

See the stories and pictures at the top of the page about the Apopka High School Football team's win over the Wekiva Mustangs in the annual

Mayor's Cup. Apopka secured their seat in the playoffs with the victory as Wekiva prepares for one last regular season game.



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# Apopka takes home Mayor's Cup for second season in a row

By Marshall Tempest  
Apopka Chief Staff

The end of the 2024 FHSAA football season was marked for the Apopka Blue Darters last week with a win over in-city rivals the Wekiva Mustangs. With the win, Apopka stopped a loss streak that would've reached five with a loss to Wekiva and secured their seat in the 2024 FHSAA 7A Region Two Playoffs. It also makes Apopka the Mayor's Cup winners for two seasons in a row breaking the cycle of the last decade where whoever held the game at home won the game.

Apopka's win over Wekiva was the first game in which Apopka scored more than seven points since their 49-0 victory over West Port back at the start of September. That's a good thing to see as the Blue Darters head into playoffs against some very explosive teams.

"Once again, we made it harder than it needs to be. We did some good things... We should have put this one away but we gave up an easy score on defense which gave them hope and then we gave up another one to keep it interesting. So we did poorly to end the game and that's on us. But, offensively we were able



TEMPEST'S  
TIMEOUT

Marshall Tempest

to move the ball a little bit more, get some first downs, and score so that was good. We missed two field goals so we're leaving points on the board. We are still not where we are supposed to be, but we won a game, so thank God for that," said head coach of the Blue Darters Jeff Rolson after the game.

The game against Wekiva was very interesting because of the timing of the scoring. Twenty-nine points were scored by both teams in the fourth quarter alone. To put that into perspective, there were only 36 points scored by both teams in the entire game. This game truly didn't start until the fourth quarter – and wasn't finished until the final possession.

Most of the game was quiet. With the first quarter going scoreless, Apopka tallied one touchdown



In the photo above, the Apopka High School Blue Darters celebrate their Mayor's Cup victory with School Board member Melissa Byrd, Commissioner Diane Velazquez, and Apopka's principal Lyle Heinz.



In the photo above, the seniors on the Apopka football team stand together holding up the Mayor's Cup and 25 (their graduation year) after their final regular season game as Blue Darters on Friday, November 1.

in the second quarter, the third quarter was quiet coming out of halftime, and then the explosive fourth quarter.

The first quarter was interesting because we got to see a different look from Apopka on offense while

seeing the defense lockdown Wekiva's versatile attack.

The Apopka offense came out with one goal last Friday at Wekiva – get first downs! The Blue Darters came out with an old-fashioned smashmouth of

fense from the very first set of downs. They made it very clear that the plan was to run straight through the Wekiva defense and get to the endzone through a true battle of attrition.

Apopka was running a somewhat jumbo package

with a six-man front, Trevon Williams at fullback behind the front, quarterback Tyson Davison and a tailback, and two wideouts. For their entire first drive, Apopka stuck to the

See MAYOR'S CUP Page 3B

## Wekiva falls to Apopka, prepares for undefeated Jones

By Neal Fisher  
Apopka Chief Staff

During all six losses this season, the Wekiva Mustangs have fallen behind by at least three touchdowns midway through the second quarter.

The most recent installment of the trend was against cross-town rival, the Apopka Blue Darters on Friday, November 1.

Then Apopka upped the level of how well the Apopka way had been executed against Wekiva, the best since the first contest of the season.

The combination translated to a victory by the score of 20-16 for the Blue Darters. Apopka has now won 13 of the 19 contests making up the Mayor's Cup Rivalry, or also known as the Tater Bowl.

Even with a final overall record of 4-5, the vic-

tory most importantly kept the Blue Darters alive for a 25th consecutive berth into the FHSAA playoffs. Eight teams in each region qualify. Apopka was holding the seventh position in the FHSAA's power rankings for Class 7A-Region 2 heading into the contest. Primary reason ranked seventh is the fifth highest strength of schedule among all of Class 7A.

The performance was what has become the expected and norm for a Blue Darters' offense, gaining 191 yards on 44 carries. Typical and traditional of the approach by which Apopka wins, the ball was moved methodically and systematically down the field, gaining 4.35 yards per carry. Two completed passes gaining a total of another 53 yards then broke the Mustangs' back.

Below the surface of

the typical and traditional approach is the 4.35 yards per carry that allowed Apopka to control time of possession and starting field position.

Time of possession and starting field position is important to all teams and almost always have an impact on the outcome. However, the Blue Darters' way is not just interested in emphasizing and applying the advantages of both statistics as part of the approach. Intention is to apply both statistics to the current situation with the utmost efficiency and as the centerpiece. The longer a possession lasts, the less time the opponent has to score. The worse the starting field possession, the less likely a team is to score.

