

H.S. FOOTBALL PLAYOFF PREVIEW

INSIDE:

- QB Mikey Maloney and linebacker Cam Simpson are leaders for Riverside
- Chardon QB Alex Henry delivers for Hilltoppers
- Bye week changed Mentor for the better
- Perry kicker is exchange student from Poland
- Tiger LaVerde and sons enjoying season together at Kirtland
- Plus: Capsules on every area playoff game and statistics



OPINION

Expanded playoffs offer interesting tidbits

And then there were 448.

Kinda rolls of the tongue, doesn't it? OK, OK, sarcasm noted.



John Kampf

But when the 7 o'clock hour arrives on Friday, Oct. 28, that's how

many teams will begin postseason play when the first round of the OHSAA's football playoffs begin. Therefore, there are 448 teams who are alive for a state championship.

Starting last season, the governing body of scholastic sports expanded the playoffs to 16 teams per region. In doing so, some pretty interesting tidbits have come to light, such as:

- There are 29 teams still sporting undefeated records heading into postseason play.

Lakota West is the only remaining Division I team with an unblemished record, as four Division II teams — Hudson, Medina Highland, Cincinnati Winton Woods and Xenia.

While reigning Division III state-runner up Hamilton Badin is the only remaining undefeated team in Division III, Glenville,



PAUL DICICCO - FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Rocco Alfieri and Kirtland bring their undefeated record into the first round of the Division VI playoffs this weekend.

West Holmes and Cincinnati Wyoming are all spotless in Division IV.

Division V is loaded with undefeated teams.

Three of them (South Range, Sugarcreek Gateway, Richmond Edison) are in Region 17, three more in Region 19 (Iron-

ton, Harvest Prep and Barnesville), with yet again three more in Region 20 (Milton Union, Springfield Northeast-

ern and Chillicothe Zane Trace).

Liberty Center in Region 18 is also undefeated, leaving 10 such teams in Division V.

In Division VI, Kirtland, Mogadore and Valley Christian remain undefeated in Region 21, Ashland Crestview and Columbia are loss-less in Region 22, with Marion Local spotless in western Ohio.

The only remaining undefeated teams in Division VII are Lowellville, Antwerp and Waynesfield-Goshen.

- On the flip side, there are 65 teams in the statewide playoff field with a losing record. Eighteen of them are in Division VII, 14 of them are in Division I and 11 of them are in Division II.

- There are two teams in the playoff field with one win — Cincinnati LaSalle and Stow-Munroe Falls.

Stow-Munroe Falls won its opener against Cuyahoga Falls and lost the next nine in the Division I, Region 1 ranks.

In Division II, Region 8, Cincinnati LaSalle defeated Colerain in the opener, but then lost its next eight OHSAA-affiliated games. LaSalle's Week 2 opponent, a prep

school from Canada that they beat, does not count in the OHSAA's point system.

- Despite all the teams that got IN with a losing record, two didn't make it into the field despite their winning records — Tontogany Otsego (6-4) finished 17th in Division V, Region 18, while Columbus Briggs (5-4) finished 21st in Division II, Region 7.

- In what to be the first occurrence in OHSAA playoff history, South Gallia and Sciotoville East will play for a third time on Oct. 28.

The South Gallia Rebels (4-6) earned two of their wins this season against 5-5 Sciotoville East, 22-14 in Week 3 and 40-34 in Week 5. The Rebs will go for the trifecta this weekend.

- No one is traveling for a first-round game further than Malvern. Located in rural Carroll County, Malvern (8-2) will travel to Coal Grove Dawson-Bryant (6-4) in the southern tip of Ohio on Friday. The one-way trip is 264 miles long and will take — according to Mapquest.com — a shade over four hours.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Riverside reaping benefits of leaders

By John Kampf

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Dave Bors considers himself a lucky guy, and it's not because of the 9-1 record his team has heading into post-season play this weekend.

It's because of the unselfish leaders he has on his team that, if built differently, could have resulted in anything but the 9-1 team he has on his hands right now.

Back in late August, Bors sat in his office a little nervous about the meeting he was about to have with one of his players. He was about to tell the incumbent starting quarterback, one who threw for more than 1,000 yards the previous year, that the Beavers were going in a different direction at that position.

He was worried.

He shouldn't have been.

That morning, Bors told senior Cam Simpson that he would be moving to defense and that junior Mikey Maloney would be running the show on offense, this after Simpson replaced injured Maloney early in the 2021 season and went on to throw for 1,233 and 11 touchdowns while also rushing for 468 yards and seven scores.

"Absolutely I was concerned because Cam's a human and a competitor,"



JOHN KAMPF — THE NEWS-HERALD

Mikey Maloney (left) and Cam Simpson were in a quarterback battle all summer. Now they are leaders, and close friends, on both sides of the ball — Maloney at quarterback and Simpson at linebacker.

Bors said. "I knew how much he put into it."

After an hour-long conversation, Simpson revealed the senior leader he is.

"He said, 'Sure I'm a little disappointed, but I back Mikey 100 percent,'" Bors recalled. "If you think this is what's best for the team, I'm going to be best I can be on defense and be the best leader I can be."

"It really was awe-inspiring."

As Riverside heads into a Week 11 game against visiting Lakeside, the Beavers

continue to reap the benefits of Maloney at quarterback and Simpson at linebacker.

Maloney has thrown for 1,877 yards and 22 touchdowns, with 576 additional yards and 12 touchdowns coming in the running game.

Simpson is second on the team with 75 tackles, with 14 tackles for loss, three sacks, three fumble recoveries and two interceptions.

What could have been a team-crumbling decision if handled differently —

by any of the three parties — wasn't, and Riverside is reaping the benefits of that.

"Obviously it was a difficult situation. I played quarterback my entire life," Simpson said. "I just told coach 'You know what's best for the team. I'm not going to throw a fit.' I knew it would work out."

Maloney completed 84 percent of his passes for 241 yards in the early going of the 2021 season before breaking the thumb on his right hand in a special teams blocking drill in practice.

"It was at a 90-degree angle. I knew it was bad and my season was over," Maloney said of his sophomore season.

He and his friend, Simpson, battled all summer and through 7-on-7s for the quarterback spot. All the while, both dabbled on defense, too, with Simpson getting work at linebacker and Maloney at DB.

Cameron Ruff, a Riverside grad and a new face on his alma mater's coaching staff this fall, approached Bors noting the pair's defense prowess after a workout.

"He's like, 'Holy cow. I can't believe you have guys like this and they're not playing defense. That Simpson kid is unbelievable,'" Bors said.

"The trick was going to be who won the quarterback battle, because by default the other would play another position."

The move they made has worked out about as close to perfection as you could get. Maloney is one of the best — if not the best — dual-threat quarterbacks in the area with his throwing and running unnerving many a defensive coordinator.

Simpson adds a tough, hard-nosed athleticism to the outside linebacker spot opposite Jason Ryan, making Riverside's defense that much more scary.

Bors broke down what each brings to the table.

On Maloney, he said, "Mikey is a tremendous athlete with a lot of savvy and moxie. Anytime he touches the ball, it can go to the house, whether it's via air or on the ground. He's a major headache for opposing defenses."

On Simpson, he said, "You never have to worry about Cam Simpson. A very good athlete and he's so darn smart. We know that side is taken care of. We're good there. If you go away from Jason thinking the other side is the weak side, well, there is no weak side. He's that good."

Maloney said their friendship never wavered or suffered through it all.

"That wasn't going to happen, ever," he said. "He's helped me out so much. It's been a really good friendship throughout the whole process."

Simpson agreed.

"He's phenomenal," Simpson said. "We talk all the time. I'm SO glad he's on our team and not a quarterback we have to prepare for. He's fun to watch."

"We want the same thing, for the team to be as good as it possibly can be."

With Simpson and Maloney leading the way, the Beavers are hoping and planning on a long playoff run. Their team has already notched the undisputed Western Reserve Conference title, is state-ranked (ninth in the final Division II Associated Press poll) and is second in the Division II, Region 5 computer ratings.

But they want more.

If not for their unselfish nature at the beginning of the season, and their refusal to let a strong friendship be affected, that might not be possible.

