














2021 – 5A State Runner Up

Schedule				
Date	Opponent(s)	Result	Caption	Location
8/27/21	vs  Waukee	W 49-0		Ankeny City Stadium
9/3/21	vs  Ankeny Centennial	L 7-14		Ankeny City Stadium
9/10/21	@  Dowling Catholic	W 27-13		Valley Stadium
9/17/21	vs  Southeast Polk	W 21-7	Homecoming	Ankeny City Stadium
9/24/21	vs  Des Moines Roosevelt	W 49-6		Ankeny City Stadium
10/1/21	@  Valley	L 35-38	Homecoming	Valley Stadium
10/8/21	vs  Des Moines North	W 56-7		Ankeny City Stadium
10/15/21	vs  Waukee Northwest	W 48-7	Senior Night	Northwest High School
10/22/21	vs  Des Moines Lincoln	W 56-0		Ankeny City Stadium
10/29/21	vs  Waukee Northwest	W 42-3	5A - First Round	Ankeny City Stadium
11/5/21	vs  Prairie	W 37-7	5A- Quarterfinals	Cedar Rapids Prairie High School
11/12/21	vs  Valley	W 35-13	5A - State	UNI-Dome
11/19/21	vs  Southeast Polk	L 7-24	5A - State	UNI-Dome

2022-01-09 - [Senior Slide Show](#)

2021-01-03 - [IFCA Academic All State](#) Article and [the Awards List](#)

- Braden Simonsen
- Jackson Penningroth
- Nick Eaton
- Max Pelham
- Ethan Thomas

- Antonio Espino
- Sean Gavin
- Brady McCullough

2021-11-23 - Seven Ankeny players named to Class 5A all-state first team by IPSWA

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

All-state honors from the Iowa Print Sports Writers Association

Class 5A First Team

- Running back Colin Kadolph
- Receiver Brady McCullough
- Offensive lineman Antonio Espino
- Kicker Max Pelham
- Defensive lineman Braden Simonsen
- Linebacker Tamden Webb-Tate
- Defensive back Ryan Crandall

Class 5A Second Team

- Linebackers Sean Gavin
- Linebacker Jackson Penningroth
- Quarterback JJ Kohl
- Offensive lineman Joe Kingston
- Defensive back Will Cornwell

Class 5A Third Team

- Offensive Lineman Drew Monsivais

=====

2021-11-22 - [Ankeny Fanatic Prep of the Week: Tamden Webb-Tate, Ankeny football](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-21 - [Kadolph, Webb-Tate, Porter earn repeat all-district first-team honors](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

1st Team All District :

Senior running back Colin Kadolph and senior linebacker Tamden Webb-Tate of Ankeny both earned first-team honors for the second straight year.

Junior quarterback JJ Kohl was among Ankeny's other first-team picks. He was joined on the squad by five other seniors—receiver Brady McCullough, offensive lineman Antonio Espino, defensive lineman Braden Simonsen, linebacker Sean Gavin and defensive back Ryan Crandall.

2nd Team All District :

Junior quarterback JJ Kohl was among Ankeny's other first-team picks. He was joined on the squad by five other seniors—receiver Brady McCullough, offensive lineman

Antonio Espino, defensive lineman Braden Simonsen, linebacker Sean Gavin and defensive back Ryan Crandall.

All District Honorable Mention:

Senior kicker Max Pelham and junior defensive lineman Diego Jackson

=====

2021-11-20 - [‘They played better than us on this night’: Hawks fall short in title game rematch](#)

by Rob Gray, Ankeny Fanatic

Article...

It hurts to watch.

You’re helpless.

The game is essentially decided and the opposing team is flexing and raising its arms on the sideline with 3-plus minutes left. That’s where Ankeny’s football players found themselves late in Friday night’s 24-7 rematch loss to Southeast Polk in the Class 5A championship game and — you know — that stings.

“That’s a good team,” said Hawks linebacker Sean Gavin, who had 1.5 sacks in the defeat. “Gotta give it to them. They played better than us on this night.”

Ankeny (10-3) was poised to win its first back-to-back state titles in school history, but the Rams (12-1) made all the key plays down the stretch en route to their team's first state football championship at any level.

"We're super excited," said Southeast Polk star Xavier Nwankpa, who stewed over a 42-14 loss to the Hawks in last season's Class 4A title game at the UNI-Dome. "This was our year. We had a bunch of seniors back, a bunch of good leaders. We were excited. ... We bought in all together and just got after it."

It was not total domination, despite what the final score indicates.

The Rams led 10-7 at halftime and the teams' total offense was separated by a mere one yard. Southeast Polk had bolted to a 10-0 lead early before Ankeny battled back with a touchdown drive capped by Colin Kadolph's 31-yard run to the end zone.

Order had seemingly been restored for the Maroon and Gold faithful. The Hawks headed to the halftime locker room knowing they'd get the ball to start the second half, but a three-and-out offensive series after the break helped set the tone for what would come.

"We just struggled getting first downs on offense the whole night and that was our goal the whole night — just getting first downs and marching down the field to score," said Ankeny standout receiver Brady McCullough, who totaled 73 of his game-high 87 receiving yards in the first half. "They did a lot of different things. They brought that outside linebacker a lot and that kind of affected our run game a lot because we're just more a spread out offense, but there's a lot of things I wish I could have done and our whole team could have done differently on the offensive side of the ball, but they just had a better game than us. They took advantage of our mistakes."

Even the successes.

When Ankeny punter Max Pelham skillfully dropped a kick at the Southeast Polk 1-yard line early in the second half, it popped immediately to the sideline.

The Hawks had won the field position battle — or so it seemed. The Rams had not successfully converted a third down until that drive, but they then did it four times, always by a yard or two.

Almost 10 minutes later, Southeast Polk running back Abu Sama plunged into the end zone on a 3-yard run and the Hawks were on their heels, down two scores, early in the fourth quarter. “It takes a mental toll,” said Ankeny senior defensive lineman Braden Simonsen. “They’re a really good team. They’ve got really good athletes who are gonna make good plays at times that they needed. They just made more of those than us. We didn’t make the plays we needed to and that’s why we lost.”

