

Akron Beacon Journal

Fourth-quarter blocked field goal helps Avon football beat Highland

Brad Bournival Akron Beacon Journal

Nov. 22, 2025, 5:45 a.m. ET

BRUNSWICK — Ain't that a kick in the head.

Top-seeded [Highland](#) was riding momentum in the fourth quarter on Nov. 21 when one tremendous play by third-seeded [Avon](#) turned the tide.

It added up to a 36-19 win by the Eagles and a third consecutive Division II, Region 6 final loss by Highland to that team up north.

Up next for Avon is a state semifinal against [Walsh Jesuit \(11-1\)](#) Nov. 28 at the University of Akron's InfoCision Stadium. The Warriors advanced with a 35-7 win over Archbishop Hoban.

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

Need a news break? [Check out the all new PLAY hub with puzzles, games and more!](#)

The play that changed things for Avon, Highland

The crucial momentum swing happened with under 7 minutes to play when a field-goal attempt changed everything.

Highland's Jonah Kowza got ready for a 41-yard field goal to close the gap to seven. Before you think a 41-yard field goal is a stretch, the five-star kicker had made two over 40 this season.

But, instead of a 29-22 score, it turned into a 17-point game when Nolan Farley blocked the kick and Nathan Peters returned it 70 yards for a touchdown.

“We score right there and it’s a seven-point game,” Highland coach Mike Gibbons said. “We got some stops there and had the momentum. I felt like we put ourselves in a really good position to finish the game out. You can’t let that happen. It’s too much pressure, they block it

and take it back for a touchdown. It's a huge play by them. Unfortunately, we were on the short end of that one."

What happened leading up to Avon's blocked field goal

A play that took about 10 seconds to develop completely unraveled what Highland had been doing to that point.

The Hornets stopped Avon on downs and [Casey Myser](#) scored on a 57-yard touchdown run near the end of the third quarter to make it 29-19.

Avon closed the quarter with a first down but punted after runs of zero and minus-1 yard, a holding penalty and incomplete pass.

Grady Gibb led Highland to the Avon 24 and a field-goal attempt looked like it was going to make things interesting down the stretch.

Then Avon, which blocked an extra point in the first quarter, came up with the play of the game to send Highland packing.

"These big games, there's so much back and forth, back and fourth," Gibbons said. "You try not to ride the momentum there, but obviously that was a knockout punch right there. We needed to score. It was a two-score game. We gave ourselves a chance to make it one score. ... It is what is there."

It put the game back in Avon's hands, and Quiante' Smith (23 carries, 168 yards, TD) and Co. made sure Myser (10 carries, 103 yards, TD; one catch, 44 yards, TD) and Gibb (18 carries, 31 yards, TD; 7-of-12 passing, 167 yards, TD) didn't have any magic left.

Brad Bournival can be reached by email at bbournival@usatoday.com and is on X at [@bbournival](#).

Our team of savvy editors independently handpicks all recommendations. If you purchase through our links, the USA Today Network may earn a commission. Prices were accurate at the time of publication but may change.