

Akron Beacon Journal

Eli Lee headlines 2024 Beacon Journal All-Greater Akron football team defense

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Just how good is Archbishop Hoban linebacker Eli Lee?

The senior was recruited to Ohio State by legend James Laurinaitis.

If things pan out the way the coaching staff thinks he'll be wearing Laurinaitis' No. 33 as the focal point of the Ohio State defense.

In addition to that, Lee was named the Ohio Division II Defensive Player of the Year, which made him an easy choice as the Greater Akron Defensive Player of the Year.

The 6-foot-3, 230-pound star registered 122 tackles, 23 tackles for loss, 12 sacks, three interceptions, two forced fumbles and scored a defensive touchdown. He also helped the Knights win their fifth regional title in a row.

Lee is part of our 25-man All-Greater Akron defensive team. Check out the defensive team below along with info on each player.

2024 Beacon Journal All-Greater Akron High School Football Team: Defense

Defensive linemen: Ace Brown, Hoban; Nick Crawford, Hoban; MarQuan Davis, East; Jordan Jackson, Nordonia; Gavin Gindlesperger, Manchester; Carson Noonan, Highland; Ryan Zywiec, Highland

Linebackers: Markus Brown, Norton; Caden Carter, Walsh Jesuit; Jacob Earnest, Wadsworth; Evan Foust, Highland; Joey Kopec, CVCA; Eli Lee, Hoban; Tanner Mintz, Hoban; Declan Norton, Walsh Jesuit; James Robinson, Tallmadge; Dionte Younger Jr.,

Firestone

Defensive backs: Tylan Boykin, Hoban; James Brewer, Walsh Jesuit; Aiden Henry, Walsh Jesuit; Elbert Hill, Hoban; Gavin Madigan, Wadsworth; Antonio Martin, Green; Terrell Wharton Jr., East; Buddy Willig, Norton

Meet the 2024 Beacon Journal All-Greater Akron Defensive Football Team

Defensive linemen

Ace Brown, Hoban

6-3, 225, junior

Second-team All-Northeast Inland District. Registered 49 tackles with 16 coming for loss. Has 12 sacks and two forced fumbles. Scored a defensive touchdown. Has offers from Kentucky and Illinois among his eight.

Nick Crawford, Hoban

5-11, 250, senior

Second-team Division II All-Ohio. Registered 65 tackles, 22 for loss and had 17 sacks. Forced four fumbles, scored a defensive touchdown and blocked a punt. Helped Knights to state semifinals for fifth season in row.

MarQuan Davis, East

6-0, 180, senior

Second-team Division III All-Ohio. City Series Co-defensive Player of the Year. Registered 61 tackles with 30 going for loss. Logged team-high 17 sacks. Recovered a fumble and had a defensive touchdown. Led Dragons to wins in five of last seven games and a share of the City Series championship with Firestone.

Gavin Gindlesperger, Manchester

6-1, 205, junior

Second-team Division V All-Ohio. First-team All-Principals Athletic Conference on an 11-2 Manchester team. Logged 59 tackles with 18 coming for loss. Logged 6.5 sacks and had 16 quarterback pressures. Graded out at 90% blocking as a tight end.

Jordan Jackson, Nordonia

6-3, 250, senior

Third-team Division II All-Ohio. First-team Suburban League National Conference.

Registered 48 tackles with 14 coming for loss. Caused and recovered a fumble. Logged five sacks. Led Knights to 10-3 record.

Carson Noonan, Highland

6-3, 270, senior

First-team Division II All-Ohio. Northeast Inland Co-defensive Player of the Year.

Suburban League American Conference Lineman of the year. Three-star recruit who signed with Miami (Ohio) off of a 13-1 Highland team. Registered 70 tackles, 20 for loss, registered 10.5 sacks and had three forced fumbles. Lineman for offense that ran for 3,573 yards and passed for 2,410 yards.

James Robinson, Tallmadge

6-2, 220, sophomore

Third-team Division III All-Ohio. First-team All-Suburban League American Conference.

Registered 111 tackles with 19 going for loss. Logged a defensive touchdown and made two interceptions.

Ryan Zywiec, Highland

6-3, 260, senior

Second-team Division II All-Ohio. Suburban League American Conference co-Defensive

Player of the Year. Registered 76 tackles, 21.5 for loss, 9.5 sacks, one forced fumble and two fumble recoveries. Lineman for offense that scored 43.3 points per game.

Linebackers

Markus Brown, Norton

6-1, 185, junior

Second-team Division IV All-Ohio. First-team All-Metro Athletic Conference. Set school record for tackles (126) with 100 of them coming unassisted. Logged 11 tackles for loss and five sacks. Had two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and an interception.

Caden Carter, Walsh Jesuit

6-0, 210, junior

Third-team Division III All-Ohio. Registered 115 tackles, 10 for loss, and had three sacks. Carter added two forced fumbles, three pass breakups and had an interception. Led Warriors to first undefeated regular season in 26 years.

