, while being efficient in the passing game. Levak's favorite target is Brayden Harris, who has caught nine TD passes. ... It will be strength vs. strength when CVCA's defense faces Geneva's offense. The Royals are allowing only 7.3 points per game, while the Eagles are scoring 46 points per game. ... Geneva is in the playoffs for the fourth straight year. The Eagles ruined the first home playoff game for Alliance last week, routing the Aviators 46-12. ... QB Caden Proy is the catalyst for the Eagles offense. He ran for four TDs in the win over Alliance.

Who will win: CVCA 35-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 3 Hawken or No. 6 Akron East

No. 6 East (9-2) at No. 3 Hawken (8-2)

What to know: East is in the playoffs for the sixth year in a row and eighth time overall. Hawken is in the playoffs for the sixth year in a row and 16th time overall. The Hawks were state runners-up in 1987 and finished as state semifinalists in 1986 and 1993. ... East scored 19 unanswered points in last week's 19-7 playoff win over Cleveland Benedictine at Ellet. ... East QB Marlin Engram Jr. has completed 111 of 193 passes for 1,760 yards with 19 TDs and eight interceptions this season. Engram also has 70 carries for 394 yards and two TDs. ... Lawrence Cherry Jr. is East's top running back with 842 yards and six TDs on 103 carries. Emmanuel Jefferson ran for a TD against Benedictine and is up 47 carries for 460 yards and three TDs. Lavance Bratton scored his first two rushing TDs versus Benedictine and is at 120 yards on 18 carries for the season. ... Terrell Wharton Jr. is East's leading receiver with 24 catches for 541 yards and eight TDs. Jefferson has 25 catches for 450 yards and six TDs, Terrel Karim Jr. has 27 catches for 458 yards and four TDs and Donte Swain Jr. has 28 catches for 378 yards and three TDs. Swain missed last week's game with an injury and could return this week. ... Sean Echols, Nasir West and Marcus Henderson II are three key two-way linemen. ... Wharton and Jefferson both have two interceptions. ... East's leaders defensively are Jon Jeffries, Tarrell Robinson, Cherry, Bratton, Henderson II, Karim and West. ... Jeffries has 70 tackles (10 for loss). ... Robinson has 65 tackles (19 for loss), three sacks, three fumble recoveries, two forced fumbles, two defensive touchdowns and one interception. ... Karim has 15 TFLs and nine sacks. Cherry and Henderson both have 10 TFLs. ... Bratton also has a receiving TD and a defensive TD. ... Hawken's top players are QB-P Donovan Moorhead, RB-LB Kene Obi, WR-DB Charlie Mallett, WR Tommy Wright, WR Mitch Greenberg, OL-DL Brendan Healy, OL-LB Miles Hamilton, OL Zack Mangini, OL Rocco Vitantonio, DL Leroy Scales, LB JP Ours, DB Alex Laschinger and K Joey Skoczen. ... Moorhead, a Jacksonville State recruit, is the son of University of Akron football coach Joe Moorhead. He has completed 272 of 390 passes this season for 3,005 yards with 37 TDs and four interceptions. He also averages 33.9 yards per punt with a long of 55 yards ... Mallett has 104 receptions for 1,161 yards and 16 TDs, and has recorded three interceptions. ... Obi has run for 771 yards and 11 TDs on 130 carries, has 50 catches for 591 yards and four TDs and has eight TFLs. ... Wright also has 50 catches for 486 yards and nine TDs. ... Kevin Oster has three TD catches and Mitch Greenberg has two TD catches and one TD run. ... Skoczen has made 44 of 47 PATs and 5 of 5 field goals with a long of 35 yards. ... Mangini is the son of former NFL coach Eric Mangini, who was coach of the Jets (2006-08) and Browns (2009-10),

and on Bill Belichick's staff when the Patriots won Super Bowls to cap the 2001, 2003 and 2004 seasons.

Who will win: Hawken 28-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 2 CVCA or No. 10 Geneva

Division III, Region 10

No. 5 Rocky River (9-2) at No. 4 Revere (8-2)

What to know: Revere's come-from-behind win over Copley in Week 10 vaulted them into a first-round bye. The Minutemen are in the playoffs for the third consecutive season. ... This will be the first time Revere plays Rocky River. The Pirates are in the playoffs for the sixth consecutive year. Both teams lost in the regional quarterfinals last year. ... Revere has performed well in low-scoring games this season. The Minutemen are scoring 23.2 points per game on offense, while allowing 16.2 points per game. ... Revere will be led by QB Chase Clifford, who went 12-of-24 passing for 149 yards passing, along with 62 yards rushing and a TD vs. Copley. ... RB James Perry has become the Minutemen's workhorse in the second half of the season. Perry ran for 89 yards and two TDs vs. Copley. ... The Pirates offense has been prolific this season, scoring 38.2 points a game. ... However, in its playoff opener against Midview, the Pirates were held to season lows in points (20) and total yards (332). ... RB Marcus McMahon will be a focus for Minutemen defense, as he rushed for 219 yards on 35 carries vs. Midview.

