

OHSAA high school football playoffs | Greater Akron 4th-round breakdowns, predictions

[Michael Beaven](#), [Michael Leonard](#), [Brad Bournival](#) and [Nate Ulrich](#) Akron Beacon Journal

Published 6:11 a.m. ET Nov. 20, 2024 | Updated 6:11 a.m. ET Nov. 20, 2024

And then there were three.

That's how many Akron-area teams are still playing as we reach Week 14 of the high school football season and the fourth week of the OHSAA playoffs in seven divisions and 28 regions.

Here's our look at the two regional final games featuring Summit County-area teams, including a breakdown of each matchup and who we predict will win. The winners of these two games face each other next week in the state semifinals.

Watch Ohio High School Football Live on the NFHS Network all season

Friday's Summit County high school football predictions, breakdowns

Division II, Region 5

No. 1 Walsh Jesuit (13-0) vs. 2 Hoban (11-2), at Twinsburg Tiger Stadium

What to watch for from Walsh Jesuit: Walsh Jesuit snapped an 11-game losing streak in its series with rival Archbishop Hoban by prevailing 19-14 on Oct. 4 at Conway Memorial Stadium. Now Walsh looks to get over the hump against Hoban in a Division II, Region 5 championship game — the same round in which the Warriors fell to the Knights in 2023 and 2021. By winning in Week 7 this fall, Walsh proved something to itself. “It just built confidence in our guys having lost all those before,” Warriors coach Nick Alexander said. “So our guys are excited for this opportunity to be back in the regional

final, and we'll be ready for Friday." ... Since Walsh hired Alexander before the 2019 season, it has gone 1-7 against Hoban, including 0-2 in the playoffs. "It's crazy 'cause this is our ninth time playing Hoban as a staff in our six years, so there's a lot of familiarity," Alexander said. " ... We just know we're in for a good, physical matchup." ... Seven weeks ago, Walsh senior QB Keller Moten rushed for the game-winning, 9-yard touchdown with 39.1 seconds left in the fourth quarter against Hoban. This season, Moten has gone 113-of-179 passing for 1,645 yards and 17 TDs with four interceptions and carried the ball 127 times for 1,209 yards (9.5 average) and 22 TDs. Last week, in Walsh's 42-28 regional semifinal win over Austintown Fitch, Moten rushed for three TDs and threw a 23-yard TD pass to junior wide receiver Milan Parris. ... Parris has 27 catches for 597 yards and nine TDs. Senior Aiden Henry has 41 catches for 565 yards and four TDs and threw a 26-yard TD pass on offense, 44 tackles (37 solos) as a safety on defense and has returned two kickoffs for touchdowns. ... Walsh also has three talented running backs in junior Marty Tobin (116 carries, 970 yards, nine TDs), senior Lucas Weaver (112 carries, 831 yards, nine TDs) and junior Carlos Smith (60 carries, 558 yards, eight TDs). Walsh's offensive line is consistent with seniors Kodey Kish, Matthew DeSciscio and Luka Jeras and juniors Colton Crosley and Brayden Piersall. ... The Warriors have gained more than 5,600 yards in 13 games, with over 4,000 of those yards on the ground. ... Walsh's defense features Henry, senior linemen Luka Jeras, Anthony Bernard and Jamir McCombs, sophomore lineman Dario Jeras, senior linebacker Declan Norton, junior linebacker Caden Carter, junior cornerback James Brewer, junior safety Grant Blascak, senior cornerback Dominic Romanini, junior cornerback Tommy Puletti and sophomore linebacker Caden Mariola. ... Norton has 113.5 tackles (76 solos), six sacks and one forced fumble. ... Carter has 108.5 tackles (74 solos and 10 for loss), three sacks, two forced fumbles and one interception. ... Bernard has five sacks, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. McCombs has 10 tackles for loss, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. Mariola has 10 tackles for loss. ... Romanini and Blascak each have three interceptions and Brewer has two interceptions. ... Junior kicker Freddie Marcell has made a single-season school record 67 PATs in 69 attempts. He has also made 3-of-4 field goal attempts. Senior punter Jake Hassman averages 40 yards per boot. ... Walsh seeks its sixth trip to a state semifinal and first since 1999, when the Warriors won the Division II state title. The Warriors were state runners-up in 1998.

What to watch for from Archbishop Hoban: Hoban is in a regional final for the 10th year in a row under coach Tim Tyrrell. The Knights won Division III state championships in 2015 and 2016, Division II state titles in 2017, 2018 and 2020 and were the Division II state runners-up in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Hoban seeks its 11th trip to a