Jacob Earnest, Wadsworth

6-2, 225, junior

Second-team Division II All-Ohio. Suburban League National Conference Defensive Player of the Year on an 11-2 Wadsworth team. Registered 112 tackles, 4.5 for loss, intercepted a pass, recovered a fumble and scored a defensive touchdown. Blocked an extra point to help the Grizzlies beat Nordonia.

Evan Foust, Highland

6-0, 195, sophomore

Second-team Division II All-Northeast Inland District. First-team All-Suburban League American Conference. Registered team high 88 tackles with nine coming for loss. Forced a fumble, recovered a fumble and had four sacks and two pass breakups. Also totaled 28 catches for 577 yards and five TDs, 27 carries for 242 rushing yards and three TDs and punted 12 times with an average of 35.4 yards per punt and five inside the 20.

Joey Kopec, CVCA

6-2, 205, junior

First-team Division III All-Ohio. Northeast Inland Co-defensive Player of the Year. Registered 85 tackles, four for loss, and had seven quarterback pressures and six interceptions. Also totaled 1,072 rushing yards, 230 receiving yards, 541 return yards and 17 touchdowns (10 rushing, three receiving, two via kick returns, one interception return and one passing).

Eli Lee, Hoban

6-3, 230, senior

Ohio Division II Defensive Player of the Year. Four-star recruit who signed with Ohio State. Registered 122 tackles, 23 tackles for loss, 12 sacks, three interceptions, two forced

fumbles and scored a defensive touchdown. Helped Knights (12-3) win fifth regional title in a row.

Tanner Mintz, Hoban

6-0, 220, senior

Second-team Division II All-Ohio. Three-star recruit who signed with Kent State. Registered 110 tackles and had eight sacks. Recovered four fumbles, made four interceptions and scored two defensive touchdowns.

Declan Norton, Walsh Jesuit

6-1, 220, senior

Third-team Division II All-Ohio. Registered 150 tackles and six tackles for loss. Logged six sacks and forced a fumble for the two-time regional finalist Warriors. Helped Walsh to first undefeated season since 1998 and a 13-1 record.

Dionte Younger Jr., Firestone

6-0, 212, senior

Second-team All-Northeast Inland District. First-team All-City Series. Registered 125 tackles with 15 coming for loss. Logged four sacks, two forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and four pass breakups. Also blocked a field goal, and totaled 92 carries for 582 rushing yards and 10 TD's, 16 receptions for 185 yards and one TD as Firestone shared the City Series title with East.

Defensive backs

Tylan Boykin, Hoban

6-1, 180, senior

Third-team Division II All-Ohio. Three-star recruit who signed with Eastern Michigan. Registered 52 tackles, broke up 26 passes, had four interceptions and scored a defensive touchdown. Also returned two punts for TDs, rushed for two TDs and added a TD pass.

James Brewer, Walsh Jesuit

6-3, 175, junior

Second-team All-Northeast Inland. Registered 49 tackles with four coming for loss. Recorded a sack and scored a defensive touchdown. Picked off two passes and had 14 pass breakups. Forced a fumble and caused a fumble.

Aiden Henry, Walsh Jesuit

5-10, 180, senior

Third-team Division II All-Ohio. Registered 55 tackles, two tackles for loss and had three pass breakups. Logged 42 receptions for 580 yards and scored four touchdowns on offense. Also had a passing touchdown.

Elbert Hill, Hoban

5-11, 175, junior

First-team Division II All-Ohio. Four-star recruit ranked No. 1 in the nation at cornerback. Registered 56 tackles and had two sacks. Logged five interceptions, two defensive touchdowns and broke up 26 passes. Returned two kickoffs for TDs and had five TDs on offense (three receiving and two rushing).

Gavin Madigan, Wadsworth

5-11, 215, junior

Honorable mention Division II All-Ohio. First team All-Suburban League National Conference. Registered 92 tackles, 4.5 for loss, and had eight pass breakups in 10 games. Made three interceptions. Ran for 764 yards and 11 TDs on 98 carries and caught a TD pass.

Antonio Martin, Green

6-0, 180, senior

Second-team Division II All-Ohio. First-team Federal League. Allowed only seven catches, while registering five interceptions and nine pass breakups in nine games. Made 10 tackles on third or fourth down. Also had 41 receptions for 733 yards and 10 TDs.

Terrell Wharton Jr., East

6-2, 160, junior

Honorable mention Division III All-Ohio. Three-star recruit with offers from Penn State,

Purdue, Wisconsin and Indiana. First-team All-City Series. Logged 32 tackles and registered 16 pass breakups. Scored three touchdowns on offense.

Buddy Willig, Norton

6-1, 170, junior

Second-team Division IV All-Ohio. First-team All-Metro Athletic Conference. Registered 77 tackles and three interceptions. Also completed 55 of 78 passes for 914 yards with seven touchdowns and two interceptions, and had 95 carries for 628 yards and nine TDs, and returned a punt for a TD.

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