Apopka held an 18-6 minute advantage in time

See MUSTANGS Page 2B

By Neal Fisher  
Apopka Chief Staff

For the fifth time over the last seven seasons, both Apopka Blue Darter (Men, Women) teams had a presence at the state championship meet.

"I am proud of both teams' achievements given the state of each," Blue Darters head coach Doug Campbell said. "Advancing to the state championship meet even though fairly young teams demonstrates the high level of talent and skill continuing to be developed in the Apopka area."

The state championships for team and individual as well as both genders were contested at Boardwalk Bowl, (10749 East Colonial Drive) on October 29, 30 and 31.

Two components are used to determine the state champion: a preliminary, 10-pin (traditional format for bowling) and then a head-to-head, double-elimination tournament. The 10-pin component at the state championship is made up of four games.

Teams scoring the 16 highest amount of pins during the 10-pin component then advance to the double-elimination tournament.

Outcome of each match during the tournament is determined using Baker Rules and best-of-five game formats. Similar to an offensive line-up in baseball, each bowler throws one frame during Baker Rules. The first bowler throws the first frame, second bowler throws the second frame and so on.

There are 16 districts across the state of Florida

that use the same format. First and second place or the two finalists from each district championship tournament advance to the state championship meet.

Tone of the expectations for each Blue Darter team were much different at the beginning of the 2024 season. Each teams' achievements at the beginning, during and at the end of the postseason continued to have a different tone. Circumstances, conditions and the state of the programs were much different between the teams.

Earning a berth in the state championship meet has now reached 12 consecutive seasons. The streak of reaching the double elimination component came to an end last season at 10 consecutive state championship meets though.

The Apopka Men's team advanced into the double-elimination tournament this season and further than last. A lot of would've, could've, and should have when the 2024 season ended remained for the Blue Darters though.

"Returning to the double-elimination tournament component of the state championship meet removed the bad taste from last season," Campbell said. "There are a number of factors having a role in how a team feels when competing, and at the state championship meet specifically. One less factor was no longer a part of preventing disappointing frames from turning into the negative and heavy feel."

However, Apopka then lost two consecutive matches and was a part of the first group (four teams)

## APK bowling surpasses their 2023 campaign, look forward to 2025

eliminated.

Nor did the up-and-down feel of any individual performance change during the state championship meet. When bowling as well as capable of, the Blue Darters beat every opponent. When and for how long Apopka bowled as well as capable of was the unpredictable question asked throughout the season though.

Twenty-two percent of the frames or 21 out of 96 were left open by the Blue Darters. Spare conversion percentage was 58 percent or 29 out of 50 attempts.

Even more specifically though, Apopka left only four out of 33 frames open during the three victories. Open frames during the six losses totaled 17 out of 63 frames. The Blue Darters also failed to mark during the 10th frame and earn the third throw three times as well.

Scores of the two series were: (3-1 games), 195-209, 231-76, 193-138, 224-185 vs. the Daytona Beach Seabreeze Sandcrabs and 237-201, 254-225, 201-212, 192-212, 182-136 vs. the Davie Western Wildcats (3-2 games),

Team scores of 919, 958, 958 and 964 for a total of 3,799 pins was posted during the 10-pin component as Apopka earned the 13th seed for the tournament.

"Consistency among the scores was excellent, but mid-900 pins can take a team only so far," Campbell said regarding the 10-pin component and then reiterated elimination during the tournament. "Turn-

See BOWL Page 3B



On Friday, November 1, Apopka's Elijah Henry sacks Wekiva's quarterback Jackson Keillor.



# Police Beat

If a law enforcement agency charges you with a crime and this paper reports that information, please notify us within 90 days if the charge is dropped, or if you are found not guilty by the court. After verifying the information, we will be happy to publish it. Please send notification to The Apopka Chief, P.O. Box 880, Apopka, 32704-0880.

In the period from October 27-November 2, the Apopka Police Department received 1,623 calls for service, responded to 39 crashes, issued 31 citations,

and made 17 arrests. Juveniles were charged with resist officer-obstruct without violence; simple assault-assault on specified personnel; crimes against person-corrupt by threat public servant or family; aggravated battery with deadly weapon; homicide-specified felony commit act could cause death; battery-touch or strike (domestic violence) (X2).

The following adults were arrested and charged: Kyler Noelle Ahrendt, 18, 200 Block W Ohio St., Ocoee, burglary-unoccupied conveyance unarmed

(X2); larceny-other theft; resist officer-obstruct without violence.

Shannon Lee Blair, 57, confidential, Apopka, battery-cause bodily harm.

Christopher Demetrius Buckner, 44, 1628 Sun Ridge Dr., Apopka, out-of-county warrant.

