

CHICAGO BEARS ANNOUNCE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL COACH AND PLAYER OF THE WEEK AWARD WINNERS - WEEK 6

The Chicago Bears have officially named Germaine Padilla, head coach of Taft High School in Chicago, as the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week and Emily Ovaska, a quarterback from Lakes Community High School in Lake Villa, as the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Player of the Week for Week 6.

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

Germaine Padilla

This past week, Head Coach Germaine Padilla and his Taft Eagles won the Chicago Public League (CPL) City Championship. After an impressive 20-3 season and a perfect 7-0 conference record, Padilla and the Eagles now aim to continue their success in the regional playoffs. On Sept. 28, the Eagles delivered a strong defensive performance against Kenwood High School in the first round, securing a 14-8 win, followed by a second-round victory of 35-16 over Phillips High School. On Oct. 1, the Eagles defeated Whitney Young High School 20-6 in the semifinals, advancing to the finals. On Oct. 4, Padilla and the Eagles faced their cross-town rivals, Lane Tech High School, for the CPL championship. Led by running back Lily Sarli, winner of the Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Football Player of the Week in week two, and quarterback Maylin Nunez, the Eagles put on an outstanding defensive performance, claiming a 28-6 victory and their second CPL City Championship in three years. In his post-game speech, Padilla celebrated the victory but emphasized the pursuit of greatness, encouraging his players to strive for excellence, not only on the football field, but in every aspect of their lives. Padilla's exceptional leadership has been a key factor in the success of Taft's Girls' Flag Football program. Since its inception in 2021, Padilla's dedication has not only resulted in successful seasons, but has created a culture of respect, integrity and perseverance amongst his athletes. He is committed to developing well-rounded individuals, instilling values such as discipline, teamwork and personal growth. Padilla's involvement in girls' flag football has made a significant impact on the community and continues to grow the sport, establishing the Eagles as one of the top programs in the state.



Emily Ovaska

This past week, senior quarterback Emily Ovaska led the Lakes Eagles to a perfect 4-0 record, boosting their overall season to an impressive 19-3 and 13-1 in conference, all in the program's inaugural season. On Saturday, Sept. 28, the Eagles defeated Grant Community High School 28-6, with Ovaska throwing for 212 yards and four touchdowns. On Oct. 1, she led the Eagles to an 18-12 victory over Stevenson High School, completing 11 of 15 passes for 140 yards and one touchdown, maintaining a 73% completion rate. The following day, on Oct. 2, the Eagles dominated McHenry High School 28-6, with Ovaska completing 19 of 27 passes for 191 yards and throwing three touchdowns. Overall, Ovaska recorded 51 completions, 589 yards and nine touchdowns for the week. For the season, she has totaled 2,562 yards and 41 touchdowns. Ovaska's leadership extends beyond her impressive stats, as she also excels as a team captain, building team chemistry and camaraderie. A three-sport athlete in flag football, softball and basketball, she exemplifies versatility and commitment. The Eagles are now focused on their path to the state championship, starting the postseason strong with a 31-0 shutout victory over Dundee-Crown High School in the first round of the IHSA Regionals on Oct. 8.



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.

