

CHICAGO BEARS ANNOUNCE THE FINAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL COACH AND PLAYER OF THE WEEK AWARD WINNERS - WEEK 9

For the first time in the program's history, the Chicago Bears have officially announced two deserving individuals from the same high school as the final Chicago Bears Girls' Flag Football Coach of the Week and Girls' Flag Player of the Week for Week 9. Head Coach Becca O'Dette and rusher MacKenzie Drake, both from William Fremd High School in Palatine, were named recipients of these awards in recognition of their recent success in leading their school to its first IHSA State Girls' Flag Football Championship.

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 Fremd football program and a \$500 donation to the youth football program of Drake's choice.

Becca O'Dette

On Oct. 19, Head Coach Becca O'Dette led the Fremd Vikings to the first-ever IHSA Girls' Flag Football State Championship. The Vikings began their playoff run with a 20-13 win over Evanston Township High School in the quarterfinals, followed by a narrow 16-14 victory over the number two seed, Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School. These unexpected wins set the stage for the championship, where Vikings upset top-seeded Guilford High School 24-12 to claim the state title. In the first year of Fremd's girls' flag football program, Coach O'Dette taught her players both the fundamentals and advanced strategies of the game. She harnessed her team's natural athleticism, many of whom are multi-sport athletes and college-level recruits, and developed them into skilled, competitive flag football players. Her calm demeanor throughout the season and especially during the championship weekend kept her athletes competitive and resilient. Her lifelong passion for football is evident in her coaching style and her ability to inspire and motivate her team. O'Dette's commitment to building a positive team culture enabled the Vikings to advance through a challenging state tournament. Her dedication to girls' flag football, innovative approach and focus on building a supportive community around female sports have not only secured a state championship but also created a legacy for girls' flag football at Fremd High School.

MacKenzie Drake

On Oct. 19, rusher MacKenzie Drake played a pivotal role in leading the Fremd Vikings to their first girls' flag football state title in IHSA history, securing victory over Guilford High School. During the state championship, MacKenzie delivered an impressive performance, recording three crucial sacks and relentlessly pressuring the opposing quarterback. Her determined defensive efforts were key in limiting Guilford's offensive opportunities, ultimately ending their nearly perfect, undefeated season with their first loss. MacKenzie's ability to remain focused under pressure and execute the team's defensive strategy throughout the season resulted in numerous game-changing plays that solidified Vikings' defense. Beyond her flag football achievements, MacKenzie is a well-rounded student-athlete at Fremd High School, participating in track & field, gymnastics and cheerleading. She has excelled as a state qualifier in the 4x200 relay and competed at the USATF Junior Olympics in the 4x100 and 4x400 events. Initially hesitant to join the girls' flag football team, she credits her mother's encouragement for inspiring her to take the leap. The strong camaraderie and sense of community she has found within the team are aspects she values deeply and actively contributes to.



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.