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FOOTBALL

Akron-area high school football Week 13 recaps: Walsh Jesuit, Hoban, Highland win

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Walsh Jesuit 42, Austintown Fitch 28: Top-seeded Warriors run to victory, set up regional final showdown with Hoban

Here we go again.

Top-seeded Walsh Jesuit knocked out fourth-seeded Fitch at Ravenna in a Division II, Region 5 semifinal. The Warriors' prize? A regional final rematch with Hoban (11-2) next week at a site to be determined.

Walsh ran away with its game Friday. A lot.

“Our coaches, they get us right each week,” Walsh offensive tackle Kodey Kish said. “They know the scheme. Our offensive line takes pride in being able to run the ball like that.”

Did they ever.

Keller Moten (16 carries, 125 yards, three TDs), Lucas Weaver (11 carries, 160 yards, TD), Carlos Smith (six carries, 71 yards, TD) and Marty Tobin (11 carries, 73 yards) ran all over the the Falcons (9-4) — so much so that Walsh averaged 11.6 yards per carry in the first half and scored on all five of its drives.

When the dust cleared, the Warriors had run up and down the field, gaining 429 on 44 carries (9.8 average).

“We came out swinging,” Moten said. “I’m pretty sure we scored on every drive we had in the first half. I said it once and I’ll say it again, I’ve got to give it to [the offensive line]. ...

At the end of the day, all we have to do is run through these holes. That all start up front.”

Moten (4-of-10 passing, 40 yards) added a 23-yard touchdown pass to Milan Parris.

Fitch's Deon'Dray Richard ran for 205 yards and a touchdown on 26 carries, and Junie Higgs carried seven times for 50 yards and two scores.

Next week's game between Hoban-Walsh should be made-for-TV. The Knights knocked off the Warriors last season 30-6. Walsh beat Hoban 19-14 in Week 7 this season.

“If we look at the state semifinal [the following week], I think we do a disservice to the kids,” Walsh coach Nick Alexander said. “We have to go one play at a time and go each individual play. That will give us the best chance to be successful.”

Hoban 48, Nordonia 13: Brayton Feister powers Hoban over Nordonia

Sophomore Brayton Feister ran for a career-high 290 yards and five touchdowns on 26 carries to lead Archbishop Hoban (11-2) past Nordonia (10-3) in a Division II, Region 5 semifinal matchup of Knights at Rudy Sharkey Stadium in Barberton.

"We really cleaned it up this week with our blocking assignments on the receiver side and the offensive line side," Feister said. "It was amazing the way that we were able to clean it up from last week [against Lake]. It was impressive. We played like crap last week. This week we cleaned it up and we played much better against a very good football team."

Feister scored TDs on runs 2, 7, 4, 36 and 69 yards as Hoban advanced in the rain to meet rival Walsh Jesuit (13-0) in a regional final next Friday.

"We wanted to establish the line of scrimmage," Hoban offensive coordinator Matt Saunders said. "We do that all the time at Hoban. We have struggled at times this year for consistent play, but we thought all 11 today played well. We wanted to run the ball with the weather and the conditions, and we wanted to keep the ball out of Nordonia's hands because they are explosive offensively."

Feister's career-best night happened with his brother, freshman Brydon Feister, splitting snaps at fullback with sophomore Devanaire Riley and senior Tayte Crable at tight end. Hoban's linemen were also impressive with juniors Sam Greer and Braylin Parker up front with seniors Joseph Burkeen and Nate Cross and sophomore Rylee Pickering.

"They did a good job of staying on blocks and giving Brayton a chance to get to the second level," Hoban coach Tim Tyrrell said. "Once he got to the second level, he did really well."

Hoban senior Tylan Boykin ran for 65 yards and a TD on nine carries.

"Our mindset coming into this game was to dominate, and that is what we did," Boykin said. "There are also some mistakes to clean up. We are always trying to get to that perfect mark, even though that is hard to obtain."

