



HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL 2023 SEASON PREVIEW

TEAM CAPSULES | TOP OF THE CROP | FISHER AWARD WATCH LIST

HEIRS OF THE AIR

Area is rich with talented quarterbacks this season



From left, Perry's Walter Moses, Kenston's Lucas Kaltenbach, Mentor's Scotty Fox, Lake Catholic's Frankie Trinetti, Riverside's Mikey Maloney and Berkshire's Miles Miller

OPINION

High school football is more than the game; it's community

Hands on his hips, Tiger LaVerde scanned the progress being made at Kirtland's new artificial turf field.



John Kampf

Whipping out his cell phone, he pulled up a photo of what he cannot wait to see on Friday nights. And it wasn't a photo of his juggernaut Hornets pile-driving an opposing team.

It was a photo of what the completed project would look like. Specifically, it was a 40-yard "practice" field that would rest on the east end of the newly named Wilson Stadium behind the east end zone running perpendicular to the actual field on which the Hornets will play.

"That," LaVerde said, "is what I wanted most. I want to be able to look down at that little field on Friday nights when we're playing and see the kids of our community — our future — down there playing next to us."

The words that LaVerde accentuated was "community" and "future."

A lot of times, the early weeks of August are loaded with team previews and a lot of "out with the



TIM PHILLIS — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

The Mentor football team huddles during a July 26 practice.

old, and in with the new." The 2022 season is in the past and 2023 is the focus. That mantra is certainly true to a point.

There are a lot of new things about the 2023 football season that is on our doorstep. Things such as:

- New football coaches at Benedictine (Joe Prevesk), Gilmour (Tom Kaufman) and NDCL (Anthony Baldesare).

- New turf fields at both Kirtland and VASJ, as well as new amenities across the area like Cardinal's new concession stand and restroom facilities.

- A new playoff format, in which all postseason football games will be played on Friday nights until state championship week rolls around in December.

- And of course, new players and new leaders

on the field for every team across The News-Herald coverage area.

But while it's refreshing to usher in some new facets and faces for the 2023 season, it's also important to hold on what is tradition-rich. And that goes back to LaVerde's accentuated words when looking at a photo of what a small "practice" field will look like when Wilson Stadium is complete.

Community and future.

High school football is all about community. And those young men out there on the field, as well as the cheerleaders on the sideline, the band members belting out their tunes and the kids in the student section — that's our future.

So whatever is "out with the old," that will never be it.

When the whistle blows Friday night and the 2023 season is officially kicked off, you're going to see some tremendous student-athletes who devoted a big chunk of their summer months to working out, building chemistry with their teammates and sharpening their skills all in the name of teamwork, conference championship runs and postseason glory.

But while the focus for the next three months or so will be on what is going on between the white lines on Friday nights, take a moment to see what is going on outside the lines as well.

You'll see the cheerleaders filled with energy representing their school and team.

You'll see teenagers with musical instruments in their hands, marching in unison while both entertaining fans at halftime and celebrating their team

with rousing renditions of their school's fight song.

You'll see grandstands packed with fans, roped-off sidelines lined with people from around town coming to see the big game. Many aren't even parents or family members — they're simply townsfolk wanting to watch.

You'll see young kids beyond each end zone playing a pickup game of football with their friends while the varsity game is going on.

Those are things that make high school football special. Yes, it's about the teams themselves, but it's so much more than that. It's about bringing a community together. It's about celebrating our present and our future.

So when that opening kickoff flies into the air and the 2023 season finally gets going, look around. Notice everything. And celebrate it.

Celebrate it all.

Because no matter who graduates every spring, the show that is high school football is brand new every single fall.

That should make us all proud — and maybe even give us some goosebumps now and then.

Reach Kampf at JKampf@News-Herald.com. On Twitter: [@NHPreps](https://twitter.com/NHPreps)



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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Kirtland motivated for gold trophy

LB Boyd: 'We want to get back there and show we are a championship team'

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

The quietest of hushes came across the visitor's locker room at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium on Dec. 3, 2022.

It was so quiet you could have heard a chin strap snap as the Kirtland football team gathered its things and headed home after a 14-6 loss to Marion Local in the Division VI state championship game.

One by one, the Hornets passed by a table on which sat the silver state runner-up trophy.

"The trophy, no one even wanted to hold it or look at it," linebacker Macguire Boyd said. "It sucked."

"I didn't even look at it," defensive back Will Sayle said.

Here we are eight months later, and feelings haven't changed much. While Coach Tiger LaVerde joked that, "I'm not sure that trophy made it back from Canton. The kids didn't want it," the trophy DOES have a home in Kirtland's trophy case — but it's receive-



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

At one point, the silver runner-up trophy from the 2022 Division VI state championship game was believed to have been left behind in Canton because none of the Kirtland players wanted it.

ing so little attention that it's probably dying of loneliness.

But that silver state runner-up trophy DOES serve a purpose. It is the driv-

ing force behind a motivated 2023 Kirtland football team that is bent on getting back to Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium this December to finish things

they way they wanted to back on Dec. 3, 2022.

"I don't know if we're angry about it, but we're pretty upset about it," said Boyd, now a senior. "We want to

get our revenge this year. We want to get back there and show we are a championship team."

The parts are certainly in place to make a run at

it. Kirtland graduated only 10 seniors last year, and it returns more than 20 letterwinners to this year's team, including most of a defense that allowed only 5.5 points per game last season, a 1,000-yard quarterback in Jake LaVerde, a 1,400-yard rusher in Rocco Alfieri and an all-around standout in receiver/defensive back Gino Blasini.

Oh, the Hornets also return with an axe to grind.

"Yeah, of course there's an axe to grind," Blasini said. "We have a chip on our shoulders going into the season. We don't want a silver trophy."

The game with Marion Local was every bit the classic everyone thought it would be. The Flyers led, 14-0, on a pick-six by Nathan Buscher in the third quarter before the Hornets closed the gap on a 10-yard scoring pass from Jake LaVerde to Sayle.

But that's the way it ended.

Hence the Hornets' disdain.

"It was an option read to the left and a quick pop seam pass to the right," the son of Coach Tiger LaVerde said of the interception. "They were in Cover 2, the safety jumped it and made a good play."

KIRTLAND » PAGE 4



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Kirtland

FROM PAGE 3

“For sure, that play has been a motivation for me.”

While none of the Hornets would divulge the exact wording, there was a motivational message scribbled on the white board in the team's weight room that kept the players laser-focused all offseason.

“If you don't put the work in during the offseason, you're not going to have a chance in the real season,” Coach LaVerde said.

That season — that preparation — that motivation from last year, is now at hand. The Hornets open the season Aug. 18 at Dalton. The Hornets pounded the Bulldogs, 33-0, in a second-round playoff game last fall. But Dalton has dropped down to Division VII this year and — like Kirtland — feels it has what it takes to win a state title in a Hornet-les division.

The 2023 Kirtland defense boasts seven returning starters, dotted with others who got plenty of varsity reps last season.

“I don't think we've ever had this many returners on defense,” said LaVerde, who takes a 214-19 (.918) career record in Kirtland into this season. “When you have eight or nine guys back that put in work, they should be fun to watch flying around.”

The defensive strength is likely the linebacker group, with Rocco Alfieri, Danny Alfieri, Boyd and Sayle all



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Quarterback Jake LaVerde, shown in the Division VI state final in 2022, are aiming to leave Canton with the gold state championship trophy this year.

back. End Will Bates, corner Blasini and safety Will Beers are also back.

Sayle and Bates are returning All-Ohioans on that side of the ball.

“We're hoping for a lot of shutouts,” Sayle said.

“We do take it personally when someone scores on us,” Beers noted. “We want to play really good D and get the shutout.”

Offensively, eight starters are back, including the entire skill set aside from graduated Tommy Gogolin. Jake LaVerde has experience after a 1,000-yard freshman year, Rocco Alfieri and Boyd anchor the run game, Blasini and Sayle

are at end, and a trio of linemen — Casey Carkhuff, Matthew Kahley and Brady Burich — are also back.

So is kicker Nick Barisic. “That's a lot to have back,” Coach LaVerde said. “We've got to build (the offense) and get the new kids involved and up to speed.”

The schedule in front of the Hornets has its challenges. The nonconference slate features four teams — Dalton, Lutheran West, Perry and Cuyahoga Heights — that won at least one playoff game last year. Then comes the CVC Valley Division slate.

“Yeah, there are a lot of teams that want to beat

us,” Boyd said of the perceived target on the Hornets' backs.

Adding to the excitement of the 2023 season is the brand new artificial turf field the Hornets will play on this season at the newly named Wilson Stadium. A giant jumbotron scoreboard equipped to show video highlights from previous years is included.

“It's going to be exciting,” Coach LaVerde said. “It'll be a great atmosphere. We have a great community. They really deserve it.”

While the head Hornet agrees that his team is upset and motivated about a one-touchdown loss in last

TOP OF THE CROP

Football

- 1: Riverside
- 2: Chardon
- 3: Mentor
- 4: Kirtland
- 5: Kenston
- 6: VASJ
- 7: Perry
- 8: Mayfield
- 9: Gilmour
- 10: Hawken

Watch list: Lake Catholic, University, Geneva

Crop comments: There are so many ways to go with the opening Crop, especially in the top four. ... Riverside beat Chardon last year — and probably should have beaten Mentor. Additionally, the Beavers return more starters than either of those teams, so we'll go with Coach Dave Bors' squad to lead off the opening Crop. ... Even though it was a scrimmage, Chardon outplayed Mentor on Aug. 11. The Hilltoppers' defense is bet-

year's state title game, he counts it as a successful season as part of an amazing era of Kirtland football that includes six state titles and five runner-up trophies.

“Some schools would give anything to be in one state championship game,” he said. “Last year, the state championship game was awesome. It was a fantastic year. We just ran into a very good team at the end. Even though we lost, I'm very proud of the kids.”

But those kids have a

ter than anticipated, and the offense can take the top off a defense with Will Francis' arm. ... Mentor is ultra young and inexperienced, so the Cardinals' learning curve will be great. Mentor plays Riverside in Week 3, so we'll keep an eye on that. ... Kirtland opens at No. 4. The Hornets very well could run the table and win a state title in Division VI. ... Kenston gets the nod over VASJ and Perry for the No. 5 slot. The Bombers have looked good in scrimmages and have a scary offense. ... VASJ's running game is elite. If the passing game comes along, look out for the Vikings. ... Everyone knows the potency of Perry's offense, but the defense has been tremendous in scrimmages. ... Mayfield's defense was on point, too, this preseason. The Wildcats open at No. 8. ... Gilmour and Hawken round out the opening crop a smidge ahead of Lake Catholic. Don't sleep on the Cougars.

chip on their shoulders. An axe to grind. And it's been there for about eight months now.

Don't try telling them a state runner-up trophy is a silver lining. “Silver” isn't a popular word around Kirtland these days.

They want gold.

“We just have to do what we always do, take it one game at a time and get better every day,” Jake LaVerde said. “We're energized. We're ready and motivated to go out and get it.”

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Another challenging run awaits WRC teams

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

The first day of fall practiced awaited Kenston coach Jeff Grubich. Before heading out the door of his office, he glanced at the schedule posted on the wall of the Gurd Family Fieldhouse.

"It's a meatgrinder, man," the Bombers' head honcho said. "Week in and week out, it's a grind."

To be sure, Grubich isn't looking past his team's non-conference slate of Boardman, West Geauga, Chagrin Falls, VASJ and Lake Catholic. That five-game run has its own set of challenges.

What makes Grubich swallow hard is the list of five games that come after that. The five games that comprise the Western Reserve Conference slate.

The WRC is one of the most underrated conferences in Northeast Ohio — perhaps in the state. It's been whittled down from departures the past few years. But the six that remain — Chardon, Kenston, Mayfield, North, Riverside and South — spend a good part of the fall beating on each other for league supremacy with high-end talent and superior coaching.

In the past five years, the WRC has boasted three state champions (Kenston in 2018, Chardon in 2020-



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Riverside will have its hands full defending its 2022 WRC championship this season.

21), four different league champions and a number of players who went on to play Division I college football while losing two former members — Brush and Madison — who left for competitive balance reasons.

As camps opened this week, three of the six league members — Kenston, Chardon and Riverside — all featured players who voiced aspirations for winning a state title this year. And none is out of the realm of possibility.

In short, the WRC is NOT for the weak, weary or faint of heart.

Just ask Grubich. When

his team won the 2018 state title, the Bombers weren't even undisputed league champs. They shared it with Chardon and Riverside.

"The WRC is one of the premier conferences in the state of Ohio," Chardon coach Mitch Hewitt said. "You have a wide range of sizes, great players and coaches. It's a meatgrinder, man."

The past five years might be a smallish sample size, but it confirms just how challenging (and successful) the WRC is consistently. Over that span:

- Chardon has compiled a 56-9 record, including a

17-3 playoff mark with two state titles.

- Kenston is 45-14 with a 10-4 playoff record and one state crown.

- Riverside is 37-18 with a 5-4 playoff slate.

- Mayfield is 29-22 with a 3-4 playoff mark.

- Only South (23-29, 2-4 in the playoffs) and North (13-35, 0-2 in playoff games) are under .500 over the past five years.

Number of games played varies because of the 2020 COVID-19 year when not everyone played the same amount of games.

None of the WRC's teams have a losing record in non-conference games over the past five years. Kenston is 12-3 in non-WRC games, Chardon is 11-3, Riverside 11-6, South 10-4 and both Mayfield and North 8-7.

Add it all up, and the WRC has four teams with winning records in the past five years, with five of its members winning two or more playoff games.

Madison (11-37) and Brush (4-16) struggled competitively and left the conference.

"This is my 14th year here at Riverside, and last year was my first outright league championship," Beavers coach Dave Bors said. "It's brutal as heck. If you want to be an outright champion here or think you're going to run the table, don't plan on that. There are like 4-6

teams who can be one of the favorites every year."

South's Matt Duffy agreed. He said a penalty here or there, a dropped pass, a fumble, a missed kick — something deemed insignificant — can swing a game AND a season.

"It's hard to win this," he said. "There are a lot of really good players and really good coaches. There's not a lot of margin for error."

Hewitt said a big attribute of the conference is coaching. There's little turnover in the league at the head-coaching spot or on the staffs. Duffy is the dean of WRC coaches in his 20th year, followed by Bors' 14 and Hewitt's 13. Grubich (12), Mayfield's Ross Bandiera (eight) and North's Shawn Dodd (eight) are also in long tenures compared to many schools in the area.

"Good players, they make you nervous as a coach," Hewitt said. "Good staffs terrify you. There are great players in this league, but it's the staffs that concern us the most. ... The lack of coaching turnover in this league is somewhat remarkable, given the lifespan of coaches anymore."

As usual, this year's WRC race looks to be a nose-bloodying slugfest for sure. In fact, three of the top five team's in this year's opening News-Herald Top of the Crop are from the WRC

— Chardon, Riverside and Kenston.

Riverside returns a wealth of talent from a squad that finished 9-1 in the regular season with an undisputed league crown. The Beavers went 2-1 in the Division II, Region 5 playoffs, bowing out with a heart-wrenching 16-14 loss to Hudson.

Mikey Maloney, the reigning Tony Fisher Award winner as The News-Herald's player of the year, returns at quarterback. He has a wealth of talent around him such as 1,000-yard running back Jason Mackey and receivers Brady McKnight, Dez Kirks and Ethan Ross.

The Beavers' defense is anchored by ends Antonio Bottiggi and Dom Kirks — both Division I college recruits — and Sam Salimenin.

Over at Chardon, the words "angry" and "motivated" were prevalent the first week of practice after the 2022 season ended with a second-place WRC finish to Riverside and a 14-7 loss to Canfield in the Division III, Region 9 final ended the Hilltoppers' season.

Chardon returns most of its offense, including a gigantic offensive line, and a pair of Division I college recruits on defense in Andrew Bruce and Leo Colombi.

WRC » PAGE 6

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WRC

FROM PAGE 5

Kenston, which felt it let one slip away in a 10-7 loss to Chardon in a Region 9 semifinal, also has high aspirations. With Fisher finalist Sean Patrick starring on both sides of the ball, rugged Sean Doyle in the trenches and Lucas Kaltenbach back in town after playing his first two years at Benedictine, the Bombers feel they have the stuff to win a league title and make another deep playoff run.

Mayfield went 6-5 last year with a young team. Rocco Monastero returns to lead the high-paced Wildcat offense that scares the bejeebers out of league foes.

"Remember," Dodd said, "Mayfield had Hoban on the ropes a few years ago. That's a really good program Ross Bandiera has over there."

The Wildcats won the 2019 WRC title and lost to top-ranked Hoban, 21-17, when the Knights threw a touchdown pass on the final play of the game tooust Bandiera & Co.

"Yeah, and we beat Riverside in overtime, Kenston went to the wire, we needed two miraculous plays by Joey Isabella to beat Chardon and South was back and forth," Bandiera said of his teams route to an undefeated WRC slate in 2019.

Only North and South haven't won a league title in the past five years, but as Grubich said, "You can't

look past anyone. Heck, North almost beat us last year. Probably should have."

"It's tough," said Dodd in light of his team's close call in a 31-28 loss to Kenston last year. "There's a ton of talent and coaches in this conference."

Dodd noted he's had two Division I college linemen — Ethan Spoth (Toledo) and Ryan Baer (Pitt) in recent years, and also has a budding star in Reontae Lowery this year. But the WRC is tough no matter WHO you have, he said.

"We don't have any 6-5 kids, and Chardon's got 'em at safety," Dodd said with a laugh of frustration.

South is dangerous this year, too, with athletic Delond Moss and experienced quarterback Gabe Hanzlik.

In short, the 2023 WRC is going to be like every other conference race in the past. Will it glean another state championship or two? That remains to be seen. But this history of the conference suggests that is not out of the question.

Not with high-end talent, experienced coaching and an edge of excellence that has the whole conference on the rise.

"It's a playoff experience week after week," Grubich said. "If you don't prepare for it, you're going to be on the wrong side of it real quick."

Bandiera took it a step further.

"We think we have a chance to be a pretty good team this year and we could be 1-4 or 2-3 in the conference and STILL be a pretty darn good football team," He said. "It's insane."

Area schedule

Subject to change

AUG. 17
Gilmour at Valley Forge, 7 p.m.

AUG. 18
Austintown Fitch at Euclid, 7 p.m.
Benedictine at Walsh Jesuit, 7 p.m.
Boardman at Kenston, 7 p.m.
Cardinal Mooney at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Chagrin Falls at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Chardon at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Garrettsville at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Geneva at University, 5 p.m.
Harvey at Rocky River, 7 p.m.
John Hay at VASJ (at Gilmour), 7 p.m.
Kirtland at Dalton, 7 p.m.
Leetonia at Fairport, 7 p.m.
Lorain at Brush, 7 p.m.
Madison at Perry, 7 p.m.
Mentor at Massillon Jackson, 7 p.m.
North at Lakeside, 7 p.m.
Orange at Beachwood, 7 p.m.
Rhodes at Hawken, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at Chippewa, 7 p.m.
Riverside at NDCL, 7 p.m.
Shaker Heights at South, 7 p.m.
Shaw at Mayfield, 7 p.m.
Southeast at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.

AUG. 24
Avon Lake at Benedictine, 7 p.m.

AUG. 25
Aurora at Riverside, 7:30 p.m.
Beachwood at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.
Brush at Shaker Heights, 7 p.m.
Cardinal at Pymatuning Valley, 7 p.m.
Chardon at Tiffin Columbian, 7 p.m.
Coventry at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Erie at Euclid, 7 p.m.
Fairport at David Anderson, 7 p.m.
Gilmour at Warrensville Heights, 7 p.m.
Harvey at Perry, 7 p.m.
Kenston at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Lakeside at NDCL, 7 p.m.
Lutheran West at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Mayfield at Massillon Jackson, 7 p.m.
North at Norwalk, 7 p.m.
St. Ignatius at Mentor, 7 p.m.
St. John at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
South at Madison, 7 p.m.
Struthers at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Trinity at Hawken, 7 p.m.
University at Norton, 7 p.m.

AUG. 26
Holy Name at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at Linsly, 1:30 p.m.
VASJ at Cardinal Mooney (at Mineral Ridge), 7 p.m.

SEPT. 1
Avon Lake at Chardon, 7 p.m.
Bay at University, 5 p.m.
Cardinal at Coventry, 7 p.m.
Chagrin Falls at Kenston, 7 p.m.
Cuyahoga Heights at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Edgewood at Harvey, 7 p.m.
Euclid at Massillon Perry, 7 p.m.
Hawken at Gilmour, 7 p.m.

Madison at North, 7 p.m.
Mentor at Riverside, 7 p.m.
NDCL at Bedford, 7 p.m.
Nardonita at Mayfield, 7 p.m.
Orange at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Perry at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at Canton Central Catholic, 7 p.m.
Rittman at Fairport, 7 p.m.
South at Brush, 7 p.m.
Springfield at Geneva, 7 p.m.
West Geauga at Aurora, 7 p.m.
Youngstown East at VASJ (at TBA), 7 p.m.

SEPT. 2
Beachwood at St. John (at SPIRE), 1 p.m.
Benedictine at St. Francis (N.Y.), 7 p.m.
Lake Catholic at Buchtel, 1 p.m.

SEPT. 8
Akron Garfield at Mayfield, 7 p.m.
Benedictine at Strongsville, 7 p.m.
Berkshire at Edison, 7 p.m.
Brush at North, 7 p.m.
Cardinal at Independence, 7 p.m.
Conneaut at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.
Crestwood at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Edgewood at Hawken, 7 p.m.
Fairport at Cuyahoga Heights, 7 p.m.
Geneva at Lutheran West, 7 p.m.
Grand Valley at Beachwood, 7 p.m.
Harvey at Brooklyn, 7 p.m.
Jefferson at Perry, 7 p.m.
Kenston at VASJ (at TBA), 7 p.m.
Lake Catholic at South, 7 p.m.
Madison at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Medina at Mentor, 7 p.m.
NDCL at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at University, 5 p.m.
Riverside at Maple Heights, 7 p.m.
St. Francis (N.Y.) at Chardon, 7 p.m.
Shaker Heights at Euclid, 7 p.m.

SEPT. 9
Kirtland at Trinity, 7 p.m.

SEPT. 14
Beachwood at Crestwood, 7 p.m.
Chagrin Falls at Edgewood, 7 p.m.
Hawken at Conneaut, 7 p.m.
Lake Catholic at Kenston, 7 p.m.
Mayfield at Solon, 7 p.m.
Orange at Madison, 7 p.m.
Shaw at University, 5 p.m.

