

Steelers **STEELERS** at **COMMANDERS**, 1 P.M. TODAY, CBS **W**

# DOUBLE TROUBLE

Steelers call Commanders dual-threat rookie QB Daniels 'lightning in a bottle'

BY KEVIN GORMAN

The Pittsburgh Steelers have a history of dominating rookie quarterbacks — with a 25-6 record under Mike Tomlin — yet spent the week talking about Jayden Daniels with a heaping of hyperbole in expectation that the Washington Commanders phenom will test that narrative.

There was no shortage of superlatives. Tomlin is impressed with Daniels' mobility. Steelers quarterback Russell Wilson complimented his calm demeanor in handling the spotlight with grace and confidence. Defensive captain Cameron Heyward described Daniels as "lightning in a bottle."

The 2023 Heisman Trophy winner and No. 2 overall draft pick from LSU has been all of that and more for the Commanders in becoming a runaway favorite for NFL Rookie of the Year and early MVP

candidate, especially after his heroic Hail Mary to clinch a comeback victory.

Steelers outside linebacker Alex Highsmith watched Daniels scramble before completing a 52-yard tipped pass to Noah Brown as time expired to beat the Chicago Bears in Week 8.

"It was a crazy play, those types of plays a lot of legendary quarterbacks have on their resume," Highsmith said. "He's talented. Just watching him on film, he does a lot of great things, especially as a rookie. He's a dangerous quarterback, and he's getting better every week."

DANIELS • B3



LEFT: AP; RIGHT: GETTY IMAGES

## BEYOND HIS YEARS

Where Jayden Daniels ranks among NFL QBs:

Completion pct.: 71.5 (3rd)

QB rating: 106.7 (5th)

QBR: 75.7 (2nd)

Rushing yds.: 459 (2nd)

Rushing TDs: 4 (T-3rd)

Passing yds.: 1,945 (13th)

## Numerous matchups looming large



Joey Porter Jr. could spend a lot of time shadowing Commanders receiver Terry McLaurin today.

Without a doubt, Sunday's feature matchup during the Steelers-Commanders game is going to be how the Pittsburgh defense handles Washington rookie sensation Jayden Daniels.

The first-year quarterback has a passer rating of 106.7 — the fifth best in the NFL. His 71.5% completion percentage is third best. That said, the Steelers have a 50-15 record against first-year starting QBs since the 1970 AFL-NFL merger, via the Associated Press.

But that's not the only big X's-and-O's collision to watch for between these playoff contenders. Here are some others to keep an



TIM BENZ

eye on beyond how the Steelers deal with the NFL's potential rookie of the year.

• Will Joey Porter Jr. shadow Washington wide receiver Terry McLaurin? I think he should, and Porter sure seems to want that matchup.

"That doesn't even need to be said," Porter told the NFL Network's "The Insiders" show. "I think (coach Mike Tomlin)

## INSIDE

- » Four Downs: WR Williams, QB Wilson look like match **B2**
- » Scouting the Commanders **B2**
- » Rosters, stats, betting lines **B2**
- » Madden: Beware no-huddle **B2**
- » Steelers activate LB Matakovich, WR Skowronek **B3**

knows. He knows what I want. ... Coach T understands me and my game style. I like the hard matchups. I like being under the lights, and I really don't shy away from the pressure. So if he feels like I need to go get the No. 1 guy and shut them down,

BENZ • B3



CHAZ PALLA | TRIBLIVE

## YOU AGAIN?

Jayce Powell and Jeannette will face a familiar opponent — sort of — when the Jayhawks face Fort Cherry in the WPIAL semifinals. **Story, B4**



PITT: SHANE DUNLAP | TRIBLIVE; PENN STATE: AP

## TIME TO SHINE

Above, Penn State tight end Tyler Warren scores a touchdown against Washington during the second quarter Saturday in State College. At left, Pitt's Eli Holstein attempts to avoid a tackle against Virginia at Acrisure Stadium. Both games ended too late for this edition. For coverage, visit [sports.triblive.com](http://sports.triblive.com)

NO. 25 DUQUESNE 31, ROBERT MORRIS 6

# Dukes surge to 7th consecutive victory

Perrantes, Erby connect for 3 TDs against Colonials

## INSIDE

- » 'D' lifts WVU past Bearcats **B5**
- » No. 4 Miami suffers 1st loss **B5**

BY DAVE MACKALL

Darius Perrantes and John Erby became friends while at Rhode Island, and they've remained close years later at Duquesne.

That bond never was stronger than Saturday at Rooney Field.

Perrantes threw four touchdown passes — three to Erby — and No. 25 Duquesne raced to its seventh straight victory, 31-6 over Robert Morris, to seize control of first place in the Northeast Conference with

two regular-season games remaining. "Every game is a big game," said Erby, a graduate transfer receiver from Rhode Island. "These opportunities don't always come along, and we have to take advantage. We don't take any opponent lightly."

Duquesne, in a renewal of its series with Robert Morris, certainly didn't take the Colonials lightly in administering a sound beating.

Duquesne outgained Robert

DUQUESNE/RMU • B5

# Steelers gameday



at **Commanders**, 1 p.m. today, Northwest Stadium  
TV: CBS  
**Line: Commanders by 2.5**

# DEEP CONNECTION?

## QB Wilson, new WR Williams could be ideal match



### FOURDOWNS

Written by Chris Adamski, Four Downs is a weekly feature composed of quick-hit thoughts and analysis on the Steelers and the NFL.

#### 1. Mike goes deep

Pittsburgh Steelers trade acquisition Mike Williams is 30 years old and in the midst of a season in which he has fewer catches (12) than the wide receivers he is intended to be an upgrade over (Calvin Austin III and Van Jefferson have 14 catches apiece in eight games). It's fair to posit that Williams' best football is behind him. But from 2018-21, he was a legitimate No. 1 wide receiver — particularly on deep balls. And that's an area in which Williams still could contribute to the Steelers offense.

Over Williams' aforementioned most productive four-season span, he averaged 59 catches, 978 yards and seven touchdowns. It was being a deep threat where Williams stood out most.

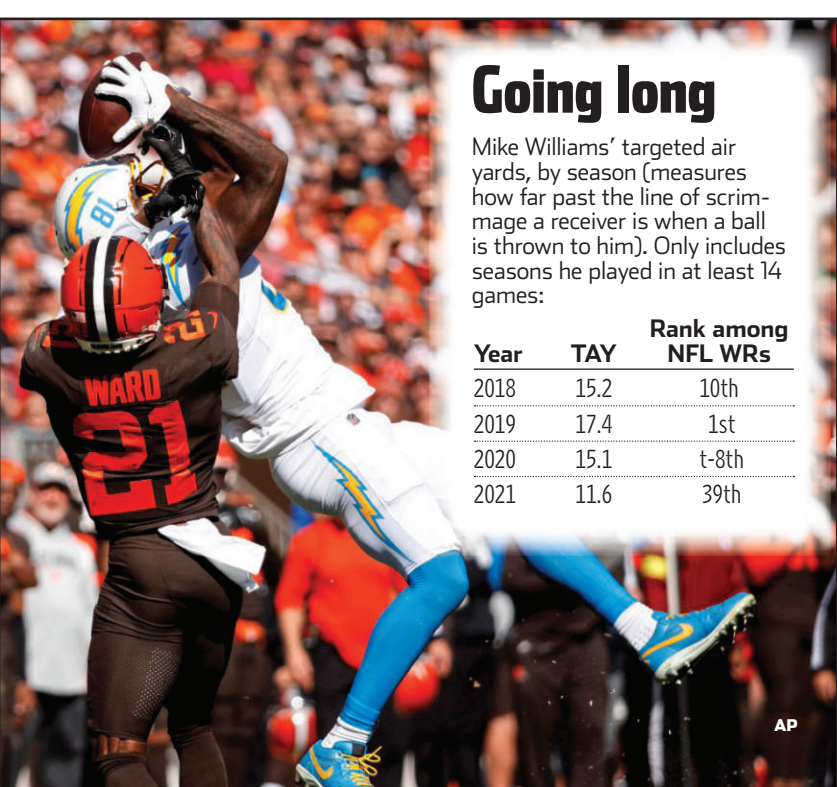
According to Next Gen Stats, Williams led the NFL in average depth of targeted pass in 2019 at 17.4 yards down the field. He also finished among the top 10 in that category in 2018 and 2020.

Per Pro Football Focus data, Williams was among the NFL leaders in touchdowns on passes caught 20 or more yards downfield between 2018-21 with 10. In 2019 and 2021, he was among the top 10 in the NFL in deep targets and catches.

#### 2. Russ throws deep

Why Williams' history of downfield plays is so relevant to the Steelers is that he would seem to be another ideal fit with their quarterback, who likewise has plenty of data to support his proficiency with deep passing plays.

Over the first nine seasons of Russell Wilson's career, he never finished lower than a tie for 10th in the NFL in passing attempts of 20-plus yards downfield, completions of 20-plus yards downfield or in touchdowns on passes of 20-plus yards downfield. He also never finished lower than ninth in PFF grading for such deep balls. During Wilson's 10 seasons with the Seattle Seahawks, he never finished lower than fifth in the NFL in



### Going long

Mike Williams' targeted air yards, by season (measures how far past the line of scrimmage a receiver is when a ball is thrown to him). Only includes seasons he played in at least 14 games:

Year	TAY	Rank among NFL WRs
2018	15.2	10th
2019	17.4	1st
2020	15.1	t-8th
2021	11.6	39th

passes caught 20 or more yards past beyond line of scrimmage.

In two starts with the Steelers, Wilson is 5 for 7 with a touchdown on "deep" passes.

#### 3. That's special

Danny Smith and his special teams units have gotten plenty of plaudits this season — and for good reason after multiple blocked field goals and extra points, a blocked punt, Chris Boswell's near-perfect field-goal kicking and Calvin Austin III's punt-return touchdown in the Steelers' most recent game.

Notice something missing from that list? Kickoffs have been the Steelers (relative) weakness. They rank dead last in kickoff return average (21.0 yards) and have not had a kick return of longer than 32 yards. Only three teams have yet to hit that standard.

The Steelers are also in the bottom half of the league in opponent kick return average (27.3).

Punts, of course, are a far different story — the Steelers are second in the NFL in opponent return average (4.8 yards) and themselves rank seventh at 12.9 yards.

PFF's grades rank the Steelers as the league's third-best special-teams

unit overall.

#### 4. Your vote, your choice

In a quirk resulting from the four-year cycle of the NFL's interconference scheduling format, the Steelers for the fourth time over the past five presidential elections are playing in proximity to our nation's capital within five days of the election.

In 2008, the Steelers played at Washington on the eve of Election Day. In 2016 and 2020, the Steelers played against the Ravens in Baltimore two days before those elections. (Yes, M&T Bank Stadium is 40 miles from Washington, D.C., but don't forget the Commanders play in Landover, Md. — itself, some 15 miles from the White House, so Baltimore stands for this frivolous purpose).

For those wondering ... The Steelers won their 2008 and 2020 games in the Washington/Baltimore Metro area — and the Democratic candidates prevailed in the election each time. When the Steelers lost at the Ravens on Nov. 6, 2016, the Republican party nominee won that week. An ominous sign for the Steelers on Sunday?