Again, that stings. Obviously. But give it up for Southeast Polk, which wilted down the stretch in last season’s title game and rose up instead this time around.

“Two physical teams,” said Rams coach Brad Zelenovich, who coached at Ankeny for two seasons before leaving in 2015 to take over the Southeast Polk program. “Elite speed on both sides. That’s why you lift all those weights in the summer, that’s why you do all the things you do. ... (That 99-yard drive), that kind of broke their back a little bit and we executed and got some third downs and fourth downs. Credit to our kids.”

Still, before what will undoubtedly (and deservedly) go down in Southeast Polk lore as “the drive,” it’s a stop that may have presaged Friday’s result.

Ankeny faced a fourth-and-one at the Rams’ 6-yard line early in the second quarter. A promising drive that included a 37-yard connection from quarterback JJ Kohl to McCullough had set the stage for a game-changing moment.

That came — but in Southeast Polk’s favor. The Rams’ Gavin McCrory came unimpeded from the edge to stop Kadolph short of a first down.

If Ankeny gets that first down, the game may have unfolded differently. But the key tackle by McCrory made that a moot possibility.

“I think I messed up when we went for that fourth-down play,” Hawks coach Rick Nelson said after commending his team’s effort. “I should have had somebody cover the outside and that kid came off the edge and smacked us. So shame on me. I know better than that. That was huge for momentum. We could have had a chance to be (up) 14-10 and maybe — and then the long drive they had where they started at the one. Took about 10 minutes off the clock. I think our defense was just spent. They made first down after first down after first down. I really like our kids. We have great kids. I know at times it probably didn’t look great, but I know they were fighting. It was just unfortunate. we just couldn’t get any momentum going. I think if we could have made that first down — I go back to that. I’m just mad at myself. I just think that was a huge turning point in the game.”

It hurts to be mad. To have any ifs, ands or buts. But sometimes the other team just makes the plays you couldn't. Games can be like that — and despite Friday's outcome, the players who basked in championship glory know the ones who endured defeat were just like them a year ago. "We grew up with some of those guys," Nwankpa said. "We hang out on the weekends and stuff, so getting to know them, and being (how) that last game ended like it did last year and finishing like it did this year, that's just nothing else you could ask for."

=====

******2021-11-19 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs SEP -
Championship Game**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

******2021-11-19 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs SEP
Student Send Off - On to the Ship First Half
Second Half**

**by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny
Football Committee**

=====

*******2021-11-19 - PHOTOS -**

Ankeny vs. Southeast Polk in the Class 5A state football championship

by Des Moines Register

=====

2021-11-19 - Southeast Polk football claims first state title with Class 5A championship win over Ankeny

by Dargan Southard, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-11-19 - Back-to-back crowns?: Ankeny Fanatic's prediction for the Class 5A title game

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

The Article ...

If you missed this week's Ankeny Fanatic podcast sponsored by Coldwell Banker Mid-America, check it out. We broke down Friday night's Class 5A championship game with seven different guests.

So will Ankeny capture its second straight title and the fourth in school history? Or will Southeast Polk claim its first championship?

The Hawks have won the last three meetings against Southeast Polk by a combined score of 87-35, including a 42-14 thumping in last year's Class 4A title game. The Rams have not scored more than 14 points against Ankeny since 2013, which is the last time they defeated the Hawks.

Back then, Southeast Polk coach Brad Zelenovich was in his first season at Ankeny after the split into two high schools.

Now, Zelenovich has built a powerhouse program in Pleasant Hill, but he's still seeking his first win against his former team. He is 0-4 against Ankeny coach Rick Nelson, who guided the Hawks to a 30-10 victory in 2015 and a 24-14 win in the first round of the 2019 playoffs. Earlier this season, Ankeny posted a 21-7 triumph over the Rams.

Southeast Polk's star safety, Xavier Nwankpa, did not play in the game on Sept. 17. He is now healthy and could make a huge difference all over the field at the UNI-Dome—on defense, offense and on special teams. Widely considered to be the state's best player, Nwankpa is capable of making a game-winning play, like he did in the season opener when he caught a Hail Mary to beat Dowling Catholic.

But Ankeny is clicking on all cylinders and has to be confident after dominating this series in recent years.

The Hawks can pound away at Southeast Polk's defense with a steady diet of Colin Kadolph runs, and that will set up some timely JJ Kohl-to-Brady McCullough passes. I don't think the Rams can consistently stop Ankeny's explosive offensive attack.

Conversely, the Rams will need to score more than 14 points in order to win. They haven't been able to do that for a long time, but a healthy Nwankpa does make them more dangerous and could open up the ground game for running backs Titus Christiansen and Abu Sama. I do think Southeast Polk will be able to move the ball, but finishing drives against Ankeny's aggressive defense will be a challenge.

The Hawks forced four turnovers in last year's title game, and I wouldn't expect a repeat of that. But I do think one or two turnovers could decide the game. It usually does.

I've thought all season long that Ankeny at its best is the best team in the state. If the Hawks show up and play their "A" game, they're going to defend their title. They just have to avoid the offensive struggles they had against Ankeny Centennial and the defensive breakdowns they had in the first meeting against Valley.

Southeast Polk is good enough to dethrone Ankeny, but I think the Rams will need a big play from Nwankpa—either a pick six or a kick return for a touchdown—in order to pull off the win. However, the Hawks are planning to kick the ball away from Nwankpa, and Kohl has thrown only three interceptions all season.

Prediction: Ankeny 27, Southeast Polk 21.

=====

2021-11-18 - PODCAST - [Ankeny Fanatic Podcast: Episode 161](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

Assistant coaches Adam Booth and Jeff Bauer along with seniors Brady McCullough and Will Cornwell of the Ankeny football team joined head coaches Brad Zelenovich of Southeast Polk and Tom Wilson of Dowling Catholic and Dome Dynasty's Dave Bingham as the guests on the latest edition of the Ankeny Fanatic weekly podcast sponsored by Coldwell Banker Mid-America.

=====

2021-11-16 -

[Breaking down Iowa high school football's Class 5A state championship between Ankeny and Southeast Polk](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

Article...

