

P6 Friday, August 16, 2023

The Gazette



HIGHLAND HORNETS

HISTORY LESSON

All-time record: 357-335-9. Record vs. current county teams: 71-80-5. Coaches, records: Augie Fliss (1952) 7-1; Tom Baugert (1953-54) 10-5-1; Jim Yrvo (1955) 8-0; Wes Cole (1956-1958) 4-21-1; Bill Horn (1959-60) 8-8; Dave Beckman (1961-64) 13-25-3; Jim Wagner (1965) 0-8; Phil Hahn (1966-67) 16-2; Bob McFarland (1968-72) 34-9-2; Dave Ring (1973-77) 32-17; Dick Felcher (1978-82) 22-27-1; Joe Paul (1983-85, 1982-94) 13-47; Dave Poetler (1986-91) 20-42; John Hopkins (1993-01) 30-44; Tim Snook (2002-06) 19-31; Tom Lombardo (2007-14) 81-29; Mike Gibbons (2015-present) 60-26. Best season: 2013 - 13-1 (D-II state semifinals). Worst season: 1985 - 0-10. Best 10-year period: 1956-75 - 75-131 (600). Worst 10-year period: 1989-99 - 22-77 (220). Most points in game: 72 vs. South Amherst, 1975. Most points allowed in game: 72 vs. Orrville, 1964. Biggest margin of victory: 68-0 vs. Kent Roosevelt, 2022. Biggest margin of defeat: 72-8 vs. Orrville, 1964. Most common opponent: Ravens (81 games, 21 wins, 1 tie). Who they own: 12-1 vs. Columbus. Who owns them: 1-2 vs. Black River. Conferences: Suburban League American Conference 1960-67, 1976-present (championships - 2022, 2013, 2008, 2001). 1976: Inland Conference 1966-70 (championships - 1975). 1974, 1969, 1968, 1967, 1966: Chippewa Conference 1963-64 (championships - none). Medina County League 1952-55 (championships - 1955, 1952).

STARTING LINEUP

Table with columns: Pos, Player, Offense, Defense, and statistics for various positions like QB, RB, WR, TE, OL, DL, DE, LB, CB, S, and K.

ROSTER

Roster list with columns: No., Player, Pos., Ht., Wt., Yr., and statistics for all team members.

BY THE NUMBERS

0 Returning starters among the defensive front seven, though end Carson Norovan is an initialistone. 8 Running touchbacks by quarterback Peyton Janickas last season.



Strong safety Chase Crutchley

Warehouse warrior Crutchley bigger, stronger after working for North Gateway Tire

Albert Grindle The Gazette

'He's very smart and tough. That's one of our mantras at Highland is that we have smart, tough players, and I think he embodies all that.'

Highland coach Mike Gibbons on safety Chase Crutchley

The longstanding summer tradition among Medina County football players used to be baling hay either stacking 50-pound bales on a wagon in relentless sun or atop a stuffy 100-degree barn mow. The strenuous workout is considered a litmus test for machoseness.

For the past two summers, Highland strong safety Chase Crutchley has done one better, stacking tires of all shapes and sizes inside the 250,000-square-foot North Gateway Tire warehouse in Seville.

SEASON OUTLOOK

COACH: Mike Gibbons. Age: 40. College: Mount Union (36). Overall record: 71-27 (110 seasons). Record at Highland: 60-26 (8th season). ASSISTANTS: Chris Meyer (defensive coordinator), Nate Howard (offensive line), Jordan Gribble (wide receivers), Mike Hettling (safeties/special teams), Larry Lambright (linebackers), Dan Valera (running backs/cornerbacks), Kenny Fritts (tight ends/defensive line). DIVISION: II. Region 6 (enrollment: 394 boys). LEAGUE: Suburban American Conference American Conference (since 1978; titles in '79, '01, '08, '13, '22). PLAYOFF APPEARANCES: 2002 (D-II regional semifinals), 2001 (D-II regional semifinals), 2008 (D-II regional runner-up), 2009 (D-II first round), 2011 (D-II first round), 2013 (D-II state semifinals), 2014 (D-II first round), 2015 (D-II first round), 2017 (D-II regional semifinals), 2020 (D-II second round), 2021 (D-II regional semifinals), 2022 (D-II regional semifinals). BEST OF THE BEST: Matt Cray has had an amazing junior season full of big plays with seven receiving touchdowns, four punt return TDs and two pick-sixes.