Cushane Damiah Carter, 35, confidential, Apopka, lewd lascivious behavior-molest victim 12 years of age less than 16 years of age, offender 18 years of age or older.

Daniel Cepeda-Juarez, 20, 809 W. Orange Blossom Trl., Apopka, out-of-county warrant.

Jarvis Brandon Clayton, 44, 516 W. 13th St.,

Apopka, drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (cocaine); resist officer-obstruct without violence.

Timothy Brian Dockery, 50, 1910 Brittany Lane, Apopka, other agency warrant.

Sharon Etienne, 24, confidential, Orlando, battery-touch or strike.

Justin Joseph Raymond Fout, 31, 130 North Hart Blvd., Orlando, out-of-county warrant.

Patrick Randy Hamilton, 20, 6455 Moore St., Orlando, burglary-unoccupied conveyance unarmed (X2); larceny-other theft; resist officer-obstruct without violence.

Darrell Lamont Harrell, 41, 3325 Fudge Rd., Apopka, drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (cocaine).

Anthony Harris, 62, transient, Apopka, resist officer with violence; simple assault-assault on specified personnel; battery on specified personnel; trespassing-occupied structure or conveyance' health-safety nuisance injurious to health.

Donnell Varuael McClain, 45, 1642 Lucy Terry Ave., Apopka, weapon offense missile into dwelling vehicle/building or aircraft; damage property-criminal mischief \$1,000 or more; burglary-occupied convey-

ance unarmed.

Johanna E. Medina, 50, confidential, Apopka, battery-touch or strike.

Jason William Scott, 46, 18 N. Terry Ave. 144, Orlando, trespassing-occupied structure or conveyance; aggravated assault on specified personnel.

Annitta Esmeira Tenorio, 44, confidential, Apopka, battery-cause bodily harm.

David Dwayne Wallace, 52, confidential, Apopka, kidnap-false imprisonment, false imprisonment of person; aggravated battery with a deadly weapon; battery-touch or strike (dating violence).

## Schoreder, Cilladi win X-treme Bass Championship at Palatka

Hello Folks,

Well, we are gettin' some rain and some sunshine most days. We need the rain, but not too much. The St. John's River is still very high, but hopefully, folks will be able to start fishin' Lake Monroe for some specks.

The X-treme Bass Series held their championship up at Palatka, last weekend. Congrats to the team of Chad Schoreder from Zephyrhills, and his fishin' partner Anthony Cilladi from Oviedo. They went wire -to-wire for the win in Palatka. The



Jim Keck  
Goin' Fishin'

duo weighed in a two-day total of 50.31 pounds. They won a 2025 Blazer 625 boat, a Mercury 250 Pro XS outboard package worth \$77,000 dollars. Chad and Anthony were the divisional champions on the Lake Toho divi-

sion. They were fishin' for the championship and the Fitzgerald Fishing Team-of-the-year title.

There were 110 teams in the championship held on the St. Johns River. Also, they were fishin' for the Michael J. Blocher Memorial Award. With their win on the St. Johns River, they clinched both of those prestigious awards. Again, congrats to Chad and Anthony on their big win.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission announced today that November is Manatee Aware-

ness Month. I know what you are thinkin': "Hey Jim, there aren't any manatees in my lakes." Well, they are all over the St. Johns River and, believe it or not, I saw one last year while I was fishin' in Lake Beauclair. I also had a witness and after talking to folks about my sighting, folks told me that they have seen manatees in the Harris Chain as well.

As fall temperatures drop, manatees start makin' their way to the Florida Springs power plant discharge areas and other warm water sites to

stay warm durin' the winter. When the temperatures start to rise, they will be on the move again roamin' our lakes and rivers. So, the FWC is lettin' us know that you need to "go slow and look out below" for the manatees when you might be fishin' in these areas. One more thing is, if you come upon a manatee that is in distress, please give the FWC a call and let them know you spotted a manatee that needs help.

I talked to Kyle at Bitter's Bait & Tackle and he reports that not many folks

are fishin' due to the high water in their favorite lakes in our area. There are a lot of ramps still closed. You need to make sure before you go fishin' that there is a ramp that's open so you can launch your boat. The Butler Chain is still closed, but the Maitland Chain of Lakes is open again.

Well, folks that's it for this week. I hope to see you real soon on the water.

Tip of the week: "Go slow and look out below."

Save a few and good luck!

## Mustangs: Majority of Apopka's drives started after the 44-yard line

Continued from page 1B

of possession during the first half. Advantage was closer by the end of the contest, but still decisive and more than a 2-1 ratio at 33-15 minutes.

Margin between plays ran only increased as the contest progressed and eventually ended at 60-36 in favor of the Blue Darters.