When [Southeast Polk](#) and Ankeny set foot on the UNI-Dome carpet on Friday night, it will have been 364 days since [they met in the same spot and played](#) for Iowa's large-class state championship game.

We figured Southeast Polk and [Ankeny](#) would again be contenders in Iowa's newly formed Class 5A, but we also needed to see them navigate the field to reach the title game first.

This year was unlike any in recent memory in Iowa's largest class of [high school football](#). A sense of parity that had been lost with Dowling Catholic's state championship streak made itself known fairly quickly this fall.

- Ankeny beat Southeast Polk and Dowling, but lost to Ankeny Centennial and West Des Moines Valley.
- Valley beat Ankeny (then lost to Ankeny) as well as Urbandale, but lost to Dowling.
- Dowling lost to Iowa City High but beat Waukee Northwest, which beat Urbandale, which beat Centennial.
- Southeast Polk beat everybody but Ankeny.

It made the season very entertaining. Lots of teams had a case as a top contender every week.

But there was always something about Ankeny and Southeast Polk that made them stand out from the rest.

They both have top-tier quarterbacks. They both have speedy running backs. They both have talented receivers, depth and versatility on defense, and coaches who have guided them to the season's biggest stage.

So it's really no surprise that the Hawks and Rams [are back playing in the season's final game again](#). It's set to be an epic clash of two central Iowa powerhouse teams. Both are loaded with playmakers in virtually every direction.

The following is a complete breakdown of Friday night's title game. We're covering every angle of this one by looking at the specific matchups, highlighting key players — and, of course, offering our prediction.

Ankeny has won five in a row in this series, and 12 of the last 13 dating to 2008. Perhaps that'll play in the Hawks favor come Friday. Perhaps it won't matter at all.

When Southeast Polk has the ball ...

The Rams' offense is again one of the state's best, at 33.3 points per game, the sixth-most in Class 5A this season, and 339.8 yards per game. They've topped 30 points in seven games this season and have surpassed 300 yards eight times — including 400-plus yards four times.

They're lethal and efficient.

Southeast Polk's offense begins with the run game, with Titus Christiansen and Abu Sama. They have combined for 1,675 rushing yards and 17 touchdowns (Christiansen with 828 and 7, Sama with 847 and 10) at a rate of 6.5 yards per carry. The Rams' 2,336 total rushing yards — 194.7 per game — ranks fourth in all of Class 5A.

At quarterback, Jaxon Dailey is the star, with 1,726 passing yards and 20 touchdowns — he's one of just four players to throw 20-plus touchdowns in 5A this year. He's also rushed for 226 yards and three touchdowns. Over the last two years, he's thrown for 3,585 yards and 39 touchdowns on a 63.6% completion rate, and is 21-2 as the starter.

Dailey has hit five different receivers for touchdowns and 12 different receivers total this year. Cole Filloon has been his favorite target: 36 receptions, 799 yards (fourth-most in 5A this year), 13 touchdowns (tied for the most in 5A this year). Star safety Xavier Nwankpa is also a receiving threat, with 28 catches, 361 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Ankeny will counter with a defense that harasses opposing offenses. The Hawks have a lot of stars on offense, but their success this season has arguably started with defense, which has allowed 218.3 yards and a 5A-best 9.6 points per game. Their 36 total sacks is the second-most in the state, and their 126 tackles for loss is the third-most.

For as many playmakers as Ankeny has on offense, there are just as many on defense. Tamden Webb-State leads the Hawks with 61.5 total tackles, 15 tackles for loss and 5 sacks. Ryan Crandall has totaled 55.5 total tackles. Braden Simonsen has 21 tackles for loss and 8 sacks. Sean Gavin has 23.5 tackles for loss and 6 sacks.

In all, the Hawks have six players with 10-plus tackles for loss, 5 with 4-plus sacks, and 11 with 20-plus total tackles. They're versatile, play fast, and hit hard. Perhaps most important, at least seven primary defenders played in last year's state championship game, and that experience has been extremely valuable this season.

When Ankeny has the ball ...

Much like Southeast Polk, Ankeny's offense has been prolific, and one of the state's best this season. The Hawks are averaging 38.5 points per game, the second-most in 5A this year, and put up 366.7 yards per contest. They've put up 35 points or more in 9 of 12 games this season, including each of the last eight en route to Friday's title game.

There's a little more balance in Ankeny's offense, but this machine also begins with the run game — specifically, Colin Kadolph, who has rushed for 1,714 yards and 22 touchdowns this season at a rate of 7.1 yards per attempt. Kadolph has accounted for nearly 75% of Ankeny's total rushing output this season. He's a home run threat, too.

JJ Kohl has stepped in at quarterback this season after Jase Bauer's all-state campaign a year ago and has played some excellent ball, to the tune of 2,016 passing yards — Kohl is one of four 5A quarterbacks to surpass 2,000 passing yards this year — and a 5A-best 25 passing touchdowns. He's completing his passes at a 60.9% clip.

Kohl's top target has been Brady McCullough: 50 receptions, 848 yards, 13 touchdowns, all better single-season receiving numbers than former Ankeny star Brody Brecht ever had. (Not a dig at Brecht, just context to how good McCullough has been this year.) Kadolph is also a big receiving threat: 18 catches, 253 yards, 4 touchdowns.

The Hawks present plenty of problems for the Rams' defense, a unit that's been stellar this season. They're allowing 11.7 points per game, the third-best in 5A, and just 216.8 yards per game. They're not as aggressive as Ankeny, but they have totaled 69.5 tackles for loss and 24.5 sacks this season.

Southeast Polk's defense features versatile playmakers. Nwankpa is the star, with 3 picks and 24 tackles. But there's Andrew Reed, the Rams' tackles leader with 68.5 (including 58 solo stops), plus two picks and three fumble recoveries. Draven Woods leads with 27.5 tackles for loss and 9 sacks. Caleb Chebuhar has recorded 60 tackles.

In all, the Rams have allowed 300 total yards of offense or more just twice this season, and have kept five opponents under 200 total yards of offense. Eleven different players have recorded at least 20 tackles. More impressive, Southeast Polk has allowed just two 100-yard rushers all season: Prairie's Makelle Taylor, and Kadolph.

