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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

# Cleveland.com football all-stars 2025: Meet the best defensive players from Northeast Ohio

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## Glenville rides record-setting defense to third state title



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By **Matt Goul, cleveland.com**

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Cincere Johnson set the tone for Glenville's defense in each of the last three football seasons.

The Tarblooders won two of its three OHSAA Division IV state championships in that time, including a historic performance this year against Shelby by holding the Whippets to 27 yards in a 45-7 victory. No team gained fewer yards in a state championship game, regardless of division.

"We always said, 'Take them to somewhere they've never been before,'" Johnson said in Canton after the state championship. "That's a great team, but they haven't faced a defense, a Glenville defense with the speed and size, and somebody in the middle like myself and people in front and on the back end."

Coach Ted Ginn Sr. often agreed that Johnson had uncanny size and speed, drawing comparisons to former Glenville linebacker Arvell Reese, who is now starring at Ohio State as a potential first-round NFL Draft pick.

Johnson could soon realize that potential, too. For now, he is the two-time cleveland.com Defensive Player of the Year. Read more about him and the rest of the 2025 all-area team, which consists of a seven-county radius surrounding Cleveland, on defense below:

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## Ends

### Collin Crocker, St. Edward

**Height, weight:** 6-foot-2, 230 pounds

**Year:** Senior

**About Crocker:** For the last two years, Crocker has led the Eagles (11-3) off the edge as their top sack artist. He had nine sacks this season with 25 quarterback hurries and 17 tackles for loss on the way to the Division I state semifinals. Crocker holds a scholarship offer from Ohio.

### Lance Dawson, Avon

**Height, weight:** 6-5, 250

**Year:** Senior

**About Dawson:** A Cincinnati recruit, Dawson broke through last season amid a deep group of defensive ends during Avon’s run to the Division II state championship. The Eagles (14-1) repeated as state champions this year with Dawson as their leading edge rusher. He finished with eight sacks, 35 tackles and 11 TFL. Dawson also had 36 quarterback pressures.

**Second team:** Ace Brown, Archbishop Hoban, sr.; Quenton Rose, Maple Heights, sr.

**Honorable mention:** Kaylon Bailey, Glenville, sr.; Ray Brown, Normandy, sr.; Luke Bonnette,

**Honorable mention:** Raylon Dancy, Glenville, sr.; Ray Brown, Normandy, sr.; Luke Dornette, Aurora, sr.; Brady Bush, Solon, jr.; Vinny DeTillio, Avon, sr.; Patrick Fellenstein, Amherst, sr.; Dirk Geiger, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, sr.; Gavin Gindlesperger, Manchester, sr.; Chase Gron, Kirtland, sr.; Kenny Hamilton, Mentor, sr.; Brendan Hernan, Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin, sr.; Dario Jeras, Walsh Jesuit, jr.; Terrel Karim Jr., Akron East, jr.; Patrick Kinsell, Archbishop Hoban, sr.; Munir Lewis, Brush, jr.; Dan Miller, Highland, sr.; Eli Nichols, Brunswick, sr.; Cliff Nicholson, Medina, sr.; Sean O'Connell, Benedictine, sr.; Tyrell O'Neal, Benedictine, sr.; Elijah Sedor, Revere, sr.; Brendan Shultz, St. Edward, sr. Deon Solomon, Cleveland Heights, sr.; Trent Taylor, Perry, sr.

## Tackle

### Austin Adkins, Strongsville

**Height, weight:** 6-3, 255

**Year:** Senior

**About Adkins:** He can play inside or out and is headed to Ohio University. Adkins tied the single-game sack record at Strongsville (8-3) with six during a regular-season win against Medina. He finished with 44 total tackles, 19 sacks, 18 tackles for loss, three fumble recoveries and scored a defensive touchdown.

**Second team:** Jamir Perez, Glenville, sr.; Arthur Scott III, Streetsboro, sr.

**Honorable mention:** Ty Bledsoe, Kirtland, sr.; Donovan Crook, Copley, sr.; Marcus Henderson II, Akron East, sr.; Dylan Luker, Avon, sr.; Logan Mitchell, Mentor, sr.; Bret Percic, Riverside, sr.; Dion'dre Taylor, Glenville, sr.; Luciano Traczyk, Mayfield, so.; Ezra Williams, Lorain, sr.; Kameron Zebbs, Garfield Heights, jr.





