

# Akron Beacon Journal

## FOOTBALL

# Akron City Series football 5 things to know from media day



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### Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

Firestone and Ellet welcome new coaches RayShaun Nevins and Bob Sax, respectively.

East features returning senior players Marlin Engram Jr. and Terrell Wharton Jr.

Buchtel coach Bryan Williams, East coach Marques Hayes and Garfield coach Kemp Boyd emphasize leadership and post-football life skills.

Garfield showcases senior players Ziiyahn Blair and Jamir Jenkins, who have been with the program for five years.

North focuses on progress and team cohesion under coach DeMonte Powell.

Akron Public Schools hosted its annual City Series Football Media Day July 29 at the Akron Education Association building.

Firestone (5-6, 4-1) and East (6-5, 4-1) were City Series co-champions last year, with the Falcons beating the Dragons.

Firestone also defeated Buchtel, Ellet and North and lost to Garfield last season. East topped Buchtel, Ellet, Garfield and North.

The Falcons, the Dragons and the Griffins (4-7, 3-2) were playoff participants in Division II, Division III and Division IV, respectively, in 2024.

APS Director of Athletics Joe Vassalotti and AEA President Patricia Shipe were among the speakers at the luncheon.

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Here are five things to know from the 2024 event, which featured six head coaches and 12 players:

## **Akron Firestone and Akron Ellet feature new football coaches**

RayShaun Nevins is the new coach at Firestone and Bob Sax has returned to the City Series as Ellet's coach. Both Nevins (2013) and Sax (1988) are Garfield graduates.

"I was in this room as a senior," Nevins said as he stood between Firestone seniors Chanse Bennett and Mekhi Tatum. "I am glad to be here, I am glad to be in this position and I am glad to be coaching alongside these men."

Nevins also talked about his players having integrity, accountability and discipline.

That sentiment was echoed by all six coaches.

Nevins replaces his uncle, Eric Mitchell, who retired from education.

Sax, who was Garfield's coach from 2002-2016, replaces John Daraio, the new Woodridge football coach.

"I am excited to be at Ellet," Sax said as he was flanked by Ellet seniors Brandon Knowles and Terrance Parker. "... I am excited to get back into it. These guys have been great leaders for us. I really want to turn this thing around. That is my biggest goal."

Sax added another objective is "to enjoy this and have fun with the kids."

"I love the Garfield Golden Rams, just not the week I am going to play you," he said.

## **Marlin Engram Jr. and Terrell Wharton Jr. lead Akron East into football season**

East is once again led by coach Marques Hayes, who brought seniors Marlin Engram Jr. and Terrell Wharton Jr. to the luncheon.

"My 'why' is helping out these youth," Hayes said. "... We are excited going into the season. We have a great group of guys."

## **Jordan Holloway and Daurean Johnson guide Akron Buchtel into football season**

Buchtel coach Bryan Williams said he is stressing leadership with his players, including luncheon attendees Jordan Holloway and Daurean Johnson. Both are seniors.

Williams said he also wants to make sure his players are ready for life after football.

"One thing about it is once the air leaves the ball, what is your second act?" he said.

## **Akron Garfield football features Ziiyahn Blair and Jamir Jenkins**

Garfield seniors Ziiyahn Blair and Jamir Jenkins attended the luncheon and continue to make coach Kemp Boyd smile.

"I am really excited about these two young men," Boyd said. "They have been with me for five years. They played in our middle school program. They stayed consistent with the process.

"... We are excited about this year, and we get to play what we think is the best game that God created — football."

## **Akron North continues to rebuild in football**

North was represented at the luncheon by coach DeMonte Powell and seniors LaDanian Hughes and Ben Sullivan. All three said they are ready to compete.

"The biggest thing for us is chasing progress, but I think this team is the most well put-together team since I have been here," Powell said.

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