Special Teams

Southeast Polk has a field-goal threat in Josh Wilson, who's hit 12-of-16 field-goal attempts this season, with a long of 41. Wilson is also 41-of-43 on point-after tries this season. As a team, the Rams punt about three times per game.

Ankeny's Max Pelham has one of the strongest legs in the state, despite an 0-for-3 showing on field-goal tries this season. He's 60-for-62 on point-after tries, and as a team, the Hawks have punted fewer times than Southeast Polk, about 2.5 per game.

Both teams have been dangerous in the return game. Nwankpa and Jace Aguiniga have both returned kickoffs for touchdowns for Southeast Polk, and Kadolph and Ryan Crandall have done the same for Ankeny. Last week, Nwankpa had a kickoff-return touchdown and a punt return that went 75 yards to set up the Ram offense.

Do not discount the possibility and impact of a big special teams play on Friday night for either side.

X-Factors

Southeast Polk's Xavier Nwankpa: Of course we're going with Southeast Polk's 5-star safety. Here is an incomplete list of his accomplishments this season: a game-winning Hail Mary touchdown reception in Week 1; a game-sealing blocked field goal in Week 7; threw a touchdown pass out of wildcat in the state quarterfinals; returned a punt 75 yards to the red zone and then a kickoff 94 yards to the house in the semifinals.

The Rams use him in so many different ways. He's a home run threat anytime he touches the ball. This year, he's amassed 738 yards from scrimmage on 49 total touches, be it receiving, rushing, returns, passing, whatever. That's 15 yards every touch. He's also scored seven touchdowns: 5 receiving, 1 return, 1 passing.

Oh, by the way, his best position is defensive back, where he routinely erases big plays, intercepts passes and lays down big hits. If Nwankpa brings his best performance, Southeast Polk is going to be really hard to beat.

Ankeny's Braden Simonsen: We're going with Simonsen as a representative for the rest of Ankeny's defense, because a strong effort from the Hawks on that side of the ball will drastically sway this game in their favor.

When Ankeny is flying around and applying pressure, the Hawks are really tough to beat. That's how they won this matchup a year ago, how they won it earlier this season — 8 tackles for loss and 3 sacks — and how they'll need to win it again this Friday.

Simonsen is one of the many playmakers for Ankeny defensively. They have experience at every level of the defense, in Webb-Tate, Crandall, Will Cornwell, Sean Gavin, Jackson Penningroth and so many more. If they set the tone early and keep Southeast Polk from moving the ball on chunk plays, it could be a long night for the Rams.

Final Thought

The lasting image of last year's state championship game is Arland Bruce IV taking a handoff, running right, then [flashing his lateral quickness by side-stepping a near tackle by Xavier Nwankpa](#) and racing to the end zone for a 34-yard touchdown run.

That made it perfectly clear that talent matters at this stage of the season. A year ago, Ankeny's Killer B's — Bruce, Brody Brecht, Jase Bauer — made up 75% of the Hawks' offensive output in a 42-14 victory over the Rams in the state title game.

This year, Ankeny again returns with plenty of talented playmakers, in Kohl, Kadolph, McCullough, the entire defense. But Southeast Polk's stars — Nwankpa, Dailey, Reed, Kadyne Proctor, others — have been playing as good as ever over the last month.

Nwankpa, especially, has shown to be a game-changing force in virtually every phase of the game. Southeast Polk didn't have him the first time it played Ankeny this year, and the result was a 21-7 Hawk win that made it clear these two were likely the favorites to again play in the season's final game.

The Rams will have Nwankpa this time. As long as he and his star-studded teammates are at their best, the Rams should have enough of an edge to come out on top.

Pick: Southeast Polk, 28-24

=====

2021-11-14 - [‘We just wanted to avenge that loss’: Hawks pound Valley, soar into title game](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-13 - [Revive Clinic and Spa Coach of the Month: Rick Nelson, Ankeny football](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-13 - [Revive Clinic and Spa Coach of the Month: Rick Nelson, Ankeny football](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-13 - [Kadolph, Hawks avenge loss to Valley, will play S.E. Polk for Class 5A crown](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-12 - [Video Summary of the Valley Semi Final Playoff Game](#)

made by a team Mom

=====

2021-11-12- [State Football: Colin Kadolph leads Ankeny over W.D.M. Valley in Class 5A state semifinals](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-11-12- VIDEO - [Colin Kadolph scored 4 touchdowns in Ankeny's 35-13 win over Valley in the Class 5A state semifinals](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

******2021-11-12 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Des Moines Valley -Semi-Final Playoffs**

Semi-Final Pictures

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

******2021-11-12 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Des Moines Valley -Semi-Final Playoffs**

First Half Second Half

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

*******2021-11-12- PHOTOS -**

Ankeny vs. West Des Moines Valley Iowa high school Class 5A state football semifinals

by Des Moines Register

=====

2021-11-10 -

[A title game rematch?: Ankeny Fanatic's predictions for the Class 5A semifinals](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-10 - PODCAST - [Ankeny Fanatic Podcast: Episode 160](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

Head coach Rick Nelson and senior defensive back Ryan Crandall of the Ankeny football team along with Dowling Catholic assistant coach Andy Pollock break down the Class 5A playoffs on the latest edition of the Ankeny Fanatic weekly podcast sponsored by Coldwell Banker Mid-America.

=====

2021-11-10 - [Video Summary of CR Prairie Playoff Game Photos](#)

made by a team Mom

=====

2021-11-07-

It's time for the Iowa high school football state semifinals. Here are our predictions.

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-11-05-

Suffocating defense lifts Ankeny past Cedar Rapids Prairie in Iowa high school football playoffs

by Jeff Johnson, Cedar Rapids Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The defending champs? Yep, they are still very much doing that defending thing.

Ankeny scored three consecutive touchdowns in the third quarter and got a relentless defensive effort overall to topple Cedar Rapids Prairie, 37-7, Friday night in a surprisingly lopsided Class 5A playoff quarterfinal at John Wall Field.

