

# 2023 Thanksgiving Day Football

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**Supplement to the Melrose Weekly News  
Friday, November 17, 2023**

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# League title on the line in 63rd Thanksgiving Classic

## 113th meeting between Melrose & Wakefield is on the road



THE 2023 Melrose High School football team.

(Terry Blieler photo)

By JENNIFER GENTILE

WAKEFIELD—It's not Thanksgiving if Melrose and Wakefield aren't crushing each other on a football field before holiday turkey is served. And on Thursday, Nov. 23, the two teams meet for the 63rd Thanksgiving Classic held this year at Landrigan Field at 10:15 a.m.

Both teams are coming off very strong seasons that ultimately fell shy of playoffs. Both have nearly identical records. Wakefield (7-3, 2-2) is coming off two non-playoff consolation shutouts including one over Lynn Classical, 28-0, last week. And, Melrose (7-3, 3-1) fell just shy to Wayland in consolation play last week, 35-28.

This year the Middlesex League had parity and then some. Because of that parity Melrose is in the position to earn the Freedom League title over Stoneham (3-1). A loss will give the ML Freedom outright to the Spartans.

Wakefield has held the trophy for two years and that's two holidays too long for Melrose, who were bested by the Warriors 15-12 in 2022 and 21-13 in 2021.

Melrose leads the all-time series 63-

43-6.

While playoffs evaded Melrose this season, they have much to boast about. A strong winning record. Numerous inevitable All Stars, two strong quarterbacks and a great returning junior class. And a possible league title.

Just one year after their Super Bowl win, Wakefield comes to the field as a run-heavy offense led by new quarterback Matt Beaver, who filled in after Wakefield lost their talented freshman quarterback Weston McNeilly to injury after game 4, which changed their offense. Look for running back Miles Sanchez to carry the ball a lot and for wide receiver Steve Woish, the team's lone returning All Star, to lend some experience on the field.

Melrose head coach Tim Morris always holds Wakefield, coached by former colleague John Rafferty, with a lot of respect. "They're always a well-coached team and play a similar style. Big up front. They had a bit of a turnover but I expect sound defense and a good running game."

Melrose brings to the field a broad

team made up of mainly seniors and juniors who helped Melrose compile a 6-2 pre-playoff record, better than much of the teams still competing for a shot at Gillette.

At quarterback, Melrose's Connor Brophy has been simply lights out and he will for sure pose a challenge for the Warriors. A two-time Melrose Weekly Player of the Week, a recent effort saw him score four touchdowns while rushing for nearly 300 yards against Wilmington.

"Connor has been great all season," says Morris. "He does it all. Throws, runs and his special teams work has been fantastic. He was punting the heck out of the ball on Friday."

The Warriors should also look out for Melrose senior captain Ben Cassavoy who has been a beast all season. He's a truly tireless player, notes Morris. "Ben has just been great on both sides of the ball."

And while Melrose has had its share of injuries in some key spots, it hasn't prevented them from still winning. Notes coach Morris, "We've been banged up, but, hey, you just play your healthy guys."

That includes some playmakers such as Marco Albanese, Nick Hitchman and Max Lanciani, who Brophy may opt to pass and hand off to over the day. The collection have scored a lot of touchdowns with a distinct ability to pick off passes, too. They will keep the Warriors busy.

In terms of common opponents, Melrose and Wakefield both fell to Burlington this season, but Melrose beat Stoneham, suggesting the boys in red and white might have the inside edge. The old saying "Throwing the records out the window" may be apt here. In a league where every team had the opportunity to beat each other (sans Watertown) it's safe to say anything can happen.

Concludes Morris, "These games are often down to the wire, nothing less is expected. Our team has battled all season. I'm proud of these kids and winning a title and the Thanksgiving trophy is a great way for our seniors to go out."

Take the quick trip north to Wakefield High and witness the 113th clash in person. It will be sure to be another great one!

### Good Luck in the Big Game!

&

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MHS football head coach Tim Morris and his senior captains Ben Cassavoy (left) and Nicolas Chiulli (right). (Terry Blieler photo)

# Thanksgiving ticket information



MELROSE—The 63rd Annual Thanksgiving Classic between the Melrose High and Wakefield High football teams will take place on Thursday, Nov. 23 at 10:15 a.m. at Landrigan Field in Wakefield.

Tickets will be available in person at the Mayor's Office and Grays Appliance at 945 Main Street. There are no online purchases required.

Advanced ticket prices are \$5.00 for students and senior citizens, and \$7.00 for adults.

All game day tickets are \$10.00.