SEPT. 15
Akron SVSM at NDCL, 7 p.m.
Bedford at Brush, 7 p.m.
Boardman at Riverside, 7 p.m.
Brooklyn at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Chardon at Bishop Watterson (at Ohio Dominican), 7 p.m.
Cuyahoga Heights at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Euclid at Strongsville, 7 p.m.
Independence at Harvey, 7 p.m.
Mentor at Cleveland Heights, 7 p.m.
North at Garfield Heights, 7 p.m.
Perry at Geneva, 7 p.m.
South at Lorain, 7 p.m.
Steubenville CC at Fairport, 7:30 p.m.
Trinity at Berkshire, 7 p.m.

VASJ at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
West Geauga at Lakeside, 7 p.m.
Wickliffe at Grand Valley, 7 p.m.

SEPT. 16
Buchtel at Benedictine, 1 p.m.
Edgewood at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at Cleveland Central Catholic, 1 p.m.

SEPT. 22
Benedictine at Normandy, 7 p.m.
Brooklyn at Beachwood, 7 p.m.
Cardinal at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Canton Central Catholic at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Cleveland Central Catholic at Brush, 7 p.m.
Erie McDowell at VASJ (at JCU), 8 p.m.
Euclid at Medina, 7 p.m.
Harvey at Crestwood, 7 p.m.
Kenston at Chardon, 7 p.m.
Kirtland at Grand Valley, 7 p.m.
Lakeside at Madison, 7 p.m.
Lutheran West at Perry, 7 p.m.
Mayfield at North, 7 p.m.
Mentor at Solon, 7 p.m.
NDCL at Howland, 7 p.m.
Orange at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at Lutheran East, 4 p.m.
South at Riverside, 7 p.m.
Trinity at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
University at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
West Geauga at Hawken, 7 p.m.
Windham at Fairport, 7 p.m.

SEPT. 28
Cleveland Central Catholic at Gilmour, 7 p.m.

SEPT. 29
Berkshire at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Brunswick at Euclid, 7 p.m.
Brush at Twinsburg, 7 p.m.
Chagrin Falls at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Chardon at South, 7 p.m.
Crestwood at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Geneva at Conneaut, 7 p.m.
Grand Valley at Harvey, 7 p.m.
Hawken at Lutheran West, 7 p.m.
John Hay at NDCL, 7 p.m.
Kenston at Mayfield, 7 p.m.
Lake Catholic at Padua, 7 p.m.
Madison at Edgewood, 7 p.m.
Perry at Orange, 7 p.m.
Pymatuning Valley at Fairport, 7 p.m.
Richmond Hts. at Harvest Prep, 7 p.m.
Riverside at North, 7 p.m.
Shaker Heights at Mentor, 7 p.m.
Shaw at Bishop Hartley, 7 p.m.
Wickliffe at Cuyahoga Heights, 7 p.m.

SEPT. 30
Beachwood at Trinity (at Cuyahoga Heights), 1 p.m.
Canisius (N.Y.) at Benedictine, 2 p.m.
Valley Forge at University, 2 p.m.

OCT. 6
Berkshire at Crestwood, 7 p.m.
Brunswick at Mentor, 7 p.m.
Brush at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Cardinal at Grand Valley, 7 p.m.

Chagrin Falls at Perry, 7 p.m.
Chardon at Mayfield, 7 p.m.
Cuyahoga Heights at Beachwood, 7 p.m.
Independence at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
John Adams at University, 5 p.m.
Kirtland at Harvey, 7 p.m.
Lake Catholic at Erie, 7 p.m.
Lakeside at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Madison at Jefferson, 7 p.m.
NDCL at Walsh Jesuit, 7 p.m.
North at South, 7 p.m.
Orange at Hawken, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at Lima Central Catholic, 7 p.m.
Riverside at Kenston, 7 p.m.
Solon at Euclid, 7 p.m.
VASJ at Ursuline, 7 p.m.
West Geauga at Lutheran West, 7 p.m.

OCT. 7
Cathedral Prep at Benedictine, 7 p.m.
Fairport at St. John (at SPIRE), 6 p.m.

OCT. 12
Geneva at Madison, 7 p.m.

OCT. 13
Beachwood at Independence, 7 p.m.
Brush at Benedictine, 7 p.m.
Crestwood at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Euclid at Cleveland Heights, 7 p.m.
Gilmour at Buckeye, 7 p.m.
Grand Valley at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Harvey at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Hawken at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.
Jackson-Milton at Fairport, 7 p.m.
Mayfield at Riverside, 7 p.m.
Mentor at Strongsville, 7 p.m.
North at Chardon, 7 p.m.
Richmond Heights at McComb, 7 p.m.
Padua at NDCL, 7 p.m.
Perry at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
South at Kenston, 7 p.m.
University at Steubenville, 7 p.m.
VASJ at Akron SVSM, 7 p.m.
Wickliffe at Brooklyn, 7 p.m.

OCT. 19
Luth. East vs. Gilmour (at Euclid), 7 p.m.

OCT. 20
Benedictine at Akron SVSM, 7 p.m.
Berkshire at Harvey, 7 p.m.
Cleveland Central Catholic at VASJ (at Gilmour), 7 p.m.
Conneaut at Madison, 7 p.m.
Euclid at Mentor, 7 p.m.
Fairport at Vienna Mathews, 7 p.m.
Kirtland at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Jefferson at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Kenston at North, 7 p.m.
Lakewood at Brush, 7 p.m.
Lutheran West at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.
Mayfield at South, 7 p.m.
Perry at Hawken, 7 p.m.
Riverside at Chardon, 7 p.m.
University at Howland, 7 p.m.
West Geauga at Orange, 7 p.m.
Wickliffe at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

OCT. 21
NDCL at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Multi-talented Richards ready for last run

Perry standout among Ohio's best athletes in three sports

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

The sun had barely begun to crest the eastern skies when Brayden Richards and his buddies — who hadn't been to bed yet — decided to get in an early round of golf.

Just a handful of weeks had passed since Richards, a junior at Perry, won a Division II state championship in the 300 hurdles to go with the third-place finish he garnered in the pole vault.

Richards was probably still a little bit sore from his trip to North Carolina where he won an AAU national title in the decathlon, yet he and his friends were going to hit 18 at nearby Erie Shores Golf Course.

He carded a round of 84 to go with the nine-hole round of 41 he shot a day earlier at Little Mountain Country Club.

And he's not even a member of the Perry golf team. He just plays for the fun of it.

When the Perry football team hits the field for

an Aug. 18 season opener against visiting Madison, it will do so with one of the most dynamic multi-sport athletes to come through The News-Herald coverage area in quite some time.

Not only is Richards one of the area's — if not the nation's — best track and field athletes, but he was also a special mention Division III All-Ohioan in basketball. This fall he'll star on the gridiron for the Pirates after a junior year in which he earned first-team Division V All-Ohio honors with a skill set that allowed him to accumulate 2,042 yards offense, 25 touchdowns and five two-point conversions.

"For one, what makes him unique is the diversity of his skill set," football coach Bob Gecewich said. "In track, he's a decathlete, not someone who just does one or two events. In football, we have the flexibility of moving him around from receiver to running back to quarterback or wherever.

"I think it's his competitive nature. Whatever he does, he wants to succeed at it."

Richards' will to compete — and be good at it — can be tracked back to when he was 3- or 4-years old when he was at the track with his father Layne, the head coach of the Perry track and field team. Off to the



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Perry's Brayden Richards is an All-Ohioan in football and basketball, and a state champion in track and field.

side lay a broken pole that couldn't be used for the pole vault anymore.

Young Brayden picked it up and gave it a shot.

"I got like 5 feet or something," Richards remembers.

A few years later as a kindergartener, Richards was playing on a team with FOURTH GRADERS in Perry's Freeway League team and caught his first

pass from future Perry All-Ohioan Drew Schiano for a 10-yard gain. It was his first "big play" on the gridiron.

The trend hasn't stopped since. Whatever Richards has done competitively, he's done at a high level.

"I like competing," Richards said with a broad smile. "I like winning. It's fun.

"Having success is fun, but without struggles or

mistakes, you don't grow. I think those struggles are where a lot of my success comes from. (Non-success) definitely drives me."

On the basketball court, Richards averaged 16.2 points per game for the Pirates to go with 6.8 rebounds and 4.0 assists per game. He'd likely be a college basketball prospect if he chose to go that route.

Instead, his college ticket

will be in track and field. He won a state championship in the 300 hurdles with a time of 37.61. He missed out on a double-up in the pole vault, placing third with a vault of 15 feet, 8 inches.

His performance in Greensboro, N.C. at the adidas AAU Nationals was impressive, his score of 7,042 points being 166 points better than any of his competitors.

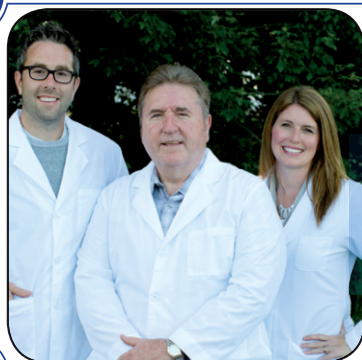
He has a slew of college offers in track and field, but said the Air Force Academy and Harvard are his favorites at this point.

But this fall, fans will get to see Richards star on the gridiron. He had a season for the ages last fall when he ran for 789 yards, caught 37 passes for 610 yards, threw for 100 yards and had 533 return yards. Add it all up, and that's 2,042 yards with 160 total points via his 25 touchdowns and five two-point conversions.

If that's not enough to impress, he added 63 tackles and three pass breakups from his safety position.

"You could see a lot of me," Richards said of the coming season. "I'll be at safety most of the time on defense, though we'll add some blitz packages. I'll be on punt return and kick return like last year, too.

TALENTED » PAGE 8



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COLEEN MOSKOWITZ — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Perry's Brayden Richards scored in multiple ways in the Pirates' 60-32 win over Kenston on Aug. 26.

Talented

FROM PAGE 7

"On offense, receiver, running back, quarterback, slot... I'll do a little bit of everything."

Gecewich likes having a Swiss Army Knife as he has in Richards, much like basketball coach Al Iacafano enjoys in basketball and his father Layne enjoys in track season.

"It's kind of cool to see him do all these sports," Gecewich said. "With many kids these days, you'll have 'This is my primary sport and the others I just do for fun.' I don't think that's the case with Brayden. Whatever he does, he wants to succeed at, and that's pretty unique."

Even his free time is either sports-related or competition related. He is a life-guard at the Perry Outdoor Y during the summer months, and he took \$15 from his

family members in a penny poker game recently.

Which begs the question — is there anything Brayden Richard ISN'T good at?

"Well, he's a really good golfer, that's for sure," Perry quarterback Walter Moses said. "We're playing this afternoon, he's my partner and there's no way we're losing."

The question remains — does he stink at anything?

"Paintball!" senior running back Jayden Studio screamed, to which Moses chimed in just as loud, "Paintball."

"Hold on," Richards countered. "We played five games and I captured the flag and we won."

He paused.

"But I guess you could say it is not my best thing," he admitted.

Give him time. Because if Brayden Richards' young life has shown us anything, it's that if he wants to be good at it — he will be.

It's only a matter of time.

Preseason Tony Fisher Award watch list

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

When the opening whistle sounds on Week 1 of the high school football season, once again the Tony Fisher Award will be on the line.

The Tony Fisher Award, named after the Euclid product who won Ohio's coveted Mr. Football Award before moving on to play at Notre Dame and in the NFL, goes to The News-Herald's football player of the year.

The winner of the award will be announced during a special edition of the Varsity Chalk Talk show on Monday, Nov. 20, at Hooley Pub and Kitchen.

Here is a preseason look at some of the players who might be in contention for the Tony Fisher Award this season. The list can and will change week by week. This list is just a starting point.

This year's initial watch list, in alphabetical order, is:

Rocco Alfieri, Kirtland, Sr.: Rugged, durable and speedy, Alfieri carried 196 times for 1,340 yards last season. He's primed to do even better than that this season.

Shahn Alston, Harvey, So.: He ran for 692 yards and scored 16 touchdowns as a ninth-grader. He also had 56 tackles and 10 TFLs. Alston already has multiple Division I college offers with more to come.

Gino Blasini, Kirtland, Sr.: Whether it's at tight end, split end or running the ball, Blasini makes plays. He had 66 catches for 540 yards and seven touchdowns last year, along with 80 tackles and seven picks on defense.

Jackson Boland, University, Sr.: He battled injuries last year, but still threw for more than 900 yards and 12 touchdowns. In the Preppers'

offense, he'll get plenty of opportunity to throw the ball around this year.

Andrew Bruce, Chardon: He ran for 592 yards last season — which will likely rise significantly this season as a feature back — and he is also a lockdown cornerback for the staunch Chardon defense.

Will Francis, Chardon, Sr.: The Chardon quarterback always piles up big stats both running and passing (when the Hilltoppers choose to pass). Francis is a first-year starter, but he's a born leader.

Josh Grambo, NDCL, Jr.: One of the best-returning defenders with All-Ohio credentials, Grambo had more than 15 TFLs last year. He's a very disruptive defender.

Bo Jackson, VASJ, Jr.: The 6-foot-1, 200-pounder is a state-caliber sprinter, has oodles of Division I college offers and is a star at running back and safety.

Lucas Kaltenbach, Kenston, Jr.: He was at Benedictine his first two seasons but is back at his home school now. He threw for 1,433 yards and nine touchdowns last season.

Andy Kavcic, Gilmour, Sr.: He ran for more than 1,200 yards last season, while also catching 17 passes for 289 yards. He and his twin, Jake, are one of the best 1-2 punches in the area this season.

Jake Kavcic, Gilmour, Sr.: He threw for 1,819 yards and 30 touchdowns. He also has amazing scrambling and running skills that could make him a 1,000-yard rusher. He's the catalyst for Gilmour's offense.

Scotty Fox, Mentor, Jr.: As a sophomore, he threw for 2,882 yards and 30 touchdowns, with 143 yards and three scores coming on the ground. He's piling up Division I college offers

with his productivity.

Jason Mackey, Riverside, Sr.: As a junior, he ran for more than 1,000 yards. With so many skilled players on the Riverside offensive set, he's going to get a lot of looks running the ball and piling up yards again.

Mikey Maloney, Riverside, Sr.: The reigning Tony Fisher Award winner threw for 2,289 yards and 28 touchdowns, while also rushing for 677 yards and 15 scores. His work ethic and leadership are off the charts.

Luke Mangini, Hawken, Sr.: The son of former Browns coach Eric Mangini can do it all. He's a rugged ballcarrier and an absolute hammer at linebacker.

Brady McKnight, Riverside, Sr.: He can run the ball and also catch the ball. He's a tough matchup with his multiple skill set. Defenses will have to account for him or he'll make them play.

Miles Miller, Berkshire, Sr.: He caused everyone on his team's schedule a ton of headaches last year when he threw for 1,445 yards and 13 touchdowns to go with his 1,138 yards rushing yards and 16 scores.

Rocco Monastero, Mayfield, Sr.: As a junior, he threw for more than 1,500 yards. The Wildcats have a ton of skill returning this year, so expect Monastero to again pile up some big numbers in the passing game.

Walter Moses, Perry, Jr.: He burst onto the scene last season with 2,212 passing yards and 26 touchdowns. He's picked up a pair of college offers, including UConn. He'll also be playing cornerback this season.

Delond Moss, South, Sr.: He caught 30 passes for 606 yards last season. He's primed



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS HERALD

2022 Tony Fisher Award winner Mikey Maloney of Riverside, shown with Tony Fisher Jr. on Nov. 21 at Hooley House, is back for his senior season.

to have a big senior season with Gabe Hanzlik whipping the ball around in South's high-powered offense.

Sean Patrick, Kenston, Sr.: The University of Akron commit ran for 1,496 yards and caught 36 passes for 621 yards with a total of 24 touchdowns. He also picked off three passes. He might be the most electric playmaker in the area.

Amani Powell, VASJ, Sr.: As a junior, he ran for 1,229 yards. He's got breakaway speed and shares the backfield with another big-time running threat Bo Jackson.

Brayden Richards, Perry, Sr.: He does it all. He ran for 891 yards, caught 37 passes for 610 yards and scored 20 touchdowns. He also saw time at quarterback. No matter where he is on the field, he's a difference-maker.

Tanelle Rose, Brush, Sr.: Ultra-fast running back ran for 1,357 yards last season. He will again be the primary focal point of the Arcs offense this season.

Frankie Trinetti, Lake Catholic, Jr.: He threw for 1,805 yards and 15 touchdowns last season despite missing a game and a half with a concussion. He's healthy and ready to pile up big numbers again this year.

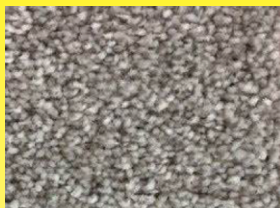
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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Madison to CVC headlines area conference changes

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

The distinct clanking of metal echoed through the weight room at Madison High School on Aug. 1.

Just outside the weight-training facility, Blue Streaks assistant coach Harry Deligianis barked encouragement to another group of players pushing weighted-down sleds across a hot, black-topped parking lot.

There's a different energy among the Madison football team this month. A big reason for that energy is the return of so many players from last year's squad that finished a disappointing 2-8. Players are bent on improving on a recent run that has seen the football program win only three of its past 20 games.

But another thing that has the Madison football team ramped up for the coming season is a new conference. Starting this fall, the Blue Streaks will be competing in the Chagrin Valley Conference, having exited from their previous home in the Western Reserve Conference.

The move, Coach Mike Gilligan said, gives his program — and all the Madison programs for that matter — a better chance to compete against schools of similar size and demo-



BARRY BOOHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Madison, shown in a scrimmage against Harvey on Aug. 10, debuts in the CVC Lake Division this fall.

graphics compared to the larger-schooled WRC.

“The demographic explosion and growth of the Painesville and Concord that Riverside has had, their student-body is probably double of ours,” Gilligan said. “Chardon is Chardon. Those two schools are

state qualifiers and state-champion (material). Kenston is up there and Mayfield is really solid.

“It's not that we're going into a league that isn't good in football. It's really good in football. We're just playing schools that are closer to our size and against kids

that are more like our kids.”

Madison's move to the CVC is just one of a handful of moves that area conferences are experiencing this fall. In addition to Madison, the CVC is also welcoming Conneaut and Jefferson.

The Greater Cleve-

land Conference is adding Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights this season.

Word is the WRC is continuing to scour Northeast Ohio for possible fits to expand, but that league will enter this season with only six teams after Brush departed last year and Mad-

ison this year.

The changes will continue in coming years as the CVC braces for Grand Valley's departure to the Northeast Athletic Conference and the GCC slides back to seven schools when Solon departs.

But as far as this year is concerned, Madison's move is the headliner, breaking up a marriage it has had with Riverside, North, Mayfield, South and Chardon since all but the Wildcats helped form the Premier Athletic Conference in 1998.

Now Madison joins a CVC Lake Division along with Geneva, Lakeside, Jefferson, Conneaut and Edgewood — a division that bears a striking resemblance to the defunct Northeastern Conference that once included Ashtabula City and Ashtabula Harbor (which consolidated to form Lakeside), Geneva, Riverside, Conneaut, Edgewood, Jefferson, St. John and Harvey.

“We have coaches on our staff that definitely know about what (the NEC) is,” Gilligan said. “Harry Deligianis played at City and we have our two Geneva guys — John Mirabell and Jim Chiaccherio. They know the NEC well. It's going to be fun to regenerate some of those rivalries.”

CHANGES » PAGE 10



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Changes

FROM PAGE 9

In the WRC, Madison (male enrollment figure of 329 this season) was one of the smallest schools in football. Riverside (582), North (513), Mayfield (463), South (451) and Chardon (376) all boast larger enrollments, while Kenston (298) is slightly smaller.

In the CVC Lake, only Lakeside (392) is larger than Madison, followed by Geneva (305).

Could Madison go from the bottom of the WRC to a CVC Lake title?

“Our goal is always to do that,” Gilligan said. “Hopefully we do. Our focus is to get better every day. Nothing else matters now. Hopefully, at the end of the year, we are in the mix.”

Mentor comes into the 2023 campaign with the youngest team it has fielded in quite some time. The Cardinals will start sophomores in at least three key positions — offensive tackles Jojo Lo-Duca and Landry Bledde, as well as receiver Justin Hodge. Granted all three already have a Division I college football offer from Miami, Ohio. Nevertheless, it's a young team in a rugged conference that got that much tougher with the addition of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights.

Mentor opens with a challenging nonconference

slate of Massillon Jackson, St. Ignatius and Riverside before the GCC opens against Medina and Cleveland Heights.

“When you look at the talent and ability (of the schedule), you're going to be battle-tested by time you get to the playoffs,” Mentor coach Matt Gray said. “There's not one easy week in the GCC. There's great talent, great coaches and great teams. You've got to compete at a high level each and every week or you're going home with a loss.”

“We've got to be ready to roll. Inexperience won't be used as an excuse.”

The influx of Jefferson — a Division IV state final four entry last year — and Conneaut, along with Madison, has pushed Kirtland back to the CVC's Valley Division after the Hornets competed in the larger-school CVC Chagrin the past few years.

Kirtland hasn't lost a league game since Oct. 21, 2016, when Cuyahoga Heights topped the Hornets, 21-0. Since then, Coach Tiger LaVerde's crew has won 48 straight games against teams from the CVC.

Kirtland, widely regarded as the favorite to win the Division VI state title, opens the season against state-ranked Dalton, followed by four opponents from other divisions of the CVC — Lutheran West, Perry, Trinity and Cuyahoga Heights — before CVC Valley play begins.

Games to watch in 2023

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

The 2023 season is loaded with optimism from area teams who have worked all offseason and preseason for this moment.

Here are some of the games that might be the best bet for your attention on Friday and Saturday nights.

Kirtland at Dalton, Aug. 18:

Kirtland expects to play for the Division VI state title this year. Dalton expects to play for the Division VII title this year. Hold on tight, folks.

Richmond Heights at Doylestown Chippewa, Aug. 18:

What makes this one special is it marks the return of varsity football at Richmond Heights for the first time in three years.

St. Ignatius at Mentor, Aug. 25:

The young Cardinals will find out how good they are early with a visit from St. Ignatius, which is under new leadership after the retirement of legendary Chuck Kyle.