Wekiva's 28-yard line was the best starting field

position for eight of nine Wekiva possessions.

Average starting field position was the Mustangs' 23-yard line.

Six of 10 Apopka possessions began at the Apopka 44-yard line or better. The Blue Darters had to move the ball only 47, 29 and 41 yards on the three possessions ending with touchdowns. Average starting field position for Apopka was the Apopka 43-yard line.

Score was 0-0 for the first 7:12 and then 7-0 until 11:31 of the third quarter. The contest never took on the feeling the Mustangs could challenge for the lead though. Again, the team without possession can not score.

Apopka also failed to convert six potential points into fruition. Two field goal attempts (from 28, 38, respectively) were missed. The second was only attempted because it was the

last play of the first half.

A seven-yard rush with 4:48 remaining in the first quarter left Tyson Davison in the end zone for the first touchdown. Noah Morgan hauled in a 27-yard pass from Davison on second down. The completed pass also moved the ball into Mustangs' territory (the 35-yard line).

Jumping the route, Henry Pickard's interception along the left sideline gave possession to Apop-

ka at the Wekiva 29-yard line. Jockee Sanders busted through the line of scrimmage, then outran everybody while following the right hashmarks and into the end zone on the next play. The final and eventual margin of difference was a 26-yard from Davison to Alex Rossi pass completion with 7:39 remaining.

Pass completions from Jackson Keillor to Dame-trious Ellison and Jabari Smith accounted for the

Mustangs' points. The touchdowns covered 78 and 14 yards, respectively.

The contest began with Wekiva moving the ball from the Wekiva 20-yard line to the Apopka 33 on five plays. Four consecutive incomplete passes followed, thus, ending the only somewhat serious threat to successfully counterattacking how effective the Blue Darters' execution of the approach was.

### Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

6			9			1		
	7				5		3	
		9		2	8			4
	4				6		1	
3				1		5		
		6	3					8
		4		9				5
2			6			8		
	5				4		7	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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SUDOKU ANSWERS: PAGE 4C



On Friday, November 1, Apopka's Myles Fieldings talks with a fellow Blue Darter defender about adjustments pre-snap based on the opponents formation and motions.

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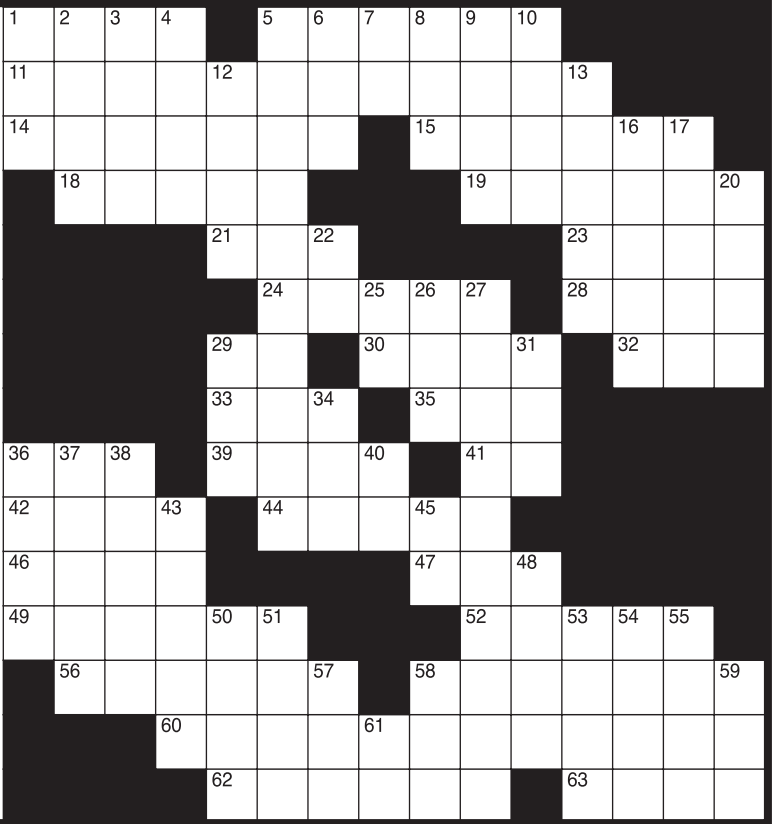
#### CLUES ACROSS

- Nasal mucus
- Hairs on the back of a dog
- Ones who build anew
- Consume too much food
- Praised
- Provides weapons
- Become less lively
- Engine additive
- Thought or suggestion
- South Korean city
- Midday rests
- Expression of acidity or alkalinity
- Group of rockers
- Very fast airplane
- One who is paid to do something
- Buzzing insect
- Monotheistic religion founder
- Strong dark beer
- Blood type
- Square measures
- Honorific titles in NW Semitic languages
- Present
- Afflict in mind or body
- Duty
- Municipality in Stockholm
- In a normal way
- Rode a bicycle
- Charitable
- Verandas
- Uncredited