## Middlesex League Standings (pre-Thanksgiving)

Freedom League			Liberty Division		
	League	Overall		League	Overall
Stoneham	4-1	6-4	Belmont	4-1	5-4
<b>Melrose</b>	3-1	7-3	Winchester	3-1	8-2
Burlington	3-2	6-4	Woburn	3-1	7-3
Wakefield	2-2	7-3	Reading	2-3	3-7
Wilmington	2-3	5-5	Arlington	1-4	4-6
Watertown	0-5	3-7	Lexington	1-4	1-9

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# Lots to cheer about for 2023 MHS cheerleading squad



THE 2023 Melrose High Cheer Team.

(photo by Raj Das edphotos.com)

**By JENNIFER GENTILE**  
 MELROSE—The Melrose High cheer team brought nothing but the best this fall as they supported the Melrose High football team on Friday nights and ran their own successful competitive season.

New Melrose head coach Meaghan Delgenio saw her

team qualify for regionals this year. The former senior captain of the team graduated at MHS in 2016 and was assistant coach for 5 years before taking over this fall.

“This is the first fall season that we’ve qualified to compete at regionals. At our last two competitions, we have achieved the

highest scores in the program’s fall season history,” she reports. “We have put in so many hours, and so much hard work, and I couldn’t be prouder of this team!”

The team is captained by seniors Adele McAndrews and Taylor MacDonald. Six seniors lead Melrose including Ava Har-

ison, Adele McAndrews, Hannah Mahoney, Jordan Tobin, Meaghan Laidlaw and Taylor MacDonald.

“Every season brings its challenges! But, this has been one of our most successful fall seasons,” she says. “We’ve seen a lot of success in our past years winter season too. Our fall season is always a bit more of a challenge because of how short it is. In the cheer world we always say ‘winter season is a marathon but the fall is a sprint.’”

But Thanksgiving Day football remains the go-to appearance of the year for this team, much to the delight of fans. This holiday they will be showcasing their skill on the sidelines at Landrig-an Field in Wakefield.

Says the coach, “Thanksgiving

is such a special tradition, we’re so grateful to be a part of it. The girls love cheering at the game.”

While they will not be performing at halftime, they will be showcasing their routine at the high school pep rally on Wednesday morning.

“I just want to thank everyone who has helped with the season, especially the parents who have showed such overwhelming support and fundraising opportunities. We couldn’t have done this without you. And I am grateful to Mary Gil who has stepped in as my assistant coach. She has truly made an impact on this program, the girls and me. I appreciate her sharing her time and knowledge with us this season.”

Go Melrose!

## Happy Thanksgiving!

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## Good Luck in the BIG Game!

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# MHS Marching Band & Color Guard rocked this fall



THE 2023 Melrose High Marching Band and Color Guard.

(Terry Blieler photo)

MELROSE—No MHS fall football season is complete without the award-winning efforts of the Melrose High Marching Band and Color Guard, who offered the perfect arrangements during Friday night lights and brought home medals during their competitive season.

Thanks in part to their unique halftime show, Distant Horizons, a show that passes through three archways, leading to the horizons of mystery, hope, and strength.

MHS Band Director Matt Reppucci was inspired by music and with the lantern lighting the way, the guard leads the band on this journey with costumes reminis-

cent of foreign lands, silks high-lighting each part's mood, and weapons signaling the barriers along the way.

The arrangement is an eclectic mix of tunes including Scheherazade - Rimsky-Korsakov, Ritual Fire Dance - Manuel de Falla, Nothing Is Lost (You Give Me Strength) (From "Avatar: The Way of Water") - The Weeknd, and Caravan - Duke Ellington.

Leading the team this season are Drum Major Ava Wenzel, Color Guard Captains: Lily Dale & Hannah Haseltine, Flute Section Leader: Ellie Sweeney, Clarinet

BAND Page 7

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## Melrose-Wakefield Through the years

