

Akron Beacon Journal

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

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Nine Akron-area teams still harbor dreams of a state title as Week 13 of the high school football season arrives with the third week of the OHSAA playoffs across all seven divisions and 28 regions.

Here's our look at games featuring Summit County-area teams, including a breakdown of each matchup and who we predict will win.

Friday's Summit County high school football predictions, breakdowns

Division II, Region 5

No. 1 Walsh Jesuit (12-0) vs. 4 Austintown Fitch (9-3), at Ravenna High School

What to watch: This is the 22nd time the Warriors have made the playoffs and the fifth season in a row they've qualified. Walsh is coming off a 35-21 win over the ninth-seeded Hudson and hope to return to

the Division II, Region 5 final for the second season in a row. ... This is the 15th time Fitch is in the playoffs and the fifth season in a row it qualified. The Falcons are coming off a 42-21 win over fifth-seeded Warren Harding and hope to reach their first regional final since 1992. ... Third-team All-Ohio QB Keller Moten (93-of-169, 1,537 yards, 16 TDs; 113 carries, 1,079 yards, 19 TDs) leads Walsh. Marty Tobin (106 carries, 905 yards, nine TDs), Lucas Weaver (101 carries, 673, eight) and Carlos Smith (54, 486, eight) head the rushing attack. The Warriors go to either Aiden Henry (39 catches, 558 yards, three TDs) or Milan Parris (26, 573, eight) in the passing game. ... Fitch is coming off a Week 12 win where it ran for 372 yards and averaged 9.1 yards per play against Harding. Deon'Dray Richard is coming off a 228-yard rushing performance with three TDs on 22 carries. Junie Higgs was an incredible complementary piece in the win, rushing for 122 yards and three scores on 14 carries. ... Returning third-team All-Ohio LB Rocco DiFlorio leads a Fitch defense that has held opponents to 17 points or less in seven games. LBs Dylan Krohn (11 tackles, sack) and Marky Fitzgerald (10, sack) combined for 6.5 tackles for loss last week and held the Raiders to 3.6 yards per carry. ... The winner plays either No. 2 Hoban (10-2) or No. 3 Nordonia (10-2) next week at a site to be determined.

Who will win: Walsh Jesuit 35-21.

2 Hoban (10-2) vs. 3 Nordonia (10-2), at Barberton High School

What to watch: Five-time state champion Hoban beat Lake 21-14 last Friday and Nordonia defeated Green 42-17. ... Each team is led by an experienced head coach with Tim Tyrrell at Hoban and Jeff Fox at Nordonia. ... Hoban and Nordonia both will try to establish their running games against good defenses. ... Nordonia QB Ben Chesser has completed 123 of 201 passes for 1,480 yards and 15 touchdowns, and rushed for 765 yards and 13 TDs on 129 carries. ... Nordonia relies on running RBs Rocco DeLorenzo (947 yards, 13 TDs, 141 carries); Khylan Osbey (636 yards, 10 TDs, 77 carries) and Liam Kountz (465 yards,

seven TDs, 54 carries) behind linemen DK Liverpool, Gabe Hart, Grant Lefeld, Luke Williams and Gavin Kanar.. ... Nordonia's Danny Ours and Owen Smotek each have three TD catches. Sam Collins, Brenden Chaddock and Osbey have two TD catches apiece. ... Nordonia's leaders defensively are Caleb Aiken, Blake Allen, Karsen Fisher, Connor Whapham, Jordan Jackson, Ben Bollas, Vince Natali and Ours. ... Hoban's rushing attack features Brayton Feister, Elbert Hill IV, Ethan Roksandich and La'Near Folk behind linemen Nate Cross, Braylin Parker, Joseph Burkeen, Sam Greer and Rylee Pickering. Feister has run for 1,483 yards and 19 TDs on 209 carries, and has one receiving TD. Roksandich has 57 carries for 410 yards and seven TDs. ... Trent Hayden has been Hoban's primary quarterback for more than a month and has a talented receiving group with tight end Tayte Crable and wide receivers John Johnson, Jackson Callaway, Tylan Boykin, Payton Cook and Hill. Callaway has four receiving TDs, Hill has three and Johnson has two. ... Hoban's defense is led by Ohio State recruit Eli Lee, Tanner Mintz, Nick Crawford, Ace Brown, Owen Turner, Hill, Boykin and Cook. ... Each team has a solid kicker with Jeremy Hammel at Hoban and Riley Edgehouse at Nordonia.

Who will win: Hoban 28-24.

