

CHICAGO BEARS LAUNCH INAUGURAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL COACH OF THE WEEK AND PLAYER OF THE WEEK AWARDS

As the 2024 Illinois high school girls' flag football season kicks off, the Chicago Bears are proud to introduce a new program dedicated to recognizing the outstanding achievements and leadership in high school girls' flag football in Illinois. This marks the inaugural year of the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week and Player of the Week awards. The rapid growth of girls' flag football across the state highlights the increasing interest and participation in the sport. Recognizing excellence in this emerging sport is important to encouraging young female athletes and promoting the continued expansion of girls' flag football in the state.

In this first-ever recognition, the Chicago Bears are proud to name Head Coach Rachel Karos of Willowbrook High School in Villa Park, as the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week and quarterback Oqiria Butler of Solorio High School in Chicago, as the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Player of the Week for Week 1. As part of this groundbreaking program, the Chicago Bears will make a \$2,000 donation to the Willowbrook football program and a \$500 donation to the youth football program of Butler's choice.

Rachel Karos

This past weekend, Head Coach Rachel Karos hosted one of the largest girls' flag football tournaments in Illinois, the Warrior Flag Fest, featuring 12 top local high school teams. She led her Willowbrook Warriors team to the finals, where they defeated Berwyn/Cicero Morton High School (48-0), Freeport High School (45-0), Mother McAuley (40-0) and Lindblom High School (58-0), before narrowly falling to Lane Tech High School in a hard-fought 0-6 defensive battle. Despite the loss, Rachel is being recognized for her outstanding leadership and significant contributions to the growth of girls' flag football. Under Rachel's leadership, Willowbrook's program has grown from 25 to 75 athletes since 2022. Additionally, Rachel has played a big part in advocating for the sport's statewide growth, playing an important role in establishing girls' flag football as an official IHSA sport. Her efforts also include working with the Chicago Bears to promote the sport internationally in Spain and the UK, making her a leading advocate for its development. The Warriors are scheduled to play a doubleheader against Streamwood High School from Streamwood and Maine West High School from Des Plaines this upcoming Saturday, Sept. 7.



Oqiria Butler

This past week, on Aug. 29 and Aug. 31, senior quarterback Oqiria Butler led the Solorio Sun Warriors to a strong start of their season with two victories. They first defeated Hillcrest High School from Country Club Hills 34-14, with Butler rushing for 150 yards, scoring three rushing touchdowns and adding a passing touchdown. In their second game, a 48-20 win over Mansueto High School from Chicago, Butler threw for 203 yards and four passing touchdowns. In total, she combined for five passing and three rushing touchdowns, making her a dynamic dual-threat quarterback. She also contributed on defense with five tackles, three pass breakups and one interception, making her a rare player to excel on both sides of the field. The Sun Warriors are scheduled for a doubleheader against Simeon High School from Chicago and Back of the Yards High Schools from Chicago this upcoming Saturday, Sept. 7.



About High School Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week & Player of the Week

The Chicago Bears launched the High School Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week and Player of the Week programs in 2024 to recognize outstanding high school coaches and players in the rapidly growing sport of girls' flag football. The Coach of the Week award honors coaches who excel in developing players' skills, leadership, teamwork and advocating the growth of the sport. The Player of the Week program highlights players for their on-field game-changer performance, sportsmanship and community involvement. Winners are selected weekly throughout the IHSA flag football season by a panel of local sports journalists. For more information, please visit ChicagoBears.com/Community/High-School-Football.