1901	Melrose 12, Wakefield 0	1972	Melrose 28, Wakefield 14
1903	Melrose 5, Wakefield 0	1973	Wakefield 18, Melrose 0
1904	Melrose 50, Wakefield 0	1974	Melrose 50, Wakefield 26
1918	Wakefield 12, Melrose 7	1975	Wakefield 24, Melrose 16
1919	Wakefield 6, Melrose 0	1976	Melrose 24, Wakefield 14
1920	Melrose 20, Wakefield 6	1977	Melrose 30, Wakefield 6
1921	Wakefield 26, Melrose 6	1978	Melrose 24, Wakefield 6
1922	Melrose 26, Wakefield 0	1979	Wakefield 14, Melrose 0
1923	Melrose 12, Wakefield 0	1980	Melrose 14, Wakefield 0
1924	Melrose 27, Wakefield 0	1981	Melrose 12, Wakefield 7
1925	Melrose 33, Wakefield 0	1982	Melrose 31, Wakefield 20
1926	Melrose 14, Wakefield 0	1983	Melrose 16, Wakefield 7
1927	Melrose 57, Wakefield 0	1984	Melrose 14, Wakefield 7
1928	Melrose 40, Wakefield 12	1985	Wakefield 14, Melrose 0
1929	Melrose 37, Wakefield 0	1986	Wakefield 32, Melrose 0
1930	Melrose 33, Wakefield 0	1987	Wakefield 15, Melrose 14
1931	Melrose 0, Wakefield 0	1988	Melrose 26, Wakefield 10
1932	Melrose 13, Wakefield 13	1989	Wakefield 10, Melrose 6
1933	Melrose 6, Wakefield 0	1990	Wakefield 0, Melrose 0
1934	Melrose 40, Wakefield 0	1991	Wakefield 14, Melrose 13
1935	Melrose 13, Wakefield 0	1992	Melrose 20, Wakefield 6
1936	Melrose 6, Wakefield 0	1993	Wakefield 17, Melrose 14
1937	Melrose 13, Wakefield 0	1994	Wakefield 14, Melrose 0
1938	Melrose 7, Wakefield 0	1995	Wakefield 28, Melrose 27
1939	Melrose 7, Wakefield 0	1996	Wakefield 3, Melrose 0
1940	Melrose 6, Wakefield 0	1997	Wakefield 12, Melrose 0
1941	Melrose 7, Wakefield 0	1998	Wakefield 20, Melrose 17
1942	Melrose 19, Wakefield 0	1999	Wakefield 14, Melrose 14
1943	Melrose 13, Wakefield 6	2000	Wakefield 34, Melrose 13
1944	Melrose 6, Wakefield 0	2001	Wakefield 35, Melrose 14
1945	Wakefield 7, Melrose 6	2002	Wakefield 12, Melrose 7
1946	Melrose 13, Wakefield 0	2003	Wakefield 20, Melrose 14
1947	Wakefield 6, Melrose 0	2004	Wakefield 7, Melrose 3
1948	Melrose 7, Wakefield 6	2005	Wakefield 27, Melrose 7
1949	Wakefield 8, Melrose 0	2006	Wakefield 21, Melrose 0
1950	Melrose 7, Wakefield 7	2007	Melrose 15, Wakefield 14
1951	Wakefield 27, Melrose 13	2008	Wakefield 34, Melrose 27
1952	Wakefield 19, Melrose 0	2009	Wakefield 14, Melrose 13
1953	Wakefield 34, Melrose 0	2010	Wakefield 15, Melrose 7
1954	Melrose 12, Wakefield 0	2011	Wakefield 3, Melrose 0
1955	Wakefield 39, Melrose 13	2012	Melrose 28, Wakefield 15
1956	Melrose 21, Wakefield 18	2013	Wakefield 17, Melrose 14 (1)
1957	Wakefield 25, Melrose 13	2013	Melrose 13, Wakefield 7 (2)
1958	Melrose 14, Wakefield 14	2014	Melrose 17, Wakefield 15 (1)
1959	Melrose 20, Wakefield 6	2014	Melrose 24, Wakefield 0 (2)
1960	Melrose 12, Wakefield 8	2014	Melrose 15, Wakefield 14 (3)
1961	Wakefield 22, Melrose 12	2015	Melrose 21, Wakefield 0 (1)
1962	Melrose 0, Wakefield 0	2015	Melrose 27, Wakefield 8 (2)
1963	Melrose 34, Wakefield 6	2016	Melrose 28, Wakefield 8
1964	Wakefield 27, Melrose 18	2017	Melrose 35, Wakefield 12
1965	Wakefield 14, Melrose 6	2018	Melrose 34, Wakefield 13
1966	Melrose 22, Wakefield 12	2019	Melrose 35, Wakefield 7
1967	Melrose 8, Wakefield 6	2021	Melrose 35, Wakefield 0 (1)
1968	Melrose 50, Wakefield 13	2021	Melrose 13, Wakefield 21 (2)
1969	Melrose 20, Wakefield 6	2022	Wakefield 15, Melrose 12
1970	Wakefield 20, Melrose 0		
1971	Melrose 32, Wakefield 20		

**Melrose leads series, 62-43-7**

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**BAND** Continued from Page 5



**THE MHS Marching Band electrified Friday nights this fall at Fred Green Field. Their halftime time show Distant Horizons brought fans to their feet and won them awards during their successful competitive season. (courtesy photo)**

Section Leader: Erin Regan, Saxophone Co-Section Leaders: Theo Tervalon & Sid McQuaid, Trumpet Section Leader: Chad Koutalidis, Low Brass Section Leader: Jonah Tully & Sophie Walton Drumline Section Leader: Ben Rossi, Pit Section Leader: Kush Karamcheti.