But here they are — together — as a team.

"Riverside has never made it further than the second round of the playoffs," Maloney said of his team's goals. "We want to prove we are a team that's a serious threat."

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Chardon QB Henry always delivers

By John Kampf

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A dinner at the home of Chardon offensive coordinator Don Navatsyk, prepared for offensive players on the Hilltoppers' football team, had just finished up when Navatsyk's wife Nancy noticed she had help cleaning up.

Without any prompting, there was senior quarterback Alex Henry picking up dishes and silverware.

Perhaps Nancy Navatsyk was surprised.

Her husband wasn't.

Nor would anyone involved with the Chardon football program.

Because if anything has been learned the last three years about Alex Henry, it's this — he's going to do what needs to be done whether it's on or off the field.

When Henry was a sophomore, the Hilltoppers NEEDED him to play defense when their All-Ohio safety went out with a shoulder injury ... and he did.

A year ago when Henry was a junior, his team NEEDED him to be a runner and ball-distributor as a first-year starting quarterback ... and he led them to a state title.

This year as a seasoned veteran, they NEEDED him to be a leader of a young of-



TIM PHILLIS —
FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Alex Henry and the Chardon Hilltoppers will host Akron East in a Division III, Region 9 playoff opener on Oct. 28.

fensive unit until that group gained experience, and he's done that.

As Chardon (8-1) heads into the Division III, Region 9 playoffs, it does so with a quarterback who is 23-1 under center over the past two seasons. He's answered the bell as a runner, a passer and — yes — even a defender during his three years of varsity play with the Hilltoppers. Chardon opens postseason play as the second seed in Division III, Region 9 and will host Akron East (6-4) in a playoff opener on Oct. 28.

"Toughness, leadership, confidence ..." Coach Mitch Hewitt said, rattling off the captain's attributes. "He's got a presence that is unique. It's not fake. It's genuine. And I think it rubs on off on his teammates.

"He's the epitome of what

you're looking for in a Chardon quarterback."

But the quarterback position isn't where Henry's journey at Chardon started, nor where he thought it'd be.

"My first start was in a state semifinal game when Nathanael Sulka's shoulder popped out," said Henry, harkening back to Chardon's 47-7 win over Tiffin Columbian on Nov. 13, 2020. "He came back a week later, but I went in the game for him again in the fourth quarter (against Columbus DeSales).

"You know, as much as I hate to say it, I miss playing on the other side of the ball."

He's doing just fine where he is, though. Through nine regular-season games this year, the 6-foot-2, 195-pounder has run for 886 yards and eight touchdowns, while throwing for 620 yards and six scores. Couple that with his dynamic junior season in which he ran for 1,191 yards and 20 touchdowns, while also throwing for 747 yards and seven scores, and it's been a pretty impressive two-year run at quarterback for a kid who for a long time figured his future would be on the defensive side of the ball.

After the 2020 season, one in which Henry cut his

teeth on the varsity level at defensive back in Sulka's stead, Henry found himself in a quarterback derby with fellow Hilltopper Zoran Vujaklija. When Vujaklija was injured in camp, that opened the door for Henry — and he hasn't looked back ever since.

"Alex ultimately earned that position. He's a totally different style than (2020 QB) Drew Fetchik," Hewitt said. "He's like a tailback who is built like a fullback who can throw the ball pretty well. It's a great combination."

Henry agreed. He said that while his passing numbers aren't all that high, he CAN throw the ball effectively. But that's not what Chardon NEEDS him to do in its run-oriented offense.

Early on this season, Henry was the primary weapon while the rest of the Chardon offense found itself. Behind an offensive line that returned only one starter and an offensive skill set that graduated All-Ohioans in Sean Carr, Alex McDonald and Sulka, Henry found himself carrying an extra load.

Now that it's playoff time, the youngsters from early in the season have some experience under their belts. The running of Zach Fay, Heath Fetchik, Caleb Hewitt and others have supplemented

Henry, and the Hilltoppers are dangerous as ever as they head into a Week 11 showdown against Akron East.

"With our offensive line so young, it was tough early, but they've gotten so much better," Henry said. "Young dudes like that, it's hard to get them ready for Friday nights when they haven't been there before. But we're in Week 10 now. And after our first four games, which had to be among the toughest schedules in Ohio, that has prepared us for where we are now."

Chardon played Olmsted Falls, Camden (N.J.), First Baptist (Fla.), and Riverside in the first four games. Those teams are a combined 28-6.

So as the young Chardon offense was getting its proverbial feet wet, Henry held the fort with extra carries and leadership.

"Sometimes guys can get the deer-in-the-headlights look in their eyes, and Alex never gets that," Navatsyk said.

"Even in the state game last year when they showed close-ups on TV, he had that look that everything was under control. Didn't matter what the situation was. The guys in the huddle see that."

Henry looks back at the past four or five years and

admits he didn't anticipate his current path. His family moved from Madison to Chardon prior to his eighth-grade year and he originally was anticipating a career on defense.

And yet, here he is with two state championship rings won at Chardon with a 23-1 record to his name as the Hilltoppers' starting quarterback.

"Yeah, sometimes Saturday mornings are tough," he said of the physical beating he takes as the primary ball-carrier in a run-oriented offense. "But if you want to win state championships, that's what you've got to do."

And he wants more.

One more.

A high school state championship hat trick, if you will.

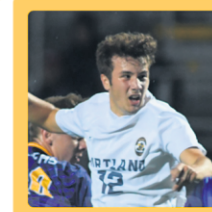
The quest begins Friday against Akron East at Memorial Stadium.

"If we can get the third, that would mean the world," he said. "I know the road to that is going to be crazy. There are a lot of good teams in our region and you know Hamilton Bardin, who we beat last year, is still undefeated. It won't be easy, but we can do it."

One thing's for certain, Alex Henry will do whatever it takes to make that happen.

He always has.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Bye week changed Mentor for better

By John Kampf

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Sometimes, a good, long, hard look in the mirror does wonders.

The Mentor football team woke up the morning of Sept. 10 licking their wounds from a 48-28 shel-lacking at the hands of Football North of Canada. They were staring at a bye week, which would allow some bumps and bruises from a rugged four-game stretch to heal up a little.

Instead, the Cardinals looked in the mirror.

What did they find?

Their true identity.

Tinkering with the offensive playbook a little and pulling quarterback-turned-safety Jacob Snow back over to offense to play wide receiver, the Cardinals shifted their offensive identity from a balanced, run-first-to-set-up-the-pass offense to more of a wide-open set.

The change has paid off immensely.

When the Cardinals (6-3) head into a Division I, Region 1 playoff opener on Oct. 28 against visiting Brunswick, they do so looking nothing like the team they were Weeks 1-4. And that's a good thing.

"The bye week was kind of crucial," Coach Matt Gray



TIM PHILLIS —
FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Jacob Snow's move from safety to receiver is part of the reason for Mentor's second-half resurgence, Coach Matt Gray said.

said.

"We were able to sit back and see what our strengths were. As the playcaller, hey I'm an offensive line man and run-game kinda guy. But you can't try to cram a square peg into a round hole. We know what our strengths are."

A young quarterback can whip it around and a group of receivers that was relatively inexperienced at season's start who are now playing like the veterans that they are.

After four games, Mentor was 2-2 and averaging 24.8 points per game. The addition of Snow, who is now a quarterback-turned-

safety-turned-receiver, the introduction of a few new offensive concepts and the grit to improve have Mentor on a 4-1 run going into the playoffs averaging 36.4 points per game over that five-game span.

All because of a good, long, hard look in the mirror and realizing the team's offensive strength was throwing the ball and getting their athletes out in space to make plays.

"I think we just locked in more," Snow said.

But his coach said it's more than that, and Snow is a big reason why.

"Number one was adding Jacob into the equation," Gray said. "He gave us a different speed, athleticism and confidence in the receiver's group. That was crucial. It's helped make everyone better."

After four games, quarterback Scotty Fox had thrown for 727 yards and five touchdowns. Since moving Snow to receiver and adding some new offensive concepts to the playbook, in the past five games he has thrown for 1,530 yards and 19 touchdowns.