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# Scouting the Commanders

#### Last meeting

Washington beat Steelers, 23-17, on Dec. 7, 2020, in Pittsburgh

#### Key matchup

**Jayden Daniels' rushing vs. Steelers ILBs/Payton Wilson:** The Steelers have allowed opposing quarterbacks only 56 rushing yards all season — Daniels nearly averages that per game (51.0). According to Pro Football Focus, more than half of Daniels' rushing attempts are not designed runs but are scrambles. It will be incumbent on the Steelers' inside linebackers to stay in their lanes, and Wilson is often on the field in passing situations.

The Steelers, for a variety of reasons, have not faced mobile quarterbacks this season — but in only two series against the Steelers in September before leaving the game via injury, Colts quarterback Anthony Richardson had 24 rushing yards.

#### Key injuries

Days after his trade from New Orleans, veteran cornerback Marshon Lattimore will not make his Commanders debut because of a hamstring injury. Leading rusher Brian Robinson Jr. (hamstring) will miss his second straight game.

Starting right tackle Andrew Wylie is listed as questionable because of a shoulder injury. ... The only Steeler on the active roster who has been ruled out is reserve outside linebacker Nick Herbig (hamstring).



**Commanders RB Austin Ekeler**

#### Series record

Washington leads 44-34-1.

#### Series notes

Sunday's game will be the Steelers' 83rd against the former Redskins — they've faced only the Browns and Bengals more often. ... The majority of the meetings came before the 1970 NFL/AFL merger, when the Steelers were moved to the AFC. In the 54 years since then, the teams have played each other 12 times. ... The Steelers have won eight of those post-merger meetings. They had a six-game winning streak in the series until 2020. ... The team was named the Washington Football Team for that game; this is the first time the Steelers play a team called the Commanders. ... The Steelers are 2-0 at what is now called Northwest Stadium. They haven't lost a road game to Washington since 1988. But the Steelers have played only two games there since then (2008 and

2016). ... The Steelers and Redskins were division rivals in the NFL East for decades dating to the Steelers' founding in 1933. The Redskins were based in Boston until 1936.

#### Notable

Each team is on a three-game winning streak. ... The Steelers rank second in the league in scoring defense (14.9 points per game), and the Commanders are third in scoring offense at 29.2. ... The Steelers are 23-12 after an idle week since the NFL instituted byes in 1990. Only four teams have more post-bye victories. ... Since Mike Tomlin became coach in 2007, the Steelers are 13-4 immediately after a bye. That's tied for the best record in the NFL in that time. Andy Reid is the only coach who has more such victories over the past 18 seasons. ... This is the Steelers' first 1 p.m. kickoff in six weeks (Sept. 29 at Indianapolis). ... The Commanders finished 4-13 last season and in last place each of the past two seasons. At 7-2, they lead the NFC East. At least one last-place team from a prior season has won its division in 19 of the past 21 NFL seasons.

#### Fantasy tip

Using standard scoring rules, Commanders rookie Daniels is the third-highest-scoring fantasy player in the NFL this season. Among quarterbacks, he ranks tied for third in rushing touchdowns (four) and second in rushing yards (459). — Chris Adamski

# Commanders' no-huddle a unique challenge

Don't possess much tactical acumen when it comes to football. Like Matt Canada.

But it feels like the Washington Commanders' commitment and success using the no-huddle offense could provide a decisive edge in Sunday's matchup with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The Commanders (7-2) have run an average of 37 plays per game without a huddle. That's by far the most in the NFL. Seattle is second at 17 per game, less than half.

Jayden Daniels, Washington's rookie quarterback, is completing 70.2% of his passes when operating without a huddle.

That's remarkable composure in a chaotic situation designed to disrupt

the opposition's poise. The Steelers traditionally rattle rookie signal-callers. But that seems unlikely with Daniels, a clear front-runner for NFL Rookie of the Year and a legit possibility for MVP.

Steelers defensive coordinator Teryl Austin will have difficulty getting subpackages on the field. That inevitably will leave the Steelers with the wrong personnel for certain situations or, more likely, see them frequently go nickel and be accordingly vulnerable to Washington's running game. The Commanders are averaging 163.9 yards per game on the ground, 5 yards per carry.

Steelers cornerback Cameron Sutton is back for his first game after

being suspended. Sutton might have some rust to knock off. But if the Steelers use lots of nickel, Sutton should replace rookie Beanie Bishop immediately in that alignment. Sutton is 2 inches taller, slightly heavier, better against the run and that was the Steelers' original plan for the nickel.

If Washington operates its no-huddle to max efficiency, the Steelers defense could be rattled and get tired. WWMCD? What would Matt Canada do?

Disclaimer: Pro Football Focus says the Steelers defense is statistically one of the NFL's best against the no-huddle. But the Commanders aren't just an occasional user. It's a 60-minute challenge.

Mark Madden hosts a radio show 3-6 p.m. weekdays on WXDX-FM (105.9).

### Steelers roster

No.	Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Ex
2	Justin Fields	QB	6-3	227	4
3	Russell Wilson	QB	5-11	206	13
4	Kyle Allen	QB	6-3	210	6
6	Patrick Queen	LB	6-0	232	5
8	Corliss Waitman	P	6-2	210	2
9	Chris Boswell	K	6-2	185	10
11	Van Jefferson	WR	6-1	200	5
13	Scotty Miller	WR	5-9	174	6
14	George Pickens	WR	6-3	200	3
18	Mike Williams	WR	6-3	220	8
19	Calvin Austin III	WR	5-9	162	3
20	Cameron Sutton	CB	5-11	188	8
21	C.J. Henderson	CB	6-1	204	5
22	Najee Harris	RB	6-1	242	4
23	Damontae Kazee	S	5-11	174	8
24	Joey Porter Jr.	CB	6-2	193	2
25	DeShon Elliott	S	6-0	210	7
26	Donte Jackson	CB	5-10	180	6
28	Miles Killebrew	S	6-2	222	9
30	Jaylen Warren	RB	5-8	215	3
31	Beanie Bishop Jr.	CB	5-9	182	R
35	Jonathan Ward	RB	6-0	202	5
38	Terrell Edmunds	S	6-1	217	7
39	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	6-1	207	7
41	Payton Wilson	LB	6-4	242	R
42	James Pierre	CB	6-2	185	5
46	Christian Kuntz	LS	6-1	228	4
49	Jeremiah Moon	LB	6-5	247	2
50	Elandon Roberts	LB	6-1	238	9
51	Nick Herbig	LB	6-2	240	2
54	Zach Frazier	C	6-3	310	R
56	Alex Highsmith	LB	6-4	242	5
62	Ryan McCollum	G	6-5	300	2
64	Max Scharping	G	6-6	327	6
65	Dan Moore Jr.	OT	6-5	315	4
66	Mason McCormick	G	6-5	315	R
67	Calvin Anderson	OT	6-5	300	6
73	Isaac Seumalo	G	6-4	303	9
74	Spencer Anderson	OL	6-5	305	2
77	Broderick Jones	OT	6-5	311	2
80	Darnell Washington	TE	6-7	264	2
81	MyCole Pruitt	TE	6-2	258	9
83	Connor Heyward	TE/ FB	6-0	230	3
84	Cord Patterson	RB/ KR	6-2	220	12
88	Pat Freiermuth	TE	6-5	258	4
90	T.J. Watt	LB	6-4	252	8
91	Preston Smith	LB	6-5	271	10
92	Isaiah Loudermilk	DT	6-7	293	4
93	Mark Robinson	LB	5-11	235	3
94	Dean Lowry	DT	6-6	296	9
95	Keeanu Benton	DL	6-4	309	2
97	Cameron Heyward	DT	6-5	295	14
99	Larry Ogunjobi	DT	6-3	305	8

### Commanders roster

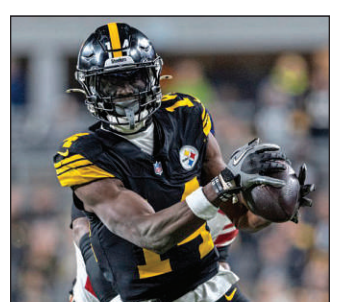
No.	Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Ex
0	Marshon Lattimore	CB	6-0	192	8
0	Mike Sainristil	CB	5-10	182	R
1	Noah Igbinoghene	CB	5-11	197	5
2	Dyami Brown	WR	6-0	195	4
3	Austin Seibert	K	5-9	211	4
4	Frankie Luvu	LB	6-3	236	7
5	Jayden Daniels	QB	6-4	210	R
6	Dante Fowler Jr.	LB	6-3	261	10
8	Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	6-1	228	3
10	Tress Way	P	6-1	220	11
11	Jeremy Chinn	S	6-3	220	5
12	Luke McCaffrey	WR	6-2	198	R
13	Emmanuel Forbes Jr.	CB	6-0	180	2
14	Olamide Zaccheaus	WR	5-8	193	6
16	Jeff Driskel	QB	6-4	231	8
17	Terry McLaurin	WR	6-0	210	6
18	Marcus Mariota	QB	6-4	222	10
20	Quan Martin	DB	6-0	195	5
22	Darrick Forrest	S	5-11	200	10
24	Michael Davis	CB	6-2	196	8
25	Benjamin St-Juste	CB	6-3	200	4
26	Jeremy McNichols	RB	5-9	214	4
30	Austin Ekeler	RB	5-9	200	8
32	Mykal Walker	LB	6-0	230	5
35	Percy Butler	S	6-0	191	3
39	Jeremy Reaves	S	5-11	200	5
40	Tyler Owens	S	6-2	213	R
41	Colson Yankoff	TE	6-4	225	R
45	Dominique Hampton	S	6-3	220	R
54	Bobby Wagner	LB	6-0	241	13
57	Nick Bellore	LB	6-1	250	14
58	Jordan Magee	LB	6-3	226	R
60	Michael Deiter	G	6-6	310	6
63	Tyler Biadasz	C	6-4	318	5
64	Sheldon Day	DT	6-1	285	8
67	Nick Allegretti	G	6-4	320	6
69	Tyler Ott	LS	6-3	252	10
71	Andrew Wylie	G/T	6-6	309	7
73	Trent Scott	T	6-5	320	7
74	Brandon Coleman	T	6-6	320	R
75	Chris Paul	G	6-4	324	3
76	Sam Cosmi	T	6-6	309	4
78	Cornelius Lucas	G	6-8	327	10
82	Ben Sinnott	TE	6-4	247	R
85	Noah Brown	WR	6-2	225	8
86	Zach Ertz	TE	6-5	250	12
87	John Bates	TE	6-6	259	4
92	Dorance Armstrong	DE	6-4	255	7
94	Daron Payne	DT	6-3	320	7
95	Jer'Zhan Newton	DT	6-2	295	R
96	Jalyn Holmes	DT	6-5	283	5
98	Phidarian Mathis	DT	6-4	312	3
99	Clelin Ferrell	DE	6-4	265	6

#### INJURY REPORT

OUT: S Terrell Edmunds (illness), LB Nick Herbig (hamstring), QUESTIONABLE: WR Ben Skowronek (shoulder), LB Tyler Matakevich (hamstring), FULL: QB Justin Fields (hamstring), C Zach Frazier (ankle), OL Isaac Seumalo (NIR/rest), RB/KR Cordarelle Patterson (ankle), TE MyCole Pruitt (knee), DT Cameron Heyward (NIR/rest).

#### INJURY REPORT

OUT: CB Marshon Lattimore (hamstring), T Cornelius Lucas (ankle), RB Brian Robinson Jr. (hamstring), TE Colton Yankoff (hamstring), QUESTIONABLE: K Austin Seibert (right hip), T Andrew Wylie (shoulder), DE Dorance Armstrong (shoulder), DE Clelin Ferrell (knee), FULL: C Tyler Biadasz (thumb), OLB Dante Fowler Jr. (groin), CB Noah Igbinoghene (thumb).



