



A feature publication of The Courier & REVIEW TIMES

Discover 419

April 2025



Flag City Squad plays for the love of the game

Local football team builds momentum with championship

By: Riley Dickinson

If you're looking for hard-hitting, competitive football this spring and summer, look no further than the Flag City Phantoms.

They've got a national championship to back it up.

The Findlay-based Phantoms won the 2025 USFA AA Orange Blossom Bowl in Orlando, Florida in January, coming away with a dominant 27-0 victory over the West Virginia Leviathan in just their second season as a squad.

Following their 12-5 season that also included an Ohio Valley Blue Collar Bowl Championship and a runner-up finish in the Players Football Association 2A Division, the Phantoms were honored in Findlay by Mayor Christina Muryn. Muryn and Findlay City



Council celebrated the Phantoms' victory and recognized Feb. 18 as Flag City Phantoms' Day with an official acknowledgement.

Who are the Phantoms?

The Phantoms aren't a college football team.

They aren't an NFL team, nor are they an arena football team.

So, what exactly are they?

The Phantoms play professional advancement

Continued on page 3



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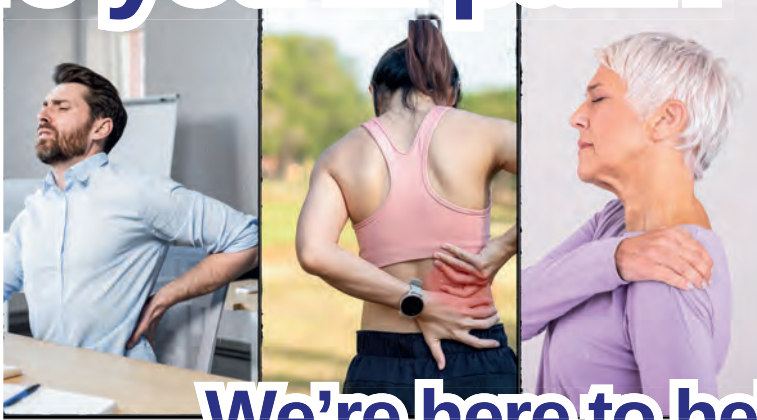
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football, and are a member of the PFA, a football association made up of 11 teams from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Kentucky. The Phantoms are owned by Aaron Sanders, but Sanders is far from your traditional sports team owner. Sanders is also a member of the Phantoms roster, playing tight end for a hard-nosed squad full of talented players.



Phantoms coach Dameer Relford. (left).

The Phantoms aren't a bunch of washed-up old guys playing touch football. They play football just like what you see on TV — it's physical, it's exciting, and it's exactly the type of event anyone looking for a fun family outing could get into.

“(Spectators) can expect hard-hitting football,” Sanders said. “Intensity, just the environment. We have about a couple hundred fans every game, that number keeps growing more and more. We bring that intensity, we bring that swag. We've got the professionalism you're looking for, a lot of high-intensity plays. We just try and bring that family atmosphere, and be inviting to the community.”

Sanders took over the Phantoms two years ago, completely rebranding the team and expanding its promotional outreach. Today, the Phantoms are the most marketed professional advancement team in the Midwest, and national champions.

“When I started out, it was the Findlay Knights,” Sanders said. “Ken and Lori Keith, they ran the Findlay Knights as owners. I was just a player. Lori sadly passed away from colon cancer, so I took over the team.

“I decided I wanted to do my own thing, so I started the Flag City Phantoms,” Sanders said. “My wife picked the colors, and I wanted something original, mascot-wise.”

With Sanders being both owner and player, he needed someone to make decisions from

the sidelines. That's where head coach Dameer Relford comes in. Relford is a motivational coach who expects the best out of his players. His leadership was crucial to the Phantoms' title run.

“My biggest point of coaching is to build relationships,” Relford said. “Aaron and I have built a solid relationship, and he has done everything that he can for this team to be successful, to put them in a winning position. It starts at the top. His marketing effort, his

drive or that motivation. We spend a lot of time talking about the process and channeling that love and that passion for the game around the right core values. It's everything to these guys.

“To be doing this at this level, to invest your own time, your own body, your own money, your own effort, you've got to have a love for the game,” Relford continued. “We know that this is sometimes an escape. My coaching perspective, this isn't an escape, it's a game. ...



DeVontae Farmer (19) throws a pass during Phantoms training camp.

recruiting effort, his ability to maneuver and navigate the different transactions that take place from the front office level. It's been outstanding to have that level of support and leadership at the top.”

