

Akron Beacon Journal

Akron-area OHSAA playoffs breakdowns, predictions in Ohio high school football

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

Nov. 12, 2025, 6:17 a.m. ET

It's the regional semifinal round of the OHSAA state playoffs for Ohio [high school football](#), and the cream in each division is quickly rising to the top.

Eight [Greater Akron](#) teams are in action in six games, all set to kick off at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 14. In Akron-area head-to-head games, [Hudson](#) (10-2) will play at [Hoban](#) (9-1) in Division II and [East](#) (10-2) will travel to [CVCA](#) (10-0) in Division III.

Keep reading to see who the Beacon Journal staff thinks will prevail in regional semifinals Friday night.

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

Friday's OHSAA football playoff predictions, breakdowns

Division II, Region 5

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

No. 5 [Hudson](#) (10-2) at No. 1 [Hoban](#) (9-1)

- **What to know:** Hudson is in the playoffs for the seventh year in a row and 18th time overall. The Explorers were Division I state semifinalists in 2014 and Division II state semifinalists in 2015 and 2016. ... Hoban is in the playoffs for the 11th year in a row and 21st time overall. Hoban won Division III state championships in 2015 and 2016 and Division II state championships in 2017, 2018 and 2020. The Knights were Division II state runners-up in 2021, 2022, 2023, and also made a Division III state semifinal appearance in 2002 and Division II state semifinals appearances in 2008 and 2024. ...

Hudson is led by linebackers Nathan Judy, Joe Cavalcanti and Brennan Funyak. ... Judy also plays tight end and quarterback. Judy caught a TD pass from QB Hayden Lipinski and threw a TD pass to Anthony Paolucci in last week's 14-12 win over Lake. ... Judy has 98 tackles (eight for loss), four sacks, an interception, 335 receiving yards and five receiving TDs. ... Cavalcanti has 103 tackles and recovered a fumble. ... Funyak has 92 tackles (11 for loss), a sack, an interception, forced two fumbles, 363 rushing yards, five rushing TDs, one receiving TD and one kickoff return for a TD. ... K-P Ian Katz has 46 touchbacks, made 43 of 44 PATs, 4 of 7 field goals and has a punting average of 39.1 yards. ... Hudson's other top players are OL-DL Andrew Lanham, WR-FS Anthony Paolucci, RB Reno Ferri, WR-CB Louie Castellarin, TE-RB Chris Horner, CB Evan Wolenski, OL Otto Grill, QB Hayden Lipinski and LB Trent Smith. ... Lanham has 42 pancake blocks and Grill has 31 pancake blocks. ... Lipinski is 125-of-213 passing for 1,653 passing yards with 19 TDs, and has four TDs rushing. ... Smith has 59 tackles, two sacks and two interceptions. ... Paolucci has 53 tackles, five interceptions, 193 receiving yards, three receiving TDs, a punt return TD and 312 punt return yards. ... Ferri has 851 rushing yards (5.9 average), six rushing TDs, 115 receiving yards and two TDs. ... Castellarin has 25 tackles, two interceptions, 327 receiving yards and three receiving TDs. ... Horner has 394 rushing yards, nine rushing TDs, 268 receiving yards and three receiving TDs. ... Wolenski has 34 tackles, a fumble recovery and an in interception. ... Hoban's Payton Cook started at QB in last week's 38-0 win over Boardman and Eastern Michigan recruit Nick Kinsey entered as a reserve after missing two games with an injury. ... Cook, a Louisville recruit as a WR, is 11-of-17 passing for 150 yards and a touchdown. Cook also has 20 catches for 301 yards and three TDs, and has run for 107 yards and two TDs on 14 carries. ... Kinsey has completed 67 of 127 passes for 1,045 yards with 10 TDs. ... RB-LB Brayton Feister has run for 870 yards and 14 TDs on 97 carries, and has 102 tackles (32 for loss), nine sacks, one defensive TD, two interceptions and four forced fumbles. ... Hoban also features OL Sam Greer (Ohio State recruit, 46 pancake blocks), DB-WR-KR-PR Elbert "Rock" Hill IV (USC recruit), DL Ace Brown (Colorado State recruit), WR-DBs Jackson Callaway and John Johnson, RB Jance Henry, LBs Patrick Kinsell and Brydon Feister, DBs Kahlil Diming and Jaiden Daniels, OLs Braylin Parker and Rylee Pickering, DL Devanaire Riley and K Jeremy Hammel. ... Hill has 40 tackles (five for loss), nine interceptions, 32 pass breakups, one blocked punt, two kickoff return TDs and one punt return TD. ... Henry has run for 803 yards and eight TDs on 115 carries. ... Callaway has 20 catches for 299 yards and two TDs. He has also returned two punts for TDs, a kickoff for a TD and an interception for a TD. ... Kinsell has 54 tackles (21 for loss), 11 sacks and two forced fumbles. ... Brydon Feister has 90 tackles (19 for loss), four sacks and an