#### Statistical leaders

Player	Comp%	Yds	TD	Int
Justin Fields	66.3	1,106	5	1

Player	Att.	Yds	Avg.	TD
Najee Harris	136	592	4.4	2
Justin Fields	55	231	4.2	5

Player	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	TD
George Pickens	35	548	15.7	1
Pat Freiermuth	26	264	10.2	2
Najee Harris	17	152	8.9	0
Calvin Austin III	14	257	18.4	2

#### Statistical leaders

Player	Comp%	Yds	TD	Int
Jayden Daniels	62.0	2,070	6	4

Player	Att.	Yds	Avg.	TD
Brian Robinson	101	461	4.6	6
Jayden Daniels	82	459	5.6	4

Player	Rec.	Yds	Avg.	TD
Terry McLaurin	42	598	14.2	6
Zach Ertz	33	350	10.6	1
Noah Brown	22	318	14.5	1
Austin Ekeler	22	248	11.3	0

#### Steelers over/unders

Category	Value
Passing yards	Russell Wilson 208.5
Rushing yards	Najee Harris 66.5 Jaylen Warren 31.5
Receiving yards	George Pickens 65.5 Pat Freiermuth 24.5 Calvin Austin III 21.5

#### Commanders over/unders

Category	Value
Passing yards	Jayden Daniels 222.5
Rushing yards	Austin Ekeler 44.5 Jayden Daniels 42.5
Receiving yards	Terry McLaurin 57.5 Noah Brown 37.5 Zach Ertz 29.5

## Steelers schedule

Date	Opp.	Score/Time
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# NFL WEEK 10



**WHAT TO WATCH** **PREGAME** NFL Network 9 a.m., ESPN 10 a.m. **NFLN** N.Y. Giants vs. Carolina at Munich, 9:30 a.m. **Fox** Tennessee at L.A. Chargers, 4:05 p.m. **CBS** Steelers at Washington, 1 p.m. • Philadelphia at Dallas, 4:25 p.m. **NBC** Football Night in America, 7 p.m. • Detroit at Houston, 8:20 p.m.

## STANDINGS

AFC					
EAST					
W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	7	2	0	.778	260 173
N.Y. Jets	3	6	0	.333	171 183
Miami	2	6	0	.250	124 187
New England	2	7	0	.222	141 217
SOUTH					
Houston	6	3	0	.667	201 200
Indianapolis	4	5	0	.444	188 193
Tennessee	2	6	0	.250	140 213
Jacksonville	2	7	0	.222	195 252
NORTH					
Steelers	6	2	0	.750	187 119
Baltimore	7	3	0	.700	318 253
Cincinnati	4	6	0	.400	270 262
Cleveland	2	7	0	.222	148 213
WEST					
Kansas City	8	0	0	1.000	203 147
L.A. Chargers	5	3	0	.625	159 101
Denver	5	4	0	.556	183 161
Las Vegas	2	7	0	.222	168 251

NFC					
EAST					
W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	7	2	0	.778	263 189
Philadelphia	6	2	0	.750	199 155
Dallas	3	5	0	.375	171 225
N.Y. Giants	2	7	0	.222	139 202
SOUTH					
Atlanta	6	3	0	.667	221 216
Tampa Bay	4	5	0	.444	259 243
Carolina	2	7	0	.222	147 293
New Orleans	2	7	0	.222	207 229
NORTH					
Detroit	7	1	0	.875	258 148
Minnesota	6	2	0	.750	209 150
Green Bay	6	3	0	.667	230 194
Chicago	4	4	0	.500	172 148
WEST					
Arizona	5	4	0	.556	207 214
L.A. Rams	4	4	0	.500	170 194
San Francisco	4	4	0	.500	210 182
Seattle	4	5	0	.444	210 221

## WEEK 10 SCHEDULE

**Thursday's result**  
Baltimore 35, Cincinnati 34

**Today's games**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
N.Y. Giants (-6.5) vs. Carolina at Munich

**1 p.m.**  
Steelers (+2.5) at Washington  
Atlanta (-3.5) at New Orleans  
Buffalo (-4) at Indianapolis  
Denver (+7.5) at Kansas City  
Minnesota (-7) at Jacksonville  
New England (+6) at Chicago  
San Francisco (-6.5) at Tampa Bay  
**4:05 p.m.**  
Tennessee (+7.5) at L.A. Chargers  
N.Y. Jets (-2) at Arizona  
Philadelphia (-7.5) at Dallas  
**8:20 p.m.**  
Detroit (-3.5) at Houston

**Monday's game**  
**8:15 p.m.**  
Miami (+2) at L.A. Rams  
**Open:** Cleveland, Las Vegas, Green Bay, Seattle

## GAMES TO WATCH



**Broncos at Chiefs**  
**Notes:** Three-time All-Pro WR DeAndre Hopkins had eight catches for 86 yards and a pair of touchdowns in only his second game with the Chiefs, helping them beat the Buccaneers in overtime last Monday night. ... The Chiefs won 16 straight in the series before the Broncos won last October. ... Broncos QB Bo Nix already has the most completions (184) and yards passing (1,753) by a rookie in team history. ... The Broncos have run for at least 100 yards in seven straight games.



**Lions at Texans**  
**Notes:** Lions WR Jameson Williams returns after serving a two-game suspension for violating the league's performance-enhancing substance policy. ... Lions QB Jared Goff's completion rate (82.8%) and passer rating (140.1) over the past six games are the highest in any six-game span in NFL history for a player with at least 50 passing attempts. ... Now Goff will face a Houston defense that ranks third in the NFL by allowing just 167.4 yards passing a game.

# 'He will make you pay'

**DANIELS** · FROM B1  
Daniels hopes to join the company of one of Pittsburgh's greats when he leads the Commanders (7-2) against the Steelers (6-2) at 1 p.m. Sunday at Northwest Stadium.

Ben Roethlisberger (10) and Dak Prescott of the Dallas Cowboys (nine) are the only rookie quarterbacks in league history to win at least eight of their first 10 career starts.

The numbers are just as dazzling. Daniels has a higher completion percentage (71.5%) and more passing yards (1,945) than Patrick Mahomes, four times more touchdown passes (nine) than interceptions (two) and is averaging 5.6 yards per carry with four rushing touchdowns.

"There's not a situation he doesn't like," Heyward said. "He can throw the ball, he can run the ball. He's dynamic, and he will make you pay if you give him a lane."

Despite his slight build, the 6-foot-4, 210-pounder also is a dangerous runner who is effective in short-yardage situations. The Commanders have a 45.9% conversion rate on third downs (50 of 109) and are perfect on 11 fourth-down attempts.

"It's funny because I know he's not a big-frame guy, but he has deceptive power because there's guys that hit him but he falls forward," Steelers defensive coordinator Teryl Austin said. "I was watching some of the goal-line stuff, and he has a couple runs down there that looks like he's stopped then, all of a sudden, it's a touchdown. That's one of the things that maybe people underestimate, that he does have really good strength, really good run ability and he doesn't fall backwards very much."

The Steelers know better than to underestimate Daniels, as Tomlin noted he's been a "franchise quarterback" dating to his college days, first at Arizona State and then LSU. Playing in a no-huddle offense directed by Kliff Kingsbury — who coached Mahomes at Texas Tech and Kyler Murray with the Arizona Cardinals — has suited Daniels, even if it was dismissed as "simple" by Cincinnati Bengals cornerback Cam Taylor-Britt.

Daniels made him eat those words on "Monday Night Football," completing 21 of 23 attempts for 254 yards and two touchdowns for a 141.7 passer rating in a 38-33 win Sept. 23.

"I'm an LSU guy, so I watched him very thoroughly for the last two years and he's a dynamic playmaker," Steelers cornerback Donte Jackson said. "He's played a lot of football. He's been in a lot



Rookie Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels leads an offense that has only three turnovers this season.

of big games. He's been in a lot of big moments. He doesn't shy away from that. I would think that's the biggest thing that I see, that he stands up in the face of tough moments."

Daniels did just that against the Bears and No. 1 overall pick Caleb Williams. The Commanders had the ball at their own 48 and were trailing 15-12 with 2 seconds left when he made the decisive pass. Daniels took a seven-step drop, then rolled right. He stopped and reversed field, keeping his eyes downfield as he scrambled before launching a ball that sailed 63 yards before being tipped by Bears defensive back Tyrique Stevenson into the hands of Brown.

"When you watch him, he's calm in the pocket, doesn't panic," Austin said. "He creates space. He moves around. He looks for targets. ... He has really good command of what they do. He plays with a good confidence level. When you watch him, in terms of when he's looking at coverages and where to distribute the ball, he seems to be looking in the right places."

"I think that, so far, he's done a wonderful job for them. We're going to have our challenges with that guy because he can run it, he can throw it, he can create, he can make off-schedule plays. He can do all of the stuff that you want a quarterback to be able to do."

And some stuff few other quarterbacks can do. Per NextGen Stats, Daniels has four touchdown passes with a completion probability of 30% or less — plus a fifth of 30.4%. Daniels also has three completions of passes that have traveled 50 or more yards in the air, the most such since ESPN started tracking air yards in 2006.

"His mobility is a major factor, whether it's by design or by ad lib, play extension, escape," Tomlin said. "It is something that will be reckoned with. It's one of the core components of why they are a dangerous group."

Couple that with Washington's ball security — the Commanders have only three turnovers (two interceptions and a fumble) — and that explains why Tomlin says the Steelers are "preparing with an edge."

Daniels also is dealing with a rib injury suffered against Carolina on Oct. 20, so the Steelers intend to be disruptive early with their pass rush to put him out of position and force mistakes. For all of their success against rookie quarterbacks, they aren't taking Daniels lightly after being beaten by C.J. Stroud of the Houston Texans and Dorian Thompson-Robinson of the Cleveland Browns last season.

"You've got to make him think," Steelers safety Minkah Fitzpatrick said. "You've got to put pressure on him and make him feel uncomfortable. They've done a really good job of allowing him to get comfortable back there and be comfortable in the pocket, so we've got to put pressure on him and make him feel uncomfortable."

Daniels has been sacked 17 times, just once more than Steelers backup Justin Fields was in his six starts. Five of those sacks came in the Commanders' two losses — at Tampa Bay in the opener and at Baltimore in Week 6 — and five others in Washington's first game against the New York Giants, a 21-18 win.

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# Early downs will be crucial for Steelers

**BENZ** · FROM B1

that's what I'm going to do." However, Steelers defensive coordinator Teryl Austin stopped short of assuring Porter would be a shadow for McLaurin.

"If that's what we wanted to do, we could do it," Austin said. "They move him around. He is a veteran. You'll see him in the slot sometimes. At weak (side), outside, strong. If we need to match and make that move, we would be able to get that done."

McLaurin has 29 more targets, 20 more receptions and 281 more yards than Noah Brown. He is the next closest Washington wide receiver in all of those categories.

From a size perspective, though, at times, the Steelers may want to put Porter (6-foot-2, 193 pounds) on Brown (6-2, 225) instead of having Donte Jackson (5-10, 180) try that battle. McLaurin checks in at about 6-foot and 210 pounds.

"McLaurin is a guy that is a significant winner in one-on-one matchups," coach Mike Tomlin said Tuesday. "We better do a good job in thoughtfully managing our exposure to him and working to minimize him."