Mentor at Riverside, Sept. 1:

Only a missed field goal on the last play of the game kept Riverside from winning this one last year in a 7-6 Cardinals win. Can the Beavers finish the job this year in Painesville?

Chagrin Falls at Kenston, Sept. 1:

It's a short drive down Washington Street between these two rivals.

Perry at Kirtland, Sept. 1:

This game was closer than last year's 36-16 final showed. Kirtland has three



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Coach Marty Gibbons and the Lake Catholic Cougars will wrap up the regular season against a showdown against rival NDCL.

hammers to start this season. This is one of them.

Avon Lake at Chardon, Sept. 1:

Avon Lake went 9-3 last year and lost to eventual state champion Toledo Central Catholic in the playoffs. Chardon went 11-2 and lost to eventual D2 state champion Canfield. Both teams are loaded this year.

Hawken at Gilmour, Sept. 1:

The battle of Gates Mills. Get to your seats early. There will be a lot of points in this one.

Medina at Mentor, Sept. 8:

The Cardinals open GCC play with the league favorite, but don't tell Matt Gray & Co. that. They'll have their high-octane offense ready to match that of the Bees.

Kenston at VASJ, Sept. 8:

Both teams have big goals for a long postseason run. This Week 4 game will be

a good litmus test for both squads.

Lake Catholic at Kenston, Sept. 14:

Kenston won last year's game, 14-7, in a physical game. The rematch will likely have more points.

Cardinal at Berkshire, Sept. 22:

The Kinsman Cup is on the line yet again. The Badgers took last year's neighborhood slugfest, 50-20.

Gilmour at University, Sept. 22:

No two area teams are closer to each other in proximity to these two. Expect a physical grudge-fest here.

Lutheran West at Perry, Sept. 22:

The Longhorns breezed through the CVC Metro last year, while the Pirates finished second to Kirtland in the CVC Chagrin. This could be the CVC Chagrin title game early on.

Kenston at Mayfield,

Sept. 29: Two fast-paced, sling-it-around offenses meet in a key WRC showdown.

Wickliffe at Cuyahoga Heights, Sept. 29:

The experienced Blue Devils want to show they are a CVC Metro contender. This game is their chance.

Lakeside at Geneva, Oct. 6:

Many feel these two teams are the top dog of the new CVC Lake Division.

North at South, Oct. 6:

The Border Battle — the Civil War — renews its rivalry at Harry E. Winters Stadium.

Geneva at Madison, Oct. 12:

This has been a season-opener for many years. Now it's a conference game in the CVC Lake. Madison won, 13-7, last year.

Walsh Jesuit at Lake Catholic, Oct. 13:

The Warriors are the preseason favorites of the Crown Conference. The Cougars would like to have a say in that.

Mayfield at Riverside, Oct. 13:

The Beavers better not be taking a week off after Kenston on Oct. 6 and before Chardon on Oct. 20, because the Wildcats can and will knock'em off.

Riverside at Chardon, Oct. 20:

This might be the area's game of the year, and it happens in Week 10. Could both teams be 9-0 when they meet? Possibly.

NDCL at Lake Catholic, Oct. 21:

What a way to end the regular season — with the East Side's version of the Holy War.



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Conference outlooks for 2023 season

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com

CROWN CONFERENCE

Favorite: Walsh Jesuit

Darkhorse: NDCL

Don't forget about: Lake Catholic

For the record: Coach Nick Alexander's Warriors were the class of the Crown last season and look to be again this year. Walsh has just been at a different level than the rest of the conference of late. Its defense is extremely stingy, with Noah Brock, John Keough and Brock Sherman standing out. Keller Moten is new at quarterback, but he has a lot of skill around him, including Keough and Owen Feliciano. ... Lake Catholic has been impressive in the pre-season camp. QB Frankie Trinetti is healthy after a concussion slowed him last year. Cross Nimmo, a junior like Trinetti, is garnering some big-time Division I college offers. Lake can throw the ball very well and is strong defensively. ... NDCL has Ryan Lipowski back at quarterback and a Josh Grambo-led defense. That's a good start with a new coaching staff.

CVC CHAGRIN DIVISION

Favorite: Perry

Darkhorse: Lutheran West

Don't forget about: Hawken

For the record: The Pirates have big goals this year and have the weaponry to get them done. The skill set is tremendous with QB Walter Moses, ultra-utility man Brayden Richards and RB Jayden Studio leading the way. Whoever wants to beat the Pirates will have to find a way to slow down that highlight reel offense — or

try to score with the Pirates. Lutheran West was a strong team last year and will be a prime contender despite big graduation losses. ... Hawken graduated marquee player Dom Johnson, but there's a lot left in the tank. Jordan Johnson and Luke Mangini will man the running game, and Donovan Moorhead looks to step in at QB for injured Lucas Brandt. The lines are big, physical and experienced. The Hawks are very much in the conference championship picture.

CVC LAKE DIVISION

Favorite: Lakeside

Darkhorse: Geneva

Don't forget about: Jefferson, Madison

For the record: Coach Buzz Edwards' Dragons get the nod in what promises to be an extremely competitive CVC Lake Division. Lakeside returns top-end talent both in the trenches with guys like Grayson Petros and in the skilled positions with guys like QB Alex DiSalvatore and receiver Jimmy Timonere. The injury bug hit the Dragons hard last year. If they stay healthy, look out. ... Geneva can't be discounted. The Eagles return nine starters on both offense and defense. They can run the ball mercilessly with Luke Smith, Kenny Young and others. Expectations are high. Are the Eagles ready to deal with them? ... Madison comes over from the Western Reserve Conference. The Blue Streaks are experienced and hungry to compete in a conference more their size than the WRC. ... Jefferson took heavy graduation losses from last year's state final four team, but Kaige Boczar and Luke Funtash return, so the Falcons must be

taken seriously.

CVC METRO DIVISION

Favorite: Cuyahoga Heights

Darkhorse: Independence

Don't forget about: Wickliffe

For the record: Coach Al Martin's team finished 9-3 last year and won a pair of playoff games. They welcome back mammoth Nick Novak (6-2, 270) on the line and a slew of athletic talent. With Lutheran West moving to another division of the CVC, Heights will be the favorite here. Independence and Wickliffe — yes Wickliffe — will be the stiffest competition. Wickliffe has had a total of one senior in the past two years. That means Coach Marce Porcello has a very experienced team on his hands. Bobby Plumb is expected to get a ton of carries this year. EJ Mester is another big playmaker. The lines are anchored by gigantic Mitchell Lindsey.

CVC VALLEY DIVISION

Favorite: Kirtland

Darkhorse: Everyone else.

For the record: Another year, another expected romp through the league schedule for Coach Tiger LaVerde's squad. Kirtland hasn't lost a league game since Week 9 of 2016. Don't expect the Hornets' streak to be snapped this year. The Hornets have a slew of experience back from last year's Division VI state runner-up team and it's an angry group after losing to Marion Local. It would take a monumental upset for the Hornets not to run the table in the CVC Valley this year. Not to say it is impossible — see Grand Valley-Kirtland from 2015 — but the odds aren't good for that to happen.

GREATER CLEVELAND CONFERENCE

Favorite: Medina

Darkhorse: Cleveland Heights

Don't forget about: Mentor

For the record: The Bees are the defending champions and get the early nod here. QB Danny Stoddard is back after throwing for 5,035 yards and 58 touchdowns last season to go with 692 yards and 12 more scores. Top receivers Jack Wojciak and Austin Knowles are also back. Any team that wants to knock off Coach Larry Laird's team is probably going to have to do it in an offensive shootout. ... Moving over from the Lake Erie League, Cleveland Heights is in its first year in the GCC. Keep an eye on Marquise Davis. He ran for 869 yards and 11 TDs last year and was also a standout on defense. Brandon Caesar (6-4, 235) is a big-time Division I college prospect. ... You can't count out Mentor. That being said, the Cardinals are younger and more experienced on the varsity level than they have been in a long time. QB Scotty Fox leads a potentially potent offense. Mentor's big question is how fast the defense grows up, with an entirely new front seven.

NORTHEAST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

Favorite: Pymatuning Valley

Darkhorse: Vienna Mathews

Don't forget about: Fairport

For the record: Pymatuning Valley won the league title last year with a 4-0 conference mark. The Lakers went 0-6 in their non-league slate, but still won the title and went to the Division VI playoffs. Coach Neal Croston's team was physical and impressive

in a scrimmage against Conneaut. His son, Ryan Croston, was an All-Ohioan last year and will operate behind a big and physical offensive line. ... Mathews went 8-3 last season, its only loss in league play coming at the hands of PV. This year's Mathews-PV game is in Week 8 (Oct. 6). That should be for the league title again. ... James Gadowski and Maverrick Piotrowski give Fairport two talented skilled position players. Josh Parsons is a strong lineman. The Skippers could be in the hunt, too, if they stay healthy.

WESTERN RESERVE CONFERENCE

Favorite: Riverside

Darkhorse: Kenston

Don't forget about: Chardon

For the record: Whew. Hold on tight folks. This is going to be a fun race to watch. Riverside is the defending league champion and returns most of its offensive skill set, including 2022 Tony Fisher Award winner Mikey Maloney at quarterback. Chardon returns most of its offense, too, and according to Coach Mitch Hewitt is bigger physically and faster than any team he's had. Keep Week 10 (Oct. 20) clear because that's when the Hilltoppers and Beavers meet in the regular-season finale. It's not out of the question that both teams will be undefeated at 9-0 when they meet. ... Of course, Kenston will want to have its say in that discussion. With RB Sean Patrick, WR Tymir Cardona and QB Lucas Kaltenbach, the Bombers are very much in the title picture, too. Mayfield is pretty good as well. But they nod has to go to Riverside and Chardon at this point.



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Playoff region projections

By Chris Lillstrung

clillstrung@news-herald.com

■ Note: Despite this being the third year of expanded playoffs to 16 per region, for consistency with years past and to not make projections a “by default” exercise, the Region 1 projection total will remain at 10.

■ (in alphabetical order, with 2022 regular-season record; News-Herald coverage area teams are in CAPS)

DIVISION I, REGION 1

Contenders: Berea Midpark (5-5), Canton GlenOak (4-6), Canton McKinley (5-5), Cleveland Heights (9-1), Massillon Jackson (5-5), Medina (9-1), MENTOR (6-3), St. Edward (9-1), St. Ignatius (6-3), Wadsworth (6-4)

What to look for: We'll begin as usual in the Region 1 with one half of The News-Herald coverage area representation here in Mentor. The offense should be pretty good with All-Ohio quarterback Scotty Fox back in the fold, although the defense did take a hit with standout starters graduated year over year. It will be interesting to see what trading Canton McKinley for Massillon Jackson as a Week 1 foe will do one way or another from a computer-points perspective. Also, trading as lightly as possible, second-level points might work against the Cardinals in the second half of their schedule, with three teams which were



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Chardon will once again be a top contender in formidable Region 9, while Mentor will have its hands full in equally tough Region 1.

3-7 and one that was 1-9 a year ago. The hope would be most if not all of those teams would be improved, but how much will have an effect. With that in mind, it feels like that Week 4 home game against Medina is a must-have to stay deep in the home-game playoff hunt. That's especially true coming off the emotion of a neighborhood clash with Riverside the week prior. ... The other News-Herald coverage area squad in this region is Euclid. Not to

sound like a broken record in this space, but after one win in the last two seasons combined, there is nowhere to go but up for the proud Panthers. Accumulating a few wins and seeing some sparkles of the old glory on East 222nd would be great to see. ... Until proven otherwise, the trust for class of this region remains at St. Edward. It's hard to argue with that All-Ohio quality returning on the offensive line for the reigning D-I state champion

with Devontae and Deonte Armstrong and Ben Roebuck. College teams would be pleased to have that kind of size and skill in the trenches. ... Speaking of the aforementioned Bees, they will be a load again to contain with first-team All-Ohio QB Danny Stoddard (5,035 yards, 58 TDs) at the controls.

DIVISION II, REGION 5

Contenders: Akron Hoban (9-1), Akron SVSM (6-3), Austintown-Fitch (9-1), Garfield Heights (7-3),

Hudson (10-0), John Hay (7-3), Maple Heights (6-4), MAYFIELD (6-4), Nordonia (8-2), RIVERSIDE (9-1), Shaker Heights (3-7), Solon (6-4), Walsh Jesuit (8-2)

What to look for: Given how historic 2022 was in so many facets for the program, it will be difficult for Riverside to replicate the caliber of last fall. The Beavers will nonetheless take their best shot at doing so, led by 2022 Tony Fisher award winner Mikey Maloney at quarterback. With Maloney, RB Jason Mackey, WR Brady McKnight and much more, Riverside will undoubtedly light up Friday nights in the weeks ahead. As far as the Beavers' schedule, every local observer will circle Week 3 against Mentor in an all-Lake County encounter of powerhouses, as well they should. But that Week 2 home clash with Aurora, given the perennial clout of the Greenmen under longtime coach and North graduate Bob Mihalik, could prove important to have in the bank down the stretch as well. Riverside will need as much momentum as it can build for that treacherous Western Reserve Conference stretch to close the regular season: at Kenston, hosting Mayfield and at Chardon. ... As far as the Wildcats, they did graduate a bunch offensively. But a returning strength for Mayfield will be a predominantly young defense from a year ago, paced by All-Ohio line-

backer Joe Barch. Heading into WRC play, figuring out a way to get out of Solon in Week 5 with a victory would be a statement of intent.

... Elsewhere in the region, anyone with an inkling of Ohio high school football knowledge is aware Akron Hoban will be a load — and there's not much more that needs to be said about the mighty Knights. ... Austintown-Fitch has high hopes as it brings back a pair of 1,000-yard rushers in Jamell Jones and D.J. Williams. ... Hudson has a prolific workhorse in the backfield in his own right in RB Ian Ludewig (2,193 yards, 26 TDs).

DIVISION III, REGION 9

Contenders: Alliance (8-2), Aurora (7-3), Canfield (8-1), Chaney (9-1), CHARDON (8-1), Dover (5-5; Region 7), GENEVA (7-3), GILMOUR (8-1), KENSTON (7-3), UNIVERSITY (8-1), Ursuline (8-2), VASJ (8-2)

What to look for: With 14 teams that won seven games or more in the regular season a year ago, then adding another top-10 team from Region 7 in Dover, this might wind up being the toughest region to project of the seven Northeast Ohio regions across the divisions. There were some tough 11th-hour cuts here as far as top-12 projections. ... Granted, Chardon graduated four first-team All-Ohioids on defense and talented skill players on offense.

PROJECTIONS » PAGE 13

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Projections

FROM PAGE 12

But if any program has earned the right to reload in this space, the Hilltoppers under Coach Mitch Hewitt are toward the top of that list. Andrew Bruce and Leo Colombi is a good start to reloading on defense, and that young offensive line should only continue to grow and improve. ... Geneva was notably young last fall and still managed eight wins and a trip to Round 2 of the playoffs. It should be fun to watch the Eagles' trajectory with that nucleus in place. ... Gilmour returns the Kavcic brothers for one more season under new coach Tom Kaufman, along with a solid core, especially on defense. So the Lancers should be heard from again for home-field contention. Maximizing those D-II points against Valley Forge and Brush is a must, though. ... Kenston brings back Sean Patrick and gave Chardon all it could handle in the playoffs last season. Perusing the Bombers' schedule, an intriguing game that may go a long way is Week 4 at fellow News-Herald coverage area squad Villa Angela-St. Joseph. ... University will be eager to build on last year's 8-2 campaign and has the personnel to do it, and you know VASJ will be a threat under Jeff Rotsky's guidance. ... As far as the top of the region, several teams will take a stab at it. But it's difficult to look past Ursuline on paper after a 10-3 season in 2022.

That offense will be dynamic with RB Christian Lynch (1,857 yards, 21 TDs) and dual-threat DC Ferrell (1,370 yards from scrimmage, 13 TDs), and the defense will be anchored by 2022 first-team All-Ohioan Ty'Req Donlow.

DIVISION IV, REGION 13

Contenders: Akron Buchtel (5-4), Canal Fulton Northwest (7-3), Canton South (7-3), Cardinal Mooney (4-6; Region 17), Girard (7-3), Holy Name (7-2; Region 10), Jefferson (7-3), LAKE CATHOLIC (3-7), Streetsboro (6-4), Struthers (6-4), West Branch (9-1), Wooldridge (7-3)

What to look for: This region always leans wild card as it is, and then for 2023 you factor in 2022 Division III state semifinalist Holy Name and formidable Cardinal Mooney coming up from D-V. So that wild-card factor becomes even more prevalent. ... The lone News-Herald coverage area team in Region 13 is Lake Catholic. Call it a hunch, but the Cougars were so close in a 3-7 season last fall with five losses by 12 points or fewer, including two by a touchdown and one by a field goal. The Cougars have some promising personnel back. So if this group can garner better fortune in close games, things could tilt much more in a playoff direction on the corner of Route 306 and Bellflower. ... West Branch appears to still be the favorite for class of Region 13, even with the graduation of prolific QB Dru DeShields. RB Boston Mullinix and WR Joey Jackson

combined for nearly 2,400 yards from scrimmage respectively as sophomores. ... The one thing that year-to-year works against Cardinal Mooney, regardless of the talent in its midst, is its strength of schedule, leaving little margin for error. But if Mooney can put it together against a slate with six larger-division opponents, and it has a group capable of that, it'll skyrocket up the region.

DIVISION V, REGION 17

Contenders: BERKSHIRE (7-3), CHAGRIN FALLS (4-6), Clearview (3-7; Region 18), Fairless (8-2), Garrettsville (8-2), Norwayne (7-3), PERRY (8-2), Richmond Edison (10-0), Sandy Valley (4-6), Smithville (6-4), South Range (10-0), West Lafayette Ridgewood (7-3)

What to look for: Putting three Chagrin Valley Conference teams across two divisions in this projection does raise a fair counterpoint: Is there room for three teams, two in the Chagrin and one in the Valley, to make top-12 cases? If it were like the old days, when this would be split into a top-four contenders and then the others vying elsewhere, then no. But for a general top-12 push, especially with what's coming back for all three? It's not out of the question. ... Perry gets Walter Moses back under center, along with the ever-versatile multi-sport stalwart Brayden Richards. Berkshire returns Miles Miller at QB and his 2,648 yards through the air and on the ground for the Badgers. Chagrin

Falls was sophomore-heavy a year ago and should be solid. ... A big advantage for the Pirates schedule-wise is having six Division III foes. Those points can add up fast in this region. ... Unbeaten 2022 D-V state champion South Range graduated a ton, and Sugar-creek Garaway has dropped to D-VI. So this region should be more wide-open toward the top as a result. ... If you want a deep sleeper for vast improvement from 2022, it might be Clearview. The Clippers were 3-7 a year ago, but with a freshman QB (Cy Christiansen; 1,486 yards, 16 TDs), junior RB (Ethan Lorenzana; 673 yards, nine TDs), three junior receivers with 24 catches or more and five one-possession losses. Same goes for Sandy Valley, which was notably young a year ago and may be ready to progress, too.

DIVISION VI, REGION 21

Contenders: Brookfield (9-1), Canton Central Catholic (6-4), CARDINAL (5-5), Cuyahoga Heights (7-2), Hanoverton United (8-2), Independence (4-6), KIRTLAND (10-0), Mineral Ridge (8-2), Mogadore (8-0), Rootstown (7-3), Trinity (4-6), Valley Christian (9-0)

What to look for: In all candor, one of the biggest challenges each year with this playoff projection is not necessarily gauging teams before a single regular-season snap has occurred. No. 1 might be finding a different way vs. years past to say something effusive about Kirtland. How about we keep it simple in 2023?

The Hornets will be really good and playing deep into November and likely December — it's as close to a mortal lock as it gets locally. ... Another News-Herald coverage area team which could be intriguing here is Cardinal. The Huskies got hot in the second half of last season to net five wins and a playoff berth. Looking at their schedule for 2023, similar fortune is available. It might not be a stretch to suggest 3-2 or even 4-1 is doable heading into Week 5 at archrival Berkshire. ... Some regions lean more top-heavy than others. With Kirtland and Mogadore here, this is one of them. The silver lining in a scenario like that, though, is it leaves the race for home field that much more wide open. Valley Christian has size and athleticism. There's something to like for, say, Mineral Ridge, Brookfield and Hanoverton United. And there's always room for others to impress. But saying with any reasonable assertion who claims No. 3 or No. 4 in this region beyond perennial powers in Kirtland and Mogadore is tough to gauge.

DIVISION VII, REGION 25

Contenders: Berlin Center Western Reserve (3-7), Dalton (8-2; Region 21), Danville (8-2), Jeromesville Hillsdale (6-4), Lowellville (10-0), Malvern (8-3; Region 23), New Middletown Springfield (6-4), Norwalk St. Paul (7-3), Salineville Southern (9-1), Toronto (7-3), Vienna Mathews (8-2), Warren JFK (8-1)

What to look for: While

there isn't a News-Herald coverage area team projected in this space to crack the top 12, it's not to imply there won't be a playoff push possible. ... Fairport eked in a year ago at No. 16 and had a lot of underclassmen who garnered experience. If anything — and this is not meant as a slight toward anyone or anything to be clear — but here's hoping, after the preseason tumult the last three years with a pandemic, multiple coaching changes and roster uncertainty, that things go more smoothly for the Skippers in August this time around. ... Richmond Heights, back in varsity football after a hiatus in that regard, is a real X-factor. The Spartans, following success as a junior-varsity squad as they rebuilt the program, have a shot at being playoff caliber in a Region 25 that tends to leave more room than other regions for it. But with every game on the road, a lot of long drives mixed in there and, again, coming back to varsity football, it's hard to ascertain where this path will lead for Richmond Heights. All the way to Week 11 would be a feel-good story to be sure. ... Beyond our area squads, this region is a handful at the top, especially with a pair of eight-win regular-season teams from 2022 in Dalton and Malvern coming in from other regions this fall. Malvern is worth keeping an eye on, with dual-threat QB Jared Witherow (2,801 total yards, 31 TDs), a wealth of skill-position depth and its top five tacklers all back in the mix.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Chardon's Colombi setting the bar high

Miami (Ohio) recruit originally thought his future was in baseball

By John Kampf

jkampf@news-herald.com



Colombi

will head into his senior year of football as a chiseled 6-foot-4, 209-pound safety who recently accepted a full athletic scholarship to Miami (Ohio).

“It’s really good,” Colombi said. “I’m very relieved knowing I don’t have the pressure of finding a school going into my senior year. I am locked in and can focus on winning a state championship.”