A tough game

Playing professional advancement football has its ups and downs. There aren't any NFL scouts waiting to interview you after the game, but there are local children asking for your autograph. You don't get to play on NBC Sports in front of 900,000 people, but you might get to be the spark that makes a young person in the crowd want to start playing football.

Perhaps most of all, for these players, it's a way to continue their love for the game after they move on from high school or college.

“It is everything to these guys, honestly,” Relford said. “It's everything to me, it's everything to this organization. It's another avenue for us to show our passion, our love, our understanding of the game. At this level, with the group that I have, it's such a talented and skillful and knowledgeable group of men that are surrounded around one common goal. Some of these guys, we need it. We need that

So much of what I've learned from this game applies to everyday life. Being a part of a team, having a winning mindset, putting value on the process over the outcome, not being so transactional and being transformational. My biggest goal is to make sure that I reach and touch guys and help them understand that the same process that we follow to be successful, is the same in life. There's a process to getting that job, getting that raise, getting that house. There's a process to winning. We've got a game plan. It's the same process.”

This season, the Phantoms will be playing home games at War Memorial Park in Ada. Their season begins on the road on March 30, and the Phantoms will play their first home game on April 26 against the Capital City Bandits. The Phantoms have four additional home games, on a three-weekend slate from May 17-31, and on June 21.

Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for children six years old or older, and children under five get in free. Concessions and a 50/50 raffle are available. Themed nights include veterans' appreciation, cancer awareness and autism awareness days.



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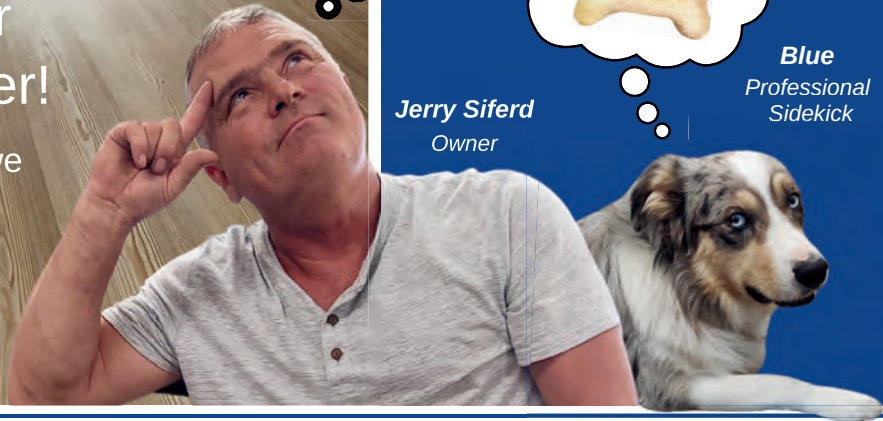
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LOCAL EVENT CALENDAR

APRIL 4



HOPE HOUSE BENEFIT AUCTION

Hancock Hotel

631 S Main St, Findlay **Doors open at 6 pm**

Join us on Friday, April 4, 2025, at the Hancock Hotel in Findlay for an inspiring evening benefiting Hope House. Sponsored by Hancock Federal Credit Union, this event features keynote speaker Sara Stockwell from Battelle for Kids. Don't miss this opportunity to support a vital cause. Program begins at 7 pm. Save the date! Registration ends April 3rd, so act fast!

APRIL 5



KITTEN SHOWER

Humane Society & SPCA of Hancock County

4550 Fostoria Ave, Findlay **11 am - noon**

Bring a gift for the kittens: KMR (powdered), canned kitten food, animal safe heating pad, kitchen scale, bottles, non-clumping unscented litter, small blankets or any of our wish list items. Learn more about kitten season, play kitten themed shower games & enjoy treats. We might even be able to play with kittens! Make a \$25 donation at the event to submit names for the next litter of kittens. Please RSVP (419) 423-1664 to let us know you're coming. Sitting is limited to 25.

APRIL 11



COMEDY WITH A PURPOSE

Marathon Center for the Performing Arts

200 W Main Cross St, Findlay **7 - 9 pm**

Join us for a night of comedy that makes a difference! Your ticket helps City Mission provide shelter, meals, and essential services to those experiencing homelessness in Hancock County. Enjoy big laughs, great company, and a powerful cause—all in one event. Tickets available at mcpa.org. For more info, call (419) 423-9151. Don't miss this chance to laugh, give back, and change lives!

APRIL 12



GROWING UP 90'S: FAMILY NIGHT

Hancock Historical Museum

422 W Sandusky St, Findlay **5 - 8 pm**

Bring back memories while making tie-dye t-shirts, listening to hits from the 1990s performed by a local artist and exploring the museum's exhibit showcasing what life was like in Hancock County decades ago (yes, it's been that long). The event is free, with no registration required, as a part of The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation's Fun for All series. Themed food and drinks, crafts and activities and a free children's book are also on offer.