Glenville DL Dion'dre Taylor (23) and LB Cincere Johnson celebrate after a sack against Shelby in the first half of play. Joshua Gunter, cleveland.com

## Linebackers

### Brayton Feister, Archbishop Hoban

**Height, weight:** 6-3, 235

**Year:** Junior

**About Feister:** A 2,000-yard rusher last year, Feister took on the leading role for Hoban's defense at linebacker. He is projected to play there in college as a four-star prospect with offers that include Indiana, Michigan and Oregon. He was the Northeast Inland District nominee for Mr. Football with 102 tackles, six sacks and 32 tackles for loss during the regular season. Feister scored twice on defense and rushed for about 900 yards entering the Division II regional finals for Hoban (10-2).

### Cincere Johnson, Glenville

**Height, weight:** 6-3, 225

**Year:** Senior

**About Johnson:** The reigning cleveland.com Defensive Player of the Year had 112 tackles through the regular season with 8.5 sacks and 21.5 TFL. He is headed to Ohio State and is the top-rated prospect in Ohio for the Class of 2026. Glenville (12-3) won its third state championship in four years and has made the state final four each season Johnson led the defense at middle linebacker.

### Storm Miller, Strongsville

**Height, weight:** 6-3, 220

**Year:** Senior

**About Miller:** Bound for Texas A&M, Miller made a massive impact the last four years at Strongsville just like his older brother and tackle, Blake Miller, did before he went to Clemson. Storm moved from the edge to middle linebacker this season in preparation for college and made himself comfortable (offenses not so much) immediately. He finished with 110 tackles, 10 sacks and 20 TFL. Miller also had two interceptions. Miller graduates as Strongsville's all-time leader with 29 sacks.

### Ryan Stolarski, Avon

**Height, weight:** 6-2, 225

**Year:** Senior

**About Stolarski:** A two-time state champion for the Eagles, Stolarski paced the Avon defense with 103 total tackles. Of those hits, he had 63 solo tackles, five sacks and eight TFL. Stolarski, who is headed to Miami (Ohio), also had two interceptions and seven quarterback pressures.

**Second team:** Mason Cerovac, Olmsted Falls, jr.; Jacob Earnest, Wadsworth, sr.; Nathan Judy, Hudson, sr.; Joey Kopec, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, sr.

**Honorable mention:** Markus Brown, Norton, sr.; Jayden Buth, Chardon, sr.; Alex Calogar, Riverside, jr.; Caden Carter, Walsh Jesuit, sr.; Tyler Denn, Amherst, sr.; Brydon Feister, Archbishop Hoban, so.; Karsen Fisher, Nordonia, jr.; Brennan Funyak, Hudson, sr.; Jamiyus Gaines, Lorain, sr.; Nolan Gill, North Ridgeville, sr.; Jameson Gordon, Highland, sr.; Brayden Homoki, Midview, sr.; Sirius Jones, Cleveland Heights, jr.; Ayden Knuebel, Streetsboro, sr.; Tommy Kopec, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, jr.; Marty Loncar, Lake Catholic, sr.; George Majernic, Strongsville, jr.; Trey Moore, Wellington, sr.; Maeson Morales, Amherst, sr.; Nick Nemeth, Holy Name, sr.; Michael Niedzwiecki, Perry, jr.; Shane Ohl, Keystone, sr.; Zander Perko, Kirtland, jr.; Aiden Peterson, St. Edward, sr.; Nick Rivera, St. Ignatius, sr.; Ben Schenk, Mentor, sr.; Jake Sikula, Berea-Midpark, sr.; Levi Springer, Elyria, sr.; Brad Watson, Wadsworth, sr.; Kallen Whitling, Highland, sr.; Ryan Wilhelm, Buckeye, sr.; Carson Wolk, Mentor, sr.

## Cornerbacks

### Elbert "Rock" Hill IV, Archbishop Hoban

**Height, weight:** 5-10, 175

**Year:** Senior

**About Hill:** One of the country’s top cornerbacks for the last three years, Hill heads to the University of Southern California after nine interceptions during his senior season. He had one pick-six and a kickoff return for another touchdown. Hill also blocked a punt for Hoban.

### **Kei’Shjuan Telfair, Euclid**

**Height, weight:** 6-0, 160

**Year:** Junior

**About Telfair:** One of the brightest spots for Euclid (4-6), Telfair is a four-star prospect with offers from Cincinnati, Clemson, Indiana, Miami, USC and Notre Dame. Those are just a few for Telfair, who doubled as a receiver. He had four interceptions, including a pick six. Telfair added 650 yards and nine touchdowns on 30 receptions.