#### CLUES DOWN

- No seats available
- Russian river
- A European river
- Phrase
- Idol
- Keyboard key
- Prefix indicating mutual
- Kilometers per hour
- Set an example
- It's among the "Great" ones
- VVV
- Murdered
- Icelandic poems
- Seas
- Famed cartoonist
- Partner to "Ma"
- Equal to one quintillion bytes
- Speak incessantly
- Disquiet
- Parts per billion (abbr.)
- Upper-class young woman (abbr.)
- S. American plant
- Monetary unit of Thailand
- Regions
- Baseball legend Yogi
- Ancient Egyptian notion of spiritual part of humans
- Fishing net
- Tinseltown
- MacBeth's wife was one
- Took a spill
- Adversary to pets
- Town in Galilee
- Secret racist society (slang)
- About aviation
- Longing or yearning
- Hawaiian dish
- Field force unit
- Partner to "Pa"

Solutions can be found on page 4C of this newspaper.





# Bowl: Young team only has room to grow and improve



On Tuesday, October 29, the Apopka Blue Darter bowling team stand together as the pledge begins during the FHSAA State Championship meet. Apopka made it to the first round of the double-elimination component of the meet.

**Continued from page 1B**

ing potential pins knocked down into fruition has to be executed as well to keep advancing in the tournament. If just half of the spares left on the table are converted or another three, perhaps even two during one of the games, three and 190 per bowler. Only 14 pins separated four of the bowlers' average per contest as well, 202, 194, 192, 188 and 173, respectively.

Six scores of no less than 204 pins were totaled by four different Blue Darters as well at least one during each game. Half or 10 of the scores reached at least 192 pins too. High score of 234 pins among Apopka was delivered by Bradyn Sowers.

Colby Todd, Cayden Bennett and Tony Price completed the Blue Darter Mens' roster.

"Nonetheless, another successful season and

ment. Only 58 pins separated four of the bowlers' total scores. Angelo Mullica turned in Apopka's highest individual score of 809, followed by John Cruz-776, Logan Licovoli-768, Bradyn Sowers-751 and Kolton Evans-695. Average scores were 950 pins as a team per game and 190 per bowler. Only 14 pins separated four of the bowlers' average per contest as well, 202, 194, 192, 188 and 173, respectively.

Six scores of no less than 204 pins were totaled by four different Blue Darters as well at least one during each game. Half or 10 of the scores reached at least 192 pins too. High score of 234 pins among Apopka was delivered by Bradyn Sowers.

Colby Todd, Cayden Bennett and Tony Price completed the Blue Darter Mens' roster.

"Nonetheless, another successful season and

the teams added to the success' high level of consistency," Campbell said. "Much more is expected each season of the bowlers and teams than every other program because of the previous success. Success shouldn't always be measured by what the previous bowlers and teams achieved though.

"Comments made by (coach) Jason (Ramos) are in step with my take on the Women's team. The Men's team is fairly young. Even though not advancing as far as accustomed to, the streak of qualifying for the state continued and with only a handful of matches (due to the hurricanes). Four bowlers are returning next season after advancing to the state championship meet with more maturation evolving due to such unusual circumstances."

The 2024 team state championship for men was claimed by Seabreeze and

Daniel Lynn of the Cape Coral Seahawks the individual.

Perhaps lacking the dynamism expected from state championship meet qualifiers, the women's team advancing to the state championship meet was in itself something of a Cinderella story. Half the roster had never competed in the sport of bowling, let alone at the varsity level. Improvement from match to match as well as consistency between individual scores of each game was the disposition of the team throughout the season.

"Getting to the state championship meet in general is an achievement," Ramos said. "With so many bowlers in primary roles for a first time is a special layer added to the achievement.

Although the total score was not among the 16 best, Apopka achieved the goal most desired, cap-

ping off the season with the highest and most consistent performance.

Team scores of 669, 622, 689, 654 pins for a total of 2,634 were posted by the Blue Darters and 26th place during the 10-pin component. Average scores were 658.5 pins as a team per game and 132 per bowler.

Highest individual score of 779 pins for Apopka was turned in by Elizabeth Marshall, followed by 500 from Olivia Hodge. Only seven pins separated Marshall from advancing to the double-elimination tournament for the individual competition. No other Blue Darter was in the lineup during all four games. Consisting of Madelynn Scofield, Haylee Thames, Shyanne Adams, Yareliz Gonzalez- Melendez, Jaiden Mullica and Mikayla Branson, rest of the roster was rotated among the four games by coach Jason Ra-

mos.