APRIL 19



419 DAY

On April 19, we recognize our area code and the vibrant communities that make it special. From local businesses to hardworking neighbors, this day is all about celebrating what makes living, working, and playing in the 419 so great. Show your local pride and be part of the celebration!

APRIL 19



EASTER EGG HUNT

Northwest Ohio Railroad Preservation

12505 County Rd 99, Findlay **10 am - 2 pm**

Join us for a continuous scavenger egg hunt from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., open to all ages! Find eggs, enjoy treats, and you might even win a Golden Ticket for the 2025 season. No competition—just fun for everyone! Quarter-scale train rides run until 4 p.m. Admission: \$3 adults | \$2 kids (12 & under) – includes a train ride!

APRIL 26



SPRING WILDFLOWER TOUR

Wintergarden/St John's Nature Preserve

615 S Wintergarden Rd, Bowling Green **10 - 11:30 am**

Discover the beauty of seasonal wildflowers and diverse plant life on this 90-minute guided tour through one of BG's most peaceful parks. This free program requires no pre-registration. Wear weather-appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear for trail walking. For more information, email stutzman@bgohio.org. Don't miss this chance to connect with nature!

APRIL 27



CLOTHIN' TROJANS 5k

Bigelow Hill School

300 Hillcrest, Findlay **2 pm**

For over 20 years, Clothe-A-Child has partnered with local schools to provide clothing for underprivileged children in Hancock and surrounding counties. This community-wide effort continues to grow, helping kids in need. Each selected child receives a \$250 shopping trip at Kohl's. Join our flat 5K to raise funds and support even more students. Every step makes a difference! Register today at <https://runsignup.com/Race/info/OH/Findlay/ClothinTrojans5k2023>

This information was pulled from community websites and was considered current at press time. We apologize for any information that may have been changed/updated after this edition was printed.



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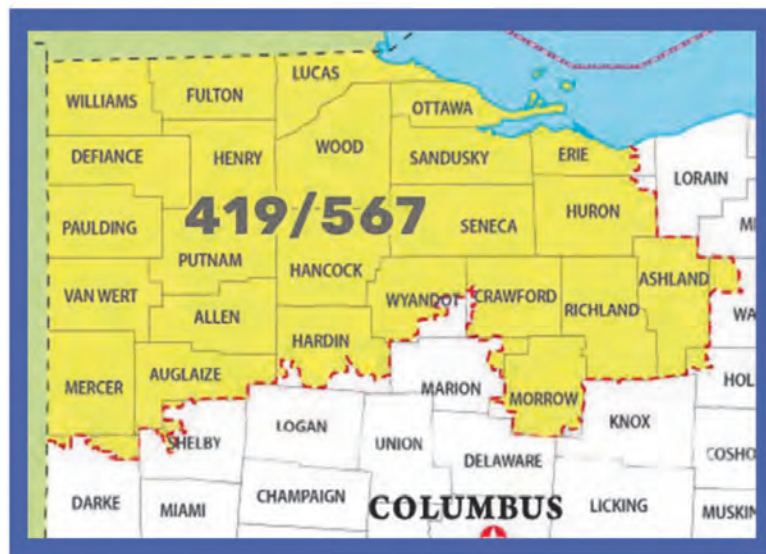
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Discover 419 Summer Fun Guide

2025

The **2025 Discover 419 Summer Fun Guide** is your regional summer travel and tourism resource for many of the great events, places to see, and things to do in the 419 area code.



This magazine will be distributed on May 10th in

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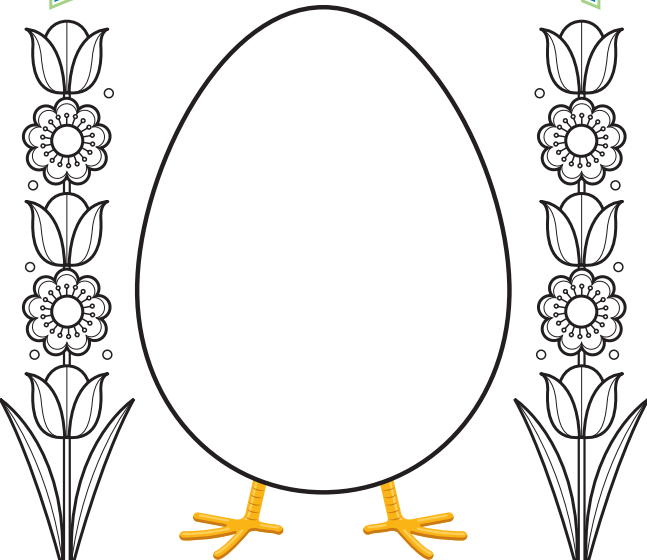


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Eggcellent Word Scramble

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- KEBTSA _____
- RETASE GEG _____
- TBENON _____
- OHAETCLC _____
- LYLJE NSEAB _____

ANSWERS: bunny, basket, Easter egg, bonnet, chocolate, jelly beans

Eggcellent Trivia

One hen can lay up to 300 eggs per year.