Colombi is coming off a junior season in which he had two interceptions and nine pass breakups — not quite the same numbers he had as a sophomore. But a big part of that diminished picks is that teams knew where he was on the field and opted not to throw the ball anywhere near the tall, ultra-athletic defensive back.

Colombi spent most of the offseason honing his skills, lifting and going through his college choices. He also strongly considered Toledo and Ohio University. “I really just felt Miami was the best fit for me overall,” he said. “I liked every-

“That sticks with us a lot. If we win that game, we probably end up winning the whole thing. We felt we were so close. A couple plays just changed the game.”

— Chardon's Leo Colombi, on losing to Canfield last season

one there. The chemistry at Miami is unbelievable. It felt like the right place as soon as I stepped in there.”

Colombi envisions a major in the business field. He also foresees the potential for a position change. With his frame, he could play some linebacker at the college level.

“I’ll probably be up to like 225 pounds by the time I play there,” he said. “They had a safety named Sterling Weatherford a few years ago — he’s with the Chicago Bears now — and he played safety and linebacker (at Miami) so that’s what they want to model me after.”

Time has flown by for Colombi. It seems like just yesterday he was a freshman celebrating the Hilltoppers’ thrilling 31-28 double overtime win over Columbus DeSales in the 2020 Division III state championship game.

It doesn’t seem that long ago that he was celebrating with his teammates after a

21-14 win over Hamilton Bardin in the 2021 Division III state championship game — his first as a starter on the Chardon defense. And he smiles thinking about the raucous celebration after Chardon’s state title in baseball his sophomore year.

He and his teammates are itching to get to work on this year’s schedule after the 2022 season ended prematurely with a 14-7 loss to eventual state champion Canfield in the Region 9 championship game.

“That sticks with us a lot,” Colombi said. “If we win that game, we probably end up winning the whole thing. We felt we were so close. A couple plays just changed the game.”

So with three state championship rings already on his hand, Colombi has a goal before heading off to Miami.

“Two more,” he said. “One more in football, then one more in baseball.”



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Chardon safety Leo Colombi will be off to Miami (Ohio) on a football scholarship after his senior year with the Hilltoppers.



Good Luck to all of the High School Football Teams!



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Beachwood » Bison

Just the facts

School: Beachwood

OHSAA: Division V, Region 17

Conference: CVC Valley

Coach: Scott Fischer, second year (2-8)

Twitter: @BisonAthletics

Home field: Allen D. McCullough Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Orange at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Beachwood at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Sept. 2: Beachwood at St. John (at SPIRE), 1 p.m.

Sept. 8: Grand Valley at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

Sept. 14: Beachwood at Crestwood, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Brooklyn at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

Sept. 30: Beachwood at Trinity (at Cuyahoga Heights), 1 p.m.

Oct. 6: Cuyahoga Heights at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Beachwood at Independence, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Wickliffe at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Larry Clark, So., 6-0, 180

RB: Cole Schriebman, Jr., 5-10, 175*

FB: Martez Pinkney, Sr., 5-10, 210*

WR: Johnny Owens, Jr., 5-9, 180*

WR: Caleb White, Jr., 5-11, 165

WR: Jacob Thomas, Jr., 5-10, 170

LT: Avi Saidel, Jr., 5-11, 260

LG: Jack Nguyen, Fr., 6-1, 205

C: Jonathan Klein, Jr., 5-10, 210*

RG: Jack Felder, Sr., 6-0, 260*

RT: Josh Rosenberg, Sr., 6-3, 295*

K: Tristan Brown, So., 6-0, 160

DEFENSE

DE: Henry Streen, So., 6-1, 190*

NT: Josh Rosenberg, Sr., 6-3, 295*

DE: Jack Felder, Sr., 6-0, 260*

LB: DariYon Flontray, So., 6-0, 185

LB: Jonathan Clein, Jr., 5-10, 210*

LB: Aaden Conor, So., 5-9, 170

SS: Johnny Owens, Jr., 5-9, 180*

FS: Cole Schriebman, Jr., 5-10, 175

FS: MarTez Pinkney, Sr., 5-10, 210*

CB: Caleb White, Jr., 5-11, 165

CB: Eriq Walker, Fr., 5-10, 165

P: Tristan Brown, So., 6-0, 160

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 13

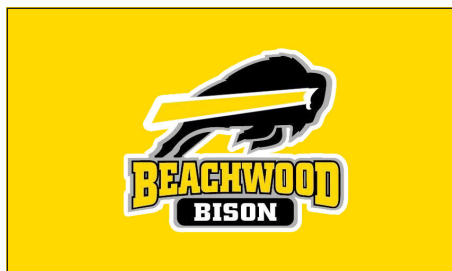
Key reserves: Eriq Walker, Fr., 5-10, 165, Chastain White, Fr., 6-1, 185

Best in the classroom: Jack Felder, 4.3 GPA

Best bench press: Josh Rosenberg 315 pounds

Best squat: MarTez Pinkney 445 pounds

Best 40 time: Cole Schriebman 4.57 seconds



Outlook

Beachwood will move from the CVC Valley Division this season into the CVC Metro, playing against a few of the schools that Coach Scott Fischer played against during his playing days with the Bison in the old Metropolitan Area Conference. Beachwood has a 28-player roster after having just 22 players last year, and will be young again with three seniors. Coming off of a 2-8 season that included three tough-luck, one-score losses, Beachwood hopes the experience gained by 13 returning starters will pay dividends. The Bison will return six starters in a spread offense that will also run some power.

Player to watch

Pinckney, a senior, will be a focal point on an offense that last season was led by brother Marquis, a quarterback who has graduated. Fischer praised Pinckney's attitude as "phenomenal."

Underclassman to watch:

Fischer is excited about the addition of Schriebman, a junior, to the Beachwood backfield. Schriebman is explosive, with 4.5 speed, and is a 'downhill' runner that is aggressive and doesn't shy away from contact.

Bottom line

IF: Beachwood can keep its small roster healthy and rely on its experience, running game and defense while Clark develops as a passer; **THEN:** the Bison can turn some of last year's close losses into wins.



Pinckney

— Jay Kron

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

The slogan on the back of this Riverside coach's T-shirt is popular in football circles for the work that needs to be done in practice. But come Aug. 18, the gates will be unlocked — for fans who have been waiting eight months for football since the end of last season

Area radio schedules

WINT-AM 1330, FM 101.5

Aug. 18: Cardinal Mooney at Lake Catholic

Aug. 25: St. Ignatius at Mentor

Sept. 1: Mentor at Riverside

Sept. 8: Medina at Mentor

Sept. 15: VASJ at Gilmour

Sept. 22: Canton Central Catholic at Lake Catholic

Sept. 29: Chardon at South

Oct. 6: Brunswick at Mentor

Oct. 13: Walsh at Lake Catholic

Oct. 20: Euclid at Mentor

WQGR-FM 9.37

Aug. 18: Mentor at Massillon Jackson

Aug. 25: St. Ignatius at Mentor

Sept. 1: Mentor at Riverside

Sept. 8: Medina at Mentor

Sept. 15: Mentor at Cleveland Heights

Sept. 22: Mentor at Solon

Sept. 29: Shaker Heights at Mentor

Oct. 6: Brunswick at Mentor

Oct. 13: Mentor at Strongsville

Oct. 20: Euclid at Mentor

WHK-AM 1420, FM 102.5

Aug. 18: Pauda at Holy Name

Aug. 25: St. Ignatius at Mentor

Sept. 1: Glenville at Avon

Sept. 8: Buckeye at North Olmsted

Sept. 15: Akron Hoban at St. Ignatius

Sept. 22: Mentor at Solon

Sept. 29: Kenston at Mayfield

Sept. 30: St. Ignatius at St. Edward

Oct. 6: Medina at Cleveland Heights

Oct. 13: Olmsted Falls at Berea-Midpark

Oct. 20: St. Edward at Akron Hoban

2022 area standings

School **Conf.** **Overall**

CVC CHAGRIN

Kirtland	7-0	10-0
Perry	6-1	8-2
Geneva	5-2	7-3
Edgewood	4-3	6-4
Lakeside	3-4	6-4
Chagrin Falls	2-5	4-6
West Geauga	1-6	2-8
Orange	0-7	0-10

CVC METRO

Lutheran West	5-0	9-1
Cuyahoga Heights	4-1	7-2
Trinity	3-2	4-6
Independence	2-3	4-6
Brooklyn	1-4	3-7
Wickliffe	0-5	1-9

CVC VALLEY

Hawken	5-1	8-2
Berkshire	5-1	7-3
Harvey	4-1	5-5
Cardinal	3-3	5-5
Crestwood	2-4	4-6
Grand Valley	1-5	2-8
Beachwood	0-5	2-8

CROWN

Walsh Jesuit	3-0	8-2
Padua	2-1	5-5
Lake Catholic	1-2	3-7
NDCL	0-3	2-8

GCC

Medina	5-0	9-1
Mentor	4-1	6-3
Solon	3-2	6-4
Brunswick	2-3	3-7
Strongsville	1-4	3-7
Euclid	0-5	1-9

NAC

Pymatuning Valley	4-0	4-6
Vienna Mathews	3-1	8-2
Windham	2-2	4-5
Fairport	1-3	4-6
St. John	0-4	2-7

WRC

Riverside	6-0	9-1
Chardon	5-1	8-1
Kenston	4-2	7-3
Mayfield	3-3	6-4
South	2-4	4-6
Madison	1-5	2-8
North	0-6	1-9

INDEPENDENTS

Gilmour		9-1
University		8-1
VASJ		8-2
Brush		2-8
Benedictine		0-10

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THIS YEAR'S QUARTERBACK CLASS IS IN RARE AIR



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Kenston's Lucas Kaltenbach.



TIM PHILLIS — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Gilmour's Jake Kavcic, shown during a 2022 game.



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Mentor quarterback Scotty Fox.



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Lake Catholic quarterback Frankie Trinetti.



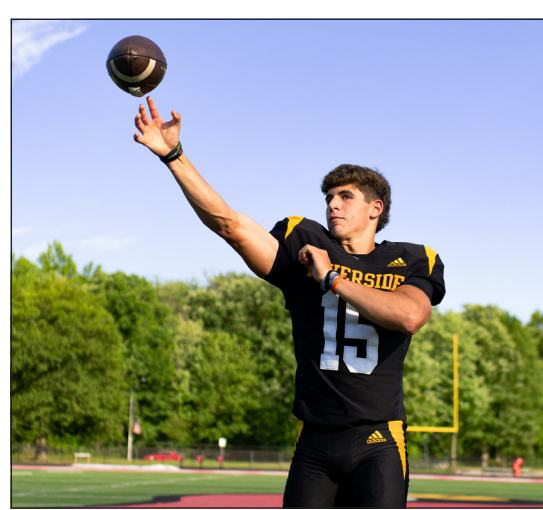
BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Perry quarterback Walter Moses.



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Berkshire quarterback Miles Miller.



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Riverside quarterback Mikey Maloney.

The area is loaded with high-profile signal-callers

By John Kampf
jkampf@news-herald.com

It's a hot summer day across Northeast Ohio. There are probably a lot of things Mikey Maloney would rather be doing — but on this day he is putting in work.

Meeting up with teammates at Riverside High School, the defending winner of the News-Herald's Tony Fisher Award starts working out and pumping iron under the watchful eye of Riverside strength and conditioning coach Bryan Doberdruk.

This, Maloney tells himself, is no time to let up.

Not after the junior season he just had. Maloney spent the 2022 season tormenting opposing defenses for nearly 3,000 of total offense and 43 touchdowns between his throwing and running.

But he wants more. "Something like that just happens with hard work," Maloney said. "I put in the work in the offseason. I don't necessarily have goals to top what I did last year. I

have some things I keep to myself, obviously. But stuff like that comes with success of the team."

Maloney, who threw for 2,289 yards and 28 touchdowns to go with 677 yards on the ground with 15 additional scores, isn't alone when it comes to being a marquee quarterback from the area putting in off-season work to prepare for the 2023 season.

In fact, there are eight other News-Herald coverage area quarterbacks who threw for more than 1,000 yards last past season. Some of them even added significant rushing yardage as well.

The glut of returning quarterbacks sets the bar for what could be the most impressive season in News-Herald history from a quarterbacking standpoint.

Here's a look at the list, in alphabetical order, including their accomplishments last season and what they potentially bring to the table this season.

Scotty Fox, Mentor, junior

He was a third-team All-Ohio pick last season in Division I, and he's back for more. Fox threw for 3,134 yards and 30 touchdowns. He got better as the year went on and has had a marvelous camp this month.

"I put on a little more weight to try and get stronger and faster," Fox said. "I want to be the best leader I can possibly be and lead the offense to as many points as possible."

Fox has an entirely new receiving corps this season aside from returner Austin Van Huss. Newcomers Dylan Sierputowski and Justen Hodge have been impressive early in camp.

Fox said it's time to be a leader more so than in previous years when he looked up to the upperclassmen.

"We have a young team, but that doesn't change anything," said 6-foot-2, 210-pound Fox, who has 12 Division I college offers. "We're ready to attack it."

Lucas Kaltenbach, Kenston, junior

While this is Kaltenbach's first year at the helm of the Bombers' offense, he has previous starting experience at Benedictine, where he threw for 1,433 yards and nine touchdowns last season before transferring back to his home school last winter.

At 6-foot-4, 220 pounds, Kaltenbach isn't in the same mold as previous Kenston quarterbacks Nico Georgiou and Jon Tomcufcik. But he has a rocket for an arm and a physical frame to run if needed.

"The challenge is winning the team over and learning a brand new playbook," Kaltenbach said. "It's a new chemistry with the receivers, teammates and coaches. It feels a little bit like being a freshman all over again."

Kaltenbach has a strong skill set around him, including returning receivers Jimmy Richmond and Tymir Cardona, along with

All-Ohio running back Sean Patrick.

"Even though I was at Benedictine, some of my best friends are here at Kenston," he said. "I think we're going to be a team that other teams don't want to take lightly."

Jake Kavcic, Gilmour, senior

Kavcic is one of the best dual-threat quarterbacks in the area, having thrown for 1,958 yards and 31 touchdowns last year to go with 374 yards rushing and four scores a year ago.

This is the third year for him starting at quarterback. He also started his freshman year at defensive back for the Lancers.

"It's been great," he said of his career at Gilmour. "I feel the most fun part is how much I've grown as a passer. I've always been able to run. I've improved a lot passing."

He's not the only Kavcic with 1,000-yard passing to his name. When Jake was injured his sophomore year, his twin Andy stepped in at quarterback and threw for more than 1,000 yards. Now Andy is among the skill set around Jake, along with Sean Dillard, Nick Iliano, Matt Lambert and Lars Broberg.

Kavcic has offers from Wheeling (W.Va.) and Otterbein. He's looking forward to one more year with the Lancers and with his twin.

"I don't know if it could get much better," he said of the chemistry and experi-

ence with his brother. "We've been doing this since we were like 3 years old. Having someone like Andy to play with and throw to is a big confidence-booster."

Mikey Maloney, Riverside, senior

It's been a fine line this offseason for Maloney, building strength while also maintaining his flexibility and speed.

Maloney, not surprisingly, has been dynamic in both of Riverside's scrimmages this preseason. He has a fine skill set around him, too, which could help him top last year's numbers of 2,289 yards passing and 677 yards rushing.

Running back Jason Mackey as well as receivers Brady McKnight, Dez Kirks and Ethan Ross — among others — make the Beavers a dangerous offense with multi-faceted Maloney running the show.

"Brady and Jason are two of my top guys," Maloney said. "We have a great skill set. Everybody is back from last year but one guy (Jake Elly). We're just looking to go 1-0 every week. Our focus is just to keep getting better."

Miles Miller, Berkshire, senior

One of the toughest games of can-you-top-that belongs to Miller.

At 5-foot-9, 170 pounds, Miller had a season for the ages last fall when he threw for 1,445 yards with 13 TDs and rushed for another 1,138 yards with 16 scores. He also

"I don't know if it could get much better. We've been doing this since we were like 3 years old. Having someone like Andy to play with and throw to is a big confidence-booster."

— Gilmour's Jake Kavcic, on playing with his twin brother Andy

had 27 tackles and six interceptions on defense.

"I just want to stay focused all year and trust in my coaches in what they tell me to do throughout the week to continue what I did — we did — last year," Miller said. "Is there a target on me now? Probably. But I've just got to play my game every Friday night. I don't care if teams know I've got the all every play. I'm going to stick to my game and play hard every night."

While Miller considers himself "an athlete that plays quarterback," he does like to be multi-dimensional.

"I prefer to run the ball, honestly," he said. "But when I get to air it out, that's so much fun."

Walter Moses, Perry, junior

Moses has a breakout season last year

when he threw for 2,212 yards and 26 touchdowns while completing an uncanny 72% of his passes.

For his efforts, he was named third-team All-Ohio in Division V.

Moses has offers from UConn and Akron, a list that could — and should — increase with another big season this fall.

"Hopefully I'll be better," the 6-foot-3, 175-pounder said. "I worked a lot and hopefully I've gotten faster. I think I've gotten better with my progressions. When I was younger, it was like, 'Hey, I'm set on this guy (to throw to). I think I've developed going through reads."

Moses, who has a strong skill set around him such as Brayden Richards, Jayden Studio and Luke Sivon, said personal and team development are his focuses, not as much college opportunities right now.

"That's motivation to keep working harder," he said.

Frankie Trinetti, Lake Catholic, junior

Trinetti had a stellar sophomore campaign, in which he threw for 1,805 yards and 15 touchdowns.

Imagine what he would have done had he not missed nearly two full games with a concussion.

Trinetti is back stronger than he was last year as a 10th-grader, and has another year

of tutelage under his belt from Lake Catholic alum (and former Iowa Hawkeye and Kansas City Chief) Ricky Stanzi.

"I'm so ready," Trinetti said. "(The concussion) was scary. My head was pounding. I'm glad I was able to come back to finish the season."

Lake has a deeper-than-normal skill set this year, including 6-foot-6 Cross Nimmo in the passing game.

"I think I can do better than last year," Trinetti said. "I think we'll be a balanced team. Josh Styles is back there, Cross Nimmo, D.J. (Sears), Ace (Peterlin)... we can do a lot."

Others to keep an eye on are Mayfield's Rocco Monastero, who threw for 1,582 yards and 18 touchdowns last season, and Kirtland's Jake LaVerde, who threw for 1,100 yards and 14 touchdowns in his 16 games as the Hornets' freshman QB.

A few others who nearly hit the 1,000-yard mark last season and could (should) do it this year are West Geauga's Finn Keenan (948 last year), University's Jackson Boland (923 last year) and VASJ's Kylan Steuball (770 last year).

Hawken's Lucas Brandt threw for 1,102 yards and 20 touchdowns as a junior last season, but had offseason surgery and is likely to miss a good portion of the season according to Coach Mark Iammarino. His absence opens the door for sophomore Donovan Moorhead.

Benedictine » Bengals

Just the facts

Conference: Independent
OHSAA: Division II, Region 5
Head coach: Joe Prevesk, First year
2022: 0-10
Twitter: @BeneBengalsFB
Home field: Euclid Community Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Benedictine at Walsh Jesuit, 7 p.m.
Aug. 24: Avon Lake at Benedictine, 7 p.m.
Sept. 2: Benedictine at St. Francis (N.Y.), 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Benedictine at Strongsville, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16: Buchtel at Benedictine, 1 p.m.
Sept. 22: Benedictine at Normandy, 7 p.m.
Sept. 30: Canisius (N.Y.) at Benedictine, 2 p.m.
Oct. 7: Cathedral Prep at Benedictine, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Brush at Benedictine, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Benedictine at Akron SVSM, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Matthew Frust, So., 6-0, 195
QB: CJ Ross, So., 6-1, 170
RB: Luke Reed*, Sr., 5-10, 180
WR: JJ Baldwin*, Jr., 6-1, 170
WR: Nehemiah Seals, Sr., 6-2, 165
TE: Augie Rosalina, Jr., 5-10, 180
LT: Eddie Dinwiddie*, Sr., 6-2, 245
LG: Braylen Rose, So., 5-9, 225
C: Deonte Sims, Sr., 5-8, 275
RG: Michael Duckworth, Jr., 6-0, 235
RT: Darnell Johnson, Sr., 6-1, 255
K: Bryce Meitin, Jr., 6-3, 170

DEFENSE

DE: Michael Duckworth, Jr., 6-0, 235
NT: Tyshawn Wilson, Jr., 6-1, 255
DE: Diondre Taylor, So., 6-0, 250
LB: James Yane, Jr., 5-10, 205
LB: Jamere Church, Jr., 5-9, 200
LB: Jonathan Spikes, So., 5-11, 200
DB: Christopher Maloney*, Jr., 5-10, 175
DB: Antonio Hobbs*, Jr., 5-8, 155
DB: Shamar Darling*, Sr., 6-0, 180
DB: Joseph Morse, Jr., 6-0, 165
DB: Joseph Pomnean, Jr., 6-0, 165
P: Bryce Meitin, Jr., 6-3, 170
***:** returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 15
Key reserves: Joseph Pomnean, Jr., 6-0, 165, Christopher Maloney, Jr., 5-10, 175, Daniel Joyce, So., 5-10, 180, Nehemiah Seals, Sr., 6-2, 165;
Best in the classroom: Sean O'Connell, 4.4 GPA, Jeremy Aede, 4.4, Daniel Joyce, 4.1
Best bench press: Tyshawn Wilson 315 pounds
Best squat: Tyshawn Wilson 585 pounds
Best 40 time: Luke Reed 4.5 seconds



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

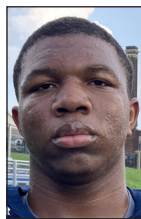
Luke Reed finds a hole against the Perry defense in a scrimmage.

Outlook

While last year was rough for Benedictine, the Bengals had five games decided by a touchdown. This is Coach Joe Prevesk's first year after he served as the offensive coordinator. They have a pair of sophomore quarterbacks and several new names in the skill group, as well. The defense has all new names in the front, but Prevesk liked the pressure they have shown through camp. With the entire secondary back and the antsy front, the Bengals are excited for their showing on that side of the ball.

Player to watch

Michael Duckworth has shown strong progress on the offensive and defensive lines. His motor and ability to lead on both sides of the ball have made him a name that the coaching staff can rely on.



Underclassman to watch: Duckworth
 Jamere Church became a name on the defensive side with his willingness to play with reckless abandon. He'll also see several opportunities on the offensive side of the ball in the backfield.

Bottom line

IF: the young players can develop chemistry, **THEN:** the Bengals will have a bounce-back year.