"Ending the season at the state championship meet is extremely satisfying for a team with little experience in primary roles outside of one bowler," Ramos said. "The end of the season was also satisfying in the sense the scores were the highest and most consistent at the same time. Next season will start with a lot of we are in a better position to move forward and advancing to the double elimination being a far more legitimate goal."

For a second consecutive season, the East River Falcons claimed the women's team state championship. Angelica Blimegger of the West Boca Raton Bulls emerged as the 2024 individual champion.

## Mayor's Cup: Fourth quarter barn burner turns into near comeback



The three photos above are of Apopka's quarterback Tyson Davison throwing the ball on the run as he rolls out of the pocket during the Blue Darters' win over the Wekiva Mustangs on Friday, November 1.

**Continued from page 1B**

ground and marched all the way to the Wekiva red zone but were unable to secure points.

The Apopka defense looked poised not only on the ground but in the secondary for most of the game keeping the Mustangs from moving the chains, but more importantly, from scoring when inside Apopka's side of the field. The defense did have their troubles giving up explosive plays late in the game but for the most part, did great.

There was great pressure on Wekiva's quarterback all night and he took his fair share of sacks and hard hits while trying to scramble for yards as the play deteriorated. The defense had more than a handful of tackles for loss and an interception that put them in perfect field position to score.

As I said before, the game really didn't start until the fourth quarter. With Apopka up 7-0 and the Blue Darter defense keeping the Mustangs corralled

it seemed to be a slow march towards victory for Apopka going into the fourth quarter.

Apopka was on defense to start the fourth quarter after just giving the Mustangs the ball. Wekiva was starting their drive from their 31-yard line. The first play from Wekiva was an incompletion due to a Mustang receiver dropping a wide-open pass. The next play was Apopka's interception.

Apopka's Henry Pickard perfectly swoops in under a crossing route intercepting the ball and bringing it back to the Wekiva line of scrimmage nearly a 15-yard return.

Now with the ball in perfect scoring position, Apopka could get some insurance points. The Blue Darters capitalized completely on Pickard's play with a one-play 26-yard touchdown run coming from Jockee Sanders. Apopka was unable to secure the extra point but pushed ahead further 13-0.

Wekiva's next drive resulted in no points once

again with a quick three and out as the Wekiva sidelines and stands began to truly look defeated.

After receiving the punt from Wekiva, Apopka started their drive on Wekiva's 41-yard line. And once again, Apopka drew up another beautiful set of plays that set up a touchdown perfectly. After running a sweep, an inside run, and an option to collect a first down and start a new set of downs on Wekiva's 27-yard line Apopka goes with the play action.

Apopka's Elijah Frazier runs a skinny post and as the defense lets him fly by so they can read the handoff, expecting an option, Davison sees Frazier ahead by three or four steps of the safeties and lets go of a perfect pass landing right in Frazier's hands for another touchdown. After a successful extra point, Apopka was now up by 20-0 with less than seven minutes to go – so the game was all but over ... right?

This is the Apopka and Wekiva game. It's not over until the final whistle – and

Wekiva proved that.

The Mustangs received the kick from Apopka and started their drive on their 22-yard line. One play is all it took. A 78-yard passing touchdown to a wide-open receiver five steps ahead of two Apopka safeties. Wekiva elected to go for two and converted putting them behind Apopka 20-8 with just under seven minutes still to go.

Wekiva came out trying an outside kick to go for another score quickly but was unable to secure it. This gave Apopka the ball to start their drive on their 45-yard line. But Apopka was unable to do much and couldn't convert to keep draining the clock punting the ball away on fourth down.

Wekiva started their drive on their 18-yard line needing another touchdown quickly to stay in the game. In ten plays Wekiva was once again in the end zone. After a ten-play-82-yard drive, the touchdown came on a 14-yard passing touchdown. Wekiva once again elected to go for two and once again converted

it. Apopka was now ahead just four points with Wekiva right on their trail 20-16 with just two minutes on the clock.

"I mean I had to take timeouts when we shouldn't have because we don't remember how to play base defense against base stuff that we see all the time that stopped them on their first drive. Then we're fine all the way until 8-6 minutes to go and were ready to pack it away and all of a sudden its 'Oh I didn't hear the call' or, 'We got too many guys on the field on defense', pass interference. Then, of course, we are getting cut, tackled to the ground, ripped on the edge, all kind of crazy stuff, and nothing happened so I mean it is what it is. We have to win. End of story. Can't leave it in the hands of anyone else."

But thankfully, when Apopka got the ball back the offense found their strength and resilience converting for a first down and running out the clock to win the 2024 Mayor's Cup.