Crutchley's a first-team All-Suburban League American Conference pick last season, got the job heading into last season after North Gateway Tire ownership sent a group text to the football team in search of summer help. Crutchley and then-starting quarterback Andrew Lutz accepted the offer. Crutchley had no choice but to acci-

come home exhausted. You don't even want to move. 'I think it works muscles that you normally wouldn't work from lifting weights, I feel stronger. I feel like on defense if someone is trying to come out to block me I can shed off it easier or I can get my arms extended and throw people. I definitely feel stronger. Being one of the smallest people on the field, I definitely don't feel like it.' While already having a reputation as a stout tackler, Crutchley plans on putting that newfound muscle to use. Instead of trying to side-step blockers or beat them to a spot, Crutchley already has flashed the ability to drive right through them and reach ball carriers more quickly. Crutchley also has taken on a leadership role following the graduation of Crutch Hill, who is a member of the same family that owns North Gateway Tire and is looking to build off a season in which he posted 50 tackles, an interception and a team-leading six pass breakups. Most importantly, he's determined to maintain the lofty standard set by a record-setting senior-laden 2022 defense that allowed only 8.2 points and 151.2 yards per game. Only Crutchley and All-Ohio cornerback/safety Matt Crayak return to the starting defensive lineup. 'Last year I was still making the calls, but when it doubt I looked to (Hill). Whatever he was calling, I was going to make sure that that was

called because he had the experience and leadership,' Crutchley said. 'Now this year, I have to take on that role. Whatever call I make stands, I have to make sure we're in position and I have to make sure we're hyped up and ready to play.' Despite losing a lot of experience on defense, Highland's expectations haven't changed. The Hornets figure to be a player in the SL American Conference and Division II, Region 6 now that defending state champion Toledo Central Catholic has dropped to D-III. While last season's seniors lived up to the hype and deservedly got most of the credit, Crutchley's class has been no slouch, going 9-1 in eighth grade, 6-1-1 in ninth grade and 8-1-1 as the predominant member of the 2021 junior varsity. The blue-collar mentalities of senior leaders like Crutchley are why the Hornets are so optimistic. 'He's a physical kid, and obviously he'll come down and tackle you,' coach Mike Gibbons said. 'Obviously his wrestling background helps him out in football. Think about it: They go into the practice room and tackle each other probably 200 times a day. That translates to the football field as well.' 'He's very smart and tough. That's one of our mantras at Highland is that we have smart, tough players, and I think he embodies all that.'

CRITICS

Critics may point to the fact Highland lost its quarterback, top two rushers and nine defensive starters, but the lower levels had a combined 27-6-3 record, highlighted by the 10-0 junior varsity. Winning is expected. QUESTION MARKS: Peyton Janickas lost a tight QB to the senior to Andrew Lutz last season and is trying to make up for last time now that he's the top dog. The senior is undersized at 5-9, 165 but lightning quick with a twitchy throwing release. If he plays well, the offense could be electric. The defensive front seven was gutted by graduation and will need acclimation time at the varsity level. The run defense was stout throughout the preseason, but there will be growing pains against the pass. Highland has been able to churn out new kickers yearly but hasn't seen them nail consistent touchbacks or last-minute, game-winning field goals very often. Carson Kwiatkowski will get the first shot at the position after making 10-of-11 extra points last season. THE SKINNY: The SL American appears to be a bit down, with most expecting a two-team race between Highland and Aurora. Torrid's season opener against



Shondel, Sliiko, Noonan

Johnny Sliiko was a valuable role player out of the slot, routing for 373 yards and two scores and catching 23 passes for 350 yards and four TDs. Those numbers should increase as Highland's offense looks to throw more out of its RPO plays. STRENGTHS: Highland is still going to be a top-notch rushing team. Carson Noonan (6-2, 245) and Tommy Shondel (6-3, 210) return up front, and senior scabbard Evan Grant (5-8, 165) and Matted sophomore Casey Meyer (6-1, 200) will be a great duo by year's

end.