The weapons around Fox have been stunning, including Jordan Stapleton (51 catches, 709 yards, seven touchdowns), Holden Cerny (38-502-3), Snow (37-454-5

in five games) and Nick Jares (23-297-4). Even running back Mitchell Waite is a threat in the passing game, hauling in 27 passes for 232 yards to go with his 614 rushing yards and 12 total touchdowns.

"Bringing Snow over from defense opened everything up," Cerny said.

Everyone has a role, according to Jares. He labeled Snow as "our deep guy. A flat-out burner." Stapleton, he said, "is our in and out guy who gets us yards," while Cerny "is another blazer on the outside."

As for himself, Jares said, "I'd like to think of myself as the short, underneath guy. Julian Edelman, Danny Amendola, Wes Welker, I see myself being the type of player they were."

Four such receivers out in pass patterns is tough enough to defend. Add in the threat of Waite's running or check-down passes to the senior running back and — whew — that's a lot to cover.

"I wouldn't want to be a defender trying to guard us," Cerny said.

Fox agreed.

He laughed when asked how many times he goes back to the huddle after a play to have multiple receivers chiding him to throw the ball their way because

they're open. But he insisted that somebody always is — just because of the varied skill set the Cardinals have under their newfound offensive philosophy.

"It's every kid's dream to be the quarterback here and come out having fun with your guys," Fox said. "There's always at least one guy open on every play. It's all about me going through my progressions and finding the open guy."

While the entire receiver group, as well as Waite, consists of seniors, a few of them did cut their teeth on varsity a year ago as juniors. But this is a brand new year and expectations were big, regardless if they were experienced or not. That's just how Mentor football operates.

No excuses. Just next man up.

"As a little kid, I dreamed of making big plays here and people chanting my name from the stands," Stapleton said. "It's amazing." Amazing would also describe the work ethic of the group.

As soon as the disappointing 2021 season ended with a 5-6 record, including an uncharacteristic first-round loss in the playoffs, Fox and the then-inexperienced receivers got to work on routes and chemistry.

"After that first-round loss, we were on the field any chance we could to get better and get our chemistry up," Stapleton said.

It resulted in a 6-3 regular season, which puts the Cardinals as the third-ranked team in the Division I, Region 1 computer ratings.

First up in the playoffs is a Brunswick team that Mentor defeated, 35-14, in Week 5 — the first week of Mentor's renewal after their bye week.

Cerny said there's no chance his team will overlook the Blue Devils, considering the Cardinals already beat them once this season.

"They came back last year and beat us on a Hail Mary," Cerny said, dredging up the memory of a 16-14 loss at the JTO last fall. "We always think about that. It adds motivation for us this week."

As practiced wrapped up earlier this week, Gray reiterated how pleased he is with where his team is — both mentally and physically — heading into post-season play.

If not for a midseason gut-check and look in the mirror, it might not have happened.

"We're in a good place right now. A good place," he said.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Perry kicker is exchange student from Poland

By John Kampf

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Imagine traveling half-way around the world as a teenager to go to school in a foreign country.

Now imagine participating a sport you've only watched on TV, but never played.

Now imagine what it's like to participate in that sport in a state tournament game.

Welcome to the world of Hubert Oryniak, an exchange student from Poland who is the kicker for the Perry football team.

Perry opens postseason play on Friday when it hosts Wooster Triway at Alumni Stadium (kickoff is at 7 p.m. on Oct. 28), and will do so with a kicker who — prior to this fall — only watched football on television.

"I never played football, just a little volleyball and basketball," the 6-foot-4, 195-pound 16-year-old said before a recent practice at Perry.

"But I have been doing karate for eight years."

Boy, has he ever.

Before coming to America as an exchange student, Oryniak won a national championship in his age group in karate. Participating in a tournament in Limanowa, Poland, that brought the best karate ath-



JOHN KAMPF — THE NEWS-HERALD

Hubert Oryniak is the kicker for the Perry football team. He is an exchange student from Poland is a national champion Karate winner in his home country.

letes from around the country, Oryniak bested the competition with his repertoire of punches and kicks.

That kicking part is what has made the transition to football in America a rela-

tively smooth one, though he admitted he is still learning and improving day by day.

"I had a lot of experience with kicks in karate, obviously, but this was my first

time kicking a football," he said.

"In karate, you aim for everything when you kick — the head, the upper body and the lower body. I just had to learn to kick a football here."

Oryniak arrived in America a few weeks before the Pirates' season opener against Riverside.

Perry's defensive coordinator Scott Niedzwiecki and his family are Oryniak's host family.

"If you ask me, it's pretty gutsy just to get on a plane and come over," Niedzwiecki said of Oryniak's exchange student journey. "It's something I would have never done, but he's adapting and doing a great job. Playing football has helped him meet other kids, too."

Once Oryniak arrived in the U.S., he was eager to get involved.

"I always wanted to try football," he said. "I always watched American movies back home that had football, but the sport is not real popular in Poland. We have rugby. That's bigger there. Soccer is really popular, too."

Perry assistant Jeff Perry convinced Oryniak to give football a shot.

"I was like, 'They play soccer in Poland, right? Can you kick a football?'" Perry said with a laugh. "The

next thing you knew he was booting it better than anyone we had this year, so he became our kicker."

More often than not, Perry attempts two-point conversions after touchdowns, but Oryniak gets his kickoffs and frequent conversion kicks as well.

"We feel like we can line up and kick extra points now, and that wasn't the case at the beginning of the year," Perry said.

Niedzwiecki noted Oryniak's athleticism and strength from his karate background help him on the gridiron.

"He's naturally strong and focused on what he does, whether it's in school or in athletics," the coach/host father said.

"He adapted quickly. I think being a karate expert helps him kick. It's not a foreign motion to him."

The only child of Ewa and Marcin Oryniak, Hubert said he misses his parents and friends back in his hometown of Busko-Zdroj, but added his schoolmates and teammates have been supportive and friendly.

He talks to his parents every day, and they watch their son play on Perry's streaming service on Friday nights, though the time difference makes that tough.

"It's like a seven-hour difference," Oryniak said.

"They stay up like, like 4 in the morning, to watch me play."

As with any teenager, Oryniak wants to be part of everything.

He loves going out to eat — Pizza Hut is a favorite he mentioned — and is looking forward to wrestling for Coach Dave Rowan's Pirates, while also finding some time to play volleyball and hit the ski slopes.

He's like every other 16-year-old.

He's just doing all those things in a whole new country.

"I know it's not the really best conditions here for skiing and snowboarding," he noted.

"There aren't any real big mountains."

Oryniak's voice quickens when he talks about how far he has come since his first practice to where he is now.

He said he is anxiously awaiting his first taste of high school playoff football, American style.

He'll find out what that's like Oct. 28 when the Pirates host Wooster Triway in the first round of the Division V, Region 21 loop.

"I was very nervous my first game," he said. "But with every game, I'm getting better."

"I'm excited to play and I'm grateful for this opportunity."



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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Kirtland coach LaVerde and sons enjoying their one and only season together

By John Kampf

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Young Philip and Jake LaVerde grabbed and tugged at the state championship football trophy the Kirtland football team had just won.

The year was 2011, and the sons of Hornets head football coach Tiger LaVerde were on the sideline as ball boys for the Hornets' 28-7 win over Coldwater in the Division V state championship game at Massillon's Paul Brown Stadium.

"Someday, this is going to be us," the boys thought to themselves, young Jake mean-mugging for a photo with the state championship trophy.

The two sons of Tiger and Mary LaVerde probably didn't do that math at the time, but but their age difference meant they would only have one shot do it — play for their dad together in a state championship season — and this is that year.

When Coach LaVerde's Hornets take to the field on Oct. 28 in a Division VI, Region 25 playoff opener against Independence, they will do so with senior Philip and freshman Jake on the same team and playing for their father for the first and only time in any of their lives.

The goal? The same one the boys dreamed of back in 2011 when they held the trophy in the locker room in Massillon — to play for their dad and win a state championship together.

"That's the goal," Philip said. "That'd be special to bring it home with these two. That's what we thought of growing up. This run will be more fun because I'm doing it with them."

