

# CHICAGO BEARS ANNOUNCE THE FIRST BOYS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH OF THE WEEK AND ALL-STAR AWARD WINNERS FOR 2024

As the 2024 Illinois boys high school football season kicks off, the Chicago Bears are proud to continue the tradition of recognizing outstanding performances and leadership among boys' high school coaches and players through the High School Coach of the Week and High School All-Star awards, brought to you by Athletico Physical Therapy.

Each week, the Chicago Bears will honor exceptional coaches and players who have demonstrated excellence, sportsmanship and a commitment to their teams and communities.

In the first of nine weekly recognitions, the Chicago Bears are excited to name Head Coach Darren Sunkett of East St. Louis High School in East St. Louis, as the Chicago Bears High School Coach of the Week and running back Aaron Stewart of Warren Township High School in Gurnee, as the Chicago Bears High School All-Star for Week 1. As part of the award programs, the Chicago Bears will make a \$2,000 donation to the East St. Louis football program and a \$500 donation to the youth football program of Stewart's choice.

## **Darren Sunkett**

This past Saturday, Aug. 31, Head Coach Darren Sunkett led his team, the East St. Louis Flyers, to a decisive 34-7 victory in their home season opener, defeating the two-time defending 8A state champion Loyola Academy Ramblers from Wilmette. During the game, the Flyers' defense took control, holding the Ramblers to under 100 total yards of offense. With this win, the Flyers snapped the Ramblers' 16-game winning streak and handed them their first loss since the 2022 season. Coach Sunkett joined East St. Louis High School as a physical education teacher and head coach of the Flyers football program in the early 2000s. Over his 24-year coaching career with the Flyers, Coach Sunkett has amassed more than 218 wins and four state championships, making him one of the winningest high school coaches in Illinois. Earlier this year, he was inducted into the Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame for his outstanding coaching career. The Flyers are scheduled to host the Newton Rams from Covington, Georgia, in a non-regional home game this upcoming Saturday, Sep. 7.



## **Aaron Stewart**

This past Friday night, Aug. 30, junior running back Aaron Stewart led the Warren Township Blue Devils to a hard-fought 55-26 non-conference victory over the Hersey Huskies from Arlington Heights. Stewart rushed for 361 yards on 30 carries and scored five touchdowns, including an 83-yard touchdown run. The Blue Devils, who were trailing 20-6 in the second quarter, scored 43 unanswered points going into the fourth quarter to secure the win. According to the Chicago Sun-Times high school football preseason rankings, the Warren Township Blue Devils are [ranked 7th overall](#) in the Illinois Power 25. This strong preseason ranking gives the football program a solid start to the season as they look to build on their early success. The Blue Devils are scheduled to play at Maine-South High School in Park Ridge this upcoming Friday night, Sept. 6.



## **About Boys High School Coach of the Week & High School All-Star**

The Chicago Bears High School Coach of the Week program was launched in 1996 and High School All-Star program in 2011. The High School Coach of the Week program honors outstanding Illinois high school coaches who develop players' football skills and knowledge, character, leadership, discipline and teamwork abilities. The nomination criteria for the High School All-Star program includes on-field performance, community involvement and good sportsmanship. Exceptional high school coaches and players who go beyond expectations are nominated by a panel of local high school sports journalists. The winning candidates are chosen each week for the 2024 IHSA football season. Since the program's inception, the Chicago Bears have donated more than \$391,500 to Illinois high schools in support of their football programs. For more information, please visit [ChicagoBears.com/Community/High-School-Football](https://ChicagoBears.com/Community/High-School-Football).