interception. ... Brown has 39 tackles (19 for loss), nine sacks and recovered three fumbles. ... Diming has 49 tackles (10 for loss), two sacks, an interception and 22 pass breakups. ... Daniels has 21 tackles, three interceptions and 21 pass breakups. ... Riley has 36 tackles, eight sacks, forced two fumbles and recovered two fumbles. ... Hammel has made 38 of 39 PATs and 10 of 14 field goals.

Who will win: Hoban 35-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 2 Walsh Jesuit (9-1) or No. 3 Austintown Fitch (10-2)

No. 3 Austintown Fitch (9-1) at No. 2 Walsh Jesuit (9-1)

What to know: [Walsh coach Nick Alexander](#) and Fitch coach T.J. Parker are friends whose teams have scrimmaged and met in the playoffs the last few years. [Walsh](#) won both recent postseason clashes, prevailing [42-28 in 2024](#) and 58-21 in 2023. [Walsh](#) is 2-1 in the all-time series. Fitch's lone win over Walsh occurred in a 1986 playoff game. ... Walsh is dealing with uncertainty at quarterback after junior starter David Ternosky suffered an injury late in the first half of last week's [49-18 win over Nordonia](#). Ternosky and backup junior QB Ben Biel each threw two TD passes against Nordonia. This week, Alexander characterized Ternosky's status as "day to day," and added Biel will start against Fitch if Ternosky cannot play. ... This third-round matchup will feature standout running backs. Walsh senior Marty Tobin compiled 13 carries for 262 yards and three TDs and one catch for a 25-yard TD against Nordonia. In Fitch's 28-25 win over Green last week, Fitch junior running back Deon'Dray Richard rushed 29 times for 165 yards and three TDs. In last year's regional semifinal between Walsh and Fitch, Tobin had 73 yards on 11 carries and Richard had 205 yards and a TD on 26 carries. ... On defense, Walsh has a tough front featuring junior end Dario Jeras, senior end Cade Romanini and senior LB Caden Carter. Last week, Romanini recovered a fumble forced by Carter. Fitch senior LB Anthony Nespeca is a defensive leader who recorded an interception and a fumble recovery against Green. "They're physical," Alexander said. "Their defense is pretty stout, and they have a really good running back that is explosive."

