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Ohio Big 50 countdown: Who are the state's best linebackers in high school football?

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Archbishop Hoban's Brayton Feister (18) and Devanaire Riley (bottom) tackle Walsh Jesuit's Marty Tobin during the OHSAA Division II regional finals on Friday, Nov. 21, 2025, in Bedford. John Kuntz, cleveland.com



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By [Matt Goul, cleveland.com](#)

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Following Monday's look at [quarterbacks around Ohio](#), it's time to gauge the leaders of the defense at linebacker.

This linebacker watch list is part of cleveland.com's new Ohio Big 50 series, which will rank the state's top high school football players regardless of classification later this summer. We are starting with position-by-position looks at the top recruits throughout the spring.

Here are the top linebackers (class years based on fall 2026):

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Judah Blair, Lakota West, jr.

Blair can play on the outside or inside and is considered a four-star prospect, according to 247Sports. His offers include Indiana, Cincinnati and North Carolina. As a sophomore, Blair had 57 tackles with 25 solo and 15.5 tackles for loss. He also scored once on defense with three sacks and an interception.

Mason Cerovac, Olmsted Falls, sr.

Cerovac will be a third-year starter and is a multi-sport standout who also plays basketball and lacrosse. He led the Bulldogs through the regular season with 79 tackles, eight TFL and five sacks as a junior. Cerovac has offers from West Virginia, Kent State and Miami (Ohio).

James Conrad, St. Ignatius, sr.

In six games last year, Conrad had 21 solo tackles and five TFL with two sacks. The 6-foot-3, 225-pounder has offers from Toledo and Massachusetts.

Jahmiere Daniels-Portis, Springfield, sr.

An All-Ohio pick last year in Division I on the second team, Daniels-Portis has offers from Cincinnati and Illinois. He totaled 88 tackles with 14.5 TFL last year and had five sacks, two interceptions and six forced fumbles.

Brayton Feister, Archbishop Hoban, sr.

A 2,000-yard back as a sophomore, Feister concentrated on linebacker last season and earned All-Ohio first-team honors in Division II. That is where he is projected to play at the next level, as a four-star prospect with offers that include Ohio State, Indiana, Michigan, Oregon, Notre Dame and USC. He totaled 133 tackles with 39 TFL, 13 sacks and two interceptions as a junior at Hoban (10-2). He also rushed for 1,098 yards and 17 TDs.

Brydon "Squeak" Feister, Archbishop Hoban, jr.

The younger brother of Brayton Feister, Brydon also made the All-Ohio first team last season. He had 110 tackles with 22 TFL and five sacks. At 6-3 and 210 pounds, he has offers from Ohio State, Indiana, Michigan and Arizona State. He also is a two-

He led the Knights with 103 tackles, including 51 solo hits, 17 TFL and three sacks. Fisher has tremendous upside at 6-3 and 230 pounds and used that frame to block two kicks last year. Miami (Ohio) has offered him a scholarship. Fisher also plays tight end and had 587 yards with six TDs on 32 receptions.

Evan Foust, Highland, sr.

Foust might not come off the field much. He made the All-Ohio second team in Division II and had 73 tackles with 3.5 sacks on defense, plus 255 yards with four TDs on 14 receptions at tight end.





Anderson's Antwoine Higgins waits for the Avon snap in the second half of their OHSAA Division II state final Dec. 4, 2025, in Canton. John Kuntz, cleveland.com

Antwoine Higgins, Cincinnati Anderson, sr.

Higgins has been part of two defenses that helped Anderson to the Division II state finals against Avon in 2024 and '25. Higgins made the All-Ohio first team last year after compiling 67 tackles with 8.5 TFL and three sacks. He holds offers from Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky and Ole Miss.

Tommy Kopec, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, jr.

With older brother Joey now at Rutgers, Tommy will be the big man on campus at CVCA. He had 61 tackles with five TFL and three sacks for the Royals to make All-Ohio honorable mention in Division III.

Josiah Pouncy, Cincinnati Taft, sr.

Pouncy put up big numbers last year for Taft with 126 solo tackles, 186 total and 42 TFL. He forced three fumbles and had a pick six, receiving honorable mention All-Ohio in Division IV. Pouncy committed in February to Louisville.



Matt Goul