

# YOLANDA BARRERA NAMED FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE 2025 CHICAGO BEARS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL ALL-STAR AWARD

*Recognizing student-athletes who go above and beyond for their communities and schools*

The Chicago Bears proudly announce Yolanda Barrera, a senior at Julius Sterling Morton East High School in Cicero, Ill., as the first recipient of the 2025 Community High School All-Star Award. The Community High School All-Star Award, brought to you by Athletico Physical Therapy, recognizes high school football and girls flag football players who make a positive impact in their communities and schools. From February through April, nine student-athletes will be honored for their leadership, character and dedication to community service.

Yolanda's leadership comes naturally in every aspect of her life. On the field, she leads by example, demonstrating discipline, teamwork and determination. She plays with intensity and heart, always striving to bring out the best in herself and her teammates in girls flag football. During the 2024 season, she was named team captain, guiding her team through a competitive season that culminated in their first-ever playoff appearance. This marked an impressive run in their inaugural season, as they won the regional championship before falling short in sectionals against Lane Tech College Prep High School, the defending champions at the time. Despite facing injuries throughout the season, Yolanda remained resilient, using each challenge as motivation to push her teammates and herself forward.

Due to her relentless effort and defensive skills, Yolanda earned her team's Defensive Player of the Year and Most Valuable Player (MVP) honors. Additionally, she received Honorable Mention recognition during the All-State team dinner at Halas Hall, where the Chicago Bears recognized top girls flag football players in Illinois for the 2024 season.

Yolanda's leadership extends far beyond the field. During the offseason, she dedicates three days a week to coaching youth flag football for children ages 8 to 10, instilling in them the same values that have shaped her own journey, including hard work, perseverance and respect. She takes pride in mentoring young athletes, ensuring they develop confidence both on and off the field. Her influence on the next generation of players reflects her deep commitment to giving back to the sport that has given her so much.

Outside of athletics, Yolanda is a dedicated student and community leader. She balances a demanding academic schedule with her athletic commitments, earning the West Suburban Conference Academic Achievement Award for excelling in the classroom. She also spends her summers volunteering at local nursing homes, taking care of residents and bringing them joy through conversation and engagement.

Her ability to connect with people, whether through sports or service, leaves a lasting impact. She leads by example, showing that passion and perseverance can shape every part of life.

Each Community High School All-Star recipient will receive a custom hand-painted football, a gift bag and an invitation to a future Chicago Bears event. Additionally, the Chicago Bears will donate \$500 to a charitable organization of the honoree's choosing.

## **About Community High School All-Star Award**

This is the fifth year of the Community High School All-Star Award, which continues to highlight student-athletes who make meaningful contributions to their communities. In partnership with Athletico Physical Therapy, the Chicago Bears established this initiative to recognize high school football and girls flag football players who use their leadership and teamwork skills to create a positive impact during the offseason. By celebrating these young leaders, the Bears aim to inspire future generations to carry these values forward, both on and off the field.