— Ben Hercik

Berkshire » Badgers

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Valley
OHSAA: Division V, Region 17
Head coach: Josh DeWeese, 11th year (45-55)
2022: 7-4 (5-1)
Twitter: @bhsfb119
Home field: Great Lakes Cheese Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug 18: Chagrin Falls at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Aug 25: Coventry at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Sept 1: Cuyahoga Heights at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Sept 8: Berkshire at Edison, 7 p.m.
Sept 15: Trinity at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Sept 22: Cardinal at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Sept 29: Berkshire at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Oct 6: Berkshire at Crestwood, 7 p.m.
Oct 13: Grand Valley at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Oct 20: Berkshire at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Miles Miller*, Sr.
RB: Justin Phillip, Sr.
WR: Mason Mendolera*, Sr.
WR: JR Ricci*, Sr.
WR: Jack Hastings*, Sr.
TE: Abram Southern, Jr.
LT: Blaze Tishko*, Sr.
LG: Caleb Corbett*, Jr.
C: Jason Brent*, Jr.
RG: Danny Tiller*, So.
RT: Vinny Cera*, Jr.
K: Roman Percic, So.

DEFENSE

DE: Andrew Kimpton, Jr.
DT: Jason Brent*, Jr.
DT: Caleb Corbett*, Jr.
DE: Danny Teller*, So.
LB: Justin Phillips*, Jr.
LB: Blaze Tishko, Sr.
OLB: Abram Southern, Jr.
OLB: Jake Hastings*, Sr.
CB: Mason Mendolera, Sr.
CB: Paul Brent*, Jr.
S: Miles Miller*, Sr.
P: Mason Mendolera, Sr.
***:** returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 17
Key reserves: Andrew Kimpton, Jr., Louis Filby, Sr., Mike White, So., Cameron Beam, So.
Best in the classroom: Mason Mendolera, 4.41 GPA, Brady Wadsworth, 3.72, Nolan Morris, 3.69



BEN HERCIK — THE NEWS-HERALD

Berkshire's defense huddles around their coach during practice.

Outlook

The offense has nine starters back, and the biggest strength is the offensive line. They return all five upfront and that experience will help establish their running game. Quarterback Miles Miller has his receiving corps back for another year as the Badgers look to again feature a multifaceted offense. The defense also brings many familiar faces back from last season, but a new middle and outside linebacker will need to adjust during the year.

Player to watch

Miller enters his third year leading the offense behind center, and looks to build on 2,583 all-purpose yards a year ago. Berkshire will rely on development as a player and leader in close games.

Underclassman to watch:

Danny Tiller handled the pressure of playing key roles on the line as a freshman a season ago. He earned All-Ohio honors a season ago and is again expected to be a big role player this season.



Tiller

Bottom line

IF: The new pieces mesh with the experienced, **THEN:** Berkshire will host another playoff game.

— Ben Hercik

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Brush » Arcs

Just the facts

Conference: Independent
OHSAA: Division II, Region 5
Head coach: Ricky Powers, Second year (2-8)
2022: 2-8
Twitter: @BRUSHAthletics
Home field: Korb Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: Lorain at Brush, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: Brush at Shaker Heights, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: South at Brush, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Brush at North, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: Bedford at Brush, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Cleveland Central Catholic at Brush, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Brush at Twinsburg, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Brush at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Brush at Benedictine, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Lakewood at Brush, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Michael Russell, Sr., 6-0, 170
RB: Tanelle Rose*, Sr., 6-1, 210
WR: Terrence Williams*, Sr., 5-7, 165
WR: Kevin Powell, Jr., 5-10, 170
WR: Tyrell Cloud, Sr., 5-9, 175
WR: Jamari McCullough, Sr., 6-0, 170
LT: Mutazz Lewis*, Sr., 6-2, 230
LG: Jaxon Gregory*, So., 6-3, 275
C: Ethan Enoch, So., 6-0, 225
RG: Antonio Heath*, Sr., 6-4, 270
RT: Alex Ayala*, So., 6-3, 240
K: Jamal Hoges, Sr., 5-8, 175

DEFENSE

DE: John Sims, Jr., 6-2, 190
NT: Malakai Officer*, Sr., 5-10, 240
DE: Inathalee Bohanon, So., 6-3, 260
LB: Israel Powers*, Jr., 6-2, 230
LB: Theo Davis*, Jr., 6-1, 220
LB: Dylan Roddy, So., 6-1, 235
LB: Aiden O'Neal, So., 5-9, 175
CB: Terrence Williams*, Sr., 5-9, 170
CB: Tyrell Cloud*, Sr., 5-10, 170
FS: Marlon Nesbitt, Jr., 6-1, 170
SS: Chaz Brown*, Sr. 5-10, 180
P: Tyrell Cloud, Sr., 5-10, 170
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 12
Key reserves: Chaz Brown, Sr., 5-9, 203, Isaiah Parker, Jr., 6-3, 220, Gabe Enoch, Sr., 5-10, 235, Ryan Lucas, Sr., 6-0, 180;



MARK KEMPTON — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Tyrell Cloud runs the ball against South.

Outlook

The Arcs have a veteran front on both sides of the ball. They bring back four of their five starting linemen from last season on offense. That front will again be the catalyst for senior running back Tanelle Rose, as he looks to build off another 1,000-plus yard season. Having that experience around a new quarterback will help the offensive game plan. The defense has five of the front seven back, plus the starting corners return. That will give the defensive line plenty of time to get into the backfield.

Player to watch

Rose comes off of an All-Ohio season in which he scored 12 total touchdowns and gained 1,357 yards. Now with a group around him that has a year of experience, it could be another big year for the running back.

Underclassman to watch: It a very young group in general for the Arcs a season ago, and they all earned experience. The line-backer duo of Israel Powers and Theo Davis have continued to make impressions with the front seven.

Bottom line

IF: the receiving corps can take some pressure off the run game, **THEN:** a balanced Arcs offense can lead them to the playoffs.



Rose

— Ben Hercik

Cardinal » Huskies

Just the facts

School: Cardinal
OHSAA: Division VI, Region 21
Conference: CVC Valley
Coach: Chris Perrotti, third year (12-10)
Twitter: @huskies_fb
Home field: Richard A. Moss Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: Garrettsville at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: Cardinal at Pymatuning Valley, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Cardinal at Coventry, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Cardinal at Independence, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: Brooklyn at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Cardinal at Berkshire, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Crestwood at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Cardinal at Grand Valley, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Harvey at Cardinal, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Kirtland at Cardinal, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Logan Strever, Sr., 5-11, 170*
WR: Kyle Sinclair, Sr., 5-11, 185*
WR: Aidan Gallagher, Sr., 6-0, 165*
WR: Troy Domen, Sr., 5-10, 160*
WR: Reese Soltis, Jr., 5-10, 155*
TE: Logan Mullet, Sr., 6-0, 195*
LT: Max Soltis, Jr., 6-2, 200*
LG: Josh Hartman, Fr., 5-10, 195
C: Austin Sly, Jr., 5-9, 175
RG: Hunter Gresch, Jr., 5-10, 180*
RT: Neil Lucariello, Jr., 6-0, 185
K: Landon Gallagher, So., 5-9, 160*

DEFENSE

DL: Max Soltis, Jr., 6-2, 200*
DL: Austin Sly, Jr., 5-9, 175
DL: Logan Mullet, Sr., 6-0, 195
LB: Chase Harris, Jr., 5-9, 165
LB: Logan Strever, Sr., 5-11, 170*
LB: Hunter Gresch, Jr., 5-10, 180
LB: Neil Lucariello, Sr., 6-0, 185*
CB: Christian Cowle, Sr., 5-8, 155*
S: Troy Domen, Sr., 5-10, 160*
S: Reese Soltis, Jr., 5-10, 155*
CB: Aidan Gallagher, Sr., 6-0, 165*
P: Kyle Sinclair, Sr., 5-11, 185*
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 14
Key reserves: Cal Siminello, Jr., 5-9, 165, Clayton Cochran, Sr., 5-11, 205.
Best in the classroom: Logan Strever 4.02 GPA
Best bench press: Max Soltis 325 pounds
Best squat: Max Soltis 465 pounds
Best 40 time: Reese Soltis/Aidan Gallagher 4.41 seconds



JOHN KAMPF — THE NEWS-HERALD

Line play will be a key for Cardinal this year.

Outlook

The Huskies are going to play fast this year. Look for senior quarterback Logan Strever to throw to a multitude of receivers and for the Huskies to play more of a wide-open, air attack than in previous years. There's still good speed in the running game, too. Having so many starters back on each side of the ball will allow Cardinal to be aggressive and play fast. Depth in a small school is always a concern, and there are four new starters on the front seven.

Player to watch

Logan Strever is not only the quarterback on offense, but also on defense as a returning starter at linebacker. The offense runs through him. They'll need to keep him healthy in order to reach their goals.

Underclassman to watch: Max Soltis is 6-2, 200, but looks and plays a lot bigger than that. He's the anchor of both lines.

Bottom line

IF: the switch to a wide-open offense is successful, **THEN:** the Huskies are going to be fun to watch and be a tough opponent this year.



Strever

— John Kampf

NH PREPS

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Chagrin Falls » Tigers

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Chagrin

OHSAA: Division V, Region 17

Head coach: John Scott, third year (9-11)

2022: 4-6 (2-5)

Twitter: @chagrinAD

Home field: C.S. Harris Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Chagrin Falls at Berkshire, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Beachwood at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Chagrin Falls at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Conneaut at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Sept. 14: Chagrin Falls at Edgewood, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Orange at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Chagrin Falls at West Geauga, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Chagrin Falls at Perry, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Hawken at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Lutheran West at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Jacob Kay, So., 6-0, 160

RB: Jack Gellin, So., 5-10, 175

FB: Aiden Beresford*, Sr., 6-3, 200

WR: Jack Medhurst, Jr., 5-11, 170

WR: Drew Zelch*, Jr., 5-9, 170

TE: Brady Devito, So., 5-11, 190

LT: Sam Stauffer*, Jr., 6-1, 270

LG: Tyler Saccone*, Sr., 5-8, 180

C: Mason Hart, Jr., 5-11, 270

RG: Jake Evans, Jr., 6-1, 225

RT: Parker Courtright*, Jr., 6-1, 275

K: Ben Cowan*, Sr., 5-10, 160

DEFENSE

DE: Duncan Scott, Sr., 6-2, 215

NT: Dylan Babic, Sr., 6-3, 205

DE: Alex Hardy, So., 5-8, 200

OLB: Cole Ducas*, Jr., 6-2, 190

ILB: Cooper Ryan, Jr., 5-8, 170

ILB: Jack Keegan, So., 6-2, 200

OLB: Charlie Bazzone, Jr., 5-10, 175

CB: Brandon Castelluccio*, Sr., 5-10, 175

CB: Quin Bargar, So., 5-8, 160

FS: Luke Neimeier*, Sr., 6-1, 160

SS: Grant Alberts*, Sr., 6-2, 175

P: Cole Ducas*, Jr., 6-2, 190

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 17

Key reserves: Carlo Ricco, Jr., 5-9, 180, Cole Kramer, So., 5-10,

170, Tyler McCort, Sr., 6-0, 180, Brandt Stevens, Jr., 5-10, 150

Best in the classroom: Duncan Scott 4.20 GPA, Luke Neimeier

4.15, Ben Cowan 4.12, Jake Evans 3.98, Aiden Beresford 3.87

Best bench press: Sam Stauffer, 285 pounds

Best squat: Sam Stauffer, 500 pounds

Best 40 time: Jack Gellin, 4.7 seconds



CHRIS LILLSTRUNG — THE NEWS-HERALD

Chagrin Falls' east end zone at C.S. Harris Stadium is shown Aug. 8.

Outlook

A tough second half of 2022 led the Tigers to a 4-6 mark. But the good news is a sophomore-laden group garnered snaps and should be better off for it. An offensive line that lacked girth last fall hit the weight room hard and will be a calling card for this team. Chagrin might be a year away still, but progress is tangible.

Player to watch

Tyler Saccone, a 5-foot-8, 180-pound senior left guard, is a "spark plug" and "pulse" for this squad according to Scott, one who will help solidify an improved O-line.



Underclassman to watch: Saccone

Sophomore Jack Gellin (5-10, 175) will be a focal point for a run-first team as this young core develops.

Bottom line

IF: this junior class arrives ahead of schedule to complement veterans and promise sprinkled through the lineup; **THEN:** 6-4 and rightful excitement for 2024 doesn't seem unreasonable.

— Chris Lillstrung

Chardon » Hilltoppers

Just the facts

School: Chardon

Conference: WRC

OHSAA: Division III, Region 9

Coach: Mitch Hewitt, 13th year (109-33)

2022: 11-2

Twitter: @topperfb

Home field: Memorial Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Chardon at West Geauga, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Chardon at Tiffin Columbian, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Avon Lake at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: St. Francis (N.Y.) at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Chardon at Bishop Watterson (at Ohio Dominican), 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Kenston at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Chardon at South, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Chardon at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: North at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Riverside at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Will Francis, Sr., 5-9, 160

FB: Vinny Colombi, Jr., 5-10, 190

RB: Andrew Bruce, Sr., 6-0, 185*

RB: Drago Vujaklija, 5-10, 181, Sr.*

WR: Derek Galinac, 5-10, 166, Sr.*

TE: Andrew Baggott, So., 6-4, 270*

LT: Tredell Graves, Jr., 6-2, 245*

LG: Colin Youdath, Sr., 6-0, 221

C: Vince Valletto, Jr., 6-2, 242

RG: Trevor Winters, So., 6-2, 290

RT: Logan Bryant, Sr., 6-0, 255*

K: Sam Sacerich, Jr., 5-7, 155

DEFENSE

DL: Kyle Kiskey, Sr., 6-3, 210

DL: Caleb Schuetzman, Sr., 6-2, 240*

DL: Mario Tolo, Sr., 6-2, 215

LB: Austin Leszynski, Sr., 6-3, 218*

LB: Ken Friihauf, Sr., 6-4, 205

LB: Austin Green, Sr., 6-0, 192

LB: Alexander Ash, Jr., 5-11, 176

DB: Andrew Bruce, Sr., 6-0, 185*

DB: Caleb Hewitt, Jr., 5-10, 167*

DB: Leo Colombi, Sr., 6-3, 215*

DB: Braden Maruna, 5-10, 166

P: Derek Galinac, Sr., 5-10, 166

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 17

Key reserves: Zach Hoenigman, Sr., 6-0, 185, Austin Hardesty,

Sr., 6-0, 220, Beckett Dotson, Jr., 6-0, 190, Tyler Malloy, Sr., 5-9,

185, Braden Schmauder, Sr., 5-10, 163.

Best in the classroom: Charlie Brock, 4.0 GPA

Best bench press: Caleb Schuetzman 405 pounds

Best squat: Logan Bryant 620 pounds

Best 40 time: Caleb Hewitt 4.46 seconds



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS HERALD

Coach Mitch Hewitt and the Chardon Hilltoppers have high goals for the season.

Outlook

The Hilltoppers are experienced and motivated after losing in a regional final last year. Coach Mitch Hewitt said this is among the biggest (physically) and fastest teams he's had. Offensively, the line is so deep that Division I recruit Andrew Baggott has moved from tackle to tight end. Will Francis is a new, heady leader at quarterback. Defensively, graduation losses took some super talent off the front seven. The defensive backs are experienced and talented.

Player to watch

Andrew Bruce is a standout two-way starter at running back and at defensive back. He's a Division I college recruit with top-notch speed. He is a lockdown corner.

Underclassman to watch:

Caleb Hewitt, the coach's son, is the fastest player on the team. When he and Bruce are on the field at the same time on offense, hold your breath.

Bottom line

IF: Chardon's youthful defensive front seven can replace many All-Ohioans; **THEN:** The Hilltoppers could run the table and contend for a Division III state title.

— John Kampf



Bruce

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Euclid » Panthers

Just the facts

Conference: GCC

OHSAA: Division I, Region 1

Head coach: Robert Andrews, second year (1-9)

2022: 1-9 (0-5)

Twitter: @EUCFOOTBALL

Home field: Euclid Community Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Austintown Fitch at Euclid, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Erie at Euclid, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Euclid at Massillon Perry, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Shaker Heights at Euclid, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Euclid at Strongsville, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Euclid at Medina, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Brunswick at Euclid, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Solon at Euclid, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Euclid at Cleveland Heights, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Euclid at Mentor, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Robert King*, So., 6-0, 185

RB: Nylan Thompson, Sr., 6-3, 210

RB: Marquise Hall*, Sr., 5-10, 185

WR: Jamal Jefferson*, Sr., 6-0, 180

WR: Josiah Clark, Jr., 5-9, 175

TE: Dray Fazl*, Sr., 5-11, 190

LT: Isaiah Williams, Sr., 6-2, 350

LG: Eric Kirksey, So., 5-11, 280

C: Dave Johnson*, Sr., 5-11, 270

RG: Dylan Boufford, So., 6-1, 260

RT: Brandon Parker, Sr., 6-1, 250

K: Nylan Thompson, Sr., 6-3, 210

DEFENSE

DE: Jerome Gayles, So., 6-4, 260

DT: Anthony Riddle, So., 5-11, 250

DT: Kamillion Wills, Jr., 5-10, 265

DE: Kendon West*, So., 6-1, 225

MLB: Rufus Lester, Sr., 5-9, 200

SLB: Dray Fazl, Sr., 5-11, 190

Star: Rynell Taylor, Sr., 5-10, 180

FC: Jamal Jefferson*, Sr., 6-0, 180

BC: Dajahn Telfair*, Sr., 6-1, 175

FS: James Tisino, So., 5-8, 160

SS: Marquise Hall*, Sr., 5-10, 185

P: Dray Fazl, Sr., 5-11, 190

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 7

Key reserves: Jayden Thomas, Sr., 6-3, 260, Shafiq Smith, Jr., 6-0, 280;

Best in the classroom: Dajahn Telfair, 3.7 GPA

Best bench press: Shawn Porter, 320 pounds

Best squat: Shawn Porter, 500 pounds

Best 40 time: Jamal Jefferson, 4.4 seconds



BEN HERCIK — THE NEWS-HERALD

Euclid gets a break before going to drills.

Outlook

After a pair of winless seasons, Euclid picked up a win over Erie (Pa.) a year ago. Now the Panthers are looking to build on it and make a return to the playoffs. The Panthers have several new faces on both sides of the ball, and it's been a focus through the summer to help get all the new faces and names get accustomed to the team. The offense returns Jamal Jefferson and will rely on his leadership early portion in the season.

Player to watch

Padua transfer Marquise Hall has worked his way into the backfield for the Panthers. Hall is a dynamic player who can do it all out of the backfield. He can complement Jefferson on offense.

Underclassman to watch: Robert King guided Euclid back to the win column against Erie and he will be called on this season through the Panthers' rigorous schedule.

Bottom line

IF: it can carry the momentum of close games into the second half, **THEN:** Euclid will earn a playoff berth.



Hall

— Ben Hercik

Fairport » Skippers

Just the facts

Conference: NAC

OHSAA: Division VII, Region 25

Head coach: Domanick Sherwood, second year (2-3)

2022: 4-7

Twitter: @SkippersFB

Home field: Greig Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Leetonia at Fairport, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Fairport at David Anderson, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Rittman at Fairport, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Fairport at Cuyahoga Heights, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Steubenville Catholic Central at Fairport, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 22: Windham at Fairport, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Pymatuning Valley at Fairport, 7 p.m.

Oct. 7: Fairport at St. John (at SPIRE), 6 p.m.

Oct. 13: Jackson-Milton at Fairport, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Fairport at Vienna Mathews, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: James Gadomski*, Sr., 6-3, 190

RB: Maverick Piotrowski*, Sr., 5-11, 185

WR: Jan Castellano, So., 5-6, 135

WR: Yomar Castellano, Fr., 5-6, 135

WR: Kevin Castellano*, Sr., 5-6, 140

WR: Umar Abdul-Hakim, Jr., 5-10, 140

LT: Josh Parsons*, Sr., 6-3, 215

LG: Trey Vaughn*, So., 5-9, 155

C: Colin LaFaye*, Jr., 5-9, 210

RG: Michael Hess*, Sr., 6-1, 185

RT: DJ Dambolena*, So., 6-2, 215

K: Maverick Piotrowski, Sr., 5-11, 185

DEFENSE

DE: James Gadomski*, Sr., 6-3, 190

DT: Josh Parsons*, Sr., 6-3, 215

NG: Colin LaFaye*, Jr., 5-9, 210

DE: Maverick Piotrowski*, Sr., 5-11, 185

LB: Kevin Castellano*, Sr., 5-6, 140

LB: DJ Dambolena*, So., 6-2, 215

LB: Michael Hess*, Sr., 6-1, 185

LB: Brady Lawson*, So., 5-10, 165

CB: Yomar Castellano, Fr., 5-6, 135

CB: Umar Abdul-Hakim, Jr., 5-10, 140

S: Jan Castellano, So., 5-6, 135

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 10

Key reserves: Shane Greenwood, So., 5-9, 135, Gavin Mullenwey, So., 5-9, 145.

Best in the classroom: Michael Hess, 3.9 GPA

Best bench press: James Gadomski, Maverick Piotrowski 250 pounds

Best squat: James Gadomski 425 pounds

Best 40 time: Maverick Piotrowski 4.6 seconds



COLEEN MOSKOWITZ — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Fairport will rely on a veteran skill set to pile up the points again this season.

Outlook

Fairport, coming off its fourth playoff appearance in school history, hopes to return to the postseason with a roster of 20 players, 10 of which are returning starters, buoyed an enthusiastic group of underclassmen. The Skippers will be led on both sides of the ball by a trio of seniors, including quarterback/safety James Gadomski, running back/defensive end Maverick Piotrowski, and offensive tackle/linebacker Josh Parsons.

Player to watch

Gadomski, a first-team all-district WR last season, moves to QB, having seen some time behind center last season. Sherwood describes Gadomski as long-limbed but a lot stronger than he looks, and coming along well as a passer.

Underclassman to watch: Sherwood cited brothers Jan Castellano, a sophomore, and Yomar Castellano, a freshman, as standout underclassmen among several who show promise.

Bottom line

IF: Fairport can use the playmaking experience of its senior leaders. ... **THEN:** the Skippers can finish above .500.



Gadomski

— Jay Kron

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GOOD LUCK TO ALL OUR AREA FOOTBALL TEAMS THIS SEASON!

