

# Running downhill

## Foust a standout blocker, tackler

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The Gazette

Evan Foust has spent most of his stellar junior season blocking for people with the football or tackling those who are attempting to run with it. Next year he could be the guy with the pigskin in his hands, but that's a story for another day.

Right now, all the 5-foot-10, 200-pound H-back/linebacker and his Highland football teammates care about is defeating defending Division II state champion Avon when the top-seeded Hornets (12-0) and third-seeded Eagles (11-1) meet in a Region 6 championship game tonight at 7 at Brunswick Auto Mart Stadium.

Avon, everyone in the Highland program knows, beat the Hornets at this point of the season the last two years.

"They have a really good program and they've always got some really big dudes," Foust said. "They have a lot of resources and their program is just really good."

"It's going to take the whole team coming together, 11 as one, and us firing on all cylinders. Even the peo-

ple in the stands, everyone's got to be on top of their game. This is the best of the best going at it. It's going to take everything to beat this team."

The 2025 Suburban League American Conference co-Defensive Player of the Year and a first-team All-Northeast Inland D-II District choice, Foust is no stranger to leaving it all on the field.

After leading Highland in tackles and receiving yards and earning All-Gazette honors as a blocking and receiving H-back as a sophomore, the 16-year-old with a 4.14 grade-point average not only tops the Hornets in tackles this season with 63, he's also first on the team with 14 tackles for loss, 3½ sacks and three forced fumbles.

Just as important, Foust is a pivotal blocker at H-back — he often calls his position tight end — for quarterback Grady Gibb and running back Casey Myser, as well as a great receiving target with 14 catches for 255 yards (18.2-yard average) and four touchdowns. While those receiving numbers may not jump off the page, it's important to note that Foust's catches are tied for third — and just two behind second — on a team that has outscored opponents 515-54, including 396-7 in the first half.

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Foust



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Highland's Evan Foust collects a pass past North Ridgeville's Carter Clark for a 31-yard gain.

## FOUST

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"He's been outstanding," Highland coach Mike Gibbons said. "He's a very quiet kid, not extremely vocal. He lets his play do the talking. He has great athleticism and he blocks very violently. On defense, he's got a motor. The sky's the limit for him."

Foust is equally important on both sides of the ball, but a lot of what he does on offense goes unnoticed to the casual fan. Opponents know, however, and they realize if they forget about him in pass coverage, they could get burned. They also know he will often be the player blocking right in front of reigning Gazette co-MVP Myser.

"Evan's a really aggressive blocker," linebacker partner Jameson Gordon said. "He's always out to get somebody. He's got a non-stop motor and never gets tired, I swear."

Foust, who benches 315 pounds, squats 490 and deadlifts 525, was a running back on the Highland freshman team and could go back to that position next year with Myser gone. Though only 5-10, he

wears size-14 shoes and could still have a growth spurt, which could improve his already solid 4.6-second speed in the 40-yard dash.

"He was awesome (at running back)," Gibbons said. "They had a really good (freshman) season, and he was a large reason why."

Foust eventually started playing on the junior varsity as a ninth-grader, and by the time the Hornets played Avon in the 2023 Region 6 championship, he was dressing for varsity games.

A defensive end in middle school, Foust was converted to linebacker at the high school level and became a starter on both sides of the ball as a sophomore. Over the last two seasons, he has 23 tackles for loss and 7½ sacks.

Individual accomplishments and statistics, however, mean next to nothing to Foust.

"I just want to play for my boys," he said. "My teammates are everything to me. I want to show I deserve to be out there, I've put in the work and I can do good things."

"I'm always pushing myself. I want to be in on every single play. I'm trying to give 200%

every play and take no plays off."

In a 48-0 regional semifinal victory over North Ridgeville (10-2) last week — Highland led 41-0 at halftime — Foust had a team-high eight tackles, a strip-sack and a pass breakup. He also gained 31 yards on his lone reception.

"It's always nice having someone on the other side of you that you know you can rely on," Gordon said. "If I miss something, he's always there to back me up. It's nice to have someone who is fast and plays downhill."

Whether he's on offense or defense, Foust simply wants to play. And when he's playing, he just wants to hit someone.

"I love blocking," he said. "It's amazing. I just like hitting people. It's fun to drive people back and pancake them. That's just a great feeling."

"Playing tight end helps at linebacker. I know how the linemen are going to try to block me, so I can read that. At linebacker I get to be nasty and hit people, and that helps me at tight end. On offense and defense, I get to really get after people."

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