

Akron Beacon Journal

Ohio high school football 2025 | Top 10 Akron-area 2-way players to watch

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As we prepare for the start of the 2024 Ohio high school football season, we're breaking down the top players by position. Throughout the preseason, we're ranking the top 10 Greater Akron quarterbacks, running backs, receivers/tight ends, offensive linemen, defensive linemen, linebackers, defensive backs, specialists and two-way players.

Today, we look at the top two-way players, starting with Hoban's [Elbert Hill](#), who will head to USC next year as a defensive back, but who is just as good on offense or in the kick return game.

1. Elbert Hill, Hoban

Defensive back/wide receiver (6-0, 190 pounds), Class of 2026

What to know: [Hill](#) is the most electric player on the field in more than just Greater Akron. The four-star USC commit and All-Ohioan registered 56 tackles, five interceptions, two defensive touchdowns and two sacks in 2024. He returned two kickoffs for TDs and had five TDs on offense, with three receiving and two

rushing.

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2. Brayton Feister, Hoban

Running back/linebacker (6-4, 240 pounds), Class of 2027

What to know: If you thought [Feister](#) was good at running back wait until you see him play linebacker this season. The move-in of Jance Henry allows Feister (2,104 yards on 296 carries and scored 26 TDs) to get looks on defense, where the four-star recruit and All-Ohioan has 23 Division I college offers.

3. Joey Kopec, CVCA

Running back/linebacker (6-2, 210 pounds), Class of 2026

What to know: [Kopec](#) is a three-star recruit and Rutgers commit who just keeps getting better every season. The All-Ohioan and Northeast Inland Co-defensive Player of the Year registered 85 tackles, four for loss, and had seven quarterback pressures and six interceptions at linebacker. He also had 1,072 rushing yards, 230 receiving yards, 541 return yards and 17 touchdowns (10 rushing, three receiving, two via kick returns, one interception return and one passing).

4. Gavin Madigan, Wadsworth

Running back/safety (6-0, 220 pounds), Class of 2026

What to know: The Army commit and All-Ohioan missed three games but still put up great numbers from

his hybrid safety and running back position. [Madigan](#) registered 92 tackles, 4½ for loss, had eight pass breakups and three interceptions in 10 games. He also ran for 764 yards and 11 TDs on 98 carries and caught a touchdown pass.

5. Nathan Judy, Hudson

Tight end/linebacker (6-4, 225 pounds), Class of 2025

What to know: Just how good is [Judy](#)? He threw for 1,679 yards and 12 touchdowns in 11 games and might not finish the season at quarterback in 2025. He'll likely head back to his tight end spot and play linebacker, where he made 102 tackles, 14 for loss, registered four sacks, two fumble recoveries, two interceptions and had a defensive touchdown as a sophomore.

6. Buddy Willig, Norton

Wide receiver/safety (6-1, 175 pounds), Class of 2026

What to know: [Willig](#) should see more action at wide receiver with Tallmadge transfer Trey Kersten at quarterback for the Panthers. The All-Ohioan rushed for 628 yards and nine touchdowns and made 77 tackles and three interceptions from his strong safety position last season. He also had 279 yards receiving and three touchdowns.

7. James Brewer, Walsh Jesuit

Wide receiver/defensive back (6-2, 175 pounds), Class of 2026

What to know: [Brewer](#) might be the most underrated player on this list even though he is an Ohio

University commit. Last year, he registered 49 tackles, four for loss, a sack, two interceptions and 14 pass breakups. He also forced a fumble and scored a defensive touchdown. Brewer will play outside receiver, where he will be a valuable option behind Milan Parris and Campbell Lann.

8, Evan Foust, Highland

Tight end/linebacker (6-0, 205 pounds), Class of 2027

What to know: [Foust](#) was part of an offense that set a school record for points (606) last season. He caught 28 passes for 577 yards and five touchdowns, rushed 27 times for 242 yards and three scores and led the team with 88 tackles, nine for loss and added four sacks. He averaged 35.4 yards per punt in 2024 and downed five inside the 20-yard line.

9. Evan Reed, Green

Running back/linebacker (6-1, 210 pounds), Class of 2026

What to know: [Reed](#) will help three-year starting quarterback Tyler Hunka as a multi-faceted back. He scored 13 touchdowns, two on kick returns, and logged 753 yards from scrimmage. He will be vital on defense this season after posting 40 tackles as a junior.

10. Terrell Wharton Jr., East

Wide receiver/defensive back (6-2, 170), Class of 2026

What to know: With Penn State, Wisconsin, Purdue and Kentucky after him, you know [Wharton](#) is a player. He returns with 32 tackles and 16 pass breakups on defense. He also averaged 28.8 yards and scored

three touchdowns on 10 receptions last season.

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