The Hawks (10-2) won the 4A state title last season and are still in Iowa's largest class after the state added an 11-player class this season. They incurred a pair of tight regular-season losses but looked every bit the part of a championship team here, reaching next week's semifinals at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls.

Ankeny came into this game ranked third, Prairie fourth. Their RPIs also were virtually identical: Ankeny fifth and Prairie fourth.

But this was not a close ballgame. Not at all.

"I know it's something crazy, man," said Ankeny linebacker Nick Eaton. "We've got an opportunity to do something that no Ankeny school has ever done. This was the (win) we needed to pull us to those next games and play in the Dome, baby. Go get another one."

Everyone has heard of quarterback J.J. Kohl, the junior quarterback with a multitude of big-time college scholarship offers. The 6-foot-6 junior, the son of former Iowa State kicker Jamie Kohl, has been offered by Iowa State, Iowa, Florida State, Missouri and others because of his size and tremendous arm.

Running back Colin Kadolph also is well known, a Division II Minnesota State commit who runs with burst and an ability to cut on an absolute dime. Kadolph had 117 yards rushing and two touchdowns, Kohl threw for 111 yards and a TD to Brady McCullough that gave their team a 7-0 halftime edge.

But, really, it was defense that won this game for Ankeny. The Hawks stuffed Prairie's rushing attack, forcing a bunch of Brandon Vlcko pass attempts.

The problem there, outside of being one-dimensional offensively, was Vlcko found immense pressure virtually the entire game, a bunch of blitzes resulting in him being sacked eight times and knocked to the ground probably another eight times after getting off passes. The kid took a beating, yet kept getting up and chucking it, showing his toughness. "The first half, we shot ourselves in the foot plenty of times," said Vlcko. "You just can't do that against a good team like Ankeny ... They played really well and stopped us in all aspects, really."

Prairie finished with exactly 1 yard rushing, with Vlcko completing 28 of 40 throws for 263 yards, including a 48-yard TD pass to Elijah Ward late in the third quarter.

The Hawks had a long touchdown pass early in the second quarter called back because of a holding penalty. In the second half, they blocked an Ankeny punt that bounced downfield and off a Prairie player, giving Ankeny the ball right back.

"We couldn't get out of our own way tonight," said Prairie Coach Mark Bliss. "Some games, you just shake your head and say 'What the heck?' We couldn't get a break to save our life tonight."

Kadolph's 23-yard touchdown run capped a scoring drive that began the second half for Ankeny. Prairie went three and out, a short punt into the wind giving the Hawks possession at the Prairie 39.

Kadolph eventually burst over the middle 17 yards for a TD and a 21-0 lead. Prairie drove to the Ankeny 31 on the ensuing possession, but a short pass deflected off the hand of a Prairie receiver and to defensive back Will Cornwell, who ran it back 66 yards for a pick-6 and ballgame.

An airmailed punt snap out of the end zone in the fourth and a 9-yard touchdown run by backup running back Nate Nessa provided Ankeny's other points.

"The goal was to shut down that overload stuff, get rid of the single wing and make them spread the ball out. We did that well tonight," Eaton said. "They came back and passed the ball on us pretty decently, but that's what we're used to in the CIML (Central Iowa Metro League). We see a lot of spread, so that played right into our ballgame."

This was a disappointing end for Prairie (9-3), which overcame the suspension of multiple starters for the first three games of the regular season. The Hawks' losses were by three points to Cedar Falls on a last-second touchdown and by a point to Southeast Polk, a field goal at the end of the game blocked.

Prairie was seeking its first trip to the state semifinals since 1981.

"We have some great young men in our program. I am proud of their efforts tonight, all season long," Bliss said. "These seniors, I've watched them since they were in eighth grade, and they are just special, special young men. They are going to go on and do great things in life. I just feel horrible for them that we just couldn't find a way to get to the Dome. It's been 40 years since Prairie has been to the semis, and we were hoping this was the team. But it just didn't happen tonight."

Ankeny 37, Cedar Rapids Prairie 7

At John Wall Field

Ankeny 7 0 21 9-37

C.R. Prairie 0 0 7 0- 7

- Ankeny-Brady McCullough 20 pass from J.J. Kohl (Max Pelham kick)
- Ankeny-Colin Kadolph 23 run (Pelham kick)
- Ankeny-Kadolph 17 run (Pelham kick)
- Ankeny-Will Cornwell 66 interception return (Pelham kick)
- CRP-Elijah Ward 48 pass from Brandon Vlcko (Sawyer Slezak kick)
- Ankeny-Safety, ball snapped out of end zone
- Ankeny-Nate Nessa 9 run (Pelham kick)

Team Statistics

First Downs - Ankeny 11, Prairie 13. **Rushes-Yards** - Ankeny 25-137, Prairie 32-1. **Passing Yards** - Ankeny 111, Prairie 263. **Completions-Attempts-Interceptions** - Ankeny 8-15-0, Prairie 28-40-2. **Total Yards** - Ankeny 248, Prairie 264. **Punts-Avg.** - Ankeny 3-32.0, Prairie 5-30.6. **Penalties** - Ankeny 6-40, Prairie 6-55. **Fumbles-Lost** - Ankeny 1-1, Prairie 3-1.

Individual Statistics

Rushing - Ankeny: Colin Kadolph 19-117, Nate Nessa 2-23, J.J. Kohl 1-0, Team 3-(minus) 3.

Prairie: Jake Walter 3-15, Makelle Taylor 9-14, Brandon Vlcko 20-(minus) 23.

Passing - Ankeny: J.J. Kohl 8-15-0-111. **Prairie:** Brandon Vlcko 28-40-2-263.

Receiving - Ankeny: Brady McCullough 3-38, Maddox Ward 1-37, Jeremiah Kruger 1-19, Will Hinrichs 1-16, Colin Kadolph 1-1. **Prairie:** Elijah Ward 7-137, Gabe Burkle 5-37, Jake Walter 5-33, Trey Peterson 1-25, Makelle Taylor 3-19, Lonnie Melvin 1-7, Mason Trpkosh 1-5.