"... If I had to give out a game ball, I would give it to the offensive linemen. The blocks that they were making, they were all on their assignments. They were dominant. That opened up lanes for Feister, and when he gets the lanes he is going to do what he does."

Hoban sophomore Lawrence Cherry returned an interception 55 yards for a TD.

"We definitely came into this game fired up and ready to go," Hoban senior linebacker Eli Lee said. "We still have things to work on, but this was definitely a very good step."

Hoban junior Jackson Callaway recovered a fumble and intercepted a pass. Junior Patrick Kinsell and junior Ace Brown shared a sack and Owen Turner had a solo sack.

"We have got this love, unity thing," Hoban defensive coordinator Renzy Parnell said. "It is working. The guys are getting it and coming together and playing hard."

Nordonia senior Liam Kountz ran for a 7-yard TD and senior Ben Chesser threw a 9-yard TD pass to Khylan Osbey.

"We have not seen a fast-paced offense like that all year," Tyrrell said of Nordonia. "Our kids adapted and did well, especially after halftime. They were listening to the coaches. Coach [Jeff] Fox is a great coach. Those special teams, those onside kicks are crazy."

Nordonia junior Riley Edgehouse was successful on two onside kicks. Senior Jordan Byrd recovered the first one and Edgehouse pounced on the second one.

"We had the mentality of let's get better throughout the entire season," Nordonia senior safety Vince Natali said. "Every practice, we knew we were trying to reach something special. This wasn't the result we were looking to get, but this is a good group."

Said Nordonia senior center Grant Lefeld: "This is rough. Of course, this is not how we drew it up. We had the mindset we were going to play our best every game. Not play to the scoreboard. Just play your best, and I think we did that this year."

Chesser completed 11 of 23 passes for 123 yards.

"This was not the outcome you want, but we fought hard though," Chesser said. "We didn't finish when we needed to, but we still played as hard as we could. Overall, this was a great season. We had a lot of fun this year."

Nordonia senior Rocco DeLorenzo ran for 102 yards on 22 carries and Osbey ran for 49 yards on 11 carries.

"The two one-point losses [to Wadsworth and Hudson] were heartbreaking," DeLorenzo said. "We played our hearts out every week. We finished with 10 wins. This was a very successful season. Personally, I am proud of all of my teammates. I am glad I got the chance to play with them."

Osbey had two catches for 36 yards and senior Owen Smotek had four catches for 33 yards.

"We wanted to keep getting better one week at a time," Nordonia senior cornerback Blake Allen said. "We focused on being the best team in the stadium each week. ... We love the game of football. That is what brought us the wins and to play together as a team."

Fox said Nordonia's team GPA averages 3.7 and seven seniors have over a 4.0.

"There is no margin for error against Hoban, and we had errors," Fox said. "We didn't play perfectly. ... When you think about what this is about, hopefully our program is building young men. I am grateful to be affiliated with coaching these young men."

Fox added, "Danny Ours and Blake Allen are class officers and leaders in the school."

"Danny Ours and Blake Allen are great kids," Fox said. "Same with Jordan Jackson and our other players. Grant Lefeld runs our teammates program that works with students with special needs. They do everything right in terms of representing our program on and off the field."

See the complete Ohio rankings here: Final USA Today Network Ohio Super 25 High School Football Poll

Highland 38, Anthony Wayne 14: Dylan Borla, Casey Myser add to school records as Hornets blast Generals

Highland jumped out to a 24-point lead at halftime and put it cruise control to knock out Anthony Wayne for the third time in four seasons in a Division II, Region 6 semifinal.

Hornets quarterback Dylan Borla added to his school record for touchdowns passes in a season (27) with two more against the Generals.

For the second season in a row, the second-seeded Hornets (13-0) will face the Avon (13-0) in a regional final. Last season, Avon was a 28-14 winner, but this one could be much different thanks to a Highland defense hitting on all cylinders.

While all that remains to be seen, what wasn't in question was the Hornets' semifinal win over the third-seeded Generals. Borla, who also had a rushing touchdown, threw his TDs to Nick Dobkowski and Luke Berkmeier.