McLaurin begins the weekend seventh in receiving yards with 598. Only Cincinnati's Ja'Marr Chase (10) has more touchdowns than McLaurin (6).

• The Steelers must win consistently on first and second down when they are on defense. The Commanders are great on third-down and fourth-down conversions. Washington entered the week fourth in the NFL in third-down conversions at 45.9%. They are also 11 for 11 on fourth downs.

"If it's a run play, it's going to have some type of quarterback run play off of it," linebacker Elandon Roberts said. "They run the ball very well. They have a good front

## LB Matakevich, WR Skowronek activated

The Steelers got a special teams boost for Sunday's game at the Washington Commanders with the activation of inside linebacker Tyler Matakevich and wide receiver Ben Skowronek.

Matakevich, a nine-year veteran, has been out since Sept. 15 with a hamstring injury and was placed on injured reserve two days later. He returned to practice Oct. 24 but did not play against the

New York Giants.

Skowronek appeared in the first two regular-season games but suffered a shoulder injury and had been on injured reserve since Sept. 18. He returned to practice Wednesday. To make room on the active roster, the Steelers released safety Terrell Edmunds and running back Jonathan Ward.

— Kevin Gorman

along their offensive line."

The Steelers need to make those attempts as difficult as possible to convert.

"They do a good job of staying on schedule," Austin said. "Coming out of last week's game, they had zero attempts of third-and-11-plus. They didn't get behind the sticks at all. It's really important for us, if we want to keep them from those fourth-and-shorts, to get them into second-and-long."

So far this season, the Steelers are 11th in third-down conversion defense (34.7%). They have allowed six fourth-down conversion attempts in 10 games.

• Najee Harris has three straight 100-yard games on the ground. The rushing attack may be getting into a groove.

"A lot of recent success. That's been a work in progress all year," offensive coordinator Arthur Smith said. "It's a credit to the whole unit. I like the way we are trending."

The Steelers would be wise to lean into the run a lot in this game. Washington's rush defense is the fourth worst in the NFL at 143.0 yards allowed per game. Meanwhile, the pass defense is fifth best at 183.3 yards allowed per game.

Not only that, but the Steelers are getting Zach Frazier back at center.

• The Steelers ought to have an advantage in the defensive red zone. At 37.5%, Austin's unit is the best in the NFL.

For all the things that the Commanders are doing well, scoring touchdowns in the red zone isn't one of them. They are 26th in football at just 51.2%.

The Commanders at least cash in with three points most times when they get down low, though. The team's kicker, Austin Seibert, has 25 field goals to lead the NFL. He has only missed two kicks, both beyond 50 yards. He's 24 of 24 under 50 yards.

• Speaking of kicking, The Steelers have been excellent in a lot of special teams areas.

One area where they haven't exploded yet, though, is on kick returns. They only have had seven of them, and they are averaging a league-low 21.0 yards.

That might change Sunday. The Commanders have allowed 41 total returns for 1,037 yards, the most in the NFL in both categories.

Tim Benz is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at tbenz@triblive.com or

## H.S. ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

**Taylor Doppelheuer**  
**School:** Southmoreland  
**Class:** Senior  
**Sport:** Volleyball  
**Claim to fame:** A 6-foot hitter, Doppelheuer led the Scotties to their first PIAA playoff win in program history, a 3-1 victory over North Star in the Class 2A first round.



She put down 20 kills for the Scotties, who made the WPIAL semifinals and finished fourth in the district.

**What was it like being part of the first state playoff win in program history?**

It's truly an unreal feeling. I've never been more proud of all the hard work and dedication we have put in to get this far.

**What was the key to overcoming nerves in a new environment?**

Just knowing what we are capable of and knowing we are going to do whatever it takes to get it done.

**Did you think this team would make a run in the PIAA tournament?**

Absolutely. I believe this team has the ability to compete with anyone.

**What is more exciting, a set-clinching kill or a walk-off home run in softball?**

I think a set-clinching kill in the fifth set and a walk-off are both extremely exciting.

**Do you have any college plans yet?**

I have not made my decision yet, but I've decided to major in criminology.

**You're a 6-footer. Are you done growing?**

I don't want to say for sure. Every time I do, I seem to grow another inch or two.

**Are you still going to play basketball this season?**

I will not be playing basketball this season. I will be using the time to rest and prepare for softball season.

**What's the best sports advice you've ever received?**

Take what you can out of a bad performance. Don't dwell on it, instead realign your focus and figure out what you can do to improve.

**What volleyball rule would you change?**

If the ball is shanked outside the antenna on the other side of the court, you should be able to go after it and bring it back in play and hit over.

## Joey Crimboli

**School:** Latrobe  
**Class:** Sophomore  
**Sport:** Ice hockey  
**Claim to fame:** The Latrobe right wing scored two goals and added three assists to help the Wildcats outscore rival Hempfield, 7-2, in a PIHL Class 2A game. The Wildcats are 3-2, and both losses were to Erie Cathedral Prep. Crimboli has a team-high nine goals and has scored 13 points.



**How old were you when you started to skate?**

It was probably 11 years ago, and it was during a free skate. I did one lap, and my dad (Frank) carried me the rest of the way.

**When did you start playing hockey?**

I played American Development Model (ADM) hockey. We played a game called Cross Ice.

**Was the game against Hempfield your most memorable in high school?**

It was the most enjoyable because I helped beat our rival school. It was a lot of fun.

**How has the season gone so far?**

So far pretty good. We are 3-2 and in fourth or fifth place. We are improving, and we still have games left. Penn-Trafford is probably the best team.

**Did last year's playoff loss to Franklin Regional motivate the team?**

That game hurt. We were leading after two periods and could not hold.

**How are the new faces in the lineup working out?**

We lost six guys from last year's team, and the new guys are doing their job. A couple scored goals against Hempfield.

**What are the team goals?**

It would be a failure to ourselves if we didn't make the playoffs.

**What are the team's strengths?**

Our offensive ability to score goals. We do a great job creating scoring opportunities.

**What is your strength of your game?**

My ability to finish around the net.

**When you are not playing for the Wildcats, what travel team do you play for?**

I play for the Pittsburgh Stars 16-U team. We're playing in Columbus, Ohio, this weekend. I'd like to go to Las Vegas.

**The last movie I watched was .... ?**

'Mighty Ducks'

— Bill Beckner Jr., Paul Schofield



# Quips' remarkable run ends

Fellow powerhouse TJ sends Aliquippa home before title game

BY CHRIS HARLAN

It took a big win by another elite program to snap Aliquippa's amazing WPIAL championship streak. Aliquippa had reached the WPIAL finals 16 years in a row, but that incredible run ended Friday night with a 38-21 loss to fellow titan Thomas Jefferson in the Class 4A semifinals. This will be the first time since 2007 that Aliquippa won't play in the WPIAL finals.

## 5 THINGS

The streak was older than some of the players competing in Friday's game. "Sixteen years in a row? That's pretty amazing," Thomas Jefferson coach Bill Cherpak said. "They're the benchmark. They're a great team, a great program, and they are always going to be."

The Quips' streak spanned three classifications. Aliquippa reached the Class 2A finals eight years in a row (2008-15) under coach Mike Zmijanac. When the PIAA expanded football to six classifications in 2016, the Quips voluntarily moved to 3A and reached the finals four years in a row, with Mike Warfield taking over as coach in 2018.

In 2020, the PIAA competitive-balance rule forced the team up to 4A. There, it reached the finals four more times. Aliquippa won eight WPIAL titles in that 16-year span. However, the Quips on Friday ran into an opponent with its own impressive championship history.

Thomas Jefferson has reached the WPIAL finals for the 13th time since 2003. The Jaguars have won nine titles in that span. Friday's game was a semifinal, but the teams' histories made it feel bigger. "That was a championship atmosphere," first-year Aliquippa coach Vashawn Patrick said. "When you're playing a team like TJ, that has been in championships year-in and year-out, every time you step on the field it's like the battle of the titans."

The last time Aliquippa lost a WPIAL semifinal, it came against another all-time titan. Former Jeannette star quarterback Terrelle Pryor was on the field for that Aliquippa loss in 2007. Pryor rushed for 331 yards and five touchdowns and threw for two more scores in a 70-48 victory that set a WPIAL record for combined points in a playoff game.

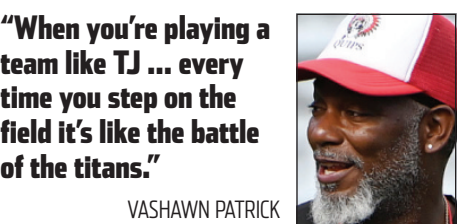
Aliquippa was disappointed to be staying home, but Patrick insisted streaks are meant to be broken. He added: "We're going to come back next year ready, strong and even better."

### Three in a row

Central Catholic and North Allegheny, who each won Friday, will meet in the WPIAL 6A final for the third year in a row. By doing so, they'll make history.

Never have two teams in the WPIAL's largest classification met in three straight finals.

Penn Hills and Butler played two consecutive 3A title games in 1977-78, and North Hills and Gateway met in



**"When you're playing a team like TJ ... every time you step on the field it's like the battle of the titans."**

VASHAWN PATRICK ALIQUIPPA COACH

back-to-back 4A finals in 1985-86. Class 4A was the WPIAL's largest classification from 1980 until 2016, when football expanded to six classifications. The sport had three classes starting in 1932. North Allegheny is a two-time defending champion in 6A. The Tigers defeated Central Catholic, 35-21, in 2022 and 44-41 last season. Norwin will host this year's 6A final at 6:05 p.m. Saturday.

No. 1 Central Catholic advanced to the finals by defeating No. 4 Seneca Valley, 38-14, on Friday. North Allegheny beat No. 3 Mt. Lebanon, 48-14, in the other semifinal.

### Chance for redemption

Seven teams were given a second chance Friday to beat an opponent that had beaten them in the regular season. Only two succeeded: Avonworth and Jeannette.

No. 5 Avonworth got five rushing touchdowns from brothers Nico and Luca Neal in a 42-21 victory over No. 4 Beaver in 3A. The outcome was a reversal from two weeks earlier when Beaver won 34-14.

No. 13 Jeannette is the highest-seeded team remaining in the playoffs after defeating No. 5 Greensburg Central Catholic, 29-23, in Class A. The Jayhawks lost to GCC, 44-27, on Oct. 4.

A couple of other rematches were close. Imani Christian came back from a 14-0 halftime deficit to Highlands and won 31-17 in Class 3A. Fort Cherry escaped an early 12-0 hole to defeat Cornell, 27-20, in Class A.

### Still going strong

The Allegheny Six was arguably the WPIAL's strongest conference in the regular season, a reputation that continues in the playoffs. Three of the four remaining playoff teams in Class 5A are from that conference: Upper St. Clair, Peters Township and Bethel Park. None of the WPIAL's other conferences has more than two surviving teams, excluding Class 6A, which has only one conference.

Overall, 14 of the 18 conferences have at least one team still in contention. The only conferences eliminated were the Big East in 5A, the Parkway in 4A and the Big 7 and Tri-County South, both in Class A.

This is the first time since 2019 that no Parkway conference teams reached the 4A finals.

### Good byes

Coaches often debate whether starting the playoffs with a bye week is good. This year, the byes were mostly good. The 13 teams with byes went 11-2 against teams without a bye. The only losses were by Beaver and Woodland Hills.

Chris Harlan is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at charlan@triblive.com.