Comments: (319)-398-8258, jeff.johnson@thegazette.com

=====

2021-11-06-

DOMEWARD BOUND!: Hawks throttle C.R. Prairie, will play Valley in semifinals

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-11-05-

See all our Iowa high school football final scores from quarterfinal playoff games on Friday

by Staff and Wire Writers, Des Moines Register

=====

******2021-11-05 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Cedar Rapids Prairie - Quarterfinals**

Quarterfinal Game Pictures

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

******2021-11-05 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Cedar Rapids Prairie - Quarterfinals -Playoffs**

First Half Second Half

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

2021-10-31- Hawks pull away from Waukee Northwest with dominant 2nd half

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-10-30 -

IT'S ALL CHALK: Favorites prevail in opening round of Class 5A playoffs

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-10-29- [A look at the 2021 Iowa high school football state quarterfinal matchups](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

******2021-10-29 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Waukee Northwest - 1st Round Playoffs**

First Half Second Half

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

2021-10-24- [Iowa high school football: 45 things we learned from Week 9 and the playoff pairings](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-10-23 -[Roosevelt has no answers for Hawks' aerial attack, lousy field](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-10-23 -[Roosevelt has no answers for Hawks' aerial attack, lousy field](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-10-23 -[Roosevelt has no answers for Hawks' aerial attack, lousy field](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-10-23-

[Iowa high school football: IHSAA releases first- and second-round playoff pairings](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

Class 5A Playoff Pairings

POD 1

- Johnston (4-5) at Southeast Polk (8-1)
- Linn-Mar (7-2) at Dowling Catholic (6-3)

POD 2

- Dubuque Senior (5-4) at Cedar Rapids Kennedy (9-0)
- Urbandale (7-2) at Iowa City High (8-1)

POD 3

- Ankeny Centennial (4-5) at West Des Moines Valley (7-2)
- Cedar Falls (6-3) at Pleasant Valley (7-2)

POD 4

- Bettendorf (5-4) at Cedar Rapids Prairie (7-2)
- Waukee Northwest (5-4) at Ankeny (7-2)

=====

******2021-10-22 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Des Moines Lincoln (Senior Night)**

Band, Tunnel and Student Section

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

Football Seniors and Game Pictures

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase (football families will be a password via email for Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee - this album only)

=====

2021-10-22-

Here are your Iowa high school athletes of the week for Oct. 11-17

by Dargan Southard, Des Moines Register

Quote from article

The Des Moines Register's eighth Iowa high school athletes of the week for fall 2021 have been determined.

On the boys' side, Ankeny football standout **Colin Kadolph** took home top honors. He picked up 60.72% of the votes recorded...

=====

2021-10-18- [The Des Moines Register's High School Football Rankings for Week 9 of the 2021 season](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

- 1. CR Kennedy**
- 2. SEP**
- 3. Urbandale**
- 4. Ankeny**
- 5. Dowling**
- 6. Valley**
- 7. Linn-Mar**
- 8. Pleasant Valley**
- 9. Iowa City High**
- 10. Cedar Rapids Prairie**

=====

2021-10-18 -

[Ankeny falls to No. 7, Centennial drops to No. 19 in latest Class 5A RPI rankings](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

******2021-10-18 - JV PHOTOS - Hawks vs Waukee Northwest**

[First Half Second Half](#)

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

2021-10-19- [Touchdowns galore. Dominant conference-meet performances. Who are the athletes of the week for Oct. 11-17?](#)

by Dargan Southard, Des Moines Register

Athlete of the Week Vote

Colin Kadolph, Ankeny football

Kadolph ran wild in Ankeny's 48-7 win over Waukee Northwest. The senior running back racked up 250 yards and six touchdowns on 24 carries, also adding three catches for 20 yards.

=====

2021-10-17- [Here are 37 things we learned during Iowa high school football's Week 8 games](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-10-16 -

[KABOOM!: Kadolph rushes for 250 yards, 6 TDs in Hawks' rout over Northwest](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

******2021-10-15 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Waukee Northwest**

[First Half](#) [Second Half](#)

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

******2021-10-15 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs
Waukee Northwest**

[PHOTO LINK](#)

by Friend of Jr Parent- Free to use

=====

2021-10-11-

**[The Des Moines Register's Week 8 Iowa high
school football rankings](#)**

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

- 1. CR Kennedy**
- 2. SEP**
- 3. Valley**
- 4. Urbandale**
- 5. Ankeny**
- 6. Dowling**

7. Linn-Mar

8. Pleasant Valley

9. Iowa City High

10. Cedar Rapids Prairie

=====

2021-10-9 -

[No. 5 Hawks get back on winning track, romp to 56-7 victory over North](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

*****2021-10-08 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Des Moines North**

[Pregame First Half Second Half](#)

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

*****2021-10-08 - PHOTOS - [Hawks vs Des Moines North](#)**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

2019-10-04- [Who's the best team in Class 5A? Here are the Week 7 high school football rankings](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

2019-10-04-

[Iowa High School Football Rankings, 2021 Week 7](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2019-10-03- [43 things we learned from Week 6 of Iowa high school football](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-10-3 -

['They made more plays than we did': Valley's late TD hands Hawks 38-35 loss](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

*****2021-10-01 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Valley**

Pregame First Half Second Half

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

2019-09-25 - Iowa high school football Week 5: Final scores, highlights, analysis, top stories from across the state

by Matthew Bain, Des Moines Register

excerpt from article

„9:32 p.m. Look at this throw from JJ Kohl

If you want to know: Is it easy to roll right and sling a fastball pass like that in a perfect placement? No. No. Not at all. This is just one of the reasons Iowa State, Iowa and Florida State have already offered Ankeny quarterback J.J. Kohl, our No. 3 in-state 2023 prospect and an Iowa Eight member.