Philip is a standout on both sides of the ball for the Hornets, packing a punch in the running game by rushing for more than 400 yards on offense, while leading the team on defense with 104 tackles, 24 tackles for loss and six sacks.



SUBMITTED

Philip LaVerde, left, and his brother Jake hold onto the 2011 state championship trophy after Kirtland's win over Coldwater. They are now a senior and freshman, respectively, on this year's team.

Jake is the starting quarterback as a freshman, having thrown for 810 yards and 11 touchdowns in Kirtland's run-based offense, adding in his share of rushing yards as well.

And their father — well — he's only one of the most successful coaches in Ohio history. Heading into the playoff opener against Independence, Tiger LaVerde has a 209-18 (.921) as Kirtland's head coach, having led the Hornets to six state titles.

He admitted No. 7 would be something special if it happens this year because it's the only time he and his boys are on the

same team together.

"You're always nervous as a coach in the playoffs and in big games," Tiger said. "I'm more nervous now. You're always hoping your kid does well. There's more anxiety to it this year, but we don't talk about it. We just try to enjoy it."

As young kids — back in 2011 when their father helped bring Kirtland its first state title, and even before — Phil and Jake LaVerde were just like any other kids in that they were always playing sports and doing so at a competitive level.

Just like Tiger and his siblings were when they were growing up in Oil City, Pa.



SUBMITTED

Kirtland football coach Tiger LaVerde is enjoying a season where he gets to coach both of his sons — Jake on the right and Philip.

The only difference was they got to hang out with and be ball boys for a Kirtland football program that was at that time building a dynasty that no one — not even Tiger himself — saw coming.

"I remember coming in on Saturdays when I was really

young, maybe 5 of 6, to watch film with the team," Philip said. "And to eat donuts," his father added, which brought a laugh and a nod of affirmation from his eldest son.

A few years later, "Jakey," as his father calls him, joined in — even though he was only in

preschool.

"Dad would send a player down to get me from preschool when I was like 4," he said. "It was so much fun."

The LaVerde boys grew up steeped in Kirtland football. The fun and competition was just as prevalent at home, along

with sisters Leah and Sophia.

"We always had a game going," Tiger said, "whether it was deck hockey, whiffle ball, badminton, volleyball or pool basketball. We always had some sort of competition. My wife (Mary) probably thinks we're too competitive."



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Coach Tiger LaVerde and the Kirtland Hornets play Independence on Oct. 28.

But Tiger, one of eight children, grew up the same way.

"We're no different than you and Uncle Matt are," Philip said. "They're competitive in whiffle ball to this day."

That competitive nature brought out the best in both the boys — and probably the girls, too. This past summer, when Philip was gearing up for his senior season, he (as always) dragged his little brother along with him, though Jakey is "little brother" in name only since he's already taller than his older sibling.

"All summer we worked hard on running routes," Philip said. "I brought him to every workout and worked with him all

summer."

Jake loved it. After all, he grew up playing backyard sports with Philip and his friends.

"It's just fun to get to play with him," Jake said. "All summer the last few years we did that, so it's good."

Jake won a preseason quarterback competition with senior Luke Chuko. Since then, Chuko has moved to defense and has been one of the most integral parts of the proud Kirtland defense that has allowed only 51 points this regular season.

Now that both LaVerde boys are on the varsity unit, they've learned a lot since they were

ball boys.

"When you're young, you don't realize how impressive it is," Philip said of Kirtland's run of success under his father. "When you're young, just just expect to win. You don't know how hard it is to get there, the hard work it takes."

That hard work has paid off across the board, not just for the LaVerde boys.

"We have a lot of great leaders on this team," Tiger said. "This senior class' GPA is the best we've had in a long time. Just great kids."

Tiger said the 2022 season has flown by faster than any he's coached. There's probably many reasons for that, includ-

ing an earlier-than-ever start to the season and a regular season that ended on Oct. 21. But another big reason is likely because his sons are on the team for the first — and only — time they've played together with him as their head coach.

"I can't believe we're at play-off time already," he said. "This season has just flown. ... As always, whenever this ends, I just hope everybody looks back and said, 'that was a lot of fun. I'm glad we did that.'"

That's the feeling every year, he noted. But a trophy this year? With the three of them together? "Yeah," Jake said with a smile. "That would be cool."

High school football playoff capsules

By John Kampf

JKampf@news-herald.com
@nhpreps on Twitter

(14) BRUNSWICK AT (3) MENTOR

What: Division I, Region 1
playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Jerome T. Osborne
Stadium

Records: Mentor 6-3,
Brunswick 3-7

Last week: Mentor def.
Euclid, 38-0, Brunswick def.
Strongsville, 7-0

On deck: Winner will face
the winner of (6) Canton
McKinley and (11) Canton
GlenOak

For the record: This is a
rematch of a Week 6 game
won by Mentor, 35-14. In
that game, Mentor sopho-
more quarterback Scotty
Fox threw for more than
400 yards and touchdowns
to five different receivers.
But beware, it was a close
game at halftime until Men-
tor stretched things out.
Brunswick attempted a fake
punt in the third deep in its
own territory, Mentor held
and scored. From there it
wasn't close. The Cardinals
will want to push the pace
and get a few scores up on
Brunswick, which prefers to
run the ball and grind away
at the clock. Keep an eye
on Mentor's receiving group
that includes Jordan Staple-
ton (area-best 51 catches),
Holden Cerny (38 catches),
Jacob Snow (37 catches)
and others. ... Brunswick
is riding the emotion of a
win over rival Strongsville



FRANK GAMBATESE — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Mayfield plays Austintown-Fitch in Round 1 of the D-II playoffs.

last week. It's paramount
the Blue Devils get their run
game going, which keeps
Mentor's high-powered
offense off the field and
whittles away at the clock.
The Cardinals' front seven,
including linebackers Kadyn
Burkholder, Jack Geduldung
and Collin Orosz, will want
to clamp down on that run
game to advance to advance
to the round of eight.

(15) LAKESIDE AT (2) RIVERSIDE

What: Division II, Region 9
playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Riverside Stadium

Records: Lakeside 6-4,
Riverside 9-1

Last week: Edgewood def.
Lakeside, 32-28, Riverside
def. South, 44-27

On deck: Winner will face
the winner of (7) Nordon
and (10) Garfield Heights

For the record: The
Beavers have won seven
in a row since a hard-to-

swallow, 7-6 loss to Mentor
in Week 3. Coach Dave Bors'
team locked up the WRC
title this year, but that's not
the extent of the team's
goals this season. Converse-
ly, Lakeside is coming off a
loss to rival Edgewood when
the Dragons completed a
pass to the 1 where time ran
out before they could run
a potential game-winning
play. ... Riverside has gotten
a huge year from quarter-
back Mikey Maloney, who
has prime passing targets in
Jake Elly (40 catches, 784
yards) and Brady McKnight
(38 catches, 572 yards),
while Jason Mackey (1,098
yards) packs a punch in
the running game. Maloney
orchestrates it all, having
thrown for 1,877 yards and
run for 576 so far this sea-
son. ... Lakeside has been
without lead back J'Shon
Sanders since Week 4. In his
stead, bullish RB Nate Bar-
tone has run well. But a lot
of what Lakeside has done
this season has come in the

passing game of Alex DiSal-
vatore, with both Jimmy
Timonere and Malachi Mat-
lock. ... Riverside has given
up 52 points in the past
two weeks to Kenston and
South, who utilized quick-
hitting passes to move the
sticks. But does Lakeside
have the horses to do that?
That's the question.