Who will win: Walsh 35-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 Hoban (9-1) or No. 5 Hudson (10-2)

Division II, Region 6

No. 4 North Ridgeville (10-1) at No. 1 Highland (11-0)

What to know: This is 15th playoff appearance and sixth consecutive for the Hornets,

who reached the state semifinals in 2013. They opened Week 12 with a 38-7 win over No. 8 Brecksville. ... This is the seventh playoff appearance and fourth consecutive for the Rangers, who opened Week 12 with a 42-7 over No. 5 Whitehouse Anthony Wayne. ... This is a regional quarterfinal rematch from 2023, won 28-7 by Highland. ... The Rangers average 381.0 yards on offense, led by first-team All-Northeast Inland Lakes District QB Cole Miller (121-for-223 passing, 1,473 yards, 12 TDs, eight interceptions; 156 carries, 1,559 yards, 18 TDs). Zack Barnhart (74 carries, 450 yards, seven TDs) also aids the rushing attack. ... Dylan DeShazo (37 receptions, 532 yards, seven TDs), Duke Baker (33 receptions, 334 yards, two TDs) and Cole Allison (25 receptions, 264 yards, TD) are Miller's main receivers. ... First-team all-district LB Nolan Gill (101 tackles, eight for loss, three sacks, fumble recovery) and DB Carter Clark (76 tackles, three interceptions) lead a defense that has given up 14 points or less six times this season. LB Ryan Anderson (74 tackles, interception, fumble recovery) also stars on defense. ... Two-time Suburban League American Conference Offensive Player of the Year Casey Myser (124 carries, 1,057 yards, 22 TDs) broke the Medina County career scoring record last week (534 points) and leads a Highland offense scoring 46.7 points per game. ... Grady Gibb (81-for-95 passing, 1,430 yards passing, 18 TDs, two interceptions) has a 149.6 quarterback rating. ... Lucas Gerding (24 catches, 432 yards, four TDs) and Nick Dobkowski (15 receptions, 351 yards, three TDs) are his primary receivers. ... SL American Conference Co-defensive Player of the Year Evan Foust (55 tackles, 13 for loss, two fumble recoveries), Dobkowski (six interceptions), Jameson Gordon (52 tackles, 9.5 for loss, five pass breakups, two interceptions) and Dan Miller (28 tackles, 11.5 for loss, three fumble recoveries, defensive TD) lead a unit that allows just 47.9 yards rushing, 152.9 total yards and 5.4 points per game.

Who will win: Highland 35-17

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 2 Wadsworth (11-0) or No. 3 Avon (10-1)

No. 3 Avon (10-1) at No. 2 Wadsworth (11-0)

What to know: This is the 17th playoff appearance and fourth consecutive for the Grizzlies, who opened Week 12 with a 34-6 win over No. 7 Toledo St. Francis. ... This is the 18th consecutive playoff appearance and 15th straight for the Eagles, who are the reigning state champions, were runners-up in 2011 and have reached nine state semifinals. ... This is a regional semifinal rematch from last season, won 41-10 by Avon. ... The Eagles are led by All-Northeast Lakes Offensive Player of the Year Blake Elder. The senior QB is 144-for-210 passing for 2,391 yards and 28 TDs against just three interceptions. ... First-team all-district wide WR Grant Barr (52 receptions, 846 yards, 10

TDs, two two-point conversions), Fin Jerdonek (35 receptions, 531 yards, seven TDs) and Caden Clapham (19 receptions, 343 yards, four TDs) are his primary receivers. The Eagles are a run-by-committee group. Michael Colburn (75 carries, 381, seven TDs), Quiante Smith (50 carries, 266 yards, five TDs) and Cam Wendell (47 carries, 190 yards, eight TDs) are the stars. ... All-Northeast Lakes Defensive Player of the Year Ryan Stolarski is a beast at linebacker. The senior and Miami (Ohio) commit has 61 tackles, seven for loss, four sacks, four QB pressures, a fumble recovery, a forced fumble and interception. North Carolina commit Jakob Weatherspoon (43 tackles, interception, three pass breakups) has shut down everyone this season. Avon allows 10.1 points per game... The Grizzlies are led by Suburban League National Conference Offensive Player of the Year Gavin Madigan (102 carries, 1,102 yards, 21 TDs) and Cooper Gray (142 carries, 1,131 yards, 17 TDs) on the ground. ... Pay too much attention to the run and the passing game of Brysen Hall (115-for-174 passing, 2, 271 yards, 27 TDs, two interceptions) and Calix Lemp (41 receptions, 971 yards, 15 TDs) will get you. ... SL National Conference Co-defensive Player of the Year and senior LB Jacob Earnest (63.5 tackles, 10 for loss, nine quarterback hurries, three pass breakups, defensive TD) is the head of a defense that gives up 9.6 points per game.