state semifinal, all since 2002. ... Hoban's offense features sophomore running back Brayton Feister and blocking by senior linemen Joseph Burkeen and Nate Cross, junior linemen Sam Greer and Braylin Parker, sophomore lineman Rylee Pickering and senior tight end Tayte Crable. ... Feister has 235 carries for 1,673 yards and 22 TDs, and 11 receptions for 92 yards and one TD. ... Feister ran for a career-high 290 yards and five touchdowns on 26 carries to lead Hoban to a 48-13 win over Nordonia (10-3) in a regional semifinal last Friday. ... Junior Trent Hayden is Hoban's primary quarterback after splitting snaps with senior Ethan Roksandich earlier in the season. Hayden, who played at Walsh as a freshman and sophomore, has completed 67 of 104 passes for 922 yards and nine TDs this season. ... Roksandich has thrown a TD pass, totaled 57 carries for 399 yards and five TDs and has three sacks as a defensive end. ... Junior La'Near Folk has 56 carries for 438 yards and seven TDs. ... Crable and sophomore John Johnson each have 17 catches and one TD, junior Jackson Callaway has 14 catches and four TDs and junior Elbert Hill IV has 14 catches and three TDs. ... Hill and senior Tylan Boykin are also threats in the backfield with two rushing TDs apiece. ... Hoban's defense is led by Ohio State recruit Eli Lee, a senior linebacker with over 110 tackles, 10 sacks, 35 tackles for loss, one TD and two forced fumbles. ... Knights senior linebacker Tanner Mintz also has over 110 tackles with four interceptions, two TDs, eight sacks and four fumble recoveries. ... Hill has more than 60 tackles with five interceptions (two returned for TDs), two sacks, 26 pass breakups and two kickoff returns for a TD. ... Senior lineman Nick Crawford has over 70 tackles with 17 sacks, 22 tackles for loss, four forced fumbles, a TD and one blocked punt. Boykin has over 50 tackles with four interceptions (one returned for a TD), 26 pass breakups and two punt returns for a TD. ... Hoban's other top defenders are junior linemen Ace Brown (12 sacks, two forced fumbles, TD) and Patrick Kinsell (six sacks, two forced fumbles, one fumble recovery), junior cornerbacks Callaway and Payton Cook (three interceptions, two fumble recoveries), senior linebacker Owen Turner (two interceptions, eight sacks) and sophomore defensive backs Johnson, Jaiden Daniels and Lawrence Cherry. ... Sophomore Jeremy Hammel is Hoban's kicker and punter. He has made 56 of 67 PATs and 7 of 8 field goal attempts with a long of 41 yards.

Who will win: Walsh 15-14

OHSAA football playoffs: OHSAA sets regional final sites, schedule

Division II, Region 6

2 Highland (13-0) vs. 1 Avon (13-0), at Elyria's Ely Stadium

What to watch: This is the 14th time the Hornets have made the playoffs and the second season in a row they've reached the regional final. Highland lost 28-14 to Avon in this round last season. The Hornets have one regional title (2013) but have never reached the state final. Highland is coming off a 38-14 win over third-seeded Whitehouse Anthony Wayne (12-1). This the Eagles' 18th playoff appearances. Avon has won a regional title in six of the last seven seasons (2022) but the Eagles have not made it past the state semifinals since they finished runners-up in 2011. The Eagles are coming off a 41-10 win over fifth-seeded Wadsworth (11-2). ... Casey Myser (230 carries, 2,024 yards, 36 TDs; 16 catches, 502 yards, seven TDs) and Dylan Borla (98-of-131 passing, 2,116 yards, 27 TDs, two interceptions) continue to set single-season school records for Highland. Evan Foust (26 catches, 537 yards, five TDs), Lucas Gerding (23 catches, 445 yards, three TDs) and Nick Dobkowski (18 catches, 426, seven TDs) are putting up solid numbers. ... Foust (81 tackles, three sacks), Ryan Zywiec (70 tackles, 9.5 sacks, 21 tackles for loss), Jameson Gordon (63 tackles, seven TFL) and Carson Noonan (62 tackles, 9.5 sacks, 18 TFL) lead a stellar defense that has allowed only 8.2 points per game. ... Northeast Lakes District Offensive Player of the Year Nolan Good, who didn't play in last year's game against Highland, is the leader for Avon. The Kent State commit is 176-of-270 passing for 2,908 yards and 28 TDs against seven interceptions. He has weapons in Matt Maxey (79 catches, 1,212 yards, 10 TDs), Cole Kepner (29 catches, 604 yards, seven TDs) and Grant Barr (34 catches, 509 yards, eight TDs). Tyler Kaufmann (87 carries, 607 yards, 10 TDs), Good (52 carries, 528 yards, nine TDs), Quiante' Smith (57 carries, 450 yards, nine TDs) and Cam Wendell (70 carries, 393 yards, five TDs) get it done on the ground. ... Owen Garcia (90.5 tackles, 3.5 sacks, 8.5 tackles for loss), Ryan Stolarski (70 tackles, three sacks, eight tackles for loss) and Jason Gillespie (15 tackles, seven sacks, eight tackles for loss) lead an Avon defense that gives up 12.2 points per game. ... The winner plays either Walsh Jesuit (13-0) or Hoban (11-2) next week at a site to be determined.

Who will win: Highland 35-31

Ex-NFL players coaching HS football: Browns legend Phil Dawson has advice for high school coaches who used to play in the league, like STVM's Doran Grant

High school football: 2024 USA Today Network Preseason All-Ohio Football Team

We occasionally recommend interesting products and services. If you make a purchase by clicking one of the links, we may earn an affiliate fee. USA TODAY Network newsrooms

operate independently, and this doesn't influence our coverage.