



Highland holds on for 13-10 win over Hudson, claims outright Suburban League National title

Updated: Oct. 23, 2026, 10:46 p.m. | Published: Oct. 23, 2026, 10:27 p.m.



Highland senior wide receiver Evan Foust scores a touchdown in a 13-10 win over Hudson on Oct. 23, 2026. Ryan Isley, cleveland.com

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By [Ryan Isley, cleveland.com](#)

HUDSON, Ohio – It came down to the final seconds, but Highland held on to capture the Suburban League National Division title outright with a 13-10 win over Hudson on Friday night.

With the Hornets (9-1, 7-0) leading by three with just 21 seconds remaining, Hudson had the ball at its own 35-yard-line with no timeouts remaining. Quarterback Hayden Lipinski hit Gavin Hitchcock for a 40-yard pass to the Highland 25-yard-line.

The Explorers (7-3, 4-3) got to the line and spiked the ball with time left for a 42-yard field goal attempt to tie the game, but the ball fluttered well right and the Hornets began to celebrate.

“Everything was hard tonight,” Highland head coach Mike Gibbons said. “It just was one of those tough games on both sides of the ball. It was kind of a gritty performance by our guys, and I am just proud of the way they kept battling all night.



Highland, No. 7 in the [latest cleveland.com NE Ohio Top 25](#) and No. 20 in the [Ohio Big 25](#), took a 13-0 lead into the half on the strength of two field goals by Jonah Kowza and a 13-yard touchdown pass from sophomore quarterback Colton Walde to Evan Foust with 38 seconds left.

On the play, Foust came wide open in the end zone behind the second level of the Hudson defense after the Hornets put a runner in motion before the snap.

“We worked on it in practice like throughout the week, and it was a great play,” Foust said. “I knew we were going call it at some point in the game, and it was just the perfect time to call it.”

Hudson made a comeback in the second half and cut the lead to just 13-10 on a Reno Ferri touchdown run from seven yards out with 7:21 left in the game.

The Explorers then got the ball back with a chance to tie or take the lead late in the fourth quarter and had a pass completion that looked to set Hudson up deep in Highland territory, but Foust tracked down the receiver and punched the ball out for a fumble, recovered by Ben Radigan with 2:24 left.

“I went up for the wrap tackle,” Foust said. “We’ve been working on punching out the ball all year. And I came around with my fist and punched the ball out just like we practiced, and it worked well.”

It was the fifth turnover forced by the Hornets on the night, and senior Chatham Phillips had two interceptions.