

Sports & Entertainment

The National Football League and PlayVS announce the first-ever Madden NFL Youth Championship

Students from across the U.S. will compete in Madden NFL 25 at the team and individual levels, participating in healthy competition that promotes skill growth and leadership



represent their schools at the Pro Bowl Games or the 2025 NFL Draft," said Williams. "It's a chance for these students to experience an NFL event that few will get in their lifetime."

Students can join the championship in two ways:

Scholastic Esports Team Registration: Middle and high school students can register to compete with their school esports program in a season-long competition to be crowned the best team in the state or region. Individual Player Registration: Players aged 13-18 in the U.S can register to compete in up to four open tournament qualifiers held throughout the year:

Fall Tournaments

· Fall Qualifier #1: Oct. 25 – 27 (Registration opens Sept. 9).

· Fall Qualifier #2: Nov. 22 – 24 (Registration opens Oct. 24).
· The winners from these two fall qualifiers will win a trip to Orlando in January to compete in the championship finals at the 2025 NFL Pro Bowl Games presented by Verizon.

Winter Tournaments

· Winter Qualifier #1: Feb. 21 – 23 (Registration opens Nov. 21).
· Winter Qualifier #2: Mar. 28 – 30 (Registration opens Feb. 20).
· The winners from these two winter qualifiers will win a trip to Green Bay in April to compete in the championship finals at the 2025 NFL Draft.

"The Madden NFL Youth Championship aligns perfectly with our goal to engage young fans and foster a love for football through innovative and accessible platforms. By offering this opportunity, we are helping stu-

dents develop essential skills," said Ed Kiang, vice president of video gaming at the NFL. "The chance to compete at marquee NFL events like the Pro Bowl Games and the NFL Draft provides an unforgettable experience that connects students directly with an NFL community brought together through their love of Madden NFL. We look forward to seeing the incredible talent and enthusiasm these young players will bring."

Based on a recent PlayVS survey conducted earlier this year, esports has shown to have a powerful positive impact on students across the country: 60% of coaches have observed improvements in grades and attendance among their players and 83% have noted enhanced leadership skills. For 46% of students, participating in an esports team through PlayVS marks their first extracurricular activity at school,

opening doors to new social and developmental opportunities. "This new initiative with Madden NFL gaming and our youth esports platform is not only fostering a healthy competitive spirit but also promoting the development of crucial life competencies including leadership, critical thinking and good sportsmanship," said Jon Chapman, CEO of PlayVS. "We believe these leagues and tournaments will open doors for many players, helping them to connect with their peers, showcase their skills to college recruiters and engage deeply with the broader Madden and NFL communities." Registration for both the Madden Youth Championship middle and high school scholastic leagues and open tournaments is now open. Interested schools and players can learn more and register by visiting playsvs.com/madden-nfl-youth-championship.

Memphis Grizzlies announce events for annual 'Grizz Goes Back to School' Campaign to support students

MEMPHIS, Tenn. September 6, 2024— The Memphis Grizzlies announced their annual Grizz Goes Back to School campaign, hosting several community events in the Memphis area throughout August and September. Each year, the initiative supports local students and teachers by providing necessary tools and resources to ensure a successful school year.



host a **Grizz Fuel Cooking Demo at Dexter Elementary School** on Friday, Sept. 13. The cooking demonstration was an interactive culinary experience led by Memphis Shelby County Schools' Nutrition Services team. Students were taught the importance of health and wellness while they are shown how food is grown and how it fuels their bodies mentally and physically.

Additionally, the team will host the **Get REV'd Up Voter Edu-**

cation Rally on National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, Sept. 17, for local high school students who are eligible to vote in the 2024 election. High school students will be informed on civic engagement, assisted in registering to vote and provided information on the voting process. The Shelby County (TN) Alumnae Chapter of **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Shelby County Election Commission, TN,** will partner with the team in hopes of empowering the youth and making their voices heard in the upcoming election.

Grizzlies forward/center **Jaren Jackson Jr.** will make a special

visit to Georgian Hills Middle School on Wednesday, Sept. 18, delivering much-needed school supplies to students facing challenges in obtaining essential materials. In addition to providing supplies, Jackson Jr. will spend time with various classes, offering words of encouragement and motivating students to excel in their academic pursuits.

To celebrate **John P. Freeman Optional School** as the latest recipient of the Grizzlies' Raise the Rim initiative, the Grizzlies will host a youth basketball clinic, led by the Junior Grizzlies, for students on the school's newly resurfaced court on Monday, Sept. 23. **The Raise the Rim** program

was created in 2023 to provide local schools and community centers with Grizzlies-branded, outdoor basketball hoop systems and equipment, foster a passion for basketball, promote healthy exercise and ensure fun for all.

To wrap up this year's campaign, the Grizzlies' **rePRESENT Every Day** program will take place on Friday, Sept. 27, at **Lucie E. Campbell Elementary of Tennessee,** rePRESENT Every Day is an incentive-based truancy reduction program designed to help keep youth in school and engaged in the classroom. The program strives to increase attendance at each of the

partnering schools by 5-12% by rewarding students throughout the school year. The tip-off event will feature a fun-filled pep rally with Grizzlies entertainment teams, alongside dental screenings and education courtesy of UTHSC. For more information on Grizz Goes Back to School, visit grizzlies.com/community. Fans who want to support the Memphis Grizzlies and purchase 2024-25 season tickets can do so now by going online to grizzlies.com/tickets. For more information on the Grizzlies, visit grizzlies.com, 'like' Memphis Grizzlies on Facebook or follow @memgrizz on Twitter/X and Instagram.

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D A R E D E V I L

— B O R N A G A I N —

The team continued their efforts by contributing to the annual **Teach for America Grind & Grub** Dinner on Wednesday, Aug. 14, at Crosstown Concourse, welcoming teachers back to Memphis with beverages and special Grizzlies swag. Later that week, the Grizzlies attended the **Shelby County Community Expo** on Saturday, Aug. 17, as they tabled, handed out Grizzlies merchandise and supported the locally inspired book, *Shelby County A to Z*, which celebrates Tennessee's largest county and features the team. The Grizzlies collaborated with **Kifani Press**, a local children's book publisher dedicated to inspiring a love of reading through great books, literacy resources and educational experiences, to publish the book.

To further support teachers, the Grizzlies surprised **Journey Coleman School with a Teacher Lounge Takeover** on Friday, Sept. 6. Educators received custom Grizzlies swag, school supplies, boxed lunches and chair massages throughout the day to decompress and prepare to take on the school year.

The campaign continued with a **Mind Health Huddle at Oasis of Hope** on Wednesday, Sept. 11. Students learned more about the importance of mental health awareness as they rotated through various therapeutic stations, including yoga, art and music therapy and a panel discussion. The Grizzlies will also