

# OPELIKA-AUBURN NEWS

Widespread destruction of schools hurts Gaza’s children

360, B1



Tigers win tune-up before Iron Bowl

SPORTS, C1

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

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## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# GOING TO STATE!



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Opelika High School principal Kelli Fischer presents the AHSAA Class 7A semifinal winner’s trophy to Opelika head coach Bryan Moore after the Bulldogs’ 31-28 win over Auburn High in an AHSAA playoff football game on Friday, Nov. 21, 2025 in Auburn.

## Opelika punches ticket to championship game

### O-A NEWS SPORTS STAFF

Opelika running back CJ Johnson broke free for a game-icing run into Auburn High territory in the final two minutes, and the Bulldogs topped Auburn High 31-28 in the ultimate rivalry game Friday night to advance to the Class 7A state championship. Opelika will face Thompson at 7 p.m. Dec. 3 in the Super 7 at Protective Stadium in Birmingham. Johnson and Opelika staved off a furious late rally bid from Auburn High, after leading 31-14 in the fourth. It was Johnson who broke loose for a 57-yard touchdown to put the Bulldogs up 31-14 with 11:14 to go. Auburn High scored two touchdowns late to cut the lead, including a 9-yard touchdown run by Cason Myers to make it 31-28 with 1:44 left.

### More coverage

For much more on Opelika’s win over Auburn High, please see C1.

Auburn High kicked the ball off to Opelika needing to get a stop to get the ball back, but that’s when Johnson broke loose on another huge run down to the Auburn High 25-yard line. Opelika was able to kneel out the clock soon after. Opelika led 21-14 at the half after a back-and-forth first two quarters. Then Opelika kicker Reese Beasley gave the Bulldogs a two-score lead with a 30-yard field goal to make it 24-14 with 1:38 left in the third quarter. Opelika’s Xavier Thomas opened the game with fireworks, running back a 34-

yard interception return for a touchdown on just the second play of the game. Auburn High responded with a 16-play scoring drive capped by a touchdown run by defensive lineman and Kansas State commit Carnell Jackson in the jumbo package — and they went back and forth from there. Opelika’s Blake Johnson punched in his own touchdown from 1-yard out to put Opelika back ahead with 1:24 left in the first quarter. In the second quarter, Cason Myers hit Levi Kelly for a 16-yard touchdown with 7:52 left before the break to tie it 14-14. But that tie was short-lived as Opelika’s CJ Johnson returned the ensuing kickoff 95

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## Restaurants open on Thanksgiving

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Thanksgiving is around the corner, and people are ready to dig into their favorite dishes. Preparing home-cooked Thanksgiving meals can be delicious, but it can also be time-consuming and costly. If you or your family don’t feel like cooking this year, the Auburn-Opelika area has restaurants that will be open on Thanksgiving and offer traditional and non-traditional meals for families to enjoy. Here’s a list of restaurants in the Auburn-Opelika area that will be

open on Thanksgiving:

### Thanksgiving meals in the area

**Cracker Barrel**  
1051 Fox Run Ave., Opelika  
334-749-2363  
Hours: 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Cracker Barrel is open regular hours on Thanksgiving Day, with a traditional meal beginning at 11 a.m. The restaurant will also offer fully prepped meals in less

Please see **OPEN**, Page A2

## Facilities closing for holiday

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Most facilities in Auburn and Opelika will be closed Thursday, Nov. 27, and Friday, Nov. 28, during the Thanksgiving holiday. Emergency services will remain on their regular schedules, and Thursday’s trash, garbage and recycling routes will run on Friday. Downtown parking in Auburn will be free from Nov. 24 to Nov. 28 during Auburn University’s Thanksgiving break,

except for the Wright Street Parking Deck. **Auburn Public Library:** The Auburn Public Library will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday and will remain closed on Thursday and Friday. **Auburn Parks and Recreation:** Most Auburn Parks and Recreation facilities will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday and will be closed Thursday and Friday. The Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center

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**Weather**  
A shower and thunderstorm  
**High 74 • Low 61**  
FORECAST • A8

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