The tradition of decorating eggs for Easter originated in Ukraine.

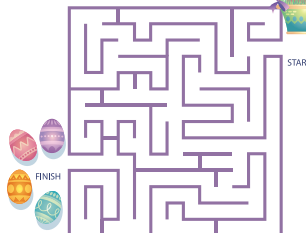
An egg's shell color usually corresponds to the earlobe color of the hen that produced it.

Ostriches lay the largest eggs of any living bird.

One ostrich egg can serve about 24 people for breakfast!

HOLIDAY MAZE

Please help me find eggs for my basket.





How to celebrate Earth Day as a family

Protecting the planet is a year-round responsibility, and that obligation is emphasized each April 22 when the world celebrates Earth Day. In 1969, an oil spill in California killed thousands of sea animals and contributed to significant ocean pollution. This environmental disaster inspired Gaylord Nelson and Denis Hayes to establish Earth Day in 1970 as a global event to raise awareness about environmental issues.

Every year around a billion people are motivated to protect the planet for Earth Day. Families can work together to do their part in protecting the environment. Here are some ways families can commemorate Earth Day together.

Clean up the neighborhood

Families can work together to make their neighborhoods cleaner. Litter in streets or parks can end up in waterways after being carried into storm drains by rain or wind, according to the Marine Debris

Program. A 2016 report from the United Nations found that nearly 50 percent of cetacean and seabird species have ingested litter. Picking up litter from local neighborhoods is a relatively easy way for families to do their part on Earth Day.

Walk and bike more

Families can learn about their carbon footprints and how their lifestyle choices affect the environment. One way to cut down on carbon emissions is to walk or bike to school and to skip the car whenever possible.

Visit a local park or wildlife habitat

Families can experience the beauty of nature and be reminded about humankind's responsibility to protect habitats and wildlife at a park, sanctuary or wildlife area. When visiting, it's important to stick to trails and remain mindful of leaving no trace behind.

Create reusable bags

Individuals can turn old T-shirts

and other clothing into reusable cloth shopping bags. There are no-sew project instructions online that offer tips about how to repurpose old clothing that is no longer worn into something Earth-friendly.

Plant more greenery

It doesn't have to be a tree, but families can visit a garden center to purchase seeds, seedlings or full-grown shrubbery to enhance their landscapes with more Earth-friendly plants. CO2METER, a carbon dioxide monitoring website, says plants and trees, combined with oceans, remove about 45 percent of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities each year. A typical hardwood tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of CO₂ per year.

Embrace locally grown foods

Families can plan meals together that feature in-season foods purchased at a local organic farmer's market.

Earth Day is a time when families can work together to help protect and preserve the planet.

100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from April 1925

The month of April has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in April 1925.

- King Yeta III of Barotseland and the Lozi people in what is now Zambia abolishes the corvée on April 1 in the British colony of Northern Rhodesia. The corvée is a system of forced labor that is considered the last vestige of slavery in the colony.

- On April 2, Harry Pierpont is arrested in Detroit for a string of bank robberies across Indiana and Michigan. Pierpont escapes from prison eight years later and ultimately joins John Dillinger in committing numerous additional bank robberies.

- Henry Ford begins running a private air freight service between Detroit and Chicago on April 2.

- On April 4, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg agrees to run in the second round of the German presidential election in place of Karl Jarres, who had won the first round. Jarres withdrew his name prior to the second round, paving the way for Hindenburg's candidacy and ultimate victory.

- Several men working for criminal Al Capone severely assault investigative reporter Robert St. John on April 6. St. John had previously authored several pieces exposing Capone's criminal empire in Cicero, Illinois.

- Adolf Hitler formally renounces his Austrian citizenship on April 7. Hitler would remain

stateless and ineligible for public office until being granted German citizenship in early 1932.

- In conjunction with the British Colonial Office, the Australian government announces a plan on April 8 to encourage nearly half a million British citizens to relocate to Australia. The government offers low-interest loans and skills training to entice people to move.

