



Area players to watch this season

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The News - Messenger

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NIL deals for high school athletes target for lawmakers

Jessie Balmert and Anna Lynn Winfrey
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

An Ohio State football commit successfully sued to profit off his name, image and likeness. Then, the Ohio High School Athletic Association voted to allow NIL for high school students state-

wide.
But Ohio lawmakers could undo all of that by banning NIL deals for students in grades 7 through 12 as soon as next year.
Rep. Adam Bird, R-New Richmond, plans to introduce a bill in 2026 to prohibit high school and middle school students from profiting from NIL, WEWS first reported. Bird told the statehouse

bureau that Ohio’s young athletes shouldn’t face the pressure of making money from their sport.
“Sports should be about fun and learning and growing,” said Bird, a former coach and school superintendent. “It’s absurd to think that the athletes are going to now make more money than the

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Saint Joseph Catholic Church lit up the night sky on Dec. 1 with its restored 239-foot steeple. ROGER LAPOINTE/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

St. Joseph Catholic Church lights up night in Fremont

FREMONT – Saint Joseph Catholic Church lit up the night sky on Dec. 1, 2025.
Saint Joseph’s steeple is the tallest in Fremont. The top of its cross measures 239 feet from the ground.
Last year, it received a complete restoration and repairs that included the entire steeple, inside and out.
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Is it illegal to use your phone at a red light?

Bailey Gallion
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

If you’ve ever stopped at a red light in Ohio, you’ve probably seen drivers around you on their phones – or taken the opportunity yourself to send a quick text or change your playlist.
Does checking your phone while you’re idling mean you’re running afoul of Ohio’s distracted driving law?
Ohio’s law took effect in April 2023. It forbids drivers from holding or “supporting” a phone with their bodies while driving. It allows officers to pull over drivers holding phones even if they aren’t breaking other laws.
Under the 2023 law, drivers are not allowed to hold phones in their hands or place them on their laps – but exceptions apply.

Is it illegal to use a phone at a red light in Ohio?
No.
Drivers can use electronic wireless communication devices if their vehicle is stationary and outside a lane of travel, parked on a road or highway due to an emergency or road closure, or “at a traffic control signal that is currently directing traffic to stop” – in other words, at a red light.
Ohio law also makes exceptions for people driving public safety
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