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## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL NOTEBOOK

# Similar spot for Jayhawks

BY BILL BECKNER JR.

If the basketball team could do it, so could the football team. That was Jeannette's mindset Friday night as the Jayhawks double-stamped their surprising run in the WPIAL Class A football playoffs with a second straight upset, 29-23 over rival and fifth-seeded Greensburg Central Catholic in the quarterfinals at Norwin.

Jeannette (9-3), the 13th seed, knocked off No. 4 Ne-shannock in the first round 23-7.

The Jayhawks, who hadn't played GCC in the playoffs since 2006, advance to face top-seeded Fort Cherry (12-0) in the semifinals. The game will be 7 p.m. Friday at Canon-McMillan's AHN Field at Big Mac Stadium.

Last basketball season, Jeannette took a seven-game losing streak against GCC into a PIAA 2A second-round playoff game — also at Norwin. The Jayhawks, seeded sixth out of seven WPIAL teams, proceeded to stun the WPIAL runner-up Centurions, 48-46, in overtime.

Who did they play in the quarterfinals? Fort Cherry. "It's deja vu," Jeannette basketball coach and athletic director Adrian Batts said. "It can be done. That's what I told our guys."

The football team had lost four straight to GCC but held the Centurions back to break the streak and advance to the semifinals for the first time since 2020.

"You don't get second chances in football," Jayhawks football coach Tommy Paulone said. "Our guys believed they could win."

Paulone is not a big basketball guy, but he gets the comparison. "Two different sports," he said. "It's just Jeannette kids being Jeannette kids."

"We had so many guys contribute to (Friday's) win. That is what it takes." Football players Kymon'e Brown, Noah Sunder, Jayce Powell, Markus McGowan, Xavier Odoriso-Farrow, McAlister Steele and Eli Jones were on the basketball team that lost to Fort Cherry, 70-60.

Star Fort Cherry quarterback Matt Sieg, a Penn State commit, was on that Rangers team.

### Nick of time

Jeannette junior Nick Mendoza was a key part of the Jayhawks' running game Friday, rushing 14 times for



Jeannette's Noah Sunder celebrates after dropping GCC's Jackson McMullen for a safety Friday.

a career-high 87 yards and a touchdown.

On the Jayhawks' final scoring drive, Mendoza ran left, made two defenders freeze with a fake, then ran into the end zone for a 7-yard score that helped Jeannette push its lead to 29-15 with 3 minutes, 31 seconds left.

"Since freshman year, we lost to GCC," Mendoza said. "We were happy to get a playoff rematch. We didn't want to go home with another loss to them. Everybody stepped up."

Brown said Mendoza looks like Boise State running back Ashton Jeanty.

"Put that in the paper," Brown said. "That's him."

Paulone said Mendoza has earned the carries. "We wanted to get him involved," Paulone said. "He is a perfect-attendance lifting guy. He is one of our most improved guys."

### Sieg-nificance

Jeannette will have its hands full with Fort Cherry junior quarterback and defensive back Sieg.

The 6-foot, 180-pounder leads the defending WPIAL champions in multiple ways, much like Brown does for Jeannette.

Quick and strong, Sieg also had offers from Pitt, West Virginia, Michigan State, USC and others.

He rushed 30 times for 185 yards and three touchdowns Friday in a 27-20 win over No. 9 Cornell (9-3) in another quar-

terfinal.

"I haven't watched the tape yet," Paulone said. "But any time the Big Ten (and) Penn State is interested, it's real."

For the season, Sieg is 67 of 108 passing for 1,022 yards and 19 touchdowns in nine games played.

Sieg also has 1,495 yards rushing and 23 TDs.

### Kerns healing

Franklin Regional made the WPIAL Class 5A quarterfinals without one of its top defensive players.

Senior linebacker Austin Kerns was on his way to a monster year when he was injured in a Week 7 loss at Penn-Trafford.

He already was recovering from a high ankle sprain when he rolled the same ankle, compounding the injury and causing ligament damage.

Kerns, a 6-foot, 205-pounder, recently had surgery and said it went well.

Kerns has been able to see the game from a different perspective.

"The game has sort of slowed down for me for the first time since I've been held out," he said. "I've been able to understand and study the game more. It's also allowed me to take on a coaching role in preparing some younger guys for their first varsity snaps."

Despite missing four games, Kerns was fourth on the team in tackles going into Friday night's quarterfinal at Pine-Richland.

Bill Beckner is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at bbeckner@triblive.com.

## Week 11 football leaders

PASSING	RUSHING	RECEIVING
303, Joey Felitsky, North Catholic (19 of 29)	281, Kemon Spell, McKeesport	144, Drew Cook, South Allegheny (7 rec.)
284, Marques Council, Aliquippa (16 of 34)	280, Ja'Vaughn Moore, Bethel Park	121, Brayden White, Thomas Jefferson (3 rec.)
251, Kole Olszewski, Bishop Canevin (12 of 23)	272, Nico Neal, Avonworth	107, Nick McCullough, Peters Township (4 rec.)
209, Ryan Cortes, South Allegheny (16 of 30)	269, Charlie Nigut, Elizabeth Forward	105, Noah Schaerli, Mt. Lebanon (4 rec.)
196, Tanner Pfeuffer, Bethel Park (7 of 14)	211, Tyler Eber, Thomas Jefferson	102, Jayce Powell, Jeannette (5 rec.)
195, Travis Clear, Beaver (9 of 19)	208, Logan King, Seton LaSalle	
187, Johnny Lovre, Penn-Trafford (14 of 25)		
180, Michael Pastrik, Seton LaSalle (12 of 18)		
175, Nolan DiLucia, Peters Township (10 of 17)		
165, Chris Smiley, Ellwood City (13 of 20)		
153, Nate Walker, Mars (18 of 28)		
150, Samir Crosby, Greensburg Central Catholic (8 of 18)		
144, Brady Brinkley, North Allegheny (8 of 17)		
144, Menage Lucas, Highlands (7 of 14)		
139, Pat Smith, Mt. Lebanon (9 of 16)		
137, Jaivin Peel, Western Beaver (10 of 20)		
135, Drew Ross, Freeport (9 of 19)		
133, Kymon'e Brown, Jeannette (8 of 16)		
195, Mason Dixon, Central Valley		
192, Eric Doerue, South Park		
185, Matt Sieg, Fort Cherry		
175, Donald Barksdale, Steel Valley		
170, Da'Ron Barksdale, Steel Valley		
140, Elijah Faulkner, Central Catholic		
139, Kymon'e Brown, Jeannette		
137, Gabe Jenkins, Imani Christian		
118, Pat Smith, Mt. Lebanon		

# FR comes up short at PIAAs

FR - FROM BI

Conrad Weiser battled through the feistiness and added its second goal as Barrie took a nice pass from Gavin Rapp and slotted it home at the 19:11 mark.

"We knew how strong they were up top and on the defensive back line," Panthers coach Nick White said. "We knew we were going to have to get at least one goal and possibly a couple to have a chance to win the game. We broke through a

couple of times, but that final connection to finish just wasn't there. This was my first year, but it was tough to talk to those seniors who have meant so much to the program.

"It was tough to tell our kids we played a great game, but we just came up a bit short. Give credit to Conrad Weiser — they are a tough team to play."

Said Scouts coach Derek Long: "This group has just done everything we have asked them to do this year.

They just battled and controlled the field, despite a physical contest. When you have two forwards like Abu and Gavin Rapp, it is tough to defend them. Our defense and keeper Tyler Yonavick were solid again today.

"You have to give credit to their keeper, Noah Walker — he was incredible today. The little things we did are the reason we are moving on."

Jeffrey Kauffman is a TribLive contributing writer.

## GCC volleyball makes semifinals

Greensburg Central Catholic swept District 6 champion West Branch 3-0, in the PIAA Class A girls volleyball quarterfinals Saturday in Johnstown to set up a rematch of the WPIAL finals.

The Centurions (19-3), who won by set scores of 25-9, 26-24 and 25-22 to reach the state semifinals for the first time since 2016, will meet Frazier on Tuesday at a time and

site to be determined. Greensburg Central Catholic swept Frazier, 3-0, in the WPIAL finals Nov. 2.

**Cathedral Prep 3, Southmoreland 0** — District 10 runner-up Cathedral Prep (17-5) defeated Southmoreland (17-6) in the PIAA Class 2A quarterfinals in Sharon, ending the Scotties' season. Set scores were 25-11, 25-19 and 25-15.

— TribLive

### Saturday's results

Avonworth 2, Fairview 1 (50) Cathedral Prep 5, Camp Hill Trinity 2 Northwestern Lehigh 4, Faith Christian 0 Notre Dame-Green Pond 1, Scranton Prep 0

### Semifinals

Tuesday's schedule West Chester-Rustin (20-3) vs. Strath Haven (18-4); Lower Dauphin (21-2) vs. Mars (20-3)

### Saturday's results

Beaver 3, Greencastle-Antrim 0 Big Spring 3, Berwick 0 Mars 3, Hampton 2 Pope John Paul II 3, Southern Lehigh 1

## HIGH SCHOOLS

### FIELD HOCKEY

PIAA tournament CLASS 3A Quarterfinals Friday's schedule Pine-Richland (10-1) vs. Bethel Park (11-2) at North Hills, 7 p.m.; Upper St. Clair (11-0) vs. Peters Township (10-1) at Bethel Park, 7 p.m. CLASS 4A Championship Nov. 16 schedule Thomas Jefferson (12-0) vs. McKeesport (8-4) at Norwin, 12:05 p.m. CLASS 3A Semifinals Friday's schedule Imani Christian (11-0) vs. Avonworth (9-3) at West Allegheny, 7 p.m.; Central Valley (6-5) vs. Elizabeth Forward (8-3) at Mountour, 7 p.m. CLASS 2A Semifinals Friday's schedule Seton LaSalle (10-0) vs. Steel Valley (9-3) at West Mifflin, 7 p.m.; South Park (10-1) vs. Ellwood City (10-0) at North Allegheny, 7 p.m. CLASS A Semifinals Friday's schedule Fort Cherry (12-0) vs. Jeannette (8-3) at Canon-McMillan, 7 p.m.; Clairton (12-0) vs. Bishop Canevin (9-2) at Peters Township, 7 p.m. PIAA District 8-9 subregional Championship Saturday's result Clearfield 34, University Prep 24

### Championship Nov. 16 schedule

Central Catholic (9-2) vs. North Allegheny (10-1) at Norwin, 6:05 p.m. CLASS 5A Semifinals Friday's schedule Pine-Richland (10-1) vs. Bethel Park (11-2) at North Hills, 7 p.m.; Upper St. Clair (11-0) vs. Peters Township (10-1) at Bethel Park, 7 p.m. CLASS 4A Championship Nov. 16 schedule Thomas Jefferson (12-0) vs. McKeesport (8-4) at Norwin, 12:05 p.m. CLASS 3A Semifinals Friday's schedule Imani Christian (11-0) vs. Avonworth (9-3) at West Allegheny, 7 p.m.; Central Valley (6-5) vs. Elizabeth Forward (8-3) at Mountour, 7 p.m. CLASS 2A Semifinals Friday's schedule Seton LaSalle (10-0) vs. Steel Valley (9-3) at West Mifflin, 7 p.m.; South Park (10-1) vs. Ellwood City (10-0) at North Allegheny, 7 p.m. CLASS A Semifinals Friday's schedule Fort Cherry (12-0) vs. Jeannette (8-3) at Canon-McMillan, 7 p.m.; Clairton (12-0) vs. Bishop Canevin (9-2) at Peters Township, 7 p.m. PIAA District 8-9 subregional Championship Saturday's result Clearfield 34, University Prep 24