"Well, you know, ev-

erybody wants to win. It's a rivalry and they always play really really hard against us, they're physical, and they're well coached. So, it means a lot to both of us to win this game," said Rolson after the game.

"The Mayor's Cup is a great win. This is my third game against Wekiva. So, last year we came out with a win, but my freshman year we lost in a close game. So, this means a lot to all of us, there are a lot of hometown boys we used to play with when we were all just little at Wekiva. And a lot of my teammates still see and hang out with those guys to this day. It's just a unique brotherly and intense rivalry," said Apopka's quarterback Tyson Davison after the game.

**Playoffs**

Now that the regular season is over Apopka has to worry about the gauntlet that is the 2024 FHSAA Class 7A Region Two Regional playoffs.

The FHSAA has



# Apopka heads to Regional Playoffs after win over Wekiva



Apopka's Henry Pickard tackles a Wekiva ball carrier on Friday, November 1.



On Friday, November 1, Apopka's Devin Simmons looks to get to the edge and sideline looking for a first down during Apopka's win over the Wekiva Mustangs.



Apopka's Michael Wells attempts an extra point after a touchdown against the Wekiva Mustangs in the Mayor's Cup.



Apopka's Donovan Muldrow (11) tackles a Wekiva ball carrier at the line of scrimmage resulting in no gain during their win over Wekiva.



Apopka's Jockey Sanders and Gamaliel Williams celebrate together after a rushing touchdown from Sanders in the fourth quarter.



Apopka's Trevon Williams (99) tackles a Wekiva running back behind the line of scrimmage resulting in a tackle for loss.



After beating the Wekiva Mustangs on Friday, November 1, Apopka's Trevon Williams (99) hoists the Mayor's Cup with the rest of the Blue Darter football team as they celebrate their win.



# Playoffs: APK prepares for the playoffs and a strong Plant City team

Continued from page 3B

changed how they do playoff seeding with the change of classes this year as well. According to the FHSAA 2024 Football manual, “(a) Playoff field will be made up of 32 teams in each class. (b) 8 Qualifiers in each region. 4 District champions and 4 at large qualifiers. Teams will be seeded 1-8 based on the final FHSAA Max-Preps Rankings. (c) Higher seed will always host in regional tournaments except during the regional quarterfinal round where a district champion is facing an at-large team, the district champion is designated as the host regardless of seeding.

The playoff seed order for Class 7A Region Two is Venice (1), Plant City (2), West Orange (3), Newsome (4), Sumner (5), Ocoee (6), Apopka (7), and Haines City (8).

While there are some teams above that need to

play one more game before playoffs the likelihood of the seeds changing is very slim. Even if some do change, they most likely would not affect Apopka’s seeding or Apopka’s opponents’ seeding.

If the playoff bracket stands as it is now Apopka would be facing the number two seed as the number seven seed. The number two seed as I said above is the Plant City Raiders.

Plant City is one of the best teams in the state of Florida this year, they are 7-2 this season and have scored 427 points while allowing just 198. They are the 63rd-ranked team in Florida and are on a four-game win streak.

Plant City is the eighth-ranked team in all of Class 7A but didn’t have a very strong schedule. The FHSAA has their schedule strength at 3.7 while Apopka sports a 8.87. So while Plant City looks miles better than Apopka on paper the difference in their op-

ponents is quite important.

Plant City has had an average opponent rating of 181.89 while Apopka had an average opponent ranking of 126.78. Apopka also faced five top-100 and two top-50 teams in the state of Florida while Plant City has faced two top-100 and no top-50 teams.

Facing less playoff-caliber opponents will not be in the Raider’s favor when they meet Apopka who has been playing against some of the best teams in the state consistently since week one. The Raiders allowed more than twice the points from their opponents than Apopka did and did so against lower-caliber teams. This proves that Apopka will be a challenge for Plant City as they have not come across a defense like ours all season.

One thing about Plant City is that they can score. The Raiders have 51 touchdowns this season (23 passing and 28 rushing) compared to Apopka’s

14 (three passing and 11 rushing). The Raiders quarterback, Chris Denson is rated 20th in the state in total yards with 2,507 yards. Denson is the definition of a dual-threat quarterback with 1,748 passing yards, 23 passing touchdowns, two interceptions, and a quarterback rating of 138.8 all while also bringing in 759 yards on the ground on 79 carries with ten rushing touchdowns.

The main piece of the Raiders’ offense is their quarterback. If the Apopka defense can corral Denson, force him to be uncomfortable, and don’t let him have time to improvise, they can control his explosive ability. If you can shut Denson down then it comes down to stopping the run.

Leading the Raiders in rushing yards this season is their senior back, Tony Marshall. Marshall has 935 yards, 16 touchdowns, averages 7.7 yards a rush, and 103.9 yards a game on

122 carries. Marshall also has four games where he has collected more than 100 yards.

