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PIAA OFFICIALLY SANCTIONS HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL IN THE COMMONWEALTH WITH HELP FROM THE EAGLES & STEELERS

The decision now recognizes high school girls' flag football as a state championship sport

MECHANICSBURG, PA [September 18, 2024] – The Philadelphia Eagles and Pittsburgh Steelers are thrilled to learn of today's announcement from the [Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc.](https://www.piaa.org/) (PIAA), declaring high school girls' flag football an officially sanctioned sport in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The PIAA Board of Directors meeting took place on Wednesday, September 18 in Mechanicsburg, PA, where girls' flag football was reviewed and approved on the third and final reading to be designated as a state sanctioned sport.

A sport is considered for sanctioning when it has adopted a set of operational and safety standards set forward by a governing body. When these standards and best practices are fully implemented within the overall framework of a program, events create a more positive and structured experience for participants. In the case of girls' flag football in Pennsylvania, it was required that there be at least 100 participating teams across the state. That threshold was achieved in April with 65 schools from the eastern side of the state (Philadelphia Eagles) and 36 from the western side (Pittsburgh Steelers).

EDITOR'S NOTE: *For media coverage purposes, click the links to download photos and b-roll of the [Eagles Girls' Flag League](#) and [Steelers Girls' Flag League](#).*

"We're thrilled that we can offer another opportunity for girls to participate interscholastic athletics," said Frank Majikes, PIAA President. "This is the second girls' sport in two years to be approved. In recognizing the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS), we will be initiating development of a girls' flag football rules book in January 2025. This will allow us to develop our process to host a championship. The structural changes to the sport won't begin until the 2025-26 school year. The PIAA thanks the National Football League, Eagles, and Steelers for their support and efforts for girls' flag football."

As part of a collaborative approach to get girls' flag football sanctioned, the Eagles and Steelers worked in tandem over the past three flag seasons to grow the game at the youth level for girls through education, engagement, distribution of equipment, and resources. In July 2023, the PIAA designated girls' flag football as an emerging sport in Pennsylvania thanks to the efforts of both clubs. This designation served as the next step in the process of getting girls' flag football sanctioned and ultimately becoming an official sport in PA.

"This is not just an important day for the Eagles and Steelers, but for the sport of football and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," said Jeffrey Lurie, Chairman & CEO, Philadelphia Eagles. "When we launched our girls' flag football league in 2022, we set an ambitious five-year goal to get the sport sanctioned in our state. Now, here we are three seasons later and two years ahead of schedule. The sport's organic growth is a credit to the participants, administrators, coaches, officials, and parents who helped raise the profile of girls' flag football. We thank the

PIAA for their leadership in recognizing a sport that has the power to unlock new pathways and opportunities for girls of all ages in every community.”

“We are excited to see such a groundbreaking moment for the future of girls’ flag football,” said Art Rooney II, Steelers President. “It has been great working with the Eagles to accomplish a successful ruling that will now give young girls the chance to compete at a state level. We look forward to seeing how girls’ flag football continues to grow in Pennsylvania and worldwide.”

Launched in the Spring of 2022, the Eagles Girls’ Flag League began with 16 schools from the Philadelphia Public and Catholic Leagues. The program then expanded to 38 teams in 2023 and then to 65 in 2024. Of those participating teams, the Philadelphia Public and Catholic Leagues have made girls’ flag an official sport within their leagues – designating their own league chairs and hosting their own championships. The Eagles Girls’ Flag League has more than 1,600 girls playing throughout the eastern side of Pennsylvania.

The Eagles’ support for girls’ flag football has also included the facilitation of learn-to-play, coaching, and officiating clinics, a girls’ flag sports performance combine, girls’ flag jamborees, and the girls’ flag championships, which have been hosted at the NovaCare Complex and Lincoln Financial Field.

As part of their ongoing commitment to increase access to girls’ youth sports, the Eagles partnered with Operation Warm to launch an innovative new sports bra line – [FLY:FWD](#) – designed specifically for young girls and women competing in sport. The initiative kicked off with the distribution of 30,000 FLY:FWD sports bras to girls in need across the Greater Philadelphia area.

The Steelers Girls’ Flag Football League began in 2022 with six schools. The first championship game was held at Acrisure Stadium. That year, the team hosted their first Steelers Flag Jamboree – a free camp for girls in grades 7-12 who are interested in learning more about playing flag football.

In 2023, the program grew to 17 schools with 22 teams. The organization implemented “Steelers Showcase Game of the Week,” where current Steelers players attend girls’ flag football games to show their support for the teams and highlight game changers within the league. Ahead of the 2023 season, the team hosted a special uniform unveiling at Acrisure Stadium. The uniforms were hung in the Steelers locker room with special lighting to make it a one-of-a-kind experience for the participants. This year’s championship game was held at Carnegie Mellon University.

This year, the program grew to 36 high schools, with the Steelers hosting a girls’ flag coaching clinic and college showcase. The “Steelers Showcase Game of the Week” and Steelers Flag Jamborees are still largely successful events that continue to highlight girls’ flag football, giving girls the opportunity to learn more about the sport.

The Eagles and Steelers have received generous support to help grow and expand the game for girls from organizations, such as the NFL Foundation, NFL Flag, USA Football, Nike, FLY:FWD, and corporate partners. Items provided by both NFL clubs to first-year programs: \$3,000 stipend (\$1,500 stipend to returning schools), 25 customized uniforms from Nike, 30 flag belts, six footballs, and USA Football Flag Kits (flags, cones, footballs).

About Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)

Beginning in Pittsburgh, on December 29, 1913, PIAA was given the privilege of serving its member schools and registered officials by establishing policies and adopting contest rules that emphasize the educational values of interscholastic athletics, promote safe and sportsmanlike competition, and provide uniform standards for all interscholastic levels of competition.