Who will win: Wadsworth 28-24

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 Highland (11-0) or No. 4 North Ridgeville (10-1)

Ohio high school football rankings: [Final USA Today Network Ohio Super 25 Poll for 2025](#)

Division III, Region 9

No. 6 **East** (10-2) at No. 2 **CVCA** (10-0)

What to know: It's the North Coast Conference champion vs. the Akron City Series champion, with each team looking to reach its first regional final in school history. ... CVCA continued its undefeated season in Week 12 by following a familiar formula to rout Geneva 42-7. The Royals broke 300 yards rushing again, while their defense held the Eagles scoreless until the fourth quarter. ... CVCA's defense has been stingy all season. The Royals are allowing just 8 points per game. ... The Royals' running back corps is one of the deepest in Northeast Ohio. Against Geneva, Zac Anderson led the way with 118 yards rushing on just five carries, and Joey Kopec added 103 yards on five carries. ... Tommy Kopec, Wesley Keeler and Reed Jones all can make an impact at running back, and QB Charley Levak also can make plays with his legs. ... Although Levak is throwing

only five passes per game, he makes the most of his passing attempts. Levak's performance against Geneva was representative, as he went 2-of-4 passing for 76 yards, but that included a 62-yard TD pass to Joey Kopec. ...By winning its first two playoff games, East has doubled the number of playoff wins in school history. The Dragons upset No. 3 seed Hawken 36-16 in Week 12. ... After a 2-2 start, the Dragons come in on an eight-game winning streak. Defense has been a major part of it, as East has allowed just 7.9 points per game during the streak. ... East QB Marlin Engram Jr. has been a two-way threat all season. In the win over Hawken, Engram threw for 159 yards and a TD, and ran for 65 yards and another score. ... Engram has several weapons to throw to, including Emmanuel Jefferson, Terrell Wharton Jr. and Lavance Bratton. ... Lawrence Cherry Jr. has been the primary running back for the Dragons. He ran for 73 yards on just seven carries vs. Hawken.

Who will win: CVCA 35-14

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 Canfield (10-1) or No. 4 Cleveland VA-SJ (9-1)

Division VII, Region 25

No. 7 East Canton (10-1) at No. 3 Mogadore (10-1)

What to know: East Canton is enjoying a historic postseason. The Hornets have won consecutive playoff games for the first time and are a win away for their first regional final. They will carry a six-game winning streak into the third round. ... East Canton overcame a Fairport return for a touchdown on the opening kickoff and beat the Skippers 46-26 on the road last week. Owen McCroskey threw for 184 yards and a TD and Dillon Anderson ran for 99 yards and two TDs for the Hornets, who rolled up 430 total yards. McCroskey also ran for a touchdown and caught a TD pass from Anderson. ... Anderson has rushed for 12 touchdowns and is 38 yards shy of 1,000 for the season. He also leads the defense with 153 tackles and eight sacks at linebacker. McCroskey has completed almost 70% of his passes for 1,659 yards and eight TDs. Ayden Stephens is East Canton's top receiver with 77 catches for 803 yards and 11 TDs. ... Mogadore opened the postseason with a 54-7 win over East Palestine. Conner Lehner had a monster game for the Wildcats with 242 rushing yards and four TDs on eight carries — all in the first half. ... Maddox Smith is a dual-threat QB who helps lead a Wildcats offense that scores just over 31 points a game.

Who will win: Mogadore 28-21

What's next: Winner advances to play No. 1 McDonald (11-0) or No. 4 Monroeville (9-2)

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.