Geneva » Eagles

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Chagrin
OHSAA: Division III, Region 9
Coach: Don Shymske, second year (8-4)
2022: 8-4
Twitter: @FbGeneva
Home field: SPIRE Institute

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: Geneva at University, 5 p.m.
Aug. 25: Struthers at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Springfield at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Geneva at Lutheran West, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: Perry at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Edgewood at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Geneva at Conneaut, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Lakeside at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Oct. 12: Geneva at Madison, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Jefferson at Geneva, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Kenny Young, Sr., 6-1, 160*
FB: Bryce Peet, So., 5-10, 195
RB: Luke Smith, Sr., 6-1, 180*
RB: Hayden Diemer, Jr., 6-2, 180, Jr.
SE: Giovanni Rice, Sr., 5-9, 160*
TE: Logan Queen, Sr., 6-1, 170*
LT: John Alley, Sr., 6-3, 315*
LG: Ken Pavlisin, Sr., 6-1, 225
C: Jason Thrower, Sr., 5-10, 265*
RG: Jamil Daghlas, Jr., 5-11, 185*
RT: Jackson Furlan, Sr., 5-9, 320*
K: Owen Pfeifer, Sr., 5-10, 160*

DEFENSE

DE: Matt Wright, Sr., 5-10, 180*
DT: Kenny Pavlisin, Sr., 6-1, 225*
DE: Jamil Daghlas, Jr., 5-11, 185
OLB: Luke Barbo, Jr., 6-1, 185*
ILB: Logan Queen, Sr., 6-1, 170*
ILB: Bryce Peet, So., 5-10, 195*
OLB: Hayden Diemer, Jr., 6-2, 180*
FS: Luke Smith, Sr., 6-1, 180*
CB: Giovanni Rice, Sr., 5-9, 160*
CB: Donald Shymske, Jr., 5-11, 150
P: Giovanni Rice, Sr., 5-9, 160*
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 18
Key reserves: Abe Rosales, Jr., 5-11, 155, Tanner Hines, Jr., 5-8, 175
Best in the classroom: Jackson Furlan 4.0 GPA, Owen Pfeifer 4.0, Logan Queen 4.0, Luke Smith 4.0
Best bench press: Jackson Furlan 340 pounds
Best squat: Jackson Furlan 585 pounds
Best 40 time: Giovanni Rice 4.57 seconds



JOHN KAMPF — THE NEWS-HERALD

Kenny Young hands off to Bryce Peet during a Geneva practice last week. The Eagles will again rely on a run-based offense this season.

Outlook

This is the most talented and experienced Geneva squad in some time. The offense returns nine starters and so does the defense. Many of them are two-way starters, but the experience is prevalent. There's a lot of depth in the skilled positions. Look for Kenny Young to run a lot and also pass here and there. The backs — Bryce Peet, Luke Smith and Hayden Diemer — are all fast and durable. The line is big, with John Alley and Jackson Furlan both going more than 300 pounds. The 4-4 defense is active and physical. Inside linebackers Logan Queen and Bryce Peet pack a punch.

Player to watch

Luke Smith is primed for a big senior season. In the Eagles' run-based offense, Smith has a chance to go well past the 1,000-yard mark rushing. He'll also start at safety. He's athletic and physical, the kind of kid you hang your hat on.

Underclassman to watch: Bryce Peet is a two-year starter as a sophomore. He'll be at fullback and inside linebacker.

Bottom line

IF: The Eagles' line depth holds up, **THEN:** The Eagles will contend for the CVC Lake Division title and more.

— John Kampf



Smith

Gilmour » Lancers

Just the facts

Conference: Independent
OHSAA: Division III, Region 9
Head coach: Tom Kaufman, first year
2022: 9-2
Twitter: @GALancerAD
Home field: Weber Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 17: Gilmour at Valley Forge, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: Gilmour at Warrensville Heights, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Hawken at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: NDCL at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: VASJ at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: University at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Sept. 28: Cleveland Central Catholic at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Brush at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Gilmour at Buckeye, 7 p.m.
Oct. 19: Lutheran East vs. Gilmour (at Euclid), 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Jake Kavcic*, Sr., 5-11, 185
TB: Andy Kavcic*, Sr., 5-11, 190
WR: Sean Dillard*, Jr., 6-1, 195
WR: Nick Iliano, Jr., 6-2, 185
WR: Matthew Lambert, Jr., 5-9, 170
TE: Brody Lennon, Jr., 6-4, 225
LT: Tim Lennon, So., 6-2, 220
LG: Luke Markowski, So., 6-0, 220
C: Nick Speyer*, Sr., 6-0, 225
RG: Jake Williams, Jr., 5-11, 215
RT: Alex Melaragno, Sr., 6-1, 220
K: Evan Wintersteller*, Sr., 5-10, 175

DEFENSE

DE: Brody Lennon*, Jr., 6-4, 225
DT: Alex Melaragno, Sr., 6-1, 220
DT: Nick Speyer*, Sr., 6-0, 225
DE: Kingston Seals, So., 6-2, 215
Mike: Aiden McNamara, Jr., 6-0, 205
Will: Bernard McDonald*, Jr., 5-11, 215
Penny: C.J. Santagata, So., 5-10, 195
CB: Brayden Green*, Sr., 6-0, 175
CB: Sebastian Cook*, So., 5-10, 170
FS: Lars Broberg*, Jr., 6-1, 175
SS: Quinn Cavanaugh, Jr., 5-10, 190
P: Andy Kavcic*, Sr., 5-11, 190
 *: returning starter
Key reserves: Cooper Panteck, Jr., 6-4, 185, Bruno Cook, Fr., 6-1, 195, Tommy DeCicco, Sr., 5-11, 190
Best in the classroom: Jake Kavcic and Andy Kavcic, 4.0 GPA
Best bench press: Andy Kavcic, 280 pounds
Best squat: Brody Lennon, 460 pounds
Best 40 time: Lars Broberg, 4.51 seconds



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Jake Kavcic hands off to Andy Kavcic during Gilmour's win at NDCL in 2022.

Outlook

Fresh off nine wins, including a 5-0 start, and with the Kavcic brothers back for one last ride, aspirations should aim high in Gates Mills. Andy Kavcic accounted for nearly 1,500 yards and 20 total TDs a year ago. Sean Dillard (24 catches, six TDs) is a vertical threat, and that defense is seasoned and skilled. The key is that inexperienced offensive line must step up — and fast.

Player to watch

QB Jake Kavcic, a 5-11, 185-pound senior, is the epitome of a dual threat. He threw for a News-Herald coverage area-high 30 TDs in 2022 and is an elite decision-maker rolling or on the read option with his brother.

Underclassman to watch: Kaufman believes junior TE/DE Brody Lennon (6-4, 225) is a Power 5 talent with his speed and size combination.

Bottom line

IF: the trench play jells and holds up its end of the bargain, **THEN:** the Lancers have the quality to push for around eight wins and be a dangerous playoff team.

— Chris Lillstrung



J. Kavcic



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Harvey » Red Raiders

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Valley

OHSAA: Division III, Region 9

Head coach: Mick Mohner, fourth year (14-16)

2022: 5-5 (4-1)

Twitter: @GooooooRaiders

Home field: Jack Britt Memorial Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Harvey at Rocky River, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Harvey at Perry, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Edgewood at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Harvey at Brooklyn, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Independence at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Harvey at Crestwood, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Grand Valley at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Kirtland at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Harvey at Cardinal, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Berkshire at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Cavon Wise*, Sr., 6-0, 200

RB: Shahn Alston*, So., 5-10, 200

RB: Chris Burt, So., 5-7, 170

WR: Trent Hull*, Jr., 6-3, 185

WR: Chase Goines, So., 6-1, 160

WR: Armani Hall, So., 5-9, 150

TE: Davon Badley*, Sr., 6-1, 195

LT: Christian Cowlin*, Sr., 6-3, 290

LG: D.J. Wyatt, So., 5-9, 250

C: Zhavier Nurse*, Sr., 6-0, 350

RG: Levi Mullen, Jr., 5-11, 200

RT: P.J. Edwards*, Jr., 6-3, 260

K: Antonio Soto-Rodriguez*, Jr., 5-9, 165

DEFENSE

DE: Amarey Bouldin*, Sr., 5-9, 235

DT: Deon Crawford, Sr., 6-1, 250

NT: Zhavier Nurse, Sr., 6-0, 350

DE: Manny Toure, Jr., 6-4, 200

LB: Shahn Alston*, So., 5-10, 200

LB: Davon Badley*, Sr., 6-1, 195

LB: Chris Burt, So., 5-7, 170

CB: Chase Goines, So., 6-1, 160

CB: Antonio Soto-Rodriguez*, Jr., 5-9, 165

FS: Katory Henry-Shaw*, Sr., 6-1, 175

SS: Tyshawn Vance*, Sr., 5-9, 170

P: Davon Badley*, Sr., 6-1, 195

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 18

Key reserves: Ish Jackson, Jr., 5-8, 160, Nore-Ay Jones, So., 6-2, 235, Ethan Eudell, So., 6-2, 170

Best in the classroom: Jake Boehm and Edson Pacheco, 4.6 GPA

Best bench press: Shahn Alston, 325 pounds

Best squat: Zhavier Nurse and Shahn Alston, 520 pounds

Best 40 time: Shahn Alston, 4.5 seconds



BARRY BOOHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Harvey huddles during its scrimmage against Madison on Aug. 10.

Outlook

Aspiration is as high as it's been in recent memory, and rightfully so. With a big-time Division I recruit in Alston, standout returning talent on both sides of the ball, a youth infusion, offensive potency, an athletic defense, trench size and buy-in, this could be the breakout campaign for which the program and community have long yearned.

Player to watch

Davon Badley, a 6-foot-1, 195-pound senior, has helped shift program culture as a longtime two-way stalwart, coming off 30 catches, seven sacks and 15 TFLs a year ago. "He is always around the football," Mohner said.

Underclassman to watch: Sophomore Shahn Alston (5-10, 200) had 16 total TDs, six sacks and 10 TFLs last fall and is the epitome of a game-changer for this program with his vast skill set.

Bottom line

IF: the Red Raiders can bear down more in the second half of games, riding Alston and a capable defense, **THEN:** their first seven-win season since going 8-2 in 1994 is achievable to supercharge this reclamation project.

— Chris Lillstrung



Badley

Hawken » Hawks

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Valley

OHSAA: Division III, Region 9

Head coach: Mark Iammarino, second year (8-3)

2022: 8-3 (5-1), shared CVC Valley

Twitter: @HawkenFootball

Home field: Cliff Walton Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Rhodes at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Trinity at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Hawken at Gilmour, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Edgewood at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Sept. 14: Hawken at Conneaut, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: West Geauga at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Hawken at Lutheran West, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Orange at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Hawken at Chagrin Falls, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Perry at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Donovan Moorhead, So., 6-4, 195

RB: Luke Mangini*, Sr., 6-0, 200

RB: Jordan Johnson*, Jr., 5-9, 165

WR: Ryan Whiting*, Jr., 5-11, 155

WR: Tommy Wright, Jr., 5-9, 140

WR: Charlie Mallett, Fr., 6-2, 160

LT: Jackson Hedin*, Jr., 6-4, 260

LG: Jack Bellar*, Sr., 6-5-11, 225

C: Louie Justice*, Sr., 6-6, 315

RG: Matt Yang, Jr., 6-3, 265

RT: Manan Raina*, Jr., 6-3, 245

K: Julian Javoris*, Jr., 6-0, 200

DEFENSE

DT: Jackson Hedin, Jr., 6-4, 260

NT: Will Greenberg*, Jr., 6-0, 285

DT: Matt Yang, Jr., 6-3, 265

LB: Luke Mangini*, Sr., 6-0, 200

LB: Paxton Laschinger*, Sr., 5-10, 180

LB: Eman Robinson, Sr., 5-9, 170

LB: Kene Obi, So., 6-1, 185

CB: Jordan Johnson*, Jr., 5-9, 165

CB: Julian Javoris*, Jr., 6-0, 200

S: Ryan Whiting*, Jr., 5-11, 155

S: Charlie Mallett, Fr., 6-2, 160

P: Julian Javoris*, Jr., 6-0, 200

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 24

Key reserves: Lucas Brandt, Sr., 5-9, 180, Rohan Gildea, Jr., 5-9, 275, Tristan Ruffin-Williams, Jr., 5-9, 170

Best in the classroom: Luke Mangini, 4.1 GPA

Outlook

The "Iammarino effect" is already in full swing, as the Hawks are coming off an 8-3



FRANK GAMBATESE — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Hawken lines up against Gilmour during their 2022 game at Hawken.

campaign with room to be bullish. Yes, replacing Dom Johnson will not be easy. But there's a strong young nucleus, along with one of the most massive offensive lines ever at Hawken, averaging 262 pounds across. That defense was also quietly among this area's most effective last fall.

Player to watch

Luke Mangini, a heady 6-foot, 200-pound senior, could be in line to be one of The News-Herald coverage area's most gifted two-way performers, a "physical specimen" per Iammarino coming off nine TDs and 12 TFLs.



Mangini

Underclassman to watch:

Iammarino sees tackle Jackson Hedin (6-4, 260) as a recruitable performer at the next level, one who seemingly "never" has a bad rep.



Hudin

Bottom line

IF: those five two-way starters stay intact and Moorhead blossoms as a first-year starting QB, **THEN:** the seven-win range is achievable, even with a vault to the CVC Chagrin in 2023.

— Chris Lillstrung

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Kenston » Bombers

Just the facts

Conference: WRC

OHSAA: Division III, Region 9

Coach: Jeff Grubich, 12th year (80-43)

2022: 9-4

Twitter: @Bomber_Football

Home field: Bomber Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Boardman at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Kenston at West Geauga, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Chagrin Falls at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Kenston at VASJ (at TBA), 7 p.m.

Sept. 14: Lake Catholic at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Kenston at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Kenston at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Riverside at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: South at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Kenston at North, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Lucas Kaltenbach, Jr., 6-3, 220

RB: Sean Patrick, Sr., 6-0, 190*

WR: Tymir Cardona, Sr., 5-8, 170*

WR: Dylan Krupp, Jr., 6-2, 200*

WR: Jimmy Richmond, Sr., 6-0, 185*

TE: Brandon Bell, Sr., 5-11, 190*

LT: Sean Doyle, Sr., 6-3, 290*

LG: Brody Sell, Fr., 6-2, 215

C: Max Robarge, Sr., 6-0, 235*

RG: Ethan Ballantyne, Jr., 6-3, 290*

RT: Sam Meeks, Jr., 6-0, 210

K: Grady Kucharson, So., 5-9, 165

DEFENSE

DL: Sam Meeks, Jr., 6-0, 210*

DL: Sean Doyle, Sr., 6-3, 290

DL: Robbie Hatcher, Sr., 6-0, 200

LB: Dylan Kupp, Jr., 6-2, 200

LB: Josh Hallen, Sr., 6-0, 215*

LB: Ashton Kolenic, Sr., 6-0, 190*

LB: Colin Weiland, Sr., 5-11, 190

CB: Jeremy Hajdu, Sr., 5-11, 185*

CB: Tymir Cardona, Sr., 5-8, 170*

S: Charlie Thompson, Jr., 5-11, 180

S: Sean Patrick, Sr., 6-0, 190*

P: Grady Kucharson, So., 5-9, 165

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 14

Key reserves: Toran Savaransky, So., 5-9, 175, Cohen Clark, Jr., 6-0, 185, Ben Burlinghaus, Sr., 6-0, 215, Robbie Hatcher, Sr., 6-0, 200

Best in the classroom: Cohen Clark, 4.54 GPA, Evan Glontz, 4.24, Colin Weiland, 3.98, Sean Doyle, 3.93

Best bench press: Sean Doyle 415 pounds

Best squat: Name, Sean Doyle 615 pounds

Best 40 time: Sean Patrick 4.5 second



NOELLE WITHERITE — THE NEWS-HERALD

Kenston features a fast and aggressive defense this season to go with their quick-paced offense.

Outlook

The Bombers feature a high level of team speed and a blue-collar work ethic — as usual. Returning All-Ohioids Sean Doyle (RB-S) and Sean Doyle (OL-DL) will lead the team. The entire starting skill set, including receivers Tymir Cardona, Dylan Krupp and Jimmy Richmond, returns. The only new face is QB Lucas Kaltenbach, who has two years starting experience at Benedictine. The defense, led by DE Sam Meeks, is aggressive. The smallest school in the WRC has some depth concerns, but this team is a conference contender with playoff aspirations.

Player to watch

Sean Patrick has been an electric playmaker since he first stepped on the field as a freshman. The Akron commit makes things happen every time he touches the ball.



Patrick

Underclassman to watch:

The coaching staff raves of junior Charlie Thompson. He'll start at DB and get a lot of reps at receiver as well.

Bottom line

IF: the Bombers stay healthy and uninjured; **THEN:** they could win the WRC and make a deep playoff run.

— John Kampf

Kirtland » Hornets

Just the facts

School: Kirtland

Conference: CVC Valley

OHSAA: Division VI, Region 21

Coach: Tiger LaVerde, 17th year (214-19)

Twitter: @kirtlandsports

2022: 15-1

Home field: Wilson Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Kirtland at Dalton, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Lutheran West at Kirtland, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Perry at Kirtland, 7 p.m.

Sept. 9: Kirtland at Trinity, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Cuyahoga Heights at Kirtland, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Kirtland at Grand Valley, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Berkshire at Kirtland, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Kirtland at Harvey, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Crestwood at Kirtland, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Kirtland at Cardinal, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Jake LaVerde, So., 6-2, 180*

RB: Rocco Alfieri, Sr., 5-10, 180

RB: Macguire Boyd, Sr., 6-0, 210

WR/RB: Gino Blasini, Sr., 6-2, 205*

WR/TE: Will Sayle, Sr., 6-1, 170*

TE: Danny Alfieri, Jr., 6-0, 190

LT: Liam Logan, Sr., 6-3, 200

LG: Jackson Carestio, Jr., 6-0, 215

C: Casey Carkhuff, Jr., 6-0, 200*

RG: Matthew Kahley, Jr., 5-11, 240*

RT: Brady Burich, Sr., 5-10, 200*

K: Nick Barisic, Sr., 5-10, 160*

DEFENSE

DL: Will Bates, Sr., 5-10, 185*

DL: Matthew Kahley, Jr., 5-11, 240*

DL: Aaron Fortuna, Sr., 5-11, 180

OLB: Will Sayle, Sr., 6-1, 170*

ILB: Macguire Boyd, Sr., 6-0, 210*

ILB: Rocco Alfieri, Sr., 5-10, 175*

ILB: Casey Carkhuff, Jr., 6-0, 200

OLB: Danny Alfieri, Jr., 6-0, 190*

CB: Gino Blasini, Sr., 6-2, 205*

CB: Nico Samac, Jr., 5-11, 165

FS: Will Beers, Sr., 5-11, 180*

P: Rocco Alfieri, Sr., 5-10, 180

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 26

Key reserves: Evan Kaprowski, So., 6-3, 180, Teddy Prusock, Jr., 5-10, 260, Tyler Turk, Jr., 5-9, 155, Ty Bledsoe, So., 5-9, 180.

Best in the classroom: Will Sayle, 4.0 GPA

Best bench press: Matthew Kahley 385 pounds

Best squat: Matthew Kahley 485 pound

Best 40 time: Gino Blasini 4.54 sseconds



NOELLE WITHERITE — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Jake LaVerde returns after throwing for 1,000 yards last season.

Outlook

An experienced, motivated and angry group of Hornets spearhead this year's state-title contenders. In all, 15 starters and 26 letterwinners return from last year's state runner-up team. Rocco Alfieri ran for nearly 1,400 yards last year, Jake LaVerde threw for more than 1,000, and Gino Blasini is one of the area's best receivers (and he can also run the ball). The hard-hitting defense — which takes offense when the opposition scores — is led by physical hitters Will Bates, Macguire Boyd and Will Sayle. There are many (seven) two-way starters, but you'll have a hard time nit-picking weaknesses on this year's squad.

Player to watch

One potential unsung hero is Macguire Boyd. He's a bulldog running the ball, and who will forget his bone-crushing hit against Marion Local in last year's state title game.



Boyd

Underclassman to watch:

The layup here is QB Jake LaVerde, but junior Danny Alfieri is a two-way starter who is primed for a breakout season.

Bottom line

IF: the Hornets avoid a rash of injuries, **THEN:** they will be the favorite to win the Division VI state championship.

— John Kampf

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Lake Catholic » Cougars

Just the facts

School: Lake Catholic
Conference: Crown
OHSAA: Division IV, Region 13
Coach: Marty Gibbons, fifth year (16-25)
2022: 3-7
Twitter: @LCCougarFB
Home field: Jerome T. Osborne Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Cardinal Mooney at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Aug. 26: Holy Name at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Sept. 2: Lake Catholic at Buchtel, 1 p.m.
Sept. 8: Lake Catholic at South, 7 p.m.
Sept. 14: Lake Catholic at Kenston, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Canton Central Catholic at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Lake Catholic at Padua, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Lake Catholic at Erie, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Walsh Jesuit at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.
Oct. 21: NDCL at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Frankie Trinetti, Jr., 6-3, 180*
TB: Josh Styles, Sr., 5-10, 185*
WR: Patrick Radigan, Jr., 5-11, 175*
WR: Ace Peterlin, Jr., 5-10, 160*
TE: Cross Nimmo, Jr., 6-5, 220
TE: DJ Sears, Jr., 6-0, 230
LT: Nathan Zappitelli, So., 6-4, 255*
LG: Chris Vanjo, Sr., 5-11, 220
C: Greg Bares, Sr., 6-0, 250*
RG: Wyatt Kaufman, Sr., 6-0, 240*
RT: David Iannini, So., 6-2, 250
K: Matteo DiSanza, Sr., 6-1, 175

DEFENSE

DE: Jayson Cummings, Jr., 6-1, 225
DT: Ray Troha, Jr., 5-9, 210
NG: Luke Richards, Sr., 6-0, 195*
DE: Max Barnes, Jr., 6-2, 215
LB: Jimmy Gibbons, Jr., 6-1, 195*
LB: Josh Styles, Sr., 5-10, 185*
DB: Greg Thomas, Sr., 5-11, 180*
DB: Caden Boyes, Jr., 5-9, 170
DB: Patrick Radigan, Jr., 5-11, 175*
CB: Jimmy Rhodes, Sr., 5-9, 160*
CB: Antonio Modica, Sr., 6-1, 170
P: Patrick Radigan, Jr., 5-11, 175*
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 21
Key reserves: George Csepegi, Jr., 5-10, 180, Joey Lonchar, Sr., 5-10, 155, Ryan Ginley, Sr., 6-0, 185, Luke Joy, Jr., 6-0, 185
Best in the classroom: Marty Loncar, 4.41 GPA, Danny Locker 4.39, Nick Tallion 4.36, Tyler Hribar 4.32, Zach Povejsil 4.16
Best bench press: Greg Bares 320 pounds
Best squat: Josh Styles 540 pounds
Best 40 time: Antonio Modica 4.5 seconds



COLEEN MOSKOWITZ — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

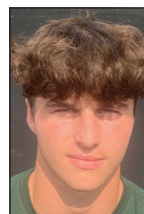
The Lake Catholic football team takes this field for a scrimmage against Medina Highland last week.