### PIAA tournament CLASS 4A Quarterfinals Saturday's results Cumberland Valley 3, Plum 0 Great Valley 1, West Chester Henderson 0 Parkland 2, Philadelphia Northeast 1 (50) Warwick 2, Fox Chapel 1

Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Radnor (19-3) vs. Dallas (18-4-1); Conrad Weiser (23-1) vs. Moon (24-0)

### CLASS 3A Quarterfinals Saturday's results Moon 2, Alderidge 1 Dallas 2, Jim Thorpe 1 Radnor 4, Archbishop Ryan 1

Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Radnor (19-3) vs. Dallas (18-4-1); Conrad Weiser (23-1) vs. Moon (24-0)

### Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Central Bucks East 5, Archbishop Carroll 0 Conestoga 2, Seneca Valley 0 Downingtown West 2, Garnet Valley 0 Lower Merion 3, Central Dauphin 0

Semifinals Tuesday's schedule West (22-3); Conestoga (21-3) vs. Lower Merion (18-5-1)

### Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Central Bucks East 5, Archbishop Carroll 0 Conestoga 2, Seneca Valley 0 Downingtown West 2, Garnet Valley 0 Lower Merion 3, Central Dauphin 0

Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Spring-Ford 3, Parkland 0

### Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Spring-Ford 3, Parkland 0

Semifinals Tuesday's schedule Spring-Ford (20-7) vs. Central Dauphin (17-

### FOOTBALL WPIAL CLASS 6A

COLLEGE FOOTBALL ROUNDUP

Georgia Tech deals No. 4 Miami 1st loss

Cam Ward and No. 4 Miami finally ran out of second-half comebacks as Haynes King led Georgia Tech to a 28-23 win over the previously unbeaten Hurricanes on Saturday, giving the Yellow Jackets their first win over a top-five team in 15 years.

Fans rushed the field, topping both goalsposts, after the game. King ran for 93 yards with a touchdown and threw for a score. The Yellow Jackets overcame 347 passing yards and three touchdowns passes by Ward, the Heisman Trophy contender.

Miami (9-1, 5-1 ACC, No. 4 College Football Playoff) was denied its first 10-0 start since 2017. Georgia Tech (6-4, 4-3) became bowl-eligible and ended a two-game losing streak that came with King, the dual-threat quarterback, held out with a right shoulder injury.

No. 16 Mississippi 28, No. 2 Georgia 10 — Jaxson Dart threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Antwane Wells Jr. in the third quarter as Mississippi (8-2, 4-2 SEC, No. 16 CFP) earned its third consecutive win. Georgia (7-2, 5-2, No. 3 CFP) scored on a 2-yard run by Nate Frazier early in the first quarter.

No. 3 Ohio St. 45, Purdue 0 — Will Howard threw three touchdown passes and rushed for another score, and Jeremiah Smith broke the Ohio State freshman receiving record with his ninth touchdown of the season as the No. 3 Buckeyes rolled.

No. 5 Texas 49, Florida 17 — Quinn Ewers passed for 333 yards and five

touchdowns as the No. 5 Longhorns rolled over the struggling Gators.

No. 8 Indiana 20, Michigan 15 — Kurtis Rourke threw two first-half touchdown passes, and the Hoosiers defense held up long enough to earn the first 10-win season in Indiana (10-0, 7-0 Big Ten) history.

Kansas 45, No. 17 Iowa St. 36 — Devin Neal ran for 116 yards and two scores and became Kansas' all-time leader in rushing yards and rushing touchdowns in a win over Iowa State at Arrowhead Stadium.

No. 18 Army 14, North Texas 3 — Quarterback Bryson Daily ran for 153 yards and two touchdowns, and Army extended the nation's longest winning streak to 13 games with a victory over North Texas.

No. 19 Clemson 24, Virginia Tech 14 — Cade Klubnik threw three touchdowns to help Clemson beat Virginia Tech. The Tigers (7-2, 6-1) bounced back from a home loss to Louisville and remain in the ACC title race.

District Slippery Rock 38, Seton Hill 20 — Chris D'Or ran for 107 yards and a touchdown to lead No. 10 Slippery Rock in the PSAC. Brayden Long threw for 248 yards and two touchdowns for Slippery Rock (8-1, 5-1). Ky'Ron Craggette rushed for 113 yards and a touchdown for Seton Hill (3-7, 1-5).

Cal (Pa.) 28, Edinboro 14 — Davis Black threw for 183 yards and two touchdowns to D'Avoy Johnson and ran for

another score to lead Cal (8-1, 6-0) to a PSAC win.

Gannon 34, Clarion 28 — Jayden Whitaker threw for 366 yards and two touchdowns to lead Gannon (3-6, 3-3) to a PSAC win at Clarion (3-7, 1-5).

Bethany 21, Saint Vincent 13 — Brett Phillips threw for 283 yards and three touchdowns to lead Bethany (1-8, 1-8) to the PAC win at Saint Vincent (1-9, 1-9).

Carnegie Mellon 63, Allegheny 10 — Tre Vasiliadis rushed for 104 yards and a touchdown as No. 16 Carnegie Mellon (8-1, 8-1) defeated Allegheny (1-8, 1-8) in PAC play.

Grove City 30, Case Western 20 — Nico Flati rushed for 144 yards and two touchdowns to lead No. 13 Grove City (8-1, 8-1) to the PAC win against Case Western (6-3, 6-3).

Waynesburg 37, Thiel 10 — Samuel Barber threw for 220 yards and two touchdowns — both to Tyler Richmond — as Waynesburg (4-5, 4-5) defeated Thiel (2-7, 2-7) in PAC play.

Westminster 56, Geneva 7 — In PAC play, Billy Levak threw for 293 yards and four touchdowns and ran for another score as Westminster (7-2, 7-2) beat Geneva (4-5, 4-5).

Mercyhurst 66, Lincoln (Calif.) 0 — Adam Urena completed 16 of 18 passes for 215 yards and six touchdowns as Mercyhurst (3-7) downed Lincoln (Calif.) (0-7).

Jerome Mullins had two interceptions for Mercyhurst, which had seven interceptions overall.

Holstein has target on his back

Pitt passer must navigate rest of season as hunted

BY JERRY DIPAOALA

The problem with winning most of the time is that those teams are forced to take the other guy's best punch week after week.

It's like going into the woods to bag that 10-point buck no one can track down. If you're successful, it's a prize you'll talk about until your friends get sick of hearing the story.

It's a bit of the same with Pitt, quarterback Eli Holstein and the teams they have played over the previous three weeks. Coach Pat Narduzzi has talked about the different twists California, Syracuse and SMU have thrown at Pitt's redshirt freshman — variations of defensive alignments that those teams did not show until they met the Panthers.

"We try to give him more of what they don't do," the coach said last week before Pitt met Virginia on Saturday night at Acrisure Stadium. "That's the key."

"This is what they do. If they change, I think we have a good idea what they're going to change to. It sounds simple. There is a lot that goes into it. We prepared for everything on offense and defense that we possibly could."

Of course, there are a limited number of ways defenses can change their schemes. Good offenses should be able to adjust.

Especially with a path to the ACC title game suddenly open after Miami's 28-23 loss to Georgia Tech on Saturday.

"It comes down to execution," Narduzzi said. "I don't care what the defense is. We should be able to execute and throw completions and run the ball."



Pitt quarterback Eli Holstein has thrown for 17 touchdowns and six interceptions.

One of the ways defenses have tried to confuse Holstein is to drop eight players into pass routes. A quarterback only has five eligible receivers, sometimes less if the coordinator leaves one in the backfield to block.

So, it becomes a numbers game that many quarterbacks can't handle, separating good passers from great ones.

Of course, it's difficult for one player to beat good teams without help from teammates. If Holstein is able to finish this season as successfully as he started it, he needs those around him to step up.

Opponents recorded 19 sacks in Pitt's first eight games. Seven came in the past three games when the offense struggled to convert third downs (missing on 30 of 38 opportunities).

Also, there was a reason Holstein needed late splash plays to start 3-0 — Kent State, Cincinnati and West Virginia sacked the quarterback 11 times.

With Pitt passing more than running (300 aerial plays) to 237 on the ground before Saturday, there's even more pressure on the line to give solid protection.

Yet there is a problem. Senior offensive left tackle Branson Taylor, a co-captain, missed the previous two games and most of California with an injury. He is out for the season.

The coaching staff has been working feverishly to get Branson's replacement, Terrence Enos, up to speed. Enos, a 6-foot-5, 315-pound redshirt junior, made only his fourth career start Saturday against Virginia.

"We all focus on the quarterback spot, but the protection has to be better," Narduzzi said, noting that was a point of emphasis in the days leading up to the Virginia game. "We've done a detailed job there. I feel good there."

"It takes 11 guys, whether it's the depth of a (pass catcher's) route, spacing in your route concepts and making things clearer (for the quarterback). Everybody has to do their job."

There has been some speculation from outside the team that Holstein does not always see open receivers, forcing him to take a sack or make an ill-advised throw. But that can be a case of him needing more experience, along with better protection.

"It's always easy to say that when you have the clicker in your hand," Narduzzi said of postgame video study. "When you rewind it, (you say), 'Why didn't he throw it over there?' But there are people in your face, and there are big dudes over there."

"The best camera is to have one of those on the quarterback's helmet so you can see what he sees. He doesn't throw it to the guy right in front of you because he can't see him."

"He's playing his tail off. We're happy with where he is. We have to make sure all 10 guys around him are playing well, too."

Jerry DiPaola is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at jdipaola@triblive.com.

WEST VIRGINIA 31, CINCINNATI 24

Turnovers help WVU to big victory

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CINCINNATI — Nicco Marchiol threw for one touchdown and ran for another, and West Virginia's defense forced Cincinnati quarterback Brendan Sorsby into three turnovers Saturday afternoon, which led to 17 points in the Mountaineers' 31-24 win over the Bearcats.

It's the fourth straight win for the Mountaineers (5-4, 4-2 Big 12) over the Bearcats (5-4, 3-3), and they denied the Bearcats the opportunity to clinch bowl eligibility.

"We've had a couple of tough weeks. We've had some drops all bounce the wrong way. Today, it bounced our way," West Virginia coach Neal Brown said. "We got some breaks today and took advantage."

Two of the Mountaineers takeaways were scoring plays. Early in the second quarter, West Virginia free safety Anthony Wilson Jr. intercepted Sorsby and returned the ball 79 yards to get the Mountaineers on the scoreboard. The pick-6 began a run of 24 unanswered points by the Mountaineers, giving them a 24-7 lead late in the third quarter.

Cincinnati answered with two quick scores to pull within 24-21.

That's where West Virginia sealed the win with another defensive score. Tyrin Bradley

Scoreboard table showing West Virginia 31, Cincinnati 24. Includes quarter-by-quarter breakdown and individual statistics.

Individual statistics table for the WVU vs CIN game, listing passing, rushing, and receiving stats for both teams.

Jr. scooped up a backwards pass from Sorsby and raced 14 yards for the touchdown. The play was reviewed and confirmed, giving the Mountaineers a 10-point lead with 3:30 left to play.

Duquesne focuses on strong finish after win

DUQUESNE/RMU · FROM B1

Morris, 383-237, in total yards. The Dukes defense sacked RMU quarterback Anthony Chicci six times and intercepted one of his passes.