=====

2021-09-25 - Roosevelt has no answers for Hawks' aerial attack, lousy field

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

**2021-09-24 - No. 2 Ankeny 49, Des Moines
Roosevelt 6: What we learned from the
Hawks' convincing win**

by Alyssa Hertel, Des Moines Register

=====

*****2021-09-24 - PHOTOS - Ankeny vs
Roosevelt**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

*****2021-09-24 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs
Roosevelt**

Pregame First Half Second Half

**by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny
Football Committee**

=====

**2019-09-23 - Ankeny Fanatic Podcast:
Episode 154**

[@BradenSimonsen](#) and [@coachricknelson](#) of [@AnkenyHawkFB](#)

are the guests on the latest edition of the [@AnkenyFanatic](#) weekly podcast

=====

2019-09-19 - [Iowa high school football: 38 things we learned from Week 4](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2019-09-19 - [Another video game-like outing from Burlington's Bryant Williams, other top performers from Week 4](#)

by Matthew Bain, Des Moines Register

excerpt from article

What a Friday night of football, huh?

First of all, we had [No. 3 Ankeny beat No. 1 Southeast Polk, 21-7](#), in what is probably the best win of the year across all seven classes. Then, No. 5 Iowa City High [proved it is a legitimate state title threat with a 21-17 win over No. 6 Dowling Catholic](#). Back in central Iowa, [No. 7 Urbandale handled No. 9 Des Moines Roosevelt, 30-0](#), and [Indianola outlasted Lewis Central, 14-9, in a Class 4A top-five battle](#).

And those are just a handful of the games involving central Iowa teams.

There were incredible games and eye-popping performances all across the state.

As you wait until college football kicks off Saturday, here's a look at some of the standout performances from Week 4 of Iowa high school football.

=====

2021-09-18 - [Hawks take down No. 1 S.E. Polk in rematch of last year's Class 4A title game](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-09-18 - [‘I think we know who’s No. 1 now’: Ankeny shuts down Rams for 21-7 victory](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2019-09-17 - [PHOTOS for purchase](#)

by Lee Navin, Des Moines Register for purchase

=====

2019-09-17 - [No. 3 Ankeny 21, No. 1 Southeast Polk 7: What we learned from the Hawks’ win over the Rams](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2019-09-17 - VIDEO - [Braden Simonsen and the Ankeny Hawks defeat SEP](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

******2021-09-17 - PHOTOS - [Ankeny vs SEP](#)**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

******2021-09-17 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs SEP
Homecoming [First Half Second Half](#)**

**by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny
Football Committee**

=====

2021-09-11 -

[‘WE’RE BACK’: Hawks rebound from loss with convincing win over Dowling](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-09-11 - Ankeny 27, Dowling Catholic 13: Here's what we learned from the Hawks' dominant win

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-09-11 - Iowa high school football: JJ Kohl, Carter Erickson, other top performers from Week 3

by Matthew Bain, Des Moines Register

excerpts from article

JJ Kohl, Ankeny

Kohl, the Register's No. 3 in-state 2023 prospect and a member of the 2021 Iowa Eight, entered the season with plenty of hype, but his first two weeks were lackluster.

That was far from the case in Week 3.

The 6-foot-6 cannon-armed quarterback completed 13 of 15 passes for 144 yards and four touchdowns, masterfully leading the No. 6 Hawks offense in a 27-13 victory over No. 2 Dowling Catholic.

Brady McCullough, Ankeny

And Kohl had a favorite target in the game: Brady McCullough.

The big, 6-4 target is the Register's No. 18 in-state 2022 prospect, and he showed why on Friday. The FCS target receiving interest from Iowa and Iowa State hauled in eight catches for 124 yards and three touchdowns.

=====

******2021-09-10 - PHOTOS - [Ankeny vs Dowling](#)**

by Friend of Senior Parent - shared to Football Committee

=====

******2021-09-10 - PHOTOS - [Ankeny vs Dowling](#)**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

2021-09-10 - VIDEO - JJ Kohl and Brady McCullough put on a show in Ankeny's 27-13 win over Dowling in Week 3

by Des Moines Register

Quarterback JJ Kohl and receiver Brady McCullough put on a show in Ankeny's 27-13 win over Dowling in Week 3. The duo connected for three touchdowns.

=====

2021-09-06 - After 23 ranked teams lost, Week 3 Iowa high school football rankings look very different

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

Class 5A rankings - Week 3

1. Southeast Polk (2-0) beat No. 8 West Des Moines Valley, 40-21
2. Dowling Catholic (1-1) beat Waukee Northwest, 17-10
3. Cedar Rapids Kennedy (2-0) beat Bettendorf, 28-7
4. Cedar Rapids Prairie (2-0) beat Dubuque Senior, 28-14
5. Urbandale (2-0) beat No. 9 Johnston, 17-7
6. Ankeny (1-1) lost to Ankeny Centennial, 14-7
7. Iowa City High (2-0) beat Cedar Rapids Jefferson, 68-0
8. West Des Moines Valley (1-1) lost to No. 1 Southeast Polk, 40-21
9. Johnston (1-1) lost to No. 5 Urbandale, 17-7
10. Des Moines Roosevelt (2-0) beat Waukee, 19-3

=====

******2021-09-03 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Jags**
First Half Second Half

**by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny
Football Committee**

=====

******2021-09-03 - PHOTOS - Hawks vs Jags**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

**2021-08-30 - Two new No. 1s, central Iowa
teams stick out in Week 2 high school football
class rankings**

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

Class 5A Rankings - Week 2

1. Southeast Polk (1-0) beat No. 3 Dowling Catholic 13-7
2. Ankeny (1-0) beat Waukee 49-0
3. Dowling Catholic (0-1) lost to No. 1 Southeast Polk 13-7
4. West Des Moines Valley (1-0) beat No. 10 Waukee Northwest 42-41 (2OT)
5. Cedar Rapids Kennedy (1-0) beat Iowa City West 27-20
6. Dubuque Senior (1-0) beat Dubuque Hempstead 19-6
7. Cedar Rapids Prairie (1-0) beat Pleasant Valley 27-21
8. Johnston (1-0) beat Cedar Falls 28-22
9. Urbandale (1-0) beat Bettendorf 13-3
10. Waukee Northwest (0-1) lost to No. 4 West Des Moines Valley 42-41 (2OT)

=====

2021-08-29 - [Iowa high school football: 30 thoughts from Week 1,](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