Outlook

Lake Catholic, sophomore-heavy in 2022, will be junior-laden this season albeit with significant experience. The offense, which will feature several playmakers and one of Lake Catholic's biggest lines in recent memory, will be led by returning junior QB Frankie Trinetti and a stable of running backs. The Lake Catholic "swarm" defense will be fast, quick to the ball, and brings back considerable experience.

Player to watch

Josh Styles is a senior in his third varsity season and is one of the team's leaders. Styles will be in the rotation at running back and start at linebacker.



Styles

Underclassman to watch:

Junior D.J. Sears returns at defensive end and will contribute a lot more on the offensive side of the ball this season in the Cougars' receiving corps and in the backfield.

Bottom line

IF: Lake Catholic can parlay its experience with size up front and improved speed. ...
THEN: the Cougars can turn close losses into wins and return to the playoffs.

— Jay Kron

Madison » Blue Streaks

Just the facts

School: Madison
Conference: CVC
OHSAA: Division III, Region 9
Coach: Mike Gilligan, fourth year (3-25)
2022: 2-8
Twitter: @MadFootball212
Home field: Dick Hamblin Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Madison at Perry, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: South at Madison, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Madison at North, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Madison at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Sept. 14: Orange at Madison, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Lakeside at Madison, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Madison at Edgewood, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Madison at Jefferson, 7 p.m.
Oct. 12: Geneva at Madison, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Conneaut at Madison, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Carson Alley, Sr., 5-9, 180*
RB: James Poe, So., 5-9, 165
RB: Sonny Salajcik, Sr., 5-9, 180*
TE: Ryan Radkowski, Jr., 6-3, 225*
WR: Noah Barnes, Sr., 6-1, 185*
WR: Mac Steele, Jr., 5-10, 160*
LT: Evan Rodrigues, Sr., 6-2, 215
LG: Ben Gelosack, Sr., 5-11, 235*
C: Jackson George, Jr., 5-10, 210*
RG: Bryant Perkins, Sr., 5-10, 225*
RT: Walter Batie, Sr., 6-1, 255
K: Ben Amos, Jr., 6-2, 165*

DEFENSE

DL: Joey Sanchez, Sr., 6-2, 190*
DL: Demetrius Williams, Sr., 6-0, 180*
DL: Tristan Shahan, Jr., 5-10, 165
LB: Nick Moretti, Sr., 6-0, 190*
LB: Jesse May, Sr., 5-7, 190*
LB: Alex Davis, Jr., 6-1, 190*
LB: Chase White, So., 6-2, 215
CB: Will Smith, Jr., 5-10, 165*
CB: Danny Combs, Jr., 5-11, 160*
S: Dom Lawrence, Jr., 5-10, 185*
S: Joey Fioritto, Jr., 6-1, 165*
P: Noah Barnes, Sr., 6-1, 185*
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 24
Key reserves: Knolan Albert, Jr., 5-10, 165, Payton Birman, So., 5-7, 155, Gavin Montagner, So., 6-3, 255, Cam Mullin, So., 5-11, 260.
Best in the classroom: Noah Barnes, 4.2 GPA
Best bench press: Ben Gelosack 310 pounds
Best squat: Tristan Shahan 465 pounds
Best 40 time: Alex Davis 4.5 seconds



FRANK GAMBATESE — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Noah Barnes and the Madison football team have high goals for the 2023 season.

Outlook

The Blue Streaks enter the Chagrin Valley Conference on an upswing, with eight starters back on offense and nine on defense. This is a hungry team anxious to have success in a new conference after struggling in the WRC. Carson Alley is back at quarterback as a dual-threat type of player. James Poe and Sonny Salajcik will lead the run-based offense, but there is a glut of good skilled players on this team. Depth is also a big key, as there are very few two-way players.

Player to watch

You can never go wrong with a dual-threat quarterback who has experience. Carson Alley has that and more. He's a tough, hard-nosed kid.



Underclassman to watch: Alley

James Poe has a big upside as a running back. He's fast and very physical. He's primed for a breakout year.

Bottom line

IF: the Blue Streaks continue their progression, **THEN:** they could win the Lake Division of the CVC.

— John Kampf

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Mayfield » Wildcats

Just the facts

Conference: WRC

OHSAA: Division II, Region 5

Head coach: Ross Bandiera, eighth year (39-32)

2022: 6-5 (3-3)

Twitter: @MayfieldSports

Home field: Wildcat Park

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Shaw at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Mayfield at Massillon Jackson, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Nordonia at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Akron Garfield at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Sept. 14: Mayfield at Solon, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Mayfield at North, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Kenston at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Chardon at Mayfield, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Mayfield at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Mayfield at South, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Rocco Monastero*, Sr., 6-0, 170

RB: Dylan Colello, Sr., 5-10, 180

WR: Dylan Parnell*, Sr., 5-9, 175

WR: Bo Lewis*, Sr., 6-2, 190

WR: Nick Nicolli, Sr., 5-7, 165

WR: Anthony Howard*, Sr., 6-0, 175

LT: Luke Durosko*, Sr., 6-0, 260

LG: Kade Woods*, Sr., 6-1, 250

C: Nico Traczyk*, Sr., 6-4, 285

RG: Dom Piccirillo, Sr., 6-0, 255

RT: Savon Harris, Sr., 6-2, 260

K: Brandon Escobar, Sr., 5-6, 135

DEFENSE

DE: Daron Arnold*, Sr., 5-11, 250

NG: Nico Traczyk*, Sr., 6-4, 285

DE: Kade Woods*, Sr., 6-1, 250

LB: Dom Milano*, Sr., 6-1, 220

LB: Joe Barch*, Sr., 5-10, 205

LB: Joe Pinzone, Sr., 5-10, 185

LB: Bo Lewis, Sr., 6-2, 190

S: Anthony Howard*, Sr., 6-0, 175

S: Owen Moon, Sr., 5-11, 170

CB: Robbie Guzzo, Sr., 5-9, 160

CB: Dylan Parnell, Sr., 5-9, 170

P: Rocco Monastero, Sr., 6-0, 170

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 13

Key reserves: Anthony Stefanski, Jr., 5-10, 245, Kareem Carroll, Jr., 6-1, 170, Lantz Reed, Jr., 5-10, 170, Jacob Reed, Jr., 5'10, 165;

Best in the classroom: JD Dinnen, 4.21 GPA; Michael Fappiano, 4.08, Luke Durosko, 3.91

Best bench press: Nico Traczyk, 350 pounds

Best squat: Luke Durosko, 555 pounds

Best 40 time: Owen Moon, 4.51 seconds



FRANK GAMBATESE — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Rocco Monastero prepares to make a pass against Riverside.

Outlook

The defense will have a new scheme but has six of its front seven back, highlighted by All-Ohioan Joey Barch, who racked up 27 TFLs a season ago. On offense, Rocco Monastero is back under center with a new skill group around him. The senior has been working with the new names to develop timing.

Player to watch

Dylan Parnell has established himself as a go-to receiver for the Wildcats and has also started to make a name defense. Last year, he totaled 621 yards and eight touchdowns. This year, he takes over the leadership of the receiving corps.

Underclassman to watch:

The Reed brothers, Lantz and Jacob, make strides in the secondary.

Bottom line

IF: the defense adjusts to their third scheme in as many years, **THEN:** the Wildcats will push the top half of the WRC.



Parnell

— Ben Hercik

Mentor » Cardinals

Just the facts

School: Mentor

Conference: GCC

OHSAA: Division I, Region 1

2022: 9-4

Coach: Matt Gray, fourth year (23-12)

Home field: Jerome T. Osborne Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Mentor at Massillon Jackson, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: St. Ignatius at Mentor, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Mentor at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Medina at Mentor, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Mentor at Cleveland Heights, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Mentor at Solon, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Shaker Heights at Mentor, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Brunswick at Mentor, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Mentor at Strongsville 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Euclid at Mentor, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Scotty Fox, Sr., 6-2, 215*

RB: Gino Korzunowski, Sr., 5-8, 185

WR: Austin VanHuss, Jr., 6-2, 180

WR: Marcus Sierpudowski, Jr., 6-0, 165

WR: Grant Cerny, Jr., 6-1, 170

WR: Justen Hodge, So., 6-1, 185

LT: JoJoLoDuca, So., 6-3, 265

LG: Jack O'Neill, Sr., 6-1, 250*

C: Jared Hines, Sr., 6-2, 235*

RG: Berk Demirci, Jr., 6-1, 235

RT: Landry Brede, So., 6-5, 270

K: Dylan Tackett, Jr., 5-10, 180*

DEFENSE

DE: Shane Krejci, Sr., 6-2, 210

DT: Ryan Saley, Sr., 5-10, 225

DE: Kevin Orosz, Sr., 6-2, 230

OLB: Spencer Barninger, Jr., 6-1, 200

ILB: Caiden Clair, Jr., 5-10, 200

ILB: Henry Schenk, Sr., 6-1, 205

OLB: Aidan Schwalm, Sr., 6-0, 195

S: Caden Markowski, Sr., 6-0, 165

S: Antonio Shelley, Sr., 5-9, 170

CB: Kellen Graham, Sr., 6-0, 175

CB: Cae-Veon Lamar, Jr., 5-10, 155

P: Antonio Shelley, Jr., 5-9, 170

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 26

Key reserves: Evan Calderwood, Sr., 5-10, 160, Marty Johnson, Sr., 5-8, 165, Ryan Skelly, Sr., 6-0, 195, Nathan Beyer, Sr., 5-10, 180.

Best in the classroom: Aidan Schwalm 4.024, Dominic Baroni, 3.966, Jack O'Neill 3.896

Best bench press: Jack O'Neill, Caiden Clair, Spencer Baminger 290 pounds

Best squat: Ryan Saley 510 pounds

Best 40 time: Xayvion Dunn 4.5 seconds



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Coach Matt Gray, center, directs his first offensive unit in a scrimmage last week.

Outlook

Coach Matt Gray loves this hard-working team and its close-knit atmosphere. But the Cardinals are young and inexperienced. There are only three returning starters on offense, including talented and experienced Scotty Fox at quarterback, and only two back on defense. The young Cardinals are going to have to grow up in a hurry, which isn't easy with the challenging schedule Mentor entertains. Two sophomores — Landry Brede and JoJo LoDuca — start at offensive tackle. The defense graduated its entire front seven from last year.

Player to watch

Most expect Mentor to be a throwing team that sets up the run. If that's the case, Gino Korzunowski could have a big year at running back. No doubt Scotty Fox and the receiving corps can throw, but a running game is important, too.

Underclassman to watch:

JoJo LoDuca got some starts last year as a freshman. He is one of three underclassmen on the offensive line.

Bottom line

IF: the Cardinals' new front seven on defense grows up quickly, **THEN:** Mentor will vie for a GCC title and make a playoff run.



Korzunowski

— John Kampfi

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NDCL » Lions

Just the facts

Conference: Crown

OHSAA: Division III, Region 9

Head coach: Anthony Baldesare, first year

2022: 2-8 (0-3)

Twitter: @NDCLathletics

Home field: Lozick Field at Lion Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Riverside at NDCL, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Lakeside at NDCL, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: NDCL at Bedford, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: NDCL at Gilmour, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Akron SVSM at NDCL, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: NDCL at Howland, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: John Hay at NDCL, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: NDCL at Walsh Jesuit, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Padua at NDCL, 7 p.m.

Oct. 21: NDCL at Lake Catholic, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Ryan Lipowski*, Jr., 5-11, 190

RB: Angelo Tamburrino, Jr., 5-11, 195

WR: Caleb Cirino, Sr., 5-9, 185

WR: Robert Bonchak, So., 6-2, 190

WR: Brandon Sawitke, Jr., 6-0, 180

TE: Connor Hernan*, Jr., 6-4, 215

LT: Greg Bores, Sr., 6-0, 280

LG: Caiden Kovacs, So., 6-1, 295

C: Joshua White, Jr., 6-1, 240

RG: Mac Rottinghaus, Sr., 5-11, 220

RT: Brendan Hernan, So., 6-5, 215

K: Ryan Cvitkovic, So., 5-10, 170

DEFENSE

DE: Joshua Grambo*, Sr., 6-3, 225

DT: Mac Rottinghaus*, Sr., 5-11, 220

DT: Caiden Kovacs, So., 6-1, 295

DE: Liam Donnelly, Sr., 6-0, 210

LB: Brayden Buell, Jr., 6-0, 195

LB: Anthony Tibaldi, Sr., 6-1, 205

LB: Tyler Newton, Sr., 6-0, 195

CB: Abram Levine*, Jr., 6-2, 180

CB: Caleb Cirino, Sr., 5-9, 185

S: Griffin Moskal*, Sr., 5-9, 190

S: Nick Dietrich*, Jr., 5-10, 180

P: Ryan Cvitkovic, So., 5-10, 170

*: returning starter

Key reserves: Nick Ravakhah, Sr., 5-11, 180

Best in the classroom: Joshua Grambo 4.2 GPA, Griffin Moskal 4.05



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

NDCL quarterback Ryan Lipowski carries during a 2022 game against Lake Catholic.

Outlook

Transition is prevalent in Munson Township. In Year 1 under Baldesare, he hit the ground running with system install in late spring and emphasizing the weight room, which led to notable added bulk program-wide. Understanding is universal a 2-8 2022 won't cut it — especially with five one-possession losses. It might take time with so much turnover, but this group is motivated to atone.

Player to watch

Joshua Grambo, a 6-foot-3, 225-pound senior, is one of The News-Herald coverage area's most disruptive defensive forces, logging five sacks and 15 TFLs last fall. He is "everything you want in an edge player," per Baldesare.

Underclassman to watch: Junior QB Ryan Lipowski (950 yards, eight TDs) showed flashes as a sophomore signal-caller. Baldesare likes his "it" factor and sense for reads.

Bottom line

IF: the plethora of new starters, particularly a brand-new offensive line, finds their way, **THEN:** climbing back toward .500 or maybe better is doable as Baldesare begins to mold the program to his vision.

— Chris Lillstrung



Grambo

North » Rangers

Just the facts

School: North

Conference: WRC

Coach: Shawn Dodd, eighth year (26-53)

2022: 1-9

OHSAA: Division II, Region 5

Twitter: @northrangers

Home field: Nick Carter Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: North at Lakeside, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: North at Norwalk, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Madison at North, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Brush at North, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: North at Garfield Heights, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: Mayfield at North, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Riverside at North, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: North at South, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: North at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Kenston at North, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Zach Rummel, Sr., 6-3, 170*

RB: Reon'Tae Lowery, Sr., 5-10, 180*

FB: Austin Gracie, Sr., 5-9, 185*

WR: Isaac Wilson, Sr., 6-0, 180*

WR: Brayden Sandstrom, So., 5-10, 165

LT: Rashaun Washington, Sr., 6-2, 240*

LG: Nate Gangloff, Sr., 6-3, 230*

C: Payten Komara, Jr., 5-8, 220

RG: Owen Sincek, Sr., 5-11, 225*

RT: Eddie Kovach-Uzi, So., 5-11, 225

K: Daniel Tadac, Sr., 6-1, 175

DEFENSE

DL: Samson Kanuch, Jr., 6-3, 175

DL: Nate Gangloff, Sr., 6-3, 230*

DL: Eric Kononow, Jr., 6-3, 180

LB: Lucas Bradford, Jr., 5-7, 175

LB: Alex Harris, So., 5-11, 180

LB: Sawyer Piasecki, Jr., 5-11, 185

CB: Jayden Teague, Sr., 5-11, 180*

S: Jayden Titschinger, Jr., 5-7, 165

S: Reon'Tae Lowery, Sr., 5-10, 180*

S: Na'Shon Ivey, Jr., 6-2, 175*

CB: Brayden Sandstrom, So., 5-10, 165

P: Zach Rummel, Sr., 6-3, 170*

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 12

Key reserves: Jacob Breen, Jr., 6-1, 170, Drake Martinez, Jr., 5-5, 150, Syllus Buchanan, Jr., 5-10, 175

Best in the classroom: Austin Gracie, 4.4 GPA

Best bench press: Nate Gangloff 330 pounds

Best squat: Rashaun Washington 420 pounds

Best 40 time: Reon'Tae Lowery 4.6 seconds



NOELLE WITHERITE — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

North's young defense, shown making a play during a scrimmage, will be a big key to this year's success.

Outlook

The Rangers have a potent skill set returning, including Zach Rummel at quarterback and Reon'Tae Lowery at running back. Lowery will command so much attention that others might be freed up to make big plays. The team speed and experience in the backfield are things the Rangers will hang their hats on this season. The defense is young, with only Nate Gangloff returning in the front seven. So that side of the ball will have to grow up in a hurry.

Player to watch

Lowery is lightning in a bottle. When he gets the ball, he only needs a sliver of light to take it to the house. He's also a starting safety, so keeping him healthy is a big key.

Underclassman to watch: Na'shon Ivey is back at safety after having his season ended early last year with a shoulder injury.

Bottom line

IF: the Rangers get off to a good start in the non-conference slate, **THEN:** They could make a run at the Division II playoffs.



Lowery



Ivey

— John Kampf

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Perry » Pirates

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Chagrin
OHSAA: Division V, Region 17
Coach: Bob Gecewich, third year (21-6)
2022: 11-3

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: Madison at Perry, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: Harvey at Perry, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Perry at Kirtland, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Jefferson at Perry, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: Perry at Geneva, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Lutheran West at Perry, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Perry at Orange, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Chagrin Falls at Perry, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Perry at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Perry at Hawken, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Walter Moses, Jr., 6-4, 182*
WR-RB: Brayden Richards, Sr., 6-0, 185*
WR-RB: Jayden Studio, Sr., 6-0, 201*
WR-RB: Owen McKoon, Jr., 5-11, 193*
WR: Luke Sivon, Jr., 6-1, 187
WR: Jimmy Ashburn, So., 5-5, 139
LT: Anthony Zagrocki, Jr., 6-2, 197
LG: Jack Knisely, Sr., 5-11, 260*
C: Antonius Bertone, So., 5-10, 188
RG: Gavin Nickerson, Sr., 5-9, 207*
RT: Chuck Thomas, Jr., 6-2, 209*
K: TBA

DEFENSE

DE: Chuck Thomas, Jr., 6-2, 209
NG: Andrew Smith, Jr., 5-5, 161
DE: Joey Baldree, Jr., 5-9, 166
LB: Jayden Studio, Sr., 6-0, 201*
LB: Owen McKoon, Jr., 5-11, 193*
LB: Dominic LaMacchia, Sr., 5-10, 171*
S: Armani Chiappone, Jr., 5-10, 175
S: Brayden Richards, Sr., 6-0, 185*
S: Luke Sivon, Jr., 6-1, 187
CB: Vince Tomasic, Jr., 6-0, 156
CB: Walter Moses, Jr., 6-4, 182
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 12
Key reserves: Trent Taylor, So. 6-4, 200, Dare'on Howard, Jr., 5-6, 184, Sean Budziak, So., 5-10, 299, Chase Sivon, Fr., 5-8, 129, Nick Harris, So., 5-10, 175, Dane Pike, So., 5-8, 157
Best bench press: Anthony Zagrocki 315 pounds
Best squat: Drew Smith 495 pounds
Best 40 time: Jayden Studio, Luke Sivon 4.78 seconds



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Perry snaps on a kick during its scrimmage against Benedictine on Aug. 10.

Outlook

For the second straight year, the Pirates have a small senior class (six players). But don't think it's a shallow or inexperienced team, as many of this year's juniors started a year ago. There is tremendous position versatility, led by seniors Jayden Studio and Brayden Richards. Even quarterback Walter Moses, who threw for more than 2,000 yards last year, will get a lot of time at cornerback this year. The Pirates play a lot of teams from bigger divisions, so when the postseason rolls around, this will be a battle-tested team.

Player to watch

Running back-linebacker Jayden Studio is getting Division I college looks. He has trimmed down to 201 pounds and is a fast, physical specimen on both sides of the ball. He's primed for a huge senior season.

Underclassman to watch: Owen McKoon, now a junior, has been in this slot for three years in a row now. He's fast, physical and plays with an edge.

Bottom line

IF: the Pirates can avoid injuries; **THEN:** they will be a favorite in the CVC Chagrin Division and a deep playoff run.



Studio

— John Kampf

Richmond Heights » Spartans

Just the facts

Conference: Independent
OHSAA: Division VII, Region 25
Head coach: Cordale Scott, first year
2022: N/A (Last season 2019: 1-9)
Twitter: @rhtspartans
Home field: Richmond Heights High School

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: Richmond Heights at Chippewa, 7 p.m.
Aug. 26: Richmond Heights at Linsly (W.Va.), 1:30 p.m.
Sept. 1: Richmond Heights at Canton Central Catholic, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Richmond Heights at University, 5 p.m.
Sept. 16: Richmond Heights at Cleveland Central Catholic, 1 p.m.
Sept. 22: Richmond Heights at Lutheran East, 4 p.m.
Sept. 29: Richmond Heights at Harvest Prep, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Richmond Heights at Lima Central Catholic, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Richmond Heights at McComb, 7 p.m.
Week 10: Open

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Darius Munford, Sr., 5-10, 190
RB: Denzel Richmond, Jr., 5-10, 225
RB: Ma'Kye Smith Mcord, So., 5-8, 200
WR: Sincere Hamilton, Fr., 5-9, 155
WR: O'Ryan Walker, Jr., 5-8, 150
WR: Domarius Frazier, Sr., 6-0, 185
OL: Mackenzie Lofton, So., 6-1, 290
OL: Kameron Zeebs, Fr., 5-11, 285
OL: Jabari Broodine, Jr., 6-0, 210
OL: Randy Knight, So., 5-6, 260
OL: Tristin Kyle, Jr., 6-7, 250
OL: Rumel Hilliard, Sr., 6-1, 230

DEFENSE

DL: Mackenzie Lofton, So., 6-1, 290
DL: Kameron Zeebs, Fr., 5-11, 284
DL: Conrad Bartley, Jr., 5-10, 250
DL: Tristin Kyle, Jr., 6-7, 250
DL: Randy Knight, So., 5-6, 260
LB: Ma'kye Smith Mcord, So., 5-8, 200
LB: Denzel Richmond, Jr., 5-10, 225
DB: Sincere Hamilton, Fr., 5-9, 155
DB: O'Ryan Walker, Jr., 5-8, 150
DB: Domarius Frazier, Sr., 6-0, 185
DB: Darius Munford, Sr., 5-10, 190
DB: Robert Walker, Jr., 6-0, 200
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 0



BEN HERCIK — THE NEWS-HERALD

Richmond Heights offense gets a play called during practice.