Soloists include Chad Koutalidis - Trumpet, Joshua Grant - Trumpet, Theo Tervalon- Alto Saxophone, and Jonah Tully - Baritone.

Seniors this year are Ava Wenzel, Theo Tervalon, Scarlett Timm, Lily Dale, Ben Rossi, Ellie Sweeney, Sophie Walton, Chad Koutalidis, Adam Saragosa and Peter Sulahian.

Led by director Matt Repucci since 2012, the award-winning band had an exciting competitive season, collecting medals along the way. They secured a Best Visual Award, Best Musical Best Overall in their North Andover competitions and have earned a first place in Div. 4 medal along

with a second-place finish in Div. 4 at the NESBA finals.

Aside from showcasing their half-time show, they also took part in workshops led by Allison LaCasse, and worked with Australian performance coach Mark Bain on performance under pressure and preparation strategies and completed a Marching Health clinic to focus on wellness. It was a busy and fun filled season.

# Happy Thanksgiving

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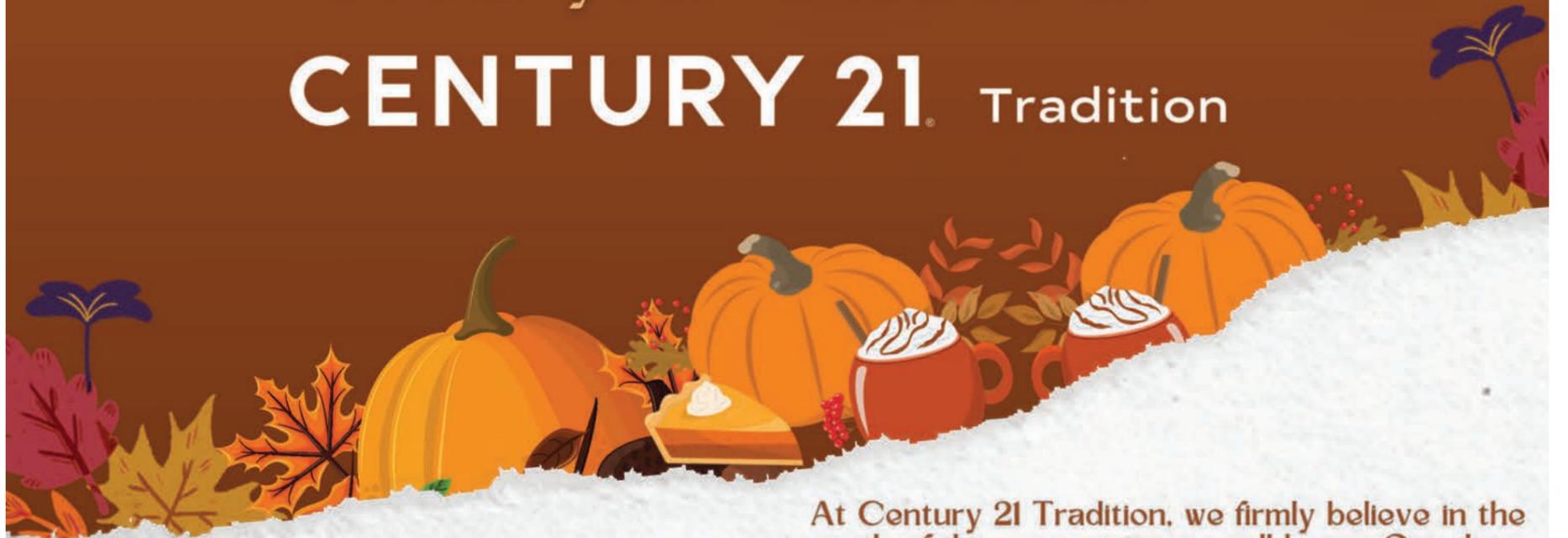
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# Thanksgiving

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Building upon the success of last year's endeavor, where we had the privilege of providing free hoodies and towels, this year, we are delighted to continue this cherished tradition by offering cozy beanies. We couldn't be more thankful for the opportunity to share our appreciation with you, our cherished community. We look forward to seeing you at Wakefield High School at 10:15 a.m. for a day of warmth, unity, and celebration.

\*Beanies are available for the first 1500 Melrose fans and 1500 Wakefield fans respectively. Actual beanies not pictured\*



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