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Division II, Region 6

2 Highland (12-0) vs. 3 Whitehouse Wayne (12-0), at Bellevue High School

What to watch: This is the 14th time the Hornets have made the playoffs and the fifth season in a row they've qualified. Highland is coming off 49-20 win over 10th-seeded Toledo St. Frances DeSales and hopes to return to the Division II, Region 6 final for the second season in a row. The Generals are making

their 15th trip to the playoffs and have qualified nine years in a row. Wayne is coming off a 35-14 win over 11th-seeded Sandusky and hope to return to a regional final for the first time since 2016. ... Highland beat Anthony Wayne last season 31-10 in the exact same round. ... Casey Myser continues to set the standard at Highland and has 42 TDs this season. He has scored nine TDs in the postseason and has rushed for 1,940 yards on 207 carries this season. Dylan Borla broke the single-season school record for TD passes (25) last week and is 85-for-118 for 1,884 yards. Evan Foust (23 catches, 495 yards, 4 TDs) is his primary receiver. All-Ohioans Carson Noonan and Ryan Zyweic lead a defense that gave up double digit points for the first time in 10 weeks. That defense allows only 7.1 points per game. ... Anthony Wayne has two-way threats in first-team All-Ohio QB Grant Kinnee (88-of-143, 1,252 yards, 17 TDs; 143 carries, 1,226 yards, six TDs) and Braden Gardner (108 carries, 951 yards, seven TDs; 15 catches, 279 yards, six TDs). Cameron Miller (18 catches, 302 yards, three TDs) is Kinnee's primary receiver. Casius Krueger (128 tackles, 10 for loss) and Billy Cousino (31 tackles, eight sacks) lead a defense that has held opponents to 14 points or less 10 times. The winner will play either top-seeded Avon (12-0) or No. 4 Wadsworth (11-1) next week at a site to be determined.

Who will win: Highland 28-21.

5 Wadsworth (11-1) vs. 1 Avon (12-0), at Strongsville High School

What to watch: Wadsworth defeated North Ridgeville 21-10 last Friday and Avon topped Olmsted Falls 52-25. ... Avon is undefeated with seven wins over teams with a winning record (two over Olmsted Falls and one apiece over McKinley, Glenville, North Ridgeville, Amherst and Avon Lake). ... The Eagles have scored between 35 and 52 points in 10 of their 12 games. The two closest games were McKinley (21-14) and Glenville (13-12). ... Avon's Nolan Good ran for a TD and three two TD passes to Maxey. Cam Wendell scored two TDs, and Quiante Smith and Tyler Kaufmann both added a TD. ... Wadsworth's

Cooper Gray, Gavin Madigan and Jacob Earnest each scored against North Ridgeville. Gray ran for a 45-yard TD, Madigan caught for a 4-yard TD pass from Brysen Hall and Ernest recovered a fumble and ran 85 yards for a TD.

Who will win: Avon 35-28

OHSAA football playoffs: Complete OHSAA Round 2 schedule

Division III, Region 9

3 CVCA (10-2) vs. 2 Gilmour Academy (11-1), at Twinsburg High School

What to watch: CVCA beat Chardon 19-16 last Friday and Gilmour topped Maple Heights 40-6. ... CVCA is led by RB-LB Joey Kopec. He has run for 1,043 yards and 10 TDs on 164 carries, has 15 catches for 225 yards and three TDs and has returned an interception for a TD and a kickoff for a TD. He has six interceptions and is closing in on 100 tackles. ... Royals QB Charley Levak has run for 624 yards and 11 TDs on 102 carries, and completed 59 of 110 passes for 942 yards and nine TDs. ... CVCA's rushing attack also includes Wesley Keeler, Nick Schober, Tommy Kopec, Ryan Wiehe and Zac Anderson. Wiehe has 512 yards and five TDs on 54 carries. Anderson has 82 carries for 438 yards and one TD. ... Brayden Harris is CVCA's leading receiver with 27 catches for 427 yards and four TDs. TE Dreylin Price is also a threat on special plays with four catches for 113 yards and two TDs. ... CVCA coach Nick Cook is pleased with the play of offensive linemen David Grimes, Gabe Kautzman, Josiah Neumeyer, Ben Truax and Brady Martin. ... CVCA's leaders on defense are the Kopec brothers, Price, Keeler, Schober, Dirk Geiger, Ky'Ron Fikes and Nathan Cook (Nick's son). ... Nathan Cook has four interceptions. Tommy Kopec and Schober each have two interceptions. ... Gilmour is led by Ohio State recruit Brody Lennon. Other key players on