This will not be an easy matchup, and it is definitely not the one Apopka wants to see in the first round of the playoffs. But, it is much better than what we could’ve been up against in Venice if we were the eighth seed.

This game is truly a toss-up for me just because the statistics and the numbers are so meaningless in this matchup because of the difference in opponents throughout the season. I think the Apopka defense has shown us all year that it can hang with some of the best defenses in the state, but I fear Plant City will be like Tampa Tech in preseason where it could become deflating for the Apopka defense to deal with such an explosive offense.

If Apopka can control the offensive juggernaut that is Plant City then the

Blue Darters have a real chance to win this game with the improvements on offense seen in the Wekiva game that were hopefully built upon this week in practice.

“A lot of our coaches will say to us, ‘build on days, you’ve got to build on momentum even if it’s little.’ You just got to keep building and keep building until we get into playoff form so I hope we bring this energy into practice next week,” said Apopka’s quarterback Tyson Davison after the win over Wekiva.

I asked coach Rolson what the team takes from the win and how they will build on it to be better for playoffs.

“Hopefully, some renewed energy, some renewed hope that we can turn this thing around and play better football and make a run.”

## The 2024-2025 Apopka boy’s basketball schedule



### Apopka Blue Darters Boys Basketball 2024-25 Basketball Schedule

Date	Day	Opponent	Location	JV	Var
Nov 12	Tuesday	Tip Off Tourney vs TBA	Wekiva	----	6:00
Nov 14	Thursday	Tip Off Tourney vs TBA	Wekiva	----	6:00
Nov 20	Wednesday	Winter Park**	Winter Park	6:00	7:30
Nov 22	Friday	Lake Brantley**	Lake Brantley	6:00	7:30
Nov 26-30	Wed-Saturday	Metro vs Florida Challenge	Apopka		
Nov 27	Wednesday	Apopka vs Seminole		----	6:45
Nov 30	Saturday	Apopka vs Lake Howell		----	12:15
Dec 2	Monday	West Orange**	Home	6:00	7:30
Dec 4	Wednesday	Evans	Home	6:00	7:30
Dec 6	Friday	Lake Mary**	Lake Mary	6:00	7:30
Dec 7	Saturday	Freshman Showcase	Lake Howell	9 <sup>th</sup> TBA	
Dec 11	Wednesday	Dr Phillips**	Dr Phillips	6:00	7:30
Dec 13	Friday	Mount Dora	Home	6:00	7:30
Dec 14	Saturday	Orange vs Polk Shootout	Home		
		4 Games Beginning 12:30 PM			
		Apopka vs Discovery			5:00
Dec 17	Tuesday	Ocoee**	Home	6:00	7:30
Dec 19	Thursday	Wekiva**	Home	6:00	7:30
Dec 20	Friday	South Lake	Home	6:00	7:30
Dec 27-28	Fri-Saturday	Florida Get Down	Gainesville		
Dec 27	Friday	Apopka vs TBA		----	TBA
Dec 28	Saturday	Apopka vs TBA		----	TBA
Jan 7-10	Tues-Friday	Metro Conference Tourney	Various	----	TBA
Jan 14	Tuesday	Lake Minneola	Lake Minneola	6:00	7:30
Jan 16	Thursday	Lake Buena Vista	Home	6:00	7:30
Jan 18	Saturday	Jamarius Edler Classic	Lake Region		
		Apopka vs Haines City			8:00
Jan 22	Wednesday	University**	Home	6:00	7:30
Jan 24	Friday	@Windermere	Windermere	5:30	7:00
Jan 27	Monday	Olympia	Home	6:00	7:30
Jan 31	Friday	Mosaic Shootout	Bartow	----	TBA
Feb 4-7	Tues-Friday	District Tournament	TBD	TBD	

\*\* Freshman Game Prior to JV at 4:30 PM

Head Coach: Scott Williams  
Associate Head Coach: John Siers  
JV Coach: Derrick Milley  
Freshman Coach: Maija Jackson



Apopka’s head coach Jeff Rolson talks with his defense before the game against the Wekiva Mustangs on Friday, November 1.

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- "What should I do if I have a transmission leak?" – Fluid leaks are signs of trouble. Check the underside of the transmission casing for wetness and the ground directly below the transmission. Catch the leak early and the only expense you may have is a front or rear seal. Leave the leak unattended and extended damage to the transmission can result and lead to a much higher repair bill.

- "How do I know if my transmission is slipping?" – Slipping is the most common driving symptom of transmission trouble. When the transmission slips, the gear changes become drawn out and a slight hesitation is felt as the shifts occur. A vehicle owner should NOT delay in having the problem checked. This con-

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