(13) MAYFIELD AT (4) AUSTINTOWN-FITCH

What: Division II, Region 9
playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Greenwood Chev-
rolet Austintown Falcon
Stadium, 4560 Falcon Dr.,
Austintown

Records: Mayfield 6-4,
Austintown-Fitch 9-1

Last week: Kenston def.
Mayfield, 28-21, Aus-
tintown-Fitch def. Warren
Harding, 59-28

On deck: Winner will face
the winner of (5) Akron
SVSM and (12) John Hay

For the record: These are

two extraordinarily battle-
tested teams. Mayfield's
losses are to Nordon
Chardon, Riverside and
Kenston, who have a com-
bined record of 32-7. Fitch's
only loss is to Massillon,
and it has wins against
Youngstown Ursuline, Can-
ton McKinley and Warren
Harding, among others. ...
The Wildcats have a strong
offense, led by quarterback
Rocco Monastero, who
has thrown for more than
1,400 yards despite missing
nearly two full games with
an injury. Dylan Parnell and
Nick Biega are home run-
hitting receivers, and the
running game is anchored by
Anthony Santoro, who has
more than 800 yards on the
ground. Including receiv-
ing and kicking, Biega has
more than 40 points this
year. ... But it's the Mayfield
defense that will be under
the spotlight in this one.
Fitch has won four in a row
since a 49-28 loss to Mas-
sillon. The Falcons blitzed
Warren Harding out of the
gate last week with a 21-0
lead after one quarter. Cam
Smith threw for 91 yards
and a score, but he can also
run. D.J. Williams ran for 118
yards and Dan Evans had
five catches for 113 yards
and two scores. Fitch aver-
ages 41.8 points per game.

**(16) SOUTH AT
(1) AKRON HOBAN**

What: Division II, Region 9
playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Dowd Field, 1 Holy
Cross Blvd., Akron

Records: South 4-6, Akron
Hoban 9-1

Last week: Riverside def.
South, 44-27, St. Edward
def. Akron Hoban, 41-20

On deck: Winner will face
the winner of (8) Barberton
and (9) Cleveland Rhodes

For the record: There are
certainly easier first-round
playoff games than the one
that Coach Matt Duffy's
Rebels are about to embark
upon. Hoban is the favorite
to win the Division II state
title, and the Knights are
coming into this game in a
nasty mood after getting
ripped by St. Edward, 41-20,
in the regular-season finale.
... South can light it up on
offense. Senior quarterback
Colin Quinlan has thrown for
1,734 yards and eight touch-
downs this season, includ-
ing a big game last week
against Riverside in which
he ran for 110 and threw for
90. Running back Tyrone
Singleton has been on fire
of late, with 1,168 yards and
21 TDs this season on the
ground, including a 146-
yard, two-touchdown effort
last week against Riverside.
Bryce Figler and Delond
Moss give the Rebels two
other weapons in their wide-
open offensive attack. ...
Hoban was gouged for more
than 400 yards against
St. Edward. Running back
Lamar Sperling ran for 157
yards and two touchdowns
against the Eagles, giving
the Buffalo commit 2,089
yards and 31 touchdowns
this season.

CAPSULES » PAGE 11



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Capsules

FROM PAGE 10

(16) AKRON EAST AT (1) CHARDON

What: Division III, Region 9 playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Memorial Stadium

Records: Akron East 6-4, Chardon 8-1

Last week: Chardon def. North, 35-0, Akron East def. Akron Ellet, 50-8

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (8) Gilmour and (9) Geneva

For the record: This is not a game the Hilltoppers want to look past, even if they are the two-time defending Division II state champions. The last team to beat Chardon in Memorial Stadium was Akron East, which ousted the favored Hilltoppers from postseason play in 2018, 39-28.

... Chardon has won five in a row since losing to WRC champion Riverside, 21-7, in Week 4. Since that loss, the Hilltoppers have averaged 42.4 points per game. The offense that was young at season's start is playing with confidence now. It all starts with QB Alex Henry, who has run for 866 yards and thrown for 620. The running back room of Zach Fay, Heath Fetchik, Caleb Hewitt and Andrew Bruce has been punishing. ... Akron East started the season 0-3 before winning six of its last seven games. That being said, North Royal-



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Kenston QB QB Nikko Georgiou has thrown for more than 2,000 yards this season.

ton (6-4) is the only team with a winning record the Dragons have defeated this season. ... Chardon has rode its defense all year. The line, anchored by Alex Kisley and Cooper Felger, the linebackers, anchored by Fetchik, and the lockdown defensive backs in Trey Liebhardt, Leo Colombi and Bruce have answered the ball all year. ... The Hilltoppers can't overlook Akron East. It would be

a surprise if they did.

(13) KENSTON AT (4) UNIVERSITY

What: Division III, Region 9 playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Euclid Community Stadium

Records: University 8-1, Kenston 7-3

Last week: University def. Howland, 28-6, Kenston

def. Mayfield, 28-21

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (5) Youngstown Chaney and (12) Alliance

For the record: If you're looking for an upset special, this might be it. With all due respect to the Preppers, who have been marvelous this season, few Division III teams have had to run a gantlet like Kenston has

had to run as being part of the Western Reserve Conference. That being said, University is having a spectacular season, with its only loss coming to a South Range team that many feel will win the Division V state title. ... University is powered by running back Ryan Pattison, who has run for 1,070 yards and 20 touchdowns this season. Quarterback Jackson Boland, who missed time earlier this season, is back and orchestrates the offense, which also includes one of the area's best receivers in Brian Kellon II. Not only has US scored at least 28 points in seven straight games, but their defense hasn't given up double figures in the past three weeks. ... Kenston's three losses are to 8-2 Perry, 8-1 Chardon and 9-1 Riverside. They scored at least 18 points in each of those games. Their offense is dynamic, with QB Nikko Georgiou having thrown for more than 2,000 yards, Sean Patrick surpassing 2,000 yards in total offense and Georgiou having a slew of receivers to throw to. ... Which defense is going to step up, maybe force a turnover and swing the tide of the game? That's the key in this one, which could turn into an offensive shootout.

(11) VASJ AT (6) TALLMADGE

What: Division III, Region 9 playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Rossiaky Stadium, 155-183 N. Elm Ave., Tallmadge

Records: VASJ 8-2, Tallmadge 8-2

Last week: VASJ def. Wooster, 41-7, Tallmadge def. Barberton, 20-14

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (14) Hawken and (3) Youngstown Ursuline

For the record: There are some big-name, home run-hitting players in this matchup between two 8-2 teams. VASJ's two losses are to undefeated Hamilton Badin and 8-2 Youngstown Ursuline. Tallmadge's losses are to 10-0 Medina Highland and 7-3 Aurora. ... The Blue Devils have a marquee player in senior Collin Dixon, a Wisconsin commit, who has 57 catches for 1,215 yards and 20 touchdowns. Quarterback Ty Hurst (2,635 yards passing, 31 TDs) leads an offense that averages 42.7 points per game, including a 53.5-point clip over the past four weeks. ... Whereas Tallmadge airs it out a lot, Coach Jeff Rotsky's Vikings are more ground-oriented. Amani Powell has run for more than 1,100 yards this season and sophomore Bo Jackson — who has an Ohio State offer — has run for more than 600 after missing some time with an injury. Quarterback Kylan Steuball has thrown for 12 touchdowns to keep teams honest. VASJ's defense, led by Eric Elder and Tim Gonakis, will have to be on point in this one. But the Vikings' best defense against Tallmadge's air raid might be its running game.

CAPSULES » PAGE 12



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Capsules

FROM PAGE 11

(9) GENEVA AT (8) GILMOUR

What: Division III, Region 9
playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Weber Stadium

Records: Gilmour 8-1,
Geneva 7-3

Last week: Gilmour def. Lutheran East, 48-6, Geneva def. Chagrin Falls, 34-0

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (1) Chardon and (16) Akron East

For the record: An interesting matchup here, with one team everyone expected to make a playoff push this year (Gilmour) against a young team that might have surprised with a 7-3 season (Geneva). The Lancers' only loss was a one-score game to University, while the Eagles' three losses were to two state-ranked teams (Perry and Kirtland) and one to rival Madison in the first game of the season.

... First-year coach Don Shymske guided his teams to some big wins this year, including victories over Struthers and New Middletown Springfield. The Eagles primarily run the ball with Luke Smith (902 yards) and Jacob Wilson (574 yards). QB Kenny Young is a gifted athlete, too. Geneva doesn't want to fall behind much because the Eagles are not much of a passing team, but rather one that grinds on the opposition with a punishing



TIM PHILLIS — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Jake Kavcic hands the ball off during Gilmour's game against University earlier this year. The Lancers host Geneva in a Division III playoff game on Oct. 28.

running game. ... Conversely, Gilmour's offense comes at you with a lot of weapons. Junior twins Jake and Andy Kavcic cause teams a lot of problems, with Jake throwing for 1,614 yards and 25 touchdowns and Andy running for 1,207 yards and 18 touchdowns. Additionally, guys like Tommy McCrone, Will Lazzaro and Jesse

Shepherd make big plays in the passing game. ... Geneva would be best served to run the ball to keep Gilmour's offense off the field. The Lancers might prefer to turn this one into a track meet, though.