=====

2021-08-28 - [OPENING STATEMENT: Hawks' defense shines in 49-0 win over Waukee](#)

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

*****2021-08-27 - PHOTOS - [First Half Half Time - Second Half and Sidelines](#)**

by Jackie Frisk - Free to use PAID by Ankeny Football Committee

=====

*****2021-08-27 - PHOTOS - [Ankeny vs Waukee](#)**

by Drue Wolfe - for purchase

=====

2021-08-26 - 'It'll be fun to watch': No. 3 Hawks look to contend for first Class 5A crown

by Dan Holm, Ankeny Fanatic

=====

2021-08-26 - Iowa high school football preseason rankings 2021: Class 5A

by Jeff Linder, Cedar Rapids Gazette

Preseason Ranking

1. Southeast Polk
2. Ankeny
3. West Des Moines Dowling
- 4 Tie - Cedar Falls and Pleasant Valley
6. West Fes Moines Valley
7. Cedar Rapids Prairie
8. Cedar Rapids Kennedy
9. Waukee
10. Ankeny Centennial

=====

2021-08-23 - [Here are 15 must-watch Iowa high school football games for 2021](#)

by Dargan Southard, Des Moines Register

excerpt from article

Week 3: Ankeny at Dowling Catholic

Date: Sept. 10

Skinny: The matchup of the season in 2020, Dowling gets its first chance at Ankeny revenge here in 2021. The Maroons rarely play with past defeat as motivation, but there should be plenty here after the Hawks halted Dowling's incredible championship run in last year's semifinals. Whichever squad wins, though, may have to beat the other again in the playoffs.

Week 4: Southeast Polk at Ankeny

Date: Sept. 17

Skinny: A replay of last season's 4A title game, you know Southeast Polk has been thinking about that [42-14 shellacking](#) all offseason. The Rams, which begin the year atop the 5A poll, will need to be much sharper for a win this time around, but the talent is there to certainly do so. Another potential UNI-Dome preview.

=====

2021-08-23 - [Introducing the Des Moines Register's 2021 preseason high school football class rankings](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

Class 5A Rankings - Preseason

1. Southeast Polk
2. Dowling Catholic
3. Ankeny
4. Cedar Falls
5. West Des Moines Valley
6. Pleasant Valley
7. Cedar Rapids Kennedy
8. Bettendorf
9. Dubuque Senior
10. Iowa City West

=====

2021-08-23 - [The Preseason Super 10 Rankings, the best high school football teams in Iowa for 2021](#)

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

except from article

3. Ankeny

Last Season: 11-1, won Class 4A state championship

Why they're in the Super 10: The Hawks lost many key playmakers from last year's state title-winning squad, but the cupboard isn't bare. Fast-rising J.J. Kohl will take the reins at quarterback. Speedy running back Colin Kadolph scored 15 touchdowns last year. Brady McCullough is a threat in the receiving game. Ryan Crandall and Braden Simonsen will highlight a fast-and-vicious defense. Ankeny isn't going anywhere.

=====

2021-08-23 -

**Meet the Preseason All-Iowa Football
Selections for the 2021 high school football
season**

by Cody Goodwin, Des Moines Register

**All Iowa - 2nd Team - Offense - QB: J.J.
Kohl, jr., Ankeny**

**All Iowa - 2nd Team - Defense - DB: Ryan
Crandall, sr., Ankeny**

**All Iowa - 2nd Team - Special Teams - K:
Max Pelham, sr., Ankeny**

=====

**2021-08-14 - Ankeny Fanatic Podcast:
Episode 148**

by Dan Holm

Ankeny Fanatic publisher Dan Holm interviews former Ankeny stars Brody Brecht and Arland Bruce IV and ex-Ankeny Centennial standout Riley Moss, as well as wide receivers coach Kelton Copeland, at the annual Iowa Hawkeye football media day in this edition of the Ankeny Fanatic weekly podcast sponsored by Coldwell Banker Mid-America.

=====

2021-08-12 - 15 burning questions before the start of the 2021 Iowa high school football season

**by Matthew Bain, Des Moines Register -
SUBSCRIBER ARTICLE**

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/sports/high-school/2021/08/12/iowa-high-school-football-15-questions-15-days-before-week-1->

ih saa-southeast-polk-waukee-northwest/5546124001/

Excerpt Below....

1. Can anyone in Class 5A topple Southeast Polk?

The Class 5A football title is Southeast Polk's to lose.

Yes, Ankeny is the defending champion. Yes, Dowling Catholic is Dowling Catholic. Yes, the eastern side of the state always puts forth a quality contender, whether it's Cedar Falls or Iowa City West or Bettendorf or Pleasant Valley or someone else.

But when a team reaches the state title game and then brings back a huge chunk of its main contributors, including a three-star Division I quarterback, a four-star safety with Ohio State, Notre Dame and Texas A&M in hot pursuit, and a five-star offensive lineman with basically everyone in the country recruiting him, that team will enter the season with lofty expectations.

The most logical competition is Ankeny, which beat the Rams 42-14 in the 2020 title game. Although the Hawks lost major offensive pieces in quarterback Jase Bauer, receiver Brody Brecht and athlete Arland Bruce IV, they return running back Colin Kadolph, receiver Brady McCullough and a bevy of defensive standouts, including safety Ryan Crandall, defensive end Braden Simonsen and linebackers Tamden Webb-Tate and Jackson Penningroth. Transfer quarterback J.J. Kohl is also a highly regarded 2023 prospect, although he's relatively unproven at the high school level so far.

2. Which star quarterback will have the best season?

There's so much quarterback talent in the state right now.

Among junior signal-callers, alone, there's: [Ankeny's Kohl, who holds offers from Iowa State, Iowa and Florida State](#); Des Moines Roosevelt's Jamison Patton, who has an Iowa State offer at safety; Marion's Alex Mota, who holds offers as an athlete from Iowa, Iowa State, Kansas State, Wisconsin and Nebraska; and Lewis Central's Braylon Kammrad, West Sioux's Dylan Wiggins, Dowling's Jaxon Smolik and Central Lyon/George-Little Rock's Zach Lutmer, who all have legitimate Division I interest.

.....