Outlook

The Spartans return to the field on the varsity level for the first time since 2019, and it's going to be a learning curve to start. But the players have bought in and are excited to face a challenging schedule. Richmond Heights has a strong offensive line leading the way during camp and are going to be a physical team early as the skill positions find their strides. The defense has also made an early impression on the coaching staff as everyone flies to the ball.

Player to watch

Quarterback Darius Munford is a dual-threat with his speed as the biggest weapon available to him. He has become a leader for the group and someone all the players look to.



Munford

Underclassman to watch:

6-foot-7 junior Tristin Kyle is a tone-setter up front and will see much of the running attack go off of his blocking ability early in the season while also wreaking havoc in the opponent's backfield.

Bottom line

IF: the Spartans can adjust as the season progresses, **THEN:** they will compete for an over .500 record.

— Ben Hercik

FORGING HIS OWN PATH TO SUCCESS.

UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

Riverside » Beavers

Just the facts

School: Riverside

OHSAA: Division II, Region 5

Conference: WRC

2022: 11-2

Coach: Dave Bors, 14th year (75-61)

Twitter: @_RHSFootball

Home field: Riverside Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Riverside at NDCL, 7 p.m.

Aug. 25: Aurora at Riverside, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 1: Mentor at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Sept. 8: Riverside at Maple Heights, 7 p.m.

Sept. 15: Boardman at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Sept. 22: South at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Sept. 29: Riverside at North, 7 p.m.

Oct. 6: Riverside at Kenston, 7 p.m.

Oct. 13: Mayfield at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: Riverside at Chardon, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Mikey Maloney, Sr., 6-0, 195*

RB: Jason Mackey, Sr., 5-11, 185*

WR: Ethan Ross, Sr., Sr., 6-4, 205*

WR: Brady McKnight, Sr., 5-10, 185*

WR: Braydon Tichy, Sr., 5-10, 165

TE: Dez Kirks, Sr., 6-2, 195*

LT: Evan Kelleher, Sr., 6-3, 250

LG: Logan Labry, Jr., 6-0, 240

C: Isaiah Walter, Sr., 6-0, 295*

RG: Derek Simpson, Jr., 6-0, 250*

RT: Cayden Calogar, Jr., 6-1, 225*

K: Matt Hribar, Sr.,

DEFENSE

DL: Dom Kirks, Sr., 6-5, 253

DL: Brody Bunting, Sr., 5-7, 190

DL: Antonio Bottiggi, Sr., 6-4, 245*

LB: West Wunderle, Jr., 6-3, 210*

LB: Sam Salminen, Sr., 5-10, 195*

LB: Matt Priest, Jr., 6-1, 215

LB: Gabe Hall, Sr., 6-1, 205

DB: Brady McKnight, Sr., 5-10, 185*

DB: Dez Kirks, Sr., 6-2, 195*

DB: Donovan Conwell, Jr., 6-0, 180

DB: Connor Hackle, Sr., 6-1, 190

P: Leo D'Astolfo, So.

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 19

Key reserves: Liam Froelich, Jr., 6-3, 280, Joey Durdella, Jr., 5-9, 170

Best in the classroom: Connor Hackle, 4.27 GPA, Ethan Ross, 4.22, Jason Mackey, 4.18, Ben Weiss, 4.17, Brady McKnight, 4.16

Best bench press: Antonio Bottiggi 375 pounds

Best squat: Derek Simpson 565 pounds

Best 40 time: Mikey Maloney 4.54 seconds



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

Brady McKnight, shown celebrating a touchdown against Chardon last year, is one of the top playmakers in the area.

Outlook

There's a lot to like about a team that returns most of the players from last year's 11-win season. There are a lot of explosive players on offense, including 2022 Tony Fisher Award winner Mikey Maloney at QB. The left side of the offensive line is new, but besides that, the offense is loaded. Defensively, there are some inexperienced spots. Replacing All-Ohioan Jake Elly on the back end won't be easy. Defensive ends Dom Kirks and Antonio Bottiggi are the best 1-2 punch at D-end in the area.

Player to watch

Brady McKnight might be an unsung hero in that he does it all, from catching passes to running the ball to being a lockdown defensive back.

Underclassman to watch:

Derek Simpson is a strong and powerful lineman, starting at offensive guard and likely to get reps on the D-line too. His strength will give teams problems.

Bottom line

IF: The new players on defense play like veterans, **THEN:** the Beavers will win the WRC and have a long playoff run.



McKnight

— John Kampf

University » Preppers

Just the facts

Conference: Independent

OHSAA: Division III, Region 9

Head coach: Ben Malbasa, ninth year (42-36)

2022: 8-2

Twitter: @USFootball1890

Home field: Scovil Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Geneva at University, 5 p.m.

Aug. 25: University at Norton, 7 p.m.

Sept. 1: Bay at University, 5 p.m.

Sept. 8: Richmond Heights at University, 5 p.m.

Sept. 14: Shaw at University, 5 p.m.

Sept. 22: University at Gilmour, 7 p.m.

Sept. 30: Valley Forge at University, 2 p.m.

Oct. 6: John Adams at University, 5 p.m.

Oct. 13: University at Steubenville, 7 p.m.

Oct. 20: University at Howland, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Jackson Boland*, Sr., 6-1, 197

RB: Darius Forrest, Sr., 5-8, 174

WR: Duke Brennan*, Sr., 6-4, 160

WR: Johnny Diaz*, Sr., 5-10, 183

WR: Sam Slesh*, Sr., 5-11, 160

TE: Lex Kekic*, Sr., 6-0, 255

LT: Cameron Beiswenger*, Sr., 6-3, 254

LG: Tristan Jackson, Jr., 5-11, 198

C: Sean Fioritto*, 5-11, 201

RG: Vir Patel*, Sr., 6-0, 284

RT: Griffin Koch, So., 6-4, 222

K: Matteo Morelli*, So., 6-1, 184

DEFENSE

DE: Julian Berger, Sr., 5-10, 177

NT: Oliver Thomas, Sr., 5-10, 197

DE: Lex Kekic*, Sr., 6-0, 255

LB: Noah Tidmore*, Sr., 5-11, 201

LB: Sean Fioritto, Sr., 5-11, 201

LB: Darius Forrest, Sr., 5-8, 174

CB: Duke Brennan*, Sr., 6-4, 160

CB: Kam Shiver*, 5-10, 162

S: Nico Alvarez, Sr., 5-11, 164

S: Mikey Malone*, So., 5-11, 178

S: George Minello*, Sr., 5-8, 181

P: Matteo Morelli, So., 6-1, 184

*: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 38

Key reserves: Caleb Pentecke, So., 5-8, 150, Andrew Merritt, Sr., 5-9, 143, Jace Landskroner, Sr., 5-10, 159, Aaron Kim, So., 6-0, 171

Best in the classroom: Julian Berger, 4.06 GPA

Best bench press: Cameron Beiswenger, 335 pounds

Best squat: Cameron Beiswenger, 445 pounds

Best 40 time: Andrew Merritt, 4.5 seconds



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

University's Noah Tidmore rushes toward the student section after defeating Gilmour last fall.

Outlook

An 8-2 season in 2022 that featured a seven-game win streak and playoff heart-breaker vs. Kenston was transformative. Stalwarts Ryan Pattison and Brian Kellon graduated, but a plethora of skill options return, including a healthy Darius Forrest at RB and big receiving corps. That defensive backfield could be among The News-Herald coverage area's best. Onus will fall on that inexperienced defensive line to be disruptive.

Player to watch

QB Jackson Boland, a 6-foot-1, 197-pound senior, managed 923 passing yards and 12 TDs despite being banged up for much of last season. Malbasa lauds his signalcaller's toughness, arm and "dynamic" potential.



Boland

Underclassman to watch: CB Kam Shiver (5-10, 162) performed admirably and turned heads as a sophomore, and Malbasa is excited for his upward trajectory.

Bottom line

IF: that defensive front six comes along and home-run hitters emerge post-Pattison and Kellon, **THEN:** another campaign around seven wins with playoff-threat potential is there for the taking.

— Chris Lillstrung

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South » Rebels

Just the facts

School: South
Conference: WRC
Coach: Matt Duffy, 20th year (126-79)
OHSAA: Division II, Region 5
2022: 4-7
Twitter: @southathletics
Home field: Harry E. Winters Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: Shaker Heights at South, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: South at Madison, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: South at Brush, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Lake Catholic at South, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: South at Lorain, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: South at Riverside, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Chardon at South, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: North at South, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: South at Kenston, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Mayfield at South, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Gabe Hanslik, Sr., 6-0, 185
TB: Cardario Williams, So., 5-9, 165
WR: Terrion Singleton, Sr., 6-4, 180*
WR: Delond Moss, Sr., 6-2, 185*
WR: Gavin McArthur, Sr., 5-9, 165*
WR: Niko Frizell, Sr., 6-3, 190*
LT: Mason Willis, So., 6-4, 280
LG: Michael Karabinus, Sr., 6-1, 240*
C: Luka Soric, Sr., 6-0, 230
RG: Darius Somrack, Sr., 6-1, 300
RT: Mac Tobin, Sr., 6-3, 200*
K: Tommy Vokic, Sr., 6-0, 175*

DEFENSE

DE: Quinton Wilson, Sr., 6-3, 215*
DT: AJ Gammieri, So., 6-1, 235
NG: Raheem Jones, So., 6-1, 385
DE: Luka Soric, Sr., 6-0, 230*
LB: Jordan Ivey, Sr., 6-0, 215*
LB: Joe Porter, Sr., 6-1, 205*
LB: Delond Moss, Sr., 6-2, 185*
LB: Javion Bryant, Sr., 6-2, 185*
DB: Joe Meden, Sr., 5-11, 170
DB: Mason Matriano, Jr., 6-0, 170
DB: Terrion Singleton, Sr., 6-4, 180*
P: Tommy Vokic, Sr., 6-0, 170
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** xx
Key reserves: Brady Namestnik, Jr., 5-11, 170, Chase Gardner, Sr., 5-8, 165, Matt Safar, Sr., 6-0, 200, Landon Brown, Jr., 5-10, 175
Best in the classroom: Name, GPA; **Name, GPA; Name, GPA**
Best bench press: Mac Tobin, 325 pounds
Best squat: Raheem Jones 480 pounds
Best 40 time: Delond Moss 4.6 seconds



PAUL DICICCO — THE NEWS-HERALD

Tyrone Singleton, left, celebrates with teammate Delond Moss after scoring a touchdown. Moss looks to be the big touchdown treat this year for the Rebels.

Outlook

The Rebels feature an athletic and fast-paced passing offense. All four starting receivers return, and QB Gabe Hanslik nearly threw for 1,000 yards as a sophomore. The key on offense will be the line's protection. The defense returns its entire starting line-backer group. Much like the offense, the key is the line and how it makes stops and takes up blockers. The coaches love the experience and leadership on this team, even with a group of sophomores slotted to start.

Player to watch

Receiver/linebacker Delond Moss is loading up a lot of scholarship offers. He's going to get a ton of catches on offense. When the ball is in his hands, good things happen.

Underclassman to watch:

Sophomore running back Cardario Williams looks to be the next big thing in South's backfield.

Bottom line

IF: The offensive and defensive lines get the job done, **THEN:** the Rebels are going to be a very difficult team to deal with this year.

— John Kampf



Moss

VASJ » Vikings

Just the facts

Conference: Independent
OHSAA: Division III, Region 9
Head coach: Jeff Rotsky, third year (14-4)
2022: 8-3
Twitter: @Vikings_AD
Home field: Multiple

Schedule

(Subject to change)
Aug. 18: John Hay at VASJ (at Gilmour), 7 p.m.
Aug. 26: VASJ at Cardinal Mooney (at Mineral Ridge), 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Youngstown East at VASJ (at TBA), 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Kenston at VASJ (at TBA), 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: VASJ at Gilmour, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Erie McDowell at VASJ (at JCU), 8 p.m.
Sept. 29: VASJ at Bishop Hartley, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: VASJ at Ursuline, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: VASJ at Akron SVSM, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Cleveland Central Catholic at VASJ (at Gilmour), 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Kylan Steuball*, Jr.
RB: Amani Powell*, Sr.
RB: Bo Jackson*, Jr.
WR: Brian Kortovitch*, Jr.
WR: Darion Taylor, Jr.
Slot: John Vuraich, Jr.
LT: Brandon Johnson*, Sr.
LG: Robert Smith*, Jr.
C: Sean Didonna*, Sr.
RG: Max Gembus, Jr.
RT: David Jones, Sr.
K: Nick Dunmier, Sr.

DEFENSE

DE: Braylon Warner-Jessie, Jr.
DL: Robert Smith, Jr.
DL: Corey Smith*, Jr.
DE: David Jones*, Jr.
LB: Bo Jackson*, Jr.
LB: Eric Elder*, Sr.
LB: Tim Gonakis*, Sr.
CB: Dante Landers*, Sr.
S: Caleb Sherman, Sr.
S: Christian Chase*, Jr.
CB: Davion Taylor*, Jr.
P: Nick Dunmier, Sr.
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 15
Key reserves: Jimmie Clemis, Jr.,



BRIAN FISHER — FOR THE NEWS HERALD

Bo Jackson breaks for a run against Lake Catholic last season.

back Kylan Steuball. The offensive line is back, as well as two receivers, including Brian Kortovitch, who hauled in six scores a year ago. The same experience returns on defense with six of the back seven back and a number of players who saw time on the defensive line.

Player to watch

It's been a big summer for Robert Smith on the line. With the leaders around him in the trenches, he's made strong strides to be a reliable name up front on both ends of the ball.

Underclassman to watch:

Sophomore Savion Lewis comes into practice battling every day on both sides of the ball and could be asked to step up into a starting role at corner.

Bottom line

IF: the back seven gives the defensive line time to adjust, **THEN:** The Vikings will be in the thick of things in Region 9.

Outlook

The Vikings bring back a plethora of experience. Speed is key for the backfield with the duo of Amani Powell and Bo Jackson. They accounted for 18 touchdowns last season. They will be joined in the running game by dual-threat junior quarter-



Smith



Lewis

— Ben Hercik



GO VIKINGS!

Good luck this season!

@VASJHighSchool

vasj.com

West Geauga » Wolverines

Just the facts

Conference: CVC Chagrin
OHSAA: Division III, Region 9
Head coach: Matt Rosati, 13th year (71-46)
2022: 2-8 (1-6)
Twitter: @WestGFootball
Home field: Howell Field

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Chardon at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: Kenston at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: West Geauga at Aurora, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Madison at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: West Geauga at Lakeside, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: West Geauga at Hawken, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Chagrin Falls at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: West Geauga at Lutheran West, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Perry at West Geauga, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: West Geauga at Orange, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: Finn Keenan*, So., 5-11, 195
RB: Christian Mulica, Sr., 5-9, 180
WR: Andrew Marino*, Sr., 5-5, 150
WR: Elijah Gudger, Jr., 5-8, 155
WR: Dom Paros, So., 6-2, 175
WR: Carson Weisman, Sr., 5-10, 160
LT: David Piekarski, Sr., 6-1, 215
LG: Brody Gruber*, Sr., 5-11, 275
C: Mavric Milnar, So., 5-11, 235
RG: Eli Milnar*, Sr., 5-11, 265
RT: Ryan Mobley, So., 6-3, 265
K: Elijah Gudger, Jr., 5-8, 155

DEFENSE

DE: Niko Kless*, Sr., 6-0, 220
NT: Gradi Zerokata, Jr., 5-8, 180
DE: Shawn Leonard*, So., 6-1, 225
LB: Paul Flowers*, Jr., 5-11, 215
LB: Nasir Levy*, Jr., 5-11, 185
LB: Quentin Artino, Jr., 5-8, 170
LB: Cejay Baker*, Sr., 5-10, 180
LB: Daegan Katz, So., 5-7, 175
DB: Matthew Osters, So., 5-9, 155
DB: Carson Weisman*, Sr., 5-10, 160
DB: Johnny Julian*, Sr., 5-7, 150
P: Alex Shaffer, Jr., 5-9, 140
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 15
Key reserves: Sam Paros, Sr., 5-11, 210, Josh Sessler, Jr., 6-3, 270, Jason Renner, Jr., 6-4, 215, Gabe Peraza, Sr., 6-2, 190



COLEEN MOSKOWITZ — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

West Geauga's Matthew Osters carries during a 2022 game at Perry.

Outlook

Following a 2-8 season ravaged by injury and confidence, the Wolverines are optimistic for what's to come. In the present, QB Finn Keenan (948 passing yards in 2022) and WR Andrew Marino (32 catches) and a good-sized line is a start, as well as an experienced defense. Long-term, this sophomore class could be special in the years ahead in helping to reshape the program.

Player to watch

Paul Flowers, a 5-11, 215-pound linebacker, is a key cog in that West G youth movement. Rosati likes his speed and physicality. The junior is a heavy hitter, part of a defense that has seven returning starters.



Flowers

Underclassman to watch:

DE Shawn Leonard (6-1, 225) logged 6.5 tackles for loss as a ninth-grader and should be in line for more production in 2023.

Bottom line

IF: a young-leaning lineup continues to develop, **THEN:** around .500 as a building block to the future would be a welcome step forward.

— Chris Lillstrung

Wickliffe » Blue Devils

Just the facts

School: Wickliffe
Conference: CVC Valley
OHSAA: Division VI, Region 21
Coach: Marce Porcello, 13th year (56-66)
Twitter: @wickliffefb
Home field: Wickliffe Memorial Stadium

Schedule

(Subject to change)

Aug. 18: Southeast at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Aug. 25: St. John at Wickliffe 7 p.m.
Sept. 1: Orange at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8: Crestwood at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15: Wickliffe at Grand Valley, 7 p.m.
Sept. 22: Trinity at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Sept. 29: Wickliffe at Cuyahoga Heights, 7 p.m.
Oct. 6: Independence at Wickliffe, 7 p.m.
Oct. 13: Wickliffe at Brooklyn, 7 p.m.
Oct. 20: Wickliffe at Beachwood, 7 p.m.

Projected lineup

OFFENSE

QB: E.J. Mester, Sr., 5-10, 150*
RB: Ralph Jackson, So., 5-10, 180*
RB: Bobby Plumb, Sr., 5-7, 170*
RB: Nunzio Zivnoska, Jr., 5-7, 150*
WR: Logan Ruscini, Jr., 5-8, 150*
TE: Noah Dohm, Sr., 6-0, 190*
LT: Lucas Marti, Jr., 6-1, 190
LG: Gio Matinez, So., 5-10, 206
C: Ryan Meitzner, Jr., 6-2, 250*
RG: Nate Abruzzino, So., 5-9, 220
RT: Mitchell Lindsey, Sr., 6-6, 360
K: Eliza Wills, Sr., 5-7, 110*

DEFENSE

DL: Blake Primoic, Sr., 5-11, 165*
DL: Andrew Darch, Jr., 6-2, 265
DL: Chris Sather, Jr., 6-0, 160
LB: Ralph Jackson, So., 5-10, 180*
LB: Ryan Quinn, Sr., 6-1, 200*
LB: Brady McFarland, Sr., 5-7, 180
LB: Jimmie Feaster, So., 5-10, 157
LB: Noah Dohm, Sr., 6-0, 190*
DB: Chase Bonadio, Sr., 5-10, 155*
DB: Logan Ruscini, Jr., 5-8, 150*
DB: E.J. Mester, Sr., 5-10, 150*
P: Nunzio Zivnoska, Jr., 5-7, 150*
 *: returning starter; **Returning letterwinners:** 14
Key reserves: Frankie Biondillo, So., 5-7, 145, Jake Beal, Jr., 5-8, 135
Best in the classroom: EJ Mester, 4.29 GPA, Noah Dohm 4.09, Ryan Quinn, 4.07
Best bench press: Mitchell Lindsey 325 pounds
Best squat: Mitchell Lindsey 450 pounds
Best 40 time: Nunzio Zivnoska 4.6 seconds



PAUL DICICCO — FOR THE NEWS-HERALD

The Wickliffe Blue Devils have some new faces on defense this year, but overall experience is a strength of this team.

Outlook

This is the most experienced and biggest size-wise team that Wickliffe has fielded in some time. Eight starters return on offense, including the entire skill set. The running game of Ralph Jackson, Bobby Plumb and Nunzio Zivnoska should be potent. The offensive line, anchored by Mitchell Lindsey, averages 245 pounds. The entire defensive backfield returns, including three seniors. There are new starters in the front seven. How well that front seven holds up will be key.

Player to watch

At 6-foot-6, 360 pounds, it's hard not to notice senior Mitchell Lindsey. He's big and strong and will pave the way for what Wickliffe anticipates will be a potent running attack.



Lindsey

Underclassman to watch:

Ralph Jackson was a starter last year as a freshman. He's a fast running back and a physical linebacker this year.

Bottom line

IF: Depth concerns don't come to fruition and Wickliffe stays healthy, **THEN:** The Blue Devils could win the CVC Metro.

— John Kampf

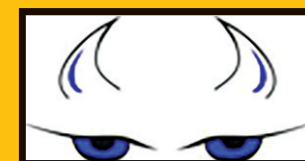


GO WICKLIFFE BLUE DEVILS! GOOD LUCK IN THE 2023-2024 SEASON!!

From the Wickliffe Football Parents Club,
 On behalf of our team, our schools and our community, **THANK YOU**
 to all of the booster club members and our generous patrons, for your
 continued support.

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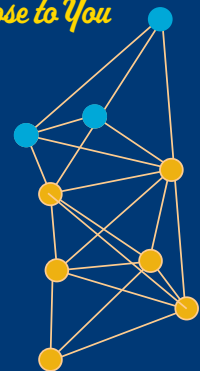
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