(14) HAWKEN AT (3) URSULINE

What: Division III, Region 9

playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: YSU's Stambaugh Stadium

Records: Hawken 8-2,
Youngstown Ursuline 8-2

Last week: Hawken def. Crestwood, 42-6,
Youngstown Ursuline def. Cardinal Mooney, 13-7

On deck: Winner will face

the winner of (11) VASJ and (6) Tallmadge

For the record: Hawken has losses to Gilmour and Harvey, while Ursuline's two losses are to 9-1 Austintown-Fitch and 6-3 Akron SVSM. Ursuline handed Brookfield, Chaney and Farrell, Pa., their only losses of the season. That suggests this is going to be a toughie

for the Hawks, under first-year coach (and area legend) Mark Iammarino. ... Hawken is led by senior Dom Johnson, who leads the area with 1,352 rushing yards and 202 points (with 33 touchdowns). Quarterback Lucas Brandt does a very good job distributing the ball in the passing game, having thrown for 1,102 yards and 20 touchdowns. Defensively, Chris Shea (24 tackles for loss) and Luke Mangini are hammers who make big plays. ... Ursuline is riding a heap-load of momentum after defeating rival Cardinal Mooney for an unprecedented fourth year in a row last week. While the state-ranked Irish did accumulate 358 yards of offense, they were only able to manage 13 points. Holding Mooney to 201 total yards was huge for Ursuline. ... Can the high-flying Hawks find a way to move the ball and score against Coach Dan Rardon's tough defense?

(14) WOOSTER TRIWAY AT (3) PERRY

What: Division V, Region 17
playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Alumni Stadium

Records: Wooster Triway 4-6, Perry 8-2

Last week: Perry def. West Geauga, 37-7, Orrville def. Wooster Triway, 23-15

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (11) Orrville and (6) Navarre Fairless

For the record: The Pirates come in with two losses, one to 9-1 Riverside and the other to 10-0 Kirtland.

CAPSULES » PAGE 13

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Capsules

FROM PAGE 12

The Pirates have won three in a row. Triway comes in on a three-game losing streak. ... Perry's offense has averaged 40.6 points in the games they've won. The defense has also played well of late, giving up 7.1 points per game over the past three weeks. ... Walter Moses has thrown for 1,827 yards and 21 touchdowns in his first year as Perry's starting quarterback. He has a lot of weapons around him, including Brayden Richards (434 yards rushing, 501 yards receiving, 17 TDs), Jayden Studio (716 yards rushing) and Jaden Hacking (552 yards receiving, nine TDs). The defense plays fast and aggressively, with Owen McKoon (71 tackles, Datone Washington (50 stops) and Brian Cox (seven sacks) atop the list. ... Triway has been hit hard by injuries this year. Regular QB Zack Miller (1,274 yards passing, 13 TDs) has been limited to five games. WR-turned-QB Cale Drown has thrown for 973 yards and 11 scores. Cooper Barton has 72 catches for 709 yards, while Easton Barnard has 55 catches for 44 yards. Perry's pass defense — and pass rush — will want to be on point in this one. This could be a high-scoring affair.

(10) RIDGEWOOD AT (7) BERKSHIRE

What: Division V, Region 17 playoff opener



COLEEN MOSKOWITZ — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Walter Moses and the Perry Pirates will host Wooster Triway in a Division V playoff opener on Oct. 28.

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Great Lakes Cheese Stadium

Records: Berkshire 7-3, West Lafayette Ridgewood 7-3

Last week: Berkshire def.

Cardinal, 50-20, Sugarcreek Garaway def. Ridgewood, 29-0

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (2) Sugarcreek Garaway and (15) Smithville

For the record: The Bad-

gers are coming off a big rivalry win over Cardinal, which clinched a share of the CVC Valley — the Badgers' first league title since 2005. The Badgers have won seven of their last

eight after an 0-2 start. Ridgewood's losses are to 9-1 West Branch, 10-0 Garaway and 7-3 Indian Valley. ... Junior Miles Miller has having a gargantuan year for Berkshire, with 1,445 yards

passing and 13 touchdowns to go with 1,138 yards rushing and 16 more scores. Josh Brown (40 catches, 621 yards, 16 TDs) is his primary target. Miller also leads the team — and News-Herald area — with six interceptions. Defensively, Elijah Southern leads with 14 tackles for loss and eight sacks. He's also a rugged ball-carrier on offense.

... Three-time All-Ohio quarterback Gabe Tingle graduated last spring, but the Generals haven't slowed down much. Josiah Cahill leads the offense. While he and the Ridgewood offense were slowed by Garaway last week (Garaway has allowed only 38 points all season), Cahill had 200 yards of total offense the week before. Kaulen Smith leads the ground game, while Kaleb Schrock recently returned from an injury to help fuel the offense as well.

(11) CARDINAL AT (6) CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS

What: Division VI, Region 21 playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Ralph P. Adams Stadium, 4820 E. 71st. St., Cuyahoga Heights

Records: Cardinal 5-5, Cuyahoga Heights 7-2

Last week: Berkshire def. Cardinal, 50-20, Cuyahoga Heights def. Wickliffe, 35-7

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (3) Valley Christian and (14) Trinity

For the record: If this game is familiar, that's because it is. They played in Week 9, with Cardinal winning.

CAPSULES » PAGE 14

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Capsules

FROM PAGE 13

It's one of only two losses for Coach Al Martin's Red Wolves — two losses by a total of 14 points. Aside from those two losses (14-8 to Lutheran West and 16-10 to Cardinal, Heights only gave up 21 points in their other seven games. It's a defense-driven team. ... Cardinal is coming off a loss to rival Berkshire in which running back Josh Soltis went over the 1,200-yard rushing mark for the season. He'll get the ball a lot in this one. Quarterback Logan Strever runs the ball well, and also has fine receiving targets in Kyle Sinclair and Troy Domen. ... In the first meeting, Devon Dzik (610 yards passing, 324 rushing this season) hit Jacob Stewart for an 80-yard touchdown pass for Heights' only touchdown. Stewart had a big game in that one, rushing for 83 yards and catching three passes for 101 yards. Andy Jakubczak has run for 497 yards and 10 TDs. But this team really hangs its hat on defense, led by Francis' Connor's 93 tackles. ... Can Cardinal pull the upset twice in a span of three weeks?

(16) INDEPENDENCE AT (1) KIRTLAND

What: Division VI, Region 21 playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Rogers Field

Records: Kirtland 10-0, Independence 4-6

Last week: Kirtland def



COLEEN MOSKOWITZ — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Gabe Lawson and the Fairport Skippers will play at Warren JFK on Oct. 28.

Orange, 42-0, Independence def. Brooklyn, 35-12

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (8) Rootstown and (9) Hanoverton United

For the record: These two teams know each other well, as longtime members of the Chagrin Valley Conference. They just haven't seen each other since 2018 when Kirtland put a 50-0 hammer on Coach Rick Adams' Blue Devils. They are in different divisions of

the CVC, hence not playing each other recently. ... Kirtland comes in on a heck of a head of steam, having run the table this year after falling short in last year's Division V state championship game. As usual, the Hornets aim to hammer teams into submission with their vaunted running attack that is spear-headed by Tommy Gogolin (794 yards), Rocco Alfieri (720 yards, 14 TDs) and Philip LaVerde

(465 yards). That being said, freshman QB Jake LaVerde has thrown for 810 yards and sophomore Gino Blasini averages 22 yards on his 23 catches. Senior All-Ohioan George Prusock anchors the physical offensive line. Defensively, Daven Patel, Philip LaVerde and others form a fast and physical defensive unit that has given up only 122 yards per game. ... This is Kirtland's first game against a Division VI team

all year. The Hornets' entire schedule is comprised of schools in larger divisions. ... Independence has nice playmakers in Rory Corrian and Max Tarnowski, but this is shaping up to be a tough assignment for the Blue Devils.