- A demonstration against Lord Balfour in Damascus ends with two people dead and 11 wounded on April 9. The protests were a response to Balfour's promotion of Jewish interests in Palestine. Balfour would depart Damascus in haste a day after the demonstration.

- F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* is published on April 10.

- Police in Denver, Colorado, carry out a raid on Good Friday on April 10. More than 200 people, including bootleggers and gamblers, are arrested. The raid was ordered by Denver Mayor Benjamin F. Stapleton, a member of the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK had benefitted from many of the institutions targeted during the raid, which prompted the organization to strip Stapleton of his membership months later.

- The James Simpson-Roosevelt Asiatic Expedition departs New York City on April 11. The expedition aimed to collect wildlife species from mountainous regions in Asia, and would ultimately return with thousands of specimens.

- Women are granted the right to vote in the Dominion of Newfoundland on April 13.

- Anarchists open fire on the vehicle of Tsar Boris III of Bulgaria on April 14. Though King Boris is grazed by a bullet and two of his companions are killed, the assassination attempt fails.

- The Caterpillar Tractor Company is founded upon the merger of Holt Manufacturing Company and the C.L. Best Tractor Company on April 15.

- After consuming an excessive amount of hot dogs and soda, Babe Ruth undergoes surgery on April 17. Ruth had collapsed on a team train 10 days earlier and is treated for what doctors characterized as an intestinal abscess.

- The Communist Party of Korea is founded in Japanese-ruled Korea on April 17.

- The use of a sign shaped like a shield is standardized as the way to identify federally funded highways in the United States on April 20.

- The entire crew of the Japanese cargo ship S.S. Raifuku Maru perishes when the ship sinks in a storm on April 21. The ship was transporting wheat from the U.S. to Germany but rescue efforts failed due to stormy conditions.

- Franz Kafka's novel, *Der Prozess* (later translated in English as *The Trial*), is published posthumously on April 26. Kafka, a relative unknown at the time of the book's publication, died of tuberculosis roughly nine months earlier.

- France begins air raids on Morocco as part of the Rif War on April 27. The raids would continue intermittently for the next nine years.

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APRIL/MAY CLASSES [Register at www.FindlayArtLeague.org](http://www.FindlayArtLeague.org)

P.E.A.C.E. Stencil Workshop-Saturday, 7:00-9:00 pm, April 5; Tuition: \$25, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome (18+). Instructor: Amber Kear

Youth Pottery, Ages 9-17-Saturdays, Wheel 9:00-10:30 am, Glazing 10:30-noon, April 12, 19, 26; Tuition: \$150, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

Parent & Child (or Date) "Play-in-Clay" Wheel Throwing-Saturday, 1:00-3:00 pm, April 12 OR 19; Tuition: \$100 (for two), all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

Beginning Pottery Wheel Throwing-Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00, April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 21; Tuition: \$180, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome (18+). Instructor: Marcie Allen

Beginning Pottery Wheel Throwing-Thursdays, 7:00-9:00, April 17, 24, May 1, 8, 22; Tuition: \$180, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome (18+). Instructor: Marcie Allen

Earth Day Evening Candle Pour-Tuesday, 7:00-9:00 pm, April 22; Tuition: \$50, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome (18+). Instructor: Amber Kear

Ceramic Hand Building: Heart Shaped Bowl-Saturday, April 26, 1:00-2:00 pm; Tuition: \$15, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

Acrylic Pour Painting-Saturday, 4:00-5:30, April 26; Tuition: \$55, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Thomas Carley

Ceramic Hand Building: Flip Flop Candle Holders-Saturday, 1:00-3:00 pm, May 10; Tuition: \$20, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

Youth Pottery, Ages 9-17-Saturdays, Wheel 9:00-10:30 am, Glazing 10:30-noon, May 10, 17, 24; Tuition: \$150, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

Parent & Child (or Date) "Play-in-Clay" Wheel Throwing-Saturday, 1:00-3:00 pm, May 17; Tuition: \$100 (for two), all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

Acrylic Pour Painting-Friday, 6:00-7:30 pm, May 23; Tuition: \$60, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Thomas Carley

Dad's "Sport Enthusiast" Ornaments-Saturday, 1:00-2:00 pm, May 24; Tuition: \$15, all materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Instructor: Cindy Meadows

POTTERY PARTY

Looking for a fun event
with friends, family, or
co-workers?

Plan a Pottery Party!

2 hours of clay time, projects
picked up 3-4 weeks after
the party. Contact us at
contact@findlayartleague.com
for details, cost and to
schedule a day and time.

objects of desire
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the common good and well being of
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