Contact Albert Grindle at 530-721-4043 or agrindle@medina-gazette.com.



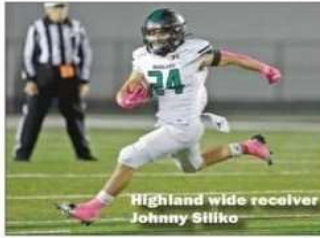
18 Friday, August 18, 2023

The Gazette

2022 STATISTICS

Standings

SHAW LACES CONFERENCE			
Rank	Team	W-L	PF
1	East Branch	10-0	113
2	Shawnee	7-4	25.8
3	Shawnee	6-5	25.0
4	Shawnee	5-6	24.1
5	Shawnee	4-7	23.2
6	Shawnee	3-8	22.3
7	Shawnee	2-9	21.4
8	Shawnee	1-10	20.5



Highland wide receiver Johnny Silko

GREATER CLEVELAND CONFERENCE			
Rank	Team	W-L	PF
1	Shawnee	11-0	46.3
2	Shawnee	10-1	45.4
3	Shawnee	9-2	44.5
4	Shawnee	8-3	43.6
5	Shawnee	7-4	42.7
6	Shawnee	6-5	41.8
7	Shawnee	5-6	40.9
8	Shawnee	4-7	40.0
9	Shawnee	3-8	39.1
10	Shawnee	2-9	38.2
11	Shawnee	1-10	37.3

LORAIN COUNTY LEAGUE			
Rank	Team	W-L	PF
1	Shawnee	12-0	26.2
2	Shawnee	11-1	25.3
3	Shawnee	10-2	24.4
4	Shawnee	9-3	23.5
5	Shawnee	8-4	22.6
6	Shawnee	7-5	21.7
7	Shawnee	6-6	20.8
8	Shawnee	5-7	19.9
9	Shawnee	4-8	19.0
10	Shawnee	3-9	18.1
11	Shawnee	2-10	17.2
12	Shawnee	1-11	16.3

METRO ATHLETIC CONFERENCE			
Rank	Team	W-L	PF
1	Shawnee	10-0	34.5
2	Shawnee	9-1	33.6
3	Shawnee	8-2	32.7
4	Shawnee	7-3	31.8
5	Shawnee	6-4	30.9
6	Shawnee	5-5	30.0
7	Shawnee	4-6	29.1
8	Shawnee	3-7	28.2
9	Shawnee	2-8	27.3
10	Shawnee	1-9	26.4
11	Shawnee	0-10	25.5

SUBURBAN LEAGUE			
Rank	Team	W-L	PF
1	Shawnee	12-0	45.8
2	Shawnee	11-1	44.9
3	Shawnee	10-2	44.0
4	Shawnee	9-3	43.1
5	Shawnee	8-4	42.2
6	Shawnee	7-5	41.3
7	Shawnee	6-6	40.4
8	Shawnee	5-7	39.5
9	Shawnee	4-8	38.6
10	Shawnee	3-9	37.7
11	Shawnee	2-10	36.8
12	Shawnee	1-11	35.9

AMERICAN CYPRESSIAN			
Rank	Team	W-L	PF
1	Shawnee	11-0	45.8
2	Shawnee	10-1	44.9
3	Shawnee	9-2	44.0
4	Shawnee	8-3	43.1
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Good luck Buckeye, Let's Go Bucks!