(16) FAIRPORT AT (1) WARREN JFK

What: Division VII, Region 25 playoff opener

When: 7 p.m., Oct. 28

Where: Leopard Stadium, 4115 Shady Road, Youngstown (at Liberty High School)

Records: Fairport 4-6, Warren JFK 8-1

Last week: Fairport def. St. John, 35-6, Warren JFK, def. Southeast, 50-0

On deck: Winner will face the winner of (8) New Middletown Spring and (9) Vienna Mathews

For the record: The Skippers had to wait longer than pretty much anyone to find out they got in the playoffs, with — believe it or not — the Toronto-Staubenville Catholic Central game being worth second-level points to Wellsville as to whether or not Fairport was postseason bound. The reward is a toughie, with tradition-rich state power Warren JFK on the docket. The Eagles' only loss is to undefeated Mogadore, and they're coming off a season in which they lost to Newark Catholic in a Division VII state semifinal. You know JFK is formidable because this is their its game against another Division VII team all season. ... Fairport lost four in a row before beating St. John in back-to-back weeks to end the regular season. Domanick Sherwood took over the reins of the program a few weeks back and has his alma mater playing well. Gabe Lawson has thrown for 1,134 yards and 11 touchdowns, with James Gadomski (30-584) leading in receptions. Maverick Piotrowski has scored six TDS and also is among the team leaders in sacks and TFL.



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High school football statistics

By John Kampf

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PASSING YARDS

Name, school	Passing yards
Scotty Fox, Mentor	2,258
Nikko Georgiou, Kenston	2,074
Mikey Maloney, Riverside	1,877
Walter Moses, Perry	1,827
Jake Kavcic, Gilmour	1,819
Frankie Trineti, Lake Catholic	1,805
Colin Quinlan, South	1,726
Rocco Monastero, Mayfield	1,582
Miles Miller, Berkshire	1,445
Lucas Kaltenbach, Benedictine	1,433
Gabe Lawson, Fairport	1,134
Carvon Vise, Harvey	1,106
Lucas Brandt, Hawken	1,102
Ryan Lipowski, NDCL	950
Finn Keenan, West Geauga	948
Jackson Boland, University	923
Nicholas Vinci, Chagrin	812
Jake LaVerde, Kirtland	810
Logan Strever, Cardinal	769
Kylan Steuball, VASJ	658
Alex Henry, Chardon	620
Dimario Ballom, Brush	553
Carson Alley, Madison	433

PASSING TOUCHDOWNS

Name, school	TD
Jake Kavcic, Gilmour	30
Scotty Fox, Mentor	24
Mikey Maloney, Riverside	22
Walter Moses, Perry	21
Lucas Brandt, Hawken	20
Nikko Georgiou, Kenston	18
Rocco Monastero, Mayfield	18
Frankie Trineti, Lake Catholic	15
Miles Miller, Berkshire	13
Jackson Boland, University	12
Jake LaVerde, Kirtland	11
Gabe Lawson, Fairport	11
Kylan Steuball, VASJ	10
Lucas Kaltenbach, Benedictine	9
Nicholas Vinci, Chagrin	9
Colin Quinlan, South	8
Ryan Lipowski, NDCL	8
Logan Strever, Cardinal	7
Alex Henry, Chardon	7
Dimario Ballom, Chagrin	6

RUSHING YARDS

Name, school	Att.Yards
Burke Buell, NDCL	218
Josh Soltis, Cardinal	138
Tanelle Rose, Brush	145
Dom Johnson, Hawken	173
Amani Powell, VASJ	128
Andy Kavcic, Gilmour	175
Tyrone Singleton, South	139
Miles Miller, Berkshire	178
Jason Mackey, Riverside	141
Sean Patrick, Kenston	149
Ryan Pattison, University	157
Luke Smith, Geneva	99

Alex Henry, Chardon	157	886
Anthony Santoro, Mayfield	140	824
Tommy Gogolin, Kirtland	78	794
Blaise Collins, Harvey	109	725
Colin Quinlan, South	104	724
Rocco Alfieri, Kirtland	114	720
Jayden Studio, Perry	88	716
Shahn Alston, Harvey	74	692
Mitchell Waite, Mentor	142	614
Andrew Bruce, Chardon	48	592
Donny Hardy, Chagrin	95	589
Mikey Maloney, Riverside	87	576
Jacob Wilson, Geneva	118	574
Logan Strever, Cardinal	81	554
Philip LaVerde, Kirtland	48	465
Brayden Richards, Perry	66	434
Bobby Plumb, Wickliffe	66	420
Josh Styles, Lake Catholic	88	415

RECEPTIONS

Name, school	Rec.	Yards
Jordan Stapleton, Mentor	51	709
Nick Brandt, Lake Catholic	51	489
Dylan Parnell, Mayfield	42	621
A. Fitzgerald, Lake Cath.	42	615
Jake Elly, Riverside	40	784
Josh Brown, Berkshire	40	621
Brady McKnight, Riverside	38	572
Tymir Cardona, Kenston	38	509
Logan Strever, Cardinal	38	502
Blaise Collins, Harvey	14	0
Luke Smith, Geneva	12	1
Brady McKnight, Riverside	12	0
Mikey Maloney, Riverside	12	0
Mitchell Waite, Mentor	12	0
Tanelle Rose, Brush	12	0
Sean Patrick, Kenston	33	609
T.J. Gibbons	32	458
Donny Hardy, Chagrin	12	0
Jayden Studio, Perry	10	3
Tommy McCrone, Gilmour	11	0
Miles Miller, Berkshire	10	2
Jake Elly, Riverside	10	1
Jaden Hacking, Perry	9	3
Brian Kellen II, University	10	0
Nick Biega, Mayfield	10	0
Carson Weisman, West Geauga	10	0
Giavonni Rice, Geneva	4	4
Jake Elly, Riverside	4	4
Troy Domen, Cardinal	4	4
George Minello, University	4	4
Davon Badley, Harvey	4	4
Will Sayle, Kirtland	4	4
Owen Tomic, Perry	3	3
Brayden Richards, Perry	3	3
Sean Patrick, Kenston	3	3
Aidan Fitzgerald, Lake Catholic	3	3
Josh Styles, Lake Catholic	3	3
Logan Strever, Cardinal	3	3
Ryan Pattison, University	3	3
Andrew Bruce, Chardon	2	2
Luke Mangini, Hawken	2	2
Lucas Brandt, Hawken	2	2
Gino Blasini, Kirtland	2	2
Evan Koprowski, Kirtland	2	2
Will Torres-Mook, Geneva	2	2
Armani Chiappone, Perry	2	2
Cam Simpson, Riverside	2	2
Adam Becker, Riverside	2	2
Elijah Southern, Berkshire	2	2
Quinton Wilson, South	2	2
Caleb Sherman, VASJ	2	2
Christian Cowle, Cardinal	2	2

Owen Tomic, Perry	15	245
Troy Domen, Cardinal	15	168
E. Robinson, Hawken	14	611
T.J. Williams, Brush	14	403
Dekhi Owens, Brush	14	208
Erik Cloud, Benedictine	14	186
Aidan Gallagher, Cardinal	14	177
Sammy Martin, University	14	73
Travis Veleba, West G	13	76
Ethan Ross, Riverside	12	223
E.J. Flakes, Bruwsh	12	162
Luke Mangini, Hawken	12	125

SCORING

Name, school	TD	Zpt Tot.
Dom Johnson, Hawken	33	2 202
Sean Patrick, Kenston	24	2 144
Tyrone Singleton, South	20	0 120
Andy Kavcic, Gilmour	20	0 120
Brayden Richards, Perry	17	5 112
Ryan Pattison, University	18	0 108
Josh Soltis, Cardinal	17	0 102
Anthony Santoro, Mayfield	17	0 102
Shahn Alston, Harvey	16	2 100
Miles Miller, Berkshire	16	0 96
Josh Brown, Berkshire	16	0 96
Burke Buell, NDCL	15	1 96
Rocco Alfieri, Kirtland	14	5 94
Logan Strever, Cardinal	15	0 90
Dom Cosic, Lake Catholic	18	3 27
Ben Cowan, Chagrin	22	1 25
Matteo Morelli, University	24	0 24
Owen Puletti, West Geauga	11	3 20
Zane Malkimaki, Fairport	14	2 20
Eliza Mills, Wickliffe	6	1 9
Lex Herr, Benedictine	7	0 7
Gavin Svagerko, Madison	2	1 5