"I'm very, very proud of our team in all three phases of the way they played today," Duquesne coach Jerry Schmitt said.

After finding its way through a pair of lopsided losses against FBS programs to start the season, Duquesne (7-2, 4-0) is on a roll. Robert Morris had no answer all day for the Dukes.

"I wasn't sure if any of our guys knew about the Robert Morris rivalry," said Schmitt, who's in his 20th season as Duquesne's coach. "In the old days, you didn't have to get their attention."

Just one player remains from the previous game in 2019.

Defending champion Duquesne, new to the Stats Perform FCS Top 25, holds a one-game lead over Robert Morris (6-4, 3-1) and Central Connecticut State (5-5, 3-1) in the NEC standings.

"Obviously, today was great, but it's on to the next one," Perrantes said. "We have two more games against great opponents. We can't

overlook anybody because everybody's going to come at us with their best."

Duquesne faces Wagner, and Robert Morris visits Central Connecticut State on Saturday before the Dukes play at Central Connecticut State, and the Colonials host Stonehill on Nov. 23.

Robert Morris coach Bernard Clark said it was a one-sided affair from start to finish.

"We got outcoached. We got outplayed," he said. "That's what happens when you get outcoached and outplayed. You lose the football game. Coach Schmitt had his guys ready to play. They played outstanding. We'll give them the credit. We didn't play well at all."

Perrantes, a 6-foot, 220-pound senior who spent just one season at Rhode Island before coming to Duquesne and building a stellar resume, finished 14 for 26 for 231 yards.

Erby, in his first season with the Dukes, had six receptions for 126 yards in the series' first game since 2019 before Robert Morris joined the Big South/Ohio Valley Conference then returned to the NEC this year.

Dave Mackall is a TribLive contributing writer.

BASKETBALL

NBA RESULTS/SCHEDULE Saturday's games Utah 111, San Antonio 110 Chicago 125, Atlanta 113 Cleveland 105, Brooklyn 100 Toronto at L.A. Clippers (n)

Today's games Houston at Detroit, 3 p.m. Boston at Milwaukee, 3:30 p.m. New York at Indiana, 5 p.m. Washington at Orlando, 6 p.m. Charlotte at Philadelphia, 7 p.m. Golden State at Oklahoma City, 7 p.m. Miami at Minnesota, 7 p.m. Dallas at Denver, 8 p.m.

Division II Bethany 21, Saint Vincent 13 Carnegie Mellon 63, Allegheny 10 Grove City 30, Case Western 20 Waynesburg 37, Thiel 10 Westminster 56, Geneva 7

East Boston College 37, Syracuse 31 Bucknell 28, Fordham 27 CCSU 21, Stonehill 17 Delaware 24, Rhode Island 21 Harvard 26, Columbia 6 LIU Brooklyn 28, Sacred Heart 7 Lafayette 21, Colgate 20 Lehigh 10, Holy Cross 7 Maine 38, Bryant 26 Morgan St. 36, Delaware St. 28 New Hampshire 33, Monmouth (NJ) 20 Penn 67, Cornell 49 Rutgers 26, Minnesota 19 SC State 38, Howard 14 Stony Brook 24, Albany (NY) 6 Towson 27, Hampton 10 Villanova 31, NC A&T 3 Yale 56, Brown 34

South Abilene Christian 35, Austin Peay 34 Alcorn St. 42, Texas Southern 21 Chattanooga 31, The Citadel 7 Clemson 24, Virginia Tech 14 Davidson 31, Morehead St. 14 Duke 29, NC State 19 E. Kentucky 31, Cent. Arkansas 24 ETSU 24, W. Carolina 21 Elon 40, William & Mary 36 Gardner-Webb 31, E. Illinois 28 Georgia Tech 28, Miami 23 Grambling St. 24, Alabama St. 23 Jackson St. 51, MVSU 14 Jacksonville St. 44, Louisiana Tech 37 (OT) James Madison 38, Georgia 17 Liberty 37, Middle Tennessee 17 Louisiana-Lafayette 55, Arkansas St. 19 Marist 40, Stetson 31

Midwest Dayton 71, Northwestern 66 Minnesota 68, Omaha 6 La Salle 61, Lafayette 60 Le Moyne 107, SUNY-IT 73 Loyola (Md.) 83, Lancaster Bible 42 Loyola (E.) 89, St. Joseph 96, Nittany Lions 77 Merrimack 65, Vermont 51 Providence 76, Stonehill 49 Toledo 90, Marshall 80

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Baylor 72, Arkansas 67 Florida St. 73, Rice 65 West Arizona 102, Old Dominion 44 Hawaii 96, Life Pacific 61 Memphis 80, UNLV 74

Football Saturday's Division I FCS Duquesne 31, Robert Morris 6 Mercyhurst 66, Lincoln (Calif.) 0

Division II Cal (Pa.) 28, Edinboro 14 Gannon 34, Clarion 28 Uconn 31, West Georgia 21 Slippery Rock 38, Seton Hill 20

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Table with columns: Name, Points, Rebounds, Assists, Steals, Blocks, Minutes. Includes players like Max Greyserman, Joe Highsmith, Ben Griffin, etc.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Includes Nashville, Pacific Division, Vegas, Los Angeles, etc.

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# Reddick gets assist from owner Jordan

### NBA legend hopes driver can deliver title in today's NASCAR championship

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Tyler Reddick needs no pep talk or motivation when it comes to winning his first Cup Series title.

He drives for Michael Jordan, after all, and the NBA Hall of Famer collected six championships in his unwavering desire for excellence at all times. Now in his fourth year of team ownership, Jordan has a shot at winning a NASCAR championship Sunday with Reddick in the winner-take-all season finale at Phoenix Raceway.

Three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin, who started the team with Jordan in 2021 and then brought Reddick to the lineup in 2022, said Jordan really only has spoken up once in a team briefing last year to emphasize how champions operate.

"I think there has been one specific competition meeting that he said he wanted to participate in. He listened to it and listened to it, and at the end, he gave his opinion on what he heard, and he didn't like what he heard and he gave some pointed remarks on what championship teams sound like and what winning teams sound like and how we need to change the way we are communicating and the way we are shifting blame all over the place," Hamlin said. "That was kind of a pivotal moment for our team and our drivers to hear and taking responsibility for each person's shortcomings and how you are going to get better, and that was a big moment in shifting our team's mentality."

But it's only because Jordan cares so desperately about both winning and his new venture as a NASCAR team owner. He's leading a two-team federal antitrust lawsuit against NASCAR and chairman Jim France over the current revenue-sharing model. "The racing side of it brings out more emotion and passion than I've seen outside of his own career in sport," Hamlin said. "I've seen him on golf courses, I've seen him play cards, things like that — I've seen all of that. But nothing matches the emotion that winning a NASCAR race has shown in him."

"I think he's spoken quite a bit about how this fills his cup — this fills his competition cup that he has been missing for such a long time. That's good for everyone and, certainly, great for our team to have Michael support them the way that he has."

Reddick will race in his first championship four Sunday

## TODAY'S LINEUP

- NASCAR CHAMPIONSHIP  
At Phoenix Raceway, Avondale, Ariz.  
Lap length: 1.00 miles  
(Car number in parentheses)
- (19) Martin Truex Jr, Toyota, 134.741 mph.
  - (22) Joey Logano, Ford, 134.690.
  - (1) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 134.268.
  - (5) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 134.208.
  - (9) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 134.228.
  - (54) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 134.273.
  - (20) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 133.373.
  - (24) William Byron, Chevrolet, 134.218.
  - (21) Harrison Burton, Ford, 132.188.
  - (45) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, 134.118.
  - (2) Austin Cindric, Ford, 134.590.
  - (14) Chase Briscoe, Ford, 134.635.
  - (7) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, 134.554.
  - (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 134.605.
  - (77) Carson Hocevar, Chevrolet, 134.389.
  - (48) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 134.378.
  - (12) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 134.263.
  - (42) John H. Nemechek, Toyota, 134.078.
  - (43) Erik Jones, Toyota, 133.834.
  - (51) Corey LaJoie, Ford, 134.068.
  - (10) Noah Gragson, Ford, 133.690.
  - (31) Daniel Hemric, Chevrolet, 133.909.
  - (84) Jimmie Johnson, Toyota, 133.531.
  - (17) Chris Buescher, Ford, 133.740.
  - (8) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 133.492.
  - (16) Derek Kraus, Chevrolet, 133.605.
  - (6) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 133.190.
  - (71) Zane Smith, Chevrolet, 133.531.
  - (23) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 132.690.
  - (47) Ricky Stenhouse Jr, Chevrolet, 133.161.
  - (15) Kaz Grala, Ford, 132.587.
  - (38) Todd Gilliland, Ford, 132.251.
  - (41) Ryan Preece, Ford, 132.528.
  - (99) Daniel Suárez, Chevrolet, 131.805.
  - (34) Michael McDowell, Ford, 132.086.
  - (3) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 130.586.
  - (44) JJ Yeley, Chevrolet, 129.627.
  - (66) Chad Finchum, Ford, 127.895.
  - (4) Josh Berry, Ford, .000.
  - (50) Jeb Burton, Chevrolet, .000.

against reigning NASCAR champion Ryan Blaney, two-time NASCAR champion Joey Logano and William Byron, who is making his second consecutive appearance in the title race. The crown will go to the driver who finishes the highest among the championship four.

On media day this week, Reddick seemed to be the most tense of the four contenders. It didn't help when he was the slowest of the championship four in Friday practice, and then he qualified 10th Saturday — only higher than contender Blaney, who qualified 17th. "I know it's championship weekend — I don't know what the right word is — I'd say I'm calm, focused. There's a lot on the line certainly," said Reddick, who had yet to receive an expected pep talk from Jordan. "I know we'll catch up between now and when we strap in the car."

His tone was the opposite of Team Penske teammates Blaney and Logano, who have a shot at giving team owner Roger Penske a third consecutive Cup championship. Penske is rolling into Phoenix fresh off last weekend's sports car World Endurance Championship and another sports car title in IMSA.

Blaney is trying to become the first driver to win back-to-back titles since Jimmie Johnson won five straight from 2006 through 2010, and Logano is trying to become the only active three-time Cup champion in NASCAR.

# Bobby Allison dies at 86

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bobby Allison, founder of racing's "Alabama Gang" and a NASCAR Hall of Famer, died Saturday. He was 86.

NASCAR released a statement from Allison's family that said he died at home in Mooresville, N.C. A cause of death wasn't given, but Allison had been in declining health for years.

Allison moved to fourth on NASCAR's Cup Series victory list last month when chairman Jim France recognized him as the winner of the Meyers Brothers Memorial at Bowman Gray Stadium in North Carolina in 1971. The sanctioning body updated its record books to reflect the decision, giving Allison 85 wins and moving him out of a tie with Darrell Waltrip.

France and longtime NASCAR executive Mike Helton presented Allison with a plaque commemorating the victory. With it, Allison trails only fellow Hall of Famers Richard Petty (200), David Pearson (105) and Jeff Gordon (93) in

Cup wins. Allison was inducted into NASCAR's second Hall of Fame class, in 2011. He was the 1983 NASCAR champion, finished second in the series title race five times and was a three-time winner of the Daytona 500.

"Bobby was the ultimate fan's driver," Allison's family said in a statement. "He thoroughly enjoyed spending time with his fans and would stop to sign autographs and have conversations with them everywhere he went. He was a dedicated family man and friend, and a devout Catholic."