offense are Cooper Panteck, Sean Dillard, Lars Broberg, Nick Iliano, Nathan Lennon, CJ Santagata, Aiden McNamara. ... Panteck has completed 166 of 248 passes for 2,811 yards, 36 touchdowns and two interceptions. ... Dillard has 56 catches for 953 yards and 10 TDs. Brody Lennon has 34 catches for 699 yards and 11 TDs, and 14 carries for 95 yards and three TDs. Broberg has 31 catches for 570 yards and 10 TDs. ... Nate Lennon has run for 509 yards and seven TDs on 68 carries, Santagata has run for 314 yards and five TDs on 63 carries and McNamara is at 294 yards and nine TDs on 62 carries. ... Iliano has 26 catches for 484 yards and six TDs, 24 carries for 85 yards and three TDs and completed 12 of 22 passes for 212 yards and four TDs. ... The Lancers top defenders are Iliano, Santagata, McNamara, Brody Lennon, Tim Lennon, Mikey Soeder and Bernard McDonald.

Who will win: CVCA 35-28.

4 Aurora (11-1) vs. 1 Youngstown Ursuline (11-1), at Hoover High School

What to watch: Aurora's offense hasn't missed a beat in the postseason, putting up 42 points per game in the playoffs, including last week's 42-6 win over Geneva. ... In the absence of Lucas Manderbach, Xavier Board has stepped up at running back for Aurora. He now leads the Greenmen with 884 rushing yards for the season. ... Tommy Tartabini also has stepped up at running back, in addition to his defensive duties. Tartabini leads Aurora with 92 tackles. ... QB Ryan Dwyer continues to be a steady presence. He had completed 66% of his passes for 1,567 yards with 15 TDs and seven interceptions. ... Ursuline's lone loss came back in Week 1 in a 37-35 loss to Walsh Jesuit. In the playoffs, Ursuline has scored 44 points in each of its games. ... Quarterback DC Ferrell does it all for the Irish. He accounted for four TDs in the first quarter of Ursuline's 44-8 win over Villa Angela-St. Joseph, including a 97-yard TD pass and scoring runs of 47 and 60 yards. ... Outside of the loss to Walsh, Ursuline's defense has been stout, allowing just 6.2 points per game after Week 1.

Who will win: Ursuline 31-28

Division IV, Region 13

3 Streetsboro (12-0) vs. 2 Perry (11-1), at Burton Berkshire

What to watch: This game pits strength vs. strength. Streetsboro's offense has been explosive all season long. The Rockets haven't been held below 30 points in a game since Week 1 vs. CVCA. However, defense has been Perry's calling card, as the Pirates are allowing just 6.5 points a game ... Streetsboro's offensive engine has been QB Cohen Klimak. While Klimak has passed for 736 yards and 4 TDs, he does most damage with his legs, running for 1,759 yards and 34 TDs. ... Cohen has plenty of rushing threats around him in Janiere Cook (683 yards, 14 TDs), Marcus Council (881 yards, 10 TDs) and Logan Fincham (603 yards, nine TDs). ... Perry's lone defeat this season came in Week 3 with a 22-21 overtime loss to small-school powerhouse Kirtland. The Pirates are coming off a 3-0 win over Struthers in the second round as a field goal from Scott Stang in the first quarter provided the game's lone points. ... QB Walter Moses led the Pirates to the Division V state title last year and is a two-time All-Ohioan. He threw for 176 yards in the win over Struthers.

Who will win: Streetsboro 28-21

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

Division V, Region 17

2 Manchester (11-1) vs. 3 Poland (10-2), at Louisville Leopard Stadium

What to watch: This is the 28th time the Panthers have made the playoffs and the first time they're in the postseason in three years. Manchester is coming off a 41-19 win over seventh-seeded Berkshire and hope to make a regional final for the first time since 2019. The Bulldogs are making their 22nd appearance in the postseason and have made it six years in a row. They are coming off a 34-14 win over 11th-seeded Martins Ferry and hope to make a regional final for the first time since 2019. ... Manchester is led by Phil Partin (239 carries, 1,818 yards, 30 TDs) and Yaden Sharp (80 carries, 522 yards, eight TDs) on the ground. If Sharp (66-of-120, 907 yards, 10 TDs) has to pass, Jake Livingston (22 catches, 324 yards, four TDs) is his main target. While the Panthers prefer the run, they can go to the air as their three touchdown receptions showed last week. ... Manchester shines on defense where it has allowed 14 points or fewer eight times. ... Poland has won six straight since a 38-30 loss to unbeaten South Range. The winning streak includes a 39-18 victory over Canton Central Catholic in the first round. Freshman QB David Xipolitas ran for 135 yards and two TDs that night. He also threw two TD passes in last week's 34-14 win over Martins Ferry. ... The winner will play either top-seeded South Range (13-0) or fifth-seeded Garaway (10-2) next week at a site to be determined.

Who will win: Manchester 20-14

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