KICKING

Name, school	XP	FG Total
Sean Kerwood, Riverside	48	8 72
Parker Munday, Kenston	34	5 49
Julian Javoris, Hawken	44	1 47
Dylan Tackett, Mentor	36	3 45
S. Vargas, Berkshire	39	2 45
Joseph Evans, Chardon	31	4 43
Nick Barisic, Kirtland	37	2 43
Nick Biega, Mayfield	42	0 42
Evan Wintersteller, Gilmour	39	0 39
A. Soto-Rodriguez, Harvey	38	0 38
Owen Pfeifer, Geneva	31	2 37
Gianni Spetic, NDCL	28	3 37
Tommy Funk, South	28	2 34
Landon Gallagher, Cardinal	25	1 28
Dom Cosic, Lake Catholic	18	3 27
Ben Cowan, Chagrin	22	1 25
Matteo Morelli, University	24	0 24
Owen Puletti, West Geauga	11	3 20
Zane Malkimaki, Fairport	14	2 20
Eliza Mills, Wickliffe	6	1 9
Lex Herr, Benedictine	7	0 7
Gavin Svagerko, Madison	2	1 5

INTERCEPTIONS

Name, school	INT
Miles Miller, Berkshire	6
Trey Liebhardt, Chardon	5
Dom Johnson, Hawken	5
Brayden Green, Gilmour	5
Carson Weisman, West Geauga	4
Giavonni Rice, Geneva	4
Jake Elly, Riverside	4
Troy Domen, Cardinal	4
George Minello, University	4
Davon Badley, Harvey	4
Will Sayle, Kirtland	4
Owen Tomic, Perry	3
Brayden Richards, Perry	3
Sean Patrick, Kenston	3
Aidan Fitzgerald, Lake Catholic	3
Josh Styles, Lake Catholic	3
Logan Strever, Cardinal	3
Ryan Pattison, University	3
Andrew Bruce, Chardon	2
Luke Mangini, Hawken	2
Lucas Brandt, Hawken	2
Gino Blasini, Kirtland	2
Tommy Gogolin, Kirtland	2
Evan Koprowski, Kirtland	2
Will Torres-Mook, Geneva	2
Armani Chiappone, Perry	2
Cam Simpson, Riverside	2
Adam Becker, Riverside	2
Elijah Southern, Berkshire	2
Quinton Wilson, South	2
Caleb Sherman, VASJ	2
Christian Cowle, Cardinal	2

Noah Barnes, Madison	2
Ryan Konyecsi, Benedictine	2
Gabe Lawson, Fairport	2
Kevin Castellano, Fairport	2
Sean McKeen, Chagrin	2
Grant Alberts, Chagrin	2
Griffin Moskal, NDCL	2
Aidan Arth, Mayfield	2
S. Cook, Gilmour	2

SACKS

Name, school	Sacks
Matt Urda, NDCL	9
Alex Kisley, Chardon	8
A.J. Adams, Riverside	8
Jack Novak, Kenston	8
Elijah Southern, Berkshire	8
C. Sean Jackson, University	8
Brian Cox, Perry	7
Colin Fairbanks, Riverside	7
Davon Badley, Harvey	7
Max Soltis, Cardinal	6.5
Louka Babic, Gilmour	6.5
Chris Shea, Hawken	6
Sam Salminen, Riverside	6
Josh Brown, Berkshire	6
Shahn Alston, Harvey	6
Austin Leszynski, Chardon	5.5
Amarey Boudlin, Harvey	5
Josh Grambo, NDCL	5
Brayden Buell, NDCL	5
Mikey Traczky, Mayfield	5
Rocco Hice, Gilmour	5
Matt Wright, Geneva	4
Sam Meeks, Kenston	4
Sammy Martin, University	4
Dimari Payne, Fairport	4
Maverick Piotrowski, Fairport	4
Joe Barch, Mayfield	4
Brody Lennon, Gilmour	4
Cooper Felger, Chardon	3.5
Dom Kirks, VASJ	3.5
Josh Ripley, Cardinal	3.5
Dom Milano, Mayfield	3.5
Daron Arnold, Mayfield	3.5
Shaun Leonard, West Geauga	3
Cam Simpson, Riverside	3
Jason Ryan, Riverside	3
Danny Tiller, Berkshire	3
Hunter Nicholson, Berkshire	3
Cross Nimmo, Lake Catholic	3
Luka Soric, South	3
Eric Elder, VASJ	3
Will Fazekas, Fairport	3

Name, school	TFLS
Collin Fairbanks, Riverside	29
Joe Barch, Mayfield	27
Chris Shea, Hawken	24
Eric Elder, VASJ	21
Alex Novak, Kenston	20
A.J. Adams, Riverside	20
Sammy Martin, University	16
Davon Badley, Harvey	15
Matt Urda, NDCL	15
Cam Simpson, Riverside	14
Elijah Southern, Berkshire	14
C. Sean Jackson, University	14
Tyree Alston, Harvey	14

Josh Grambo, NDCL	14
Heath Fetchik, Chardon	13
Cooper Felger, Chardon	13
Max Borris, Riverside	13
Johnny Smeltzer, Lake Catholic	13
Max Soltis, Cardinal	13
Josh Brown, Berkshire	12.5
Luke Mangini, Hawken	12
Sam Salminen, Riverside	12
Sam Meeks, Kenston	12
Louka Babic, Gilmour	12
David Clossin, Kenston	11
Jimmy Gibbons, Lake Catholic	11
T.J. Gibbons, Lake Catholic	10
Tim Gonakis, VASJ	10
Shahn Alston, Harvey	10
Austin Leszynski, Chardon	9
Antonio Bottiggi, Riverside	9
D.J. Sears, Lake Catholic	9
Andrew Tucholski, Cardinal	9
Hunter Nicholson, Berkshire	8
Cross Nimmo, Lake Catholic	8
J. Cocco, University	8
Alexis Rivas, Harvey	8
Brayden Buell, NDCL	8
Johnny Heiden, Berkshire	7.5
Dimari Payne, Fairport	7.5
Jacob Wilson, Geneva	7
Danny Tiller, Berkshire	7
Quinton Wilson, South	7
James Gadomski, Fairport	7
Zak Habor, Fairport	7
Rocco Hice, Gilmour	7
Brody Lennon, Gilmour	7
Mario Tolo, Chardon	6.5
Shaun Leonard, West Geauga	6.5
Jason Brent, Berkshire	6.5
Zach Fay, Chardon	6
Jack Bellar, Hawken	6
Will Greenberg, Hawken	6
Justin Phillips, Berkshire	6
Jason Panich, South	6
Ty Simms, Cardinal	6
Ryan Pattison, University	6
Maverick Piotrowski, Fairport	6
Bernard McDonald, Gilmour	6

TEAM STATISTICS

School	Off.	Def.	Diff.
Kirtland	3,807	1,222	2,585
Perry	3,581	1,760	1,821
Riverside	4,134	2,564	1,570
Hawken	3,521	2,262	1,259
Chardon	2,999	1,824	1,175
University	2,867	1,729	1,138
Mayfield	3,739	2,801	938
Berkshire	3,589	2,802	787
Geneva	2,940	2,180	760
VASJ	3,010	2,262	748
Mentor	2,987	2,864	123
Kenston	3,742	3,666	76
Lake Catholic	2,877	3,074	-197
South	3,736	4,236	-500
West Geauga	2,324	2,826	-502
NDCL	2,916	3,463	-547
Benedictine	2,025	2,932	-907
Chagrin	1,975	3,019	-1,044
Wickliffe	1,502	2,715	-1,213
Madison	1,683	3,206	-1,523
Gilmour	3,567	NR	NR
Brush	2,846	NR	NR



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