Casey Myser also continued his torrid pace for Highland, adding touchdown runs of 3 and 5 yards in the first half to bring his total to 44 for the season.

Poland 24, Manchester 13: Panthers' dream season comes to end in Division V regional semifinals

One by one, Manchester coach Kevin Stacy exchanged handshakes and hugs with the players who helped make this a special high school football season.

There was sadness and a few tears shed by the players Stacy thanked. When the pain wears off, there's no doubt the Panthers will feel a sense of pride.

One of Ohio's best comeback stories came to a close Friday when Poland beat Manchester in a Division V regional semifinal. After winning just one game the previous two years, Manchester ended an 11-win season in the third round of the playoffs.

"It's hard to put it into words right now," Stacy said. "The seniors have been through so much. The way they've turned it around over the last year is just incredible.

"All the little things they did to show our guys and getting this far, it's going to be tough to replace."

There are 12 seniors on Manchester's roster. The thought of playing a postseason game on

the third Friday in November may have felt far fetched when the Panthers were struggling. They will leave knowing their role in leading the program back to prominence.

"I told them 'Look where you are. Look what you've done,'" Stacy said. "If someone told us before the season started this is where we would be, people would have thought we were crazy.

"Our kids believed."

The belief in extending the season was alive when the Panthers found themselves down 17-13 at halftime.

Phil Partin scored both Manchester touchdowns in the first half. The first came on a 67-yard run. The other, a 2-yard run, was set up by a Blaise Donatelli interception.

How do you keep Partin and Manchester's offense off the field? You follow Poland's third-quarter script.

With David Xipolitas and Vito Komara rotating at quarterback almost every other play, Poland held the ball the entire quarter. The Bulldogs started at their own 2-yard line and were at the Manchester 25 when the quarter ended.

"You have to give them credit," Stacy said. "They kept us off the field and milked the clock. That was a good strategy for them."

The good news for the Panthers was they kept the Bulldogs from scoring. A fourth-down stop on the first play of the fourth quarter turned the ball over with Poland still clinging to a 17-13 lead.

The bad news for the Panthers was they couldn't take advantage. Manchester chose to go for it on fourth-and-3 from its own 42 but could not convert.

Manchester called a timeout before the play, but Stacy never second guessed what the Panthers were going to do.

"We were going to go for it," Stacy said. "... We thought we could get it. We just wanted to get in formation, make it right and make sure we were getting the right play call."

Poland took advantage of the short field. Pano Xipolitas' 1-yard touchdown run gave the Bulldogs a 24-13 lead.

Avon 41, Wadsworth 10: Grizzlies can't keep up with undefeated Eagles

Quarterback Nolan Good rushed for 102 yards and two touchdowns on six carries and passed for 171 yards and another score to lead undefeated Avon (13-0) over Wadsworth in a Division II, Region 6 semifinal at Strongsville High School.

Cooper Gray accounted for Wadsworth's only touchdown, scoring on a 15-yard pass from Brysen Hall in the second quarter to cut Avon's lead to 20-7. Gray led the Grizzlies (11-2) with 82 yards on 17 carries and caught five passes for another 23 yards. Hall completed 11 of 23 passes for 70 yards.

Gilmour Academy 35, CVCA 28

Gilmour (12-1) outgained the Royals 370-30 through the air, took command in the second half and held on to beat the Royals (10-3) in a Division III, Region 9 semifinal.

"We knew watching film they were athletic all over the place," said CVCA coach Nick Cook. "That was a physical battle. My view is that you've got two schools who have committed themselves to strength and conditioning and you saw that on the field."

Lancers quarterback Cooper Panteck went 17-of-25 passing for 370 yards and four TDs, including two in the first half to tight end Brody Lennon, an Ohio State commit.

After Lennon's first TD, CVCA's Joey Kopec returned the ensuing kickoff 89 yards for a TD. Kopec had two other long kickoff returns to set up the Royals in Lancers territory.