Who will win: Rocky River 24-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 Canfield (9-1) or No. 8 Kenston (7-4)

Division IV, Region 13

No. 5 Norton (10-1) at No. 4 West Branch (9-1)

What to know: This is the seventh playoff appearance and sixth consecutive for the Panthers, who beat No. 12 Edgewood 63-13 in Week 11. This is the 15th playoff appearance and fifth consecutive for the Warriors, who were state champions in 1994. ... The only team that has come close to stopping Norton's high-powered offense is Streetsboro in Week 5, and the Rockets still lost 23-13. ... The Panthers score 53.3 points per game and can do it in a variety of ways. ... Trey Kersten (83-for-125 passing, 1,544 yards passing, 27 TDs) has burners in Buddy Willig (37 catches, 857 yards, 11 TDs), Isaac Hunter (18 catches, 336 yards, seven TDs) and Alex Meinen (18 catches, 251 yards, six TDs). If opponents stop the pass, Jason Beverly (85 carries, 746 yards, 13 TDs) and

Markus Brown (77 carries, 671 yards, seven TDs) get it done. ... Brown (83 tackles, seven for loss), Willig (72 tackles, eight for loss, interception) and Beverly (65 tackles, seven for loss, four sacks, interception, two fumble recoveries, defensive TD) are the stars on the other side of the ball. ... West Branch averages 31.2 points, but defense is where the Warriors excel. West Branch allows 11.2 points per game and has held six opponents to seven points or less. ... Grady Hirst (151-of-230 passing, 2,256 yards passing, 24 TDs) has standouts in Jeremiah Thomas (57 catches, 851 yards, nine TDs) and Gavin Gregory (32 catches, 617 yards, seven TDs). ... The run game is a two-headed monster with Hirst (93 carries, 531 yards, six TDs) and Thomas (64 carries, 350 yards, 12 TDs). ... West Branch's defense is balanced with Zach Coffee (55 tackles, 12 for loss), Lukas Black (55 tackles, seven for loss), Clayton Day (55 tackles, three for loss) and Grady Close (53 tackles) as the stars.

Who will win: Norton 34-28

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 Perry (8-2) or No. 8 Chardon ND-CL (8-3)

Division V, Region 17

No. 7 Manchester (8-3) at No. 2 Girard (10-0)

What to know: Manchester is in the playoffs for the second year in a row and 29th time overall. The Panthers were state runners-up in 1997. ... Girard is making its 16th playoff appearance and ninth in a row. Girard was a state runner-up in 2018. ... Manchester is led by RB-LB Ayden Meade, RB-CB Phil Partin, QB Tyler Pappas, DE-TE Gavin Gindlesperger, WR-LB Jake Livingston, OL-DL Blaze Johnson, , OL-DL Matthew Paljich, OL-DL Tyler Sherman and LB Merrik Baker. ... Meade has run for 1,014 yards and 11 TDs on 143 carries, and has 48 tackles (22 solo, 14.5 for loss), 4.5 sacks and a forced fumble. ... Partin has played the past six games after being sidelined with an injury the first five weeks. Partin has run for 1,019 yards and 10 touchdowns on 105 carries. ... Pappas has completed 105 of 187 passes for 1,668 yards with 20 TDs and eight interceptions. He also has two rushing TDs. ... Gindlesperger has 43.5 tackles (22 solo, 15 for loss), 9.5 sacks and caught two TD passes. ... Livingston has 32 catches for 474 yards and five TDs on offense, and has 61 tackles (29 solo, 6.5 for loss), forced four fumbles, recovered three fumbles, grabbed an interception and scored two TDs on defense. ... Sherman has 60 pancake blocks, Paljich has 53 pancake blocks and Johnson has 52 pancake blocks. ... Baker has 64 tackles (24 solo, 16 for loss), 6.5 sacks and a forced fumble. ... Manchester's other key playmakers are Malachi Cintron (27 catches, 363 yards, six TDs) and Noah Lance (16 catches, 393 yards, two TDs, three interceptions). ... Girard is led by coach Pat Pearson,

and his son, QB-LB-DB AJ Pearson. Girard's other top players are WR-DB Braxton Sloan, RB-DB-KR Jeremiah Hunter, WR-RB Mario Lipinski, WR-DB Joey Alejars, WR-DB Jadon Wade and K Maxwell Erickson.

Who will win: Girard 35-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 3 Poland (8-2) or No. 6 Liberty (9-2)