

## Highland vs. Aurora: Week 10 football preview

Aurora QB Ryan Dwyer (12) passes the ball to Xavier Board (20) against Tallmadge in a Suburban League American Conference game, held at Aurora High School Veterans Stadium, Aurora. Friday, October 4, 2024. (Derek Alvez/special to cleveland.com)

Aurora Lucas Manderbach (1) runs the ball against Tallmadge in a Suburban League American Conference game, held at Aurora High School Veterans Stadium, Aurora. Friday, October 4, 2024. (Derek Alvez/special to cleveland.com)

By [Matt Goul, cleveland.com](#)

AURORA, Ohio — Both Aurora and Highland are rolling into their Suburban League showdown for the American Conference championship.

They meet Friday night at Aurora's Veterans Stadium in a battle of unbeatens.

Highland (9-0, 6-0 Suburban) is [eighth in this week's cleveland.com high school football Top 25](#) and has not given up more than one touchdown in any game since Week 2. Coach Mike Gibbons' Hornets are coming off back-to-back shutouts and have given up just 21 points total in Suburban League play.

No. 11 Aurora (9-0, 6-0) has not been quite as stingy, but close to it. Coach Bob Mihalik's Greenmen enjoyed two shutouts early this season, but have ended every game with a running clock. Highland has eight wins by at least 30 points.

Both cruised last week, spreading around the football. Seven players scored eight touchdowns in Aurora's 53-3 win against Barberton. Mihalik called it a complete team win.

His defense has been led by senior linebacker Tommy Tartabini (62 tackles, 11 tackles for loss), Cole Walton (48 tackles, six TFL) and end Lucas Manderbach (35 tackles, nine TFL, seven sacks).

They will look to slow Highland junior Casey Myser, who rushed for two early touchdowns and 67 yards on just three carries in the Hornets' 56-0 win at Cuyahoga Falls. Myser set the school's single-season record for TDs a week earlier against Revere. He now has 31 total scores, 26 rushing, with 1,347 yards on 140 carries. Senior quarterback Dylan Borla (1,483 yards, 19 TDs to one interception) and receiver Evan Foust (386 yards, three TDs on 19 receptions) have led the pass game for balance. The defense is led by Miami (Ohio) commit Carson Noonan and tackle Ryan Zywiec.

They will look to slow Manderbach (798 yards, 16 TDs) and Xavier Board (634 yards, six TDs) with the Aurora ground game. Senior quarterback Ryan Dwyer has completed 69 percent of his passes for 1,188 yards and 14 TDs to three interceptions.

Both are near locks to maintain home-field advantage for the first two rounds of the playoffs. Highland is second in Division II, Region 6. Aurora is third in Division III, Region 9.

Highland's Evan Foust (R) and Carson Noonan team up to create a fumble as they hit Tallmadge quarterback Ryan Loveless for a turnover in the first half at Tallmadge.

The defense of Highland smothered Tallmadge running back Gino Lagani on a rush in the second half.

A look at more top games to watch this week will follow on Thursday.

**No. 8 Highland (9-0) at No. 11 Aurora (9-0)**

**When:** 7 p.m. Friday

**Where:** Veterans Stadium at Aurora High School

**Playoff positioning:** Highland is second in Division II, Region 6 and would play host to Toledo Start (6-3) if the playoffs began this week; [Drew Pasteur's Fantastic 50 projects](#) the Hornets to remain in that spot against North Royalton (4-5). Aurora is third in Division III, Region 9 and would play host to Youngstown Chaney (3-5) if the playoffs began this week. [Fantastic 50 projects](#) the Greenmen to remain in that spot, but face Bedford (5-4).

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