

Akron Beacon Journal

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Vote for Akron-Area Football's Best Offensive, Defensive Players of 2025



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As the start of the [2025 Ohio high school football regular season](#) approaches, we're going to spend the next few weeks looking ahead through assorted [Akron-area preseason polls](#).

Your votes will determine the Akron-area's preseason picks as the top players and [teams](#) for the season ahead.

We continue this week with who you think will be the best offensive and defensive players of the 2025 season. Each poll will be live until 5 p.m. Aug. 14. The winner will be announced in the morning Aug. 15 on [BeaconJournal.com](#).

Players are listed alphabetically and each poll follows a look at the candidates.

Who will be Akron-area football's top offensive player in 2025?

Brayton Feister, Hoban, RB, junior

[Feister was second-team All-Ohio in Division II last year](#) after running for 2,104 yards and 26 TDs on 296 carries. He has 23 Division I college scholarship offers.

Need a break? [Play the USA TODAY Daily Crossword Puzzle](#).

Sam Greer, Hoban, OT, senior

[Greer](#) is a first-team All-Ohio selection and a four-star Ohio State commit. He has 25 Division I college offers and helped Hoban run for 331.2 yards per game and 6.8 yards per carry in 2024. Greer is the No. 2-ranked tackle in the state and is No. 7 in the nation, according to [247Sports.com](#).

Brysen Hall, Wadsworth, QB, sophomore

[Hall](#) was 142-for-245 passing for 2,118 yards and 22 touchdowns in 8½ games last season. He earned the starting role in Week 3 against Medina and went 9-2 the rest of the way, taking the Grizzlies to the Division II regional semifinals.

Tyson Hunka, Green, QB, senior

[Hunka](#) comes back to the Bulldogs as a three-year starter who threw for 2,076 yards and 17 touchdowns and ran for 496 yards and four touchdowns last season. He has passed for 2,647 yards, 28 touchdowns and 13 interceptions in 18 career starts.

Andrew McKnight, Copley, WR, senior

[McKnight was second-team All-Ohio in Division III last year](#) after he caught 57 passes for 926 yards (16.2 average) and scored 14 TDs. The versatile [McKnight](#) also ran for 72 yards and a TD on 18 carries, lined up at quarterback on some plays, punts and is the holder on kicks.

Casey Myser, Highland, RB, senior

[Myser](#) was first-team [All-Ohio in Division II last year](#) after he set school records with 2,130 rushing yards, 39 rushing touchdowns and 46 total TDs. [Myser](#) averaged 8.4 yards on 254 carries and contributed 21 catches for 558 yards (26.6 average) and seven TDs.

Milan Parris, Walsh Jesuit, WR, senior

[Parris was second-team All-Ohio in Division II last year](#) after he caught 28 passes for 597 yards (21.3 average) and scored nine touchdowns. [Parris](#) has scholarship offers from 15 Division I colleges.

Phil Partin, Manchester, RB, junior

[Partin was first-team All-Ohio in Division V last year](#) after he totaled 268 carries for 1,961 rushing yards (7.3 average) and 32 TDs to lead Manchester (11-2) to a Division V regional semifinal. [Partin](#) accounted for 43% of Manchester's total offense.

Lucas Tielsch, Copley, OT, senior

[Tielsch](#) is a first-team All-Ohio selection and a four-star Minnesota commit with 26 Division I college offers. He registered 26 pancake blocks in 2024 and is a top-50 player in the state regardless of position, according to [247Sports.com](#), and a top-100 tackle in the nation.

Who will be Akron-area football's top defensive player in 2025?

Ace Brown, Hoban, DE, senior

Brown was an [All-Northeast Inland District](#) selection last season after registering 49 tackles, including 16 for a loss, 12 sacks and two forced fumbles.

Jacob Earnest, Wadsworth, LB, senior

Earnest is an aggressive and intelligent linebacker who earned second-team All-Ohio honors after he had 126 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, three sacks and an interception last season.

Brayton Feister, Hoban, LB, junior

[Feister](#) is an impact player anywhere on the field and is ranked nationally by recruiting sites as one of the top 10 linebackers in his class. He has more than 23 college offers, including from Michigan, Oregon and USC.

Gavin Gindlesperger, Manchester, EDGE, senior

[Gindlesperger](#) logged 59 tackles, 18 for loss, and had 16 quarterback pressures and 6½ sacks to help Manchester finish 11-2 one year after an 1-9 season in 2023.

Elbert Hill IV, Hoban, CB, senior

[Hill](#) was first-team All-Ohio in Division II last year as a defensive back after he totaled five interceptions and more than 65 tackles. [Hill](#), the top-ranked cornerback in the nation for the 2026 class and 15th regardless of position, has scholarship offers from 33 Division I colleges and chose USC over other finalists Ohio State, Alabama, Oregon, Penn State and Michigan.

Dario Jeras, Walsh Jesuit, DE, junior

[Jeras](#) registered 70 tackles and five sacks to help Walsh Jesuit, which gave up 13.4 points per game and logged four shutouts, to its first undefeated regular season since 1998.

Joey Kopec, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, LB, senior

A three-time All-Ohio selection, Kopec has been a leader on CVCA's defense since his freshman year. He picked up 85 tackles and six interceptions in 2024, leading the Royals to their deepest playoff run in school history, and has committed to play at Rutgers in college.

Terrell Wharton Jr., East, CB, senior

What to know: One of the best athletes in the City Series, Wharton has college offers from 15 Division I programs, including Penn State and Wisconsin. Look for him to have a big season for the Dragons.

Buddy Willig, Norton, DB, senior

Willig could play any position off the line on either side of the ball for Norton, but he earned second-team All-Ohio honors last year as a defensive back. A ball hawk with speed, he has returned several interceptions for touchdowns during his Panthers career.

2025 Beaconjournal.com High School Football Preseason Reader Poll Winners

[Aug. 1](#) - **Game of Year:** Hudson at Highland

[Aug. 8](#) - **Surprise Team of the Year:** Woodridge

Editor's note: Winners of the Akron-Area Athlete of the Week in the spring are not eligible to win it again until the fall sports season begins. **Coaches and athletic directors:** Submit nominees for Akron-Area High School Athlete of the Week at bjsports@thebeaconjournal.com