It was a back-and-forth first half. CVCA QB Charley Levak gave the Royals a 14-7 with a 22-yard TD run, but Gilmour answered with a 57-yard TD run by Nathan Lennon.

Before halftime, CVCA took the lead again on a 15-yard TD run by Zac Anderson, but the Lancers answered with Panteck's second TD pass to make it 21-21 at the half.

Gilmour recovered the game's lone fumble and turned it into an 18-yard TD pass from Panteck to Sean Dillard in the third quarter.

Panteck's final TD was his best throw of the game. He hit Lars Broberg with an over-the-shoulder bomb that went for an 85-yard TD.

CVCA didn't give up, even after Levak had to leave the game because of a knee injury.

Backup QB Alex Mammone gained two first downs after Levak left, setting up Ryan Wiehe for a 3-yard TD run with 2:41 left.

2024 OHSAA football state finals: Ohio high school football state championships schedule in Canton, ticket info

Ursuline 29, Aurora 10: Irish rally in 4th quarter to beat Greenmen

The Greenmen (11-1) led the Irish at the end of three quarters, but Ursuline (12-1) scored 20 fourth-quarter points to advance to the Division III, Region 6 final.

After trailing 6-0 at the half, Aurora scored all its points in the third quarter. Ben Lukasik hauled in a 6-yard TD pass from Ryan Dwyer and, after an Ursuline field goal, Colin Dockman booted a 35-yard field goal to give the Greenmen 10-9 lead through three quarters.

But Ursuline quarterback DC Ferrell threw a 50-yard TD pass to Devonte Taylor, Joe Balog ran 31 yards for a score Ferrell returned a punt 55 yards for a TD to ice it.

Dwyer went 21-of-34 passing for 180 yards with a touchdown and two interceptions. Tommy Tartabini led Aurora with 105 yards rushing.

Ursuline led 330-321 in total offense, and each team had two turnovers.

Perry 45, Streetsboro 21

Walter Moses passed for 325 yards and five touchdowns to help Perry hand Streetsboro its first loss of the season in a Division IV, Region 13 regional semifinal at Burton Berkshire High School.

Despite the loss, second-year Rockets quarterback Cohen Klimak earned everyone's respect with one punishing run after another, finishing with 31 carries for 157 yards and two TDs.

"They all showed respect and it's just one of them things, you got to play for that respect and you got to play hard enough to earn it," Klimak said after helping lead the Rockets (12-1) to one of the greatest seasons in program history. "I just tried my best to do that all year."

After the Pirates (12-1) built a 17-0 lead, sophomore Marcus Council got the Rockets (12-1) going, breaking free on a sweep to the right side for a 27-yard gain. Klimak then ran the Rockets into the red zone, and Council got them into the end zone, slashing left to right for a 6-yard TD run.

Perry needed just two plays to expand its lead to 24-7, as Moses connected with Carter Hopkins for his second long touchdown catch of the game.

But Streetsboro wasn't done. Klimak pushed his way through a slew of defenders from the 1 to cap another scoring drive and make it 24-14.

After getting the ball back, Klimak then exploded toward the right sideline for a 6-yard touchdown run to make it 24-21.

"Somebody's got to put the foot down, get up, keep fighting," Klimak said. "So I just chose to be that guy and people started following."

Those were the last points Klimak and the Rockets scored as Perry pulled away.

"They have a lot of weapons," said Streetsboro senior defensive back Jackson Gula, who had a diving pick in the first half. "They were spreading the ball all over, but the thing is we busted a few coverages today and honestly we allowed more points than we should have just out of busted coverage, but that is a great team and I will give credit where credit is due.

"Our senior class doesn't have a bunch of big guys or crazy athletes, but I think we are one of the hardest working classes and we come hard to work every single day. We built a brotherhood with each other, we have good attitudes at practice and I think all that kind of added up and led to this great season that we had."

— Compiled by Michael Leonard, Don Coughlin, Brad Bournival, Mike Popovich, Jonah Rosenblum and Michael Beaven