He helped put NASCAR on the map with more than his driving. His infamous fight with Cale Yarborough in the closing laps of the 1979 Daytona 500 served as one of the sport's defining moments.

"Cale went to beating on my fist with his nose," Allison has said repeatedly, often using that phrase to describe the fight. "Cale understands like I do that it really was a benefit to the interest of racing. It proves that we were sincere."

# Neck guards yet to catch on

### NHL doesn't require players to wear protection despite Johnson's death

BY SETH RORABAUGH

Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Marcus Pettersson has warm memories of Adam Johnson.

One in particular stands out. Johnson's first and only NHL goal.

During a 7-4 road win by the Penguins against the Minnesota Wild on Oct. 12, 2019, Johnson, a speedy forward who grew up in Hibbing, Minn., scored on a rebound and it felt as if that entire town was present celebrating based on the eruption of cheers at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn.

"It was great being there for his first goal," Pettersson said. "Everybody was so happy for him. He was a guy that always came in with a smile. Everybody roots for a guy like that. Just a joyful (person) in the locker room. Always smiling. It was a great night to see. ... How loud it was. I was so happy for him."

Like just about anyone who crossed paths with Johnson, Pettersson was heartbroken over his former teammate's shocking death just over a year ago.

While playing for the Nottingham Panthers of the United Kingdom's Elite Ice Hockey League on Oct. 28, 2023, Johnson was struck on the neck by an opponent's skate in a catastrophically fatal fashion. He was 29.

In the days following Johnson's death, various leagues at various levels of the sport around the world made neck guards and other cut-resistant equipment mandatory.

To date, the NHL does not as all rule changes largely require approval from the NHL Players Association.

Only a handful of Penguins players utilize neck guards.

"I'd like to wear one," Penguins forward Lars Eller said. "But I haven't found one yet that's comfortable, that doesn't bother my performance."

Eller's sentiment on the choices available appears to be a common theme among his peers. "It's more the (options) that are out there are maybe not comfortable," Pettersson said. "I know it's probably a bad thing to say, but that's I think what guys are used to. You see (Penguins forward Bryan Rust) wear it, and kudos to him for wearing it. I tried it out a couple of times. I might try the undershirt that has it (built in)."

Penguins defenseman Ryan Graves adopted neck protection in the immediate aftermath of



Defenseman Ryan Graves is one of the few Penguins who wears neck protection. "I guess it's one of those things you don't need it until you need it," he said.

## Jarry recalled

The Pittsburgh Penguins recalled goaltender Tristan Jarry from a conditioning assignment with Wilkes-Barre/Scranton of the American Hockey League on Saturday.

Initially deployed to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton on Oct. 26, Jarry appeared in five AHL games during the assignment and posted a 4-1-0 record, a 2.16 goals-against average and a .926 save percentage.

Also Saturday, the Penguins assigned forward Matt Nieto to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton for conditioning purposes.

— Seth Rorabaugh

Johnson's death. "I guess it's one of those things you don't need it until you need it," Graves said. "Is it the most comfortable thing in the world? No. But if that was to happen (to me), I'd probably be kicking myself. It really doesn't bother me. It's not like I'm the most stylish guy out there to start with."

"I got cut on the chin a few years ago. That's pretty close. It can definitely happen. It's just one of those things that I (asked), 'Why am I not?'"

While no hard figures exist, the vast majority of NHLers do not wear neck protection. Forward Jakob Lauko is the only member of the Wild who employs one.

As a member of the Boston Bruins last season, Lauko took a skate to the face near his left eye four days before Johnson's death.

"A few days after the (tragedy) with Adam happened, I just realized I didn't want to run the risk," Lauko said. "I was pretty close to something very bad. Just seeing what happened in England, I just didn't want to risk it."

Lauko wears an undershirt that has a neck guard built into the

collar. Other neck guards are worn freely, almost like a bandana with Velcro.

"For pro players, it's maybe a little bit uncharted territory," Lauko said. "There's not many players who wear those. It's a little bit uncharted. But there's more options now. ... Hopefully, it's going to get better and more players try (neck guards)."

The options and the rules regarding them are each a work in progress.

"There's been strides taken there as far as availability and access to stuff," Penguins forward Sidney Crosby said. "And probably just awareness. There probably was always access. It was probably the awareness that has obviously grown because of what happened."

The Penguins mandated all players with their minor-league affiliates — the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins of the American Hockey League and Wheeling Nailers of the ECHL — wear protection for the neck and wrists in the aftermath of Johnson's death.

The NHL doesn't have a history of acting swiftly with regard to safety in the aftermath of tragedy. Most famously, the league ushered in mandatory use of helmets in 1979 following the death of Minnesota North Stars forward Bill Masterton in 1968. And that rule was given "grandfather" status, allowing players who were in the NHL before 1979 to continue to skate sans helmets.

A similarly grandfathered rule currently exists with a handful of players who don't wear visors after the NHL mandated their use in 2013.

Something similar may happen with neck protection.

"You could grandfather it, like you did with visors," Eller said. "I think that's the way to go. Any life lost to that sort of tragedy is one life too many. There needs to be better options, choices. At some point, it should probably be mandated."

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## IN BRIEF

# Dak to see specialist before deciding on surgery

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott is seeking another opinion while still hoping to avoid season-ending surgery on his torn hamstring, according to multiple reports.

Prescott plans to see a specialist Monday because a decision on surgery hasn't been made. Cooper Rush will start in place of Prescott on Sunday against NFC East rival Philadelphia (6-2).

• San Francisco 49ers star defensive end Nick Bosa was fined by the NFL for wearing a hat with a pro-Donald Trump message during a post-game television interview.

In addition, the 49ers took running back Christian McCaffrey off injured reserve and placed him on the 53-man roster. McCaffrey will play Sunday for the first time this season when the 49ers visit the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

• The New Orleans Saints placed

top receiver Chris Olave on injured reserve after he suffered two concussions in three weeks.

• The Houston Texans activated wide receiver Nico Collins (hamstring) from injured reserve, but he remains questionable for Sunday night's game against the Detroit Lions.

• Running back Gus Edwards was activated off injured reserve by the Los Angeles Chargers.

## Pro basketball

Kevin Durant is out for at least two weeks with a left calf strain, putting a damper on a hot start to the season for the Phoenix Suns. The Suns made the announcement a night after the Suns beat the Mavericks, 114-113, for their seventh straight victory and eighth in nine games this season.

## Baseball

Japanese ace Roki Sasaki will be available to MLB teams this off-season. The Chiba Lotte Marines

announced they have chosen to start the process of moving the pitcher to a big-league club in North America via the posting system.

Sasaki, who turned 23 this month, is expected to become one of the most sought-after pitchers on the open market. The right-hander went 10-5 with a 2.35 ERA in 18 games this year, striking out 129 hitters in 111 innings.

## Golf

Rory McIlroy's charge at the Abu Dhabi Championship faltered when he found water off his drive and made double bogey on the last hole, leaving him five shots off the lead held by Paul Waring heading into the final round.

## Tennis

Coco Gauff won the WTA Finals for the first time by rallying to beat Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2), in the final.

## SPORTS BROADCASTS

### Auto racing

NASCAR CUP SERIES  
3 p.m. Championship, Phoenix Raceway. NBC

### Basketball

COLLEGE MEN  
1 p.m. Michigan vs. Wake Forest, Greensboro, N.C. ESPN2  
1 p.m. Duke at Maryland. FS1  
5 p.m. Arizona St. at Gonzaga. ESPN  
5 p.m. Fairleigh Dickinson at Creighton. FS1

COLLEGE WOMEN  
1 p.m. Duke at Maryland. FS1  
1 p.m. Duquesne at Penn State. 104.7 FM, 970 AM, 98.7 FM, 730 AM, Penn State Radio Network  
3 p.m. NC State vs. South Carolina, Charlotte, N.C. ESPN  
3 p.m. Gonzaga at Stanford. ESPN2  
5:30 p.m. Virginia Tech vs. Iowa, Charlotte, N.C. ESPN2

7 p.m. Notre Dame at Purdue. FS1  
8 p.m. Marquette at Illinois. BTN

10 p.m. Baylor at Oregon. BTN

### Beach volleyball

AVP  
6 p.m. Championship. CBSSN

### Field hockey

COLLEGE  
11 a.m. Big Ten Tournament: Michigan vs. Northwestern, championship. BTN

### Figure skating

ISU  
Noon The 2024 NHK Trophy, Tokyo. NBC

### Football

NFL  
9:30 a.m. N.Y. Giants vs. Carolina, Munich. NFLN

1 p.m. Steelers at Washington. CBS/102.5 FM, WBGG 970 AM, Steelers Nation Radio

1 p.m. San Francisco at Tampa Bay. WWCP-8 Fox

4:05 p.m. Tennessee at L.A. Chargers. WPGH-53 Fox

4:25 p.m. Philadelphia at Dallas. CBS

8:20 p.m. Detroit at Houston. NBC, PEACOCK

### Golf

CHAMPIONS TOUR  
5 p.m. The Charles Schwab Cup championship final round. GOLF

PGA TOUR  
2 p.m. The World Wide Technology championship final round. GOLF

### Hockey

AHL  
4 p.m. Milwaukee at Chicago. NHLN

WOMEN'S  
7 p.m. Rivalry Series: U.S. vs. Canada. NHLN

### Horse racing

THOROUGHBRED  
Noon America's Day at the Races. FS2

### Soccer

COLLEGE MEN  
2 p.m. ACC Tournament: Stanford at Clemson, quarterfinal. ACCN

3 p.m. Big Ten Tournament: Michigan vs. UCLA, semifinal. BTN

4 p.m. ACC Tournament: Wake Forest at SMU, quarterfinal. ACCN

5:30 p.m. Big Ten Tournament, Michigan St. vs. Ohio St., semifinal. BTN

6 p.m. ACC Tournament: California at Duke, quarterfinal. ACCN

8 p.m. ACC Tournament: Virginia at Pitt. ACCN

11 a.m. Big East Tournament: UConn vs. Xavier, championship. FS1

Noon ACC Tournament: North Carolina vs. Florida St., championship. ESPN

12:30 p.m. Patriot League Tournament: Boston U. vs. Bucknell, championship. CBSN

1 p.m. Big Ten Tournament: Rutgers vs. UCLA, championship. BTN

2 p.m. American Athletic Tournament: East Carolina vs. Memphis, championship. ESPN

2:30 p.m. SEC Tournament: South Carolina vs. Texas, championship. SECN

### Premier League

9 a.m. Ipswich Town at Tottenham Hotspur. USA

11:30 a.m. Arsenal at Chelsea. USA

NWSL  
12:30 p.m. Playoffs: Bay at Washington, quarterfinal. ABC

3 p.m. Playoffs: Portland at NJ/NY, quarterfinal. ABC

### Tennis

ATP  
5:30 a.m. ATP finals Doubles Round Robin. Tennis

8 a.m. ATP finals Singles Round Robin. Tennis

Noon ATP finals Doubles Round Robin. Tennis

2:30 p.m. ATP finals Singles Round R. Tennis

### Volleyball

COLLEGE WOMEN  
Noon Wake Forest at Miami. ACCN

1 p.m. Texas A&M at Tennessee. ESPN

3 p.m. Creighton at Marquette. FS1  
4:30 p.m. LSU at Kentucky. SECN  
6:30 p.m. South Carolina at Missouri. SECN