

CHICAGO BEARS ANNOUNCE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL COACH AND PLAYER OF THE WEEK AWARD WINNERS - WEEK 7

The Chicago Bears have officially named Saja Alnajjar, head coach of Stagg High School in Palos Hills, as the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week and Florencia Fabian, linebacker Lane Tech High School in Chicago, as the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Player of the Week for Week 7.

These awards recognize excellence in leadership and team commitment, highlighting efforts to support young athletes and expand girls' flag football throughout Illinois. As part of this program, the Chicago Bears will make a \$2,000 donation to the Stagg football program and a \$500 donation to the youth football program of Fabian's choice.

Saja Alnajjar

Last week, Head Coach Saja Alnajjar led her Stagg Chargers to become the first-ever IHSA Regional Champions in a 20-12 upset over the Simeon Wolverines. In just the second year of the Stagg Girls' Flag program, Coach Alnajjar has built a competitive team from the ground up. Last year, she was the sole coach, overseeing the offense, defense, and special teams. Many of her athletes had never played football before, but they grew from learning fundamentals like catching and throwing to finishing the season 4-4 and advancing to the state quarterfinals. Building on last year's progress, Alnajjar led her team to an impressive 14-8 record this season. Unfortunately, their season came to a heartbreaking end after falling to Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences in the first round of sectionals, 14-12. Despite this, the Chargers had a historic season, securing the first-ever regional championship. Alnajjar is a key part of this success; her dedication to the team and the personal growth of her players is evident in their performance and teamwork. With a coaching philosophy centered around encouragement and inclusivity, she has created a positive environment where each player contributes to the team's success. Under her leadership, the team has engaged in local initiatives to promote girls' sports and encourage young athletes to try flag football. Her efforts extend beyond typical coaching duties, significantly enhancing the visibility and community of girls' athletics.



Florencia Fabian

This past week marked the first week of the IHSA state playoffs, and senior linebacker Florencia Fabian has led her Lane Tech Champions on an exciting post-season run. As an original member of the 2022 team, Fabian has contributed to the Lane Tech Champions' growth and success. This season, with an impressive 18-4 record, the team has held opponents to under 10 points in all but five games. Fabian's defensive dominance has been pivotal. On the season, she has recorded 68 tackles, 12 sacks, and four interceptions—none bigger than her go-ahead pick-six in the Regional Championship game on October 10. Her playoff excellence shone in the Regional Semi-Final, where she had three sacks and 11 tackles, helping her team secure a 30-0 victory. However, it is her leadership that has ignited the Champions during these playoffs and throughout her career. Last season, Fabian was an integral part of Lane Tech's City and State Championship-winning team. Her versatility, dedication to the team's improvement, and embodiment of true leadership have left a lasting mark on the program. Fabian's legacy will endure long after she graduates. Beyond the field, she is an active member in her community, volunteering with PAWS Chicago and at flag football clinics for elementary school aged girls. In school, she excels academically, boasting a 4.93 GPA, and plans to continue playing flag football in college. She and the Lane Tech Champions aim to continue their quest for back-to-back State Championships in the Sectionals round on Wednesday, October 16, at Winnemac Stadium.



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.