**Second team:** Savion Lewis, Villa Angela-St. Joseph, sr.; Henry Perrymond Jr., Cleveland Heights, sr.

**Honorable mention:** Makhi Boone, St. Edward, sr.; James Brewer III, Walsh Jesuit, sr.; Ryan Caimi, Kirtland, sr.; Caden Clapham, Avon, sr.; Jaiden Daniels, Archbishop Hoban, jr.; Nick Dobkowski, Highland, sr.; Xayvion Dunn, Mentor, sr.; Jaylen Edwards, Glenville, so.; Jairel Fenton, Avon, jr.; Na’Cari Gay, Maple Heights, sr.; Tommy Hohn, Wadsworth, sr.; Anthony Paolucci, Hudson, sr.; Tommy Puletti, Walsh Jesuit, sr.; Brian Strippy, North Ridgeville, sr.; Zionte Williams, Bedford, jr.

## **Safeties**

### **Gavin Madigan, Wadsworth**

**Height, weight:** 6-0, 220

**Year:** Senior

**About Madigan:** An Army commit, Madigan has been one of Northeast Ohio’s toughest players for the last four years. He was the Suburban League National Conference Offensive Player of the Year, but received All-Ohio honors for his defense. Madigan finished with 52 total tackles, 35 solo, two interceptions and three pass breakups. He rarely came off the field for coach Justin Todd, rushing for 1,108 yards and 21 touchdowns. The Grizzlies (11-1) won their third straight Suburban League title.

### **Jakob Weatherspoon, Avon**

**Height, weight:** 5-10, 175

**Year:** Senior

**About Weatherspoon:** While Weatherspoon's season ended after nine weeks because of injury, his impact is a lasting one for the two-time Division II state champions. The North Carolina recruit moved last year from cornerback to safety and added some receiving duties to his plate. He finished this season with 43 tackles, one interception and three pass breakups. Weatherspoon also came up with a critical blocked field goal that spurred a midseason shutout of Olmsted Falls.

**Second team:** Landon Lehmer, St. Edward, jr.; C.J. Newell, Glenville, sr.

**Honorable mention:** Tyler Alley, Madison, sr.; Collin Atha, Nordonia, sr.; Ziiyahn Blair, Akron Garfield, sr.; Grant Blascak, Walsh Jesuit, sr.; Louie Castellarin, Hudson, sr.; Peter Chermonte, Brecksville-Broadview Heights, sr.; Carter Clark, North Ridgeville, sr.; Kameryn Dejarnette, Garfield Heights, jr.; Jaquan Gibson, Glenville, so.; Jude Haller, Wadsworth, so.; Kevin Lowery, Shaker Heights, sr.; Peter Malchesky, Lake Catholic, sr.; Trevor Maly, Avon, sr.; Devron Mills, Cleveland Heights, jr.; Brodon Moore, St. Edward, sr.; Drew Morgan, Mentor, sr.; Mike Passerrello Jr., Amherst, sr.; Tyler Rowles, North Royalton, sr.; Aaron Scales, Glenville, sr.; Keshawn Sheppard, Maple Heights, sr.; Chase Sivon, Perry, sr.; Kent Staten, Bedford, jr.; Brayden Thomas, St. Edward, sr.; Jayshon Thomas, St. Ignatius, sr.; Sammy Ulery, Avon, sr.

## Punter

**Finley Keller, North Ridgeville**

**Height, weight:** 6-3, 220

**Year:** Senior

**About Keller:** A dual weapon as both a kicker and punter, Keller helped North Ridgeville get the ball back nine times on onside kicks and punts. He averaged 40.5 yards on 27 punts with 15 inside the 20-yard line and a long of 69 yards. He also made 4 of 5 field goals with a long of 36 yards. The Rangers (10-2) made the Division II regional quarterfinals.

**Second team:** Ryan Hurley, St. Vincent-St. Mary, sr.

**Honorable mention:** Dom Bell, Black River, fr.; Brayden Bonnett, Buckeye, sr.; J.T. Hummer, St. Ignatius, so.; Ian Katz, Hudson, sr.; Matteo Morelli, University School, sr.; Josiah Sanders, Shaw, so.; Dwight Shade, Buchtel, sr.; Chase White, Madison, sr.; Loukas White, Shaker Heights, sr.;



Caleb Zolkowski, Padua, sr.

(Note: The second paragraph of this article was adjusted for clarity.)



**Matt Goul**

Matt Goul has covered high school sports with some college and pros sprinkled in since 2005 with a bachelor's degree from Kent State University. He has covered high